

STEREOTYPED NIGERIA:

Religion & Ethnicity

AS IDENTITY POLITICS

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DEDICATION

In loving memory of my Dad, Chief I.A. Ezeonwuka
(Your dreams are on course!)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Along the course of my bumpy scholarly excursion, my gratitude goes to my God and creator, who is my all. J.C. and my mercurial children are not forgotten, while Pat, Chike and Chinwe remain strategically available. Noble lady Alice Ezeonwuka, already in your Nineties; thanks mum for your prayers!

To my friends, though the roll-call is challenging, I must continue to wish you good!

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PREFACE

From 1914 when the Nigerian project came into being, and up till the present, it has continued to subsist on a faulty conspiratory agenda. In a human body, auto-rejection becomes a life threatening course when there is practically no desire or will to tryout other reasonable alternatives. Humans are driven by interests, and the ambivalence of human interests is not questionable. Since the actualization of these interests are dictated by the chess game that is socialization and politics, the focal point must revolve on identity consult. Under identity, the *persona*, selfhood and socio-cultural appurtenances inextricably linked to issues of power, value systems and ideology revolve. Identity is undoubtedly a historically and socially constructed concept. Nigeria's redundant mission in state craftry and development is cumulatively systemic, and the prognosis is simply poor. Clandestine external interests have continued to stoke the sharp edges of prebendal divisions domestically, thereby re-enacting national discord, suspicion and acrimony. No true Nigerian identity and patriotism can emerge as long as religion remains the 'opium', that is made to run through the ethnic arteries of the disparate peoples occupying the innermost part of the Gulf of Guinea

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Some nations and sovereignties may have to pass through persistent, complex and terrible revolutionary challenges before attaining cohesion and development, while a few others may not. The complexities and dimensions manifested by the litany of crises and disturbances within the Nigerian polity points to deep-seated lack of trust, suspicion and an eclipse of fraternal confidence amongst the diverse cultural and religious entities inhabiting the area. These discordant tunes have continued to exert its toll considerably on human and material resources, hence a deadly threat to the functionality and structural existence of the country. Ethno-religious divide remain the identified issue, fanned by indoctrinated stereotype and primordialism. Unfortunately, Nigeria has remained one of the most controversial plural societies in the world today. Pre and post-independence in 1960, the annals of Nigeria's history is replete with ethnic-oriented disturbances. Ethnic chauvinism, in addition to many ethical crises are created, setting off multiple ripples. The 'one Nigeria' mantra has become nothing but a pure sarcasm, just as unity and peace in Nigeria appears dead. Ethnic politics and polarization along primordial cleavages is not new in Nigeria, but the dilemma is the momentum with which

it is unfolding, day by day. Fairness, equity and meritocracy have been banished on the altar of faulty federalism. All these have bequeathed on the nation incongruous and inept leadership with myriads of negative implications. There is practically no Nigerian in Nigeria, and this is daily stringently propelled by the challenges of massive population growth, unimaginable rate of unemployment and insecurity, added with the ever rising debt profile.

Most scholars are of the view that British imperial presence had been felt in the area that later became Nigeria as from the middle of the 19th century. The same set of scholars also accent to the fact that despite the above, British colonial administration officially commenced in Nigeria on 1st January, 1900 *vis a vis* the eventual termination of the Royal Charter previously granted the Royal Niger Company to administer the area on behalf of the British government. To effectively secure administrative convenience, imperialist Britain not only adopted the policy of divide and rule, but went deeper into the colonial scheme by applying the marriage of convenience of primordially independent nationalities. Thus Britain deliberately placed some ethnic nationalities at vantage positions over the existing groups, since this lopsided arrangement was done without consultations from involved groups. Such was the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914. It may be poignant to note that prior to this incident, through the Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1910, the British Colonial Power not only tried to separate the Northern

ethnic groups from their Southern compatriots, but went ahead to discourage the migration of Southerners to the North (International IDEA, 200:23). This policy gave birth to the *Sabon Gari* System that became prevalent in many Northern Nigeria cities as from 1911. Such divisiveness aided British perpetual grip and manipulation of Nigeria.

Nevertheless, ample historical evidences show that ‘Nigerians’ have fairly interrelated harmoniously for centuries, before being brought together in a new modern nation state, but the *caveat* is not on the basis of ethnicity or religion. Expatiating on this, Usman stated that:

The privacy source of our history showed that the fluid boundaries of the ethnic divide were very rarely conterminous with the boundaries of the polities, intensive migration, extensive networks of division of labor and commerce did not allow for the emergence of ethnically monolithic polities. (Usman, 2002:17).

Ethnicity, ethnic politics and religious bigotry became lethal weapons purposely to create evidence-based fruits of the divisive and discordant seeds sown by imperialist Britain which emphasized cultural and linguistic differences (Hamman, 2003:10), hence condensing and raining socio-political upheavals in Nigeria. Cultural and linguistic differences were glaringly emphasized, while communal sentiments got encouraged (Nnoli, 1978:113); mistrust and

suspicion came to the fore, leading to the poisoning of inter-ethnic relations within and between Nigeria's regions. It was therefore the colonialist that created Nigeria's ethnic consciousness through the use of local authority structure of divide and rule, and as the indigenous political class intensified their struggle to inherit power from the departing colonialist, ethno-religious cleavages got aggravated. Nigeria's political history is replete with British and self-inflicted errors and anomalies which got willfully absorbed into its pathology overtime. In its more than 58 years of existence post its pseudo-independence, Nigerians have had to contend with the vicious vicissitudes of the 1960s political unrests, a 30 months genocidal civil war, miss-rule, suppression and oppression under the almost 30 years military administration, terrorism, human rights abuse, poverty and classical underdevelopment. The ambitious military in their ignoble incursion into governance on the platform of their spurious claims, ended up heightening and fuelling ethnic polarization and democratic agitation in the country. Ethno-religious identity became the footstool of these Generals; hence a scholar was irked to lend credence to this noting that;

The escalation of ethnic and regional symbolism can also be connected to the patronage of sectarian, ethnic and religious organizations and the extension of largess to their leaders by the regimes of General Babangida and Abacha, which went around in circles looking for legitimacy even at the

expense of undermining national unity. They made ethno-religious basis relevant in the recruitment of their agents (Kazah-Toure, 1999:144).

Amidst myriads of absurdities and national governance anti-theical to internationally acceptable human standards, Nigeria has staggered into its fourth republic all the more dazed with unprecedented level of ethno-religious altecation, violence and mayhem. The *Boko Haram* continuous depredations mostly in Nigeria's North-East is turning out to be a child's play *vis a vis* the emerging trend of ethnic and culture-group oriented killings and cleansing enveloping certain parts of the nation's Middle belt region, including some parts of the core Northern States. It is sad to observe that this scenario is hatched and executed over an atmosphere of grave state silence and non-intervention. Nigeria is bleeding profusely, and sentiments are emotionally feeding fat from the daily butchery of fellow paternal relations and religious adherents in cold blood.

In the midst of this squalor, Nigeria's democratic aberration has continued to midwife the nation's political challenges to grow in leaps and bounds so much so that apart from the military imposition of the 1979 Constitution on the populace, the emergent political parties post 1979, have continued to tow the ethnic angles (Unity Party of Nigeria-**West**, Nigeria People's Party-**East**, National Party of Nigeria-**North**). While hinging on this development, it may be recalled and asserted

that post-independence in the 1960s, Nigeria's nationhood took the slippery political road of nepotism, ethnocentrism and primordial inclinations, hence this polarity vehemently became manifest in the Igbo Union from the **East**, the Arewa group from the **North** and the Omo Oduduwa from the **West**, among others. Suffice it to say that the existing political parties then, either by design or coincidence, ended up towing these ethnic colourations. This bad sequel ended up creating an atmosphere of distrust. Presently, in the year 2018 to be precise, Nigeria could boast of harbouring 91 registered political parties, a population of more than two hundred million citizens and a prospective economic base; but the drawback on its developmental strides is its stereotyped ethno-religious inclinations, hence the political class, the elite and the leadership steering the ship of state have largely remained retrogressive, disoriented and incongruent to the needs and demands of 21st century nationhood. When leadership impunity remains widespread, the judicial and legislative caution, control and regulation appear a mirage, an atmosphere of political apathy and hopelessness is bound to dominate the land, moreso where the polity appears over-policed, but simply under-secured.

The citizenry are bound to react in various ways, either through political dejection and apathy or organized agitations and demands for better alternative conditions in the face of perceived abject state marginalizations. These agitations have grown over the years in both complexities and sophistication, from passive to violent formats in almost all parts of Nigeria

– from the terror-laden approach of the *Boko Haram* in the North East, to the threat-based strategy of the Indigenous People of Biafra in the South East and the melodramatic approach of the Odua People’s Congress of the South West to mention but a few; Nigeria’s political environment is simply in a combustible mode. In the midst of this agitations, consultations still engage the many polarized ethno-religious groups operating within the Nigerian environment – AREWA, OHANEZE, PANDEV, AFENIFERE, MEND, The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. When many groups agitate and clamour for self-determination or restructuring at the same time within a particular political polity, the problem must be endemic and terminal, hence the dire need for sincere observation and proportionate attention. Stereotyped Nigeria factually is wallowing in the challenges of ethnicity, religious inclination and primordialism, hence lacking in a clear-cut political identity, since the interactive currencies are fear, prejudice and discrimination.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Stereotype

The term ‘stereotype’ was first introduced by a journalist, Walter Lippmann, who referred to it as ‘the picture in the head’ that you have of a particular group of people (Smith: 1998). Once aware that a person belongs to a particular group,

one tends to ascribe to him behaviour considered in the common group. A stereotype is a set of characteristics attributed to all members of same group, which characteristics that departs from 'reality' through restructuring, curtailing and deforming it (Preiswerk *et al*: 1978). The user of the stereotype often believes he is giving a straight forward description, infact, he places a mold over a reality, which that mold cannot contain. (Preiswerk *et al*: 1978). There are both negative and positive stereotypes. It helps people predict the behavior of the person, group or community they are observing. The importance of predicting or informing someone's behavior could be one of the reasons why a stereotype maybe maintained despite evidence of its inaccuracy. Whether positive or negative, stereotypes are considered to be very harmful, because it takes away one's ability to treat each member of a group as a distinct individual. (Inweregbu, 2006). Whereas historians are of the opinion that stereotypes spring from past events, from the political point of view, it could be a means by which groups in power come to rationalize war, religious intolerance and economic oppression (Sharon *et al*: 1979).

Religion

Religion maybe explained as a cultured system of designated behaviours, practices, supplications, world views, texts, sanctified places, prophesies, ethics or organizations that claims to relate humanity to certain powers above him, including the supernatural, transcendental or spiritual elements (Ezeonwuka, 2018:15). An elusive and imprecise

concept, religion lacks objectivity and is largely driven by emotion (Egwu, 2001, Agarwal *et al*, 1994). Adeniyi (1993), attempted a contribution to this concept when he defined religion as a body of truths, laws and rights by which a man is subordinated to a transcendent being. Drawing similar conclusions, Peter (1998), conceptualized religion as a system of symbols which act to establish powerful, pervasive, long-lasting mood and motivations in men, by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence, and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that moods and motivations seen uniquely realistic. Alanamu (2004), prefers seeing religion as involving both the material and the spiritual context; exhibits institutions and officials on the one hand, while undertaking the spiritual engagement on the other, thereby claiming to be characterized by supernatural and sacred transcendentalities simultaneously.

Though there is no scholarly consensus over what precisely constitutes a religion, one thing is clear; faith plus reason enmeshed in sacred histories and narratives, accompanied by prayer patterns, rituals, sacrificial ways, commemoration and veneration of deities, all aim to give meaning to life. This bond between man and higher beings elicits virtue and awe *vis a vis* the individual's broad social obligations to family, neighbours and then God. Religion, just like nationality, race or ethnicity, creates and involves a distinct identity built and sustained by doctrines. Emotions, expressions, anxieties and misfortunes, including the unknown bedeviling human existence are easily accommodated and packaged into ideals,

and such utopian imagery remains the pivotal force, strongly convincing and embellished with euphoric assurances of superfluous rewards, mostly under extreme application, beclouds rational thinking, hence could comfortably drive and determine individual or group actions. Most world religions demand total compliance and obedience to certain dogmatic principles. Of great importance are certain lofty mundane observances and promises which equip devotees with the singular conviction that theirs is the ultimate, hence every other religion is a farce. Religion is the end product of not only man's fear of the unknown, but his acknowledgement of the 'possibility of a superior being' that could be involved in deciding or relatively manipulating not only his earthly life, but his eternity. Sequel to the selfish and exploitative tendencies imbued in man, religion provides the platform for not only a pyramidal leadership, but the smooth and pervasive indoctrination and control of followership by a select few through stipulated dogma, preserved and protected with 'invoked awe'.

Religious intolerance is blind refusal to understand, respect and [accommodate] views or positions that are opposed to one's cherished religious views (Alanamu, 2006:607). Along the same pedestal, Ekwunife submits that, religious intolerance is a blind and fixated mental and psychological negative attitude towards religious beliefs and practices (Ekwunife, 1993:20). Such negative attitudes exhibit themselves in situations whereby leaders or groups in any society blindly refuse to understand and respect contrary

religious views and practices, except the ones they consider to be true. Intolerance could degenerate further and deeper into series of violence and utter destruction of lives and properties, when driven by extremism or fundamentalism. At this juncture, action becomes deliberate, accompanied by suicidal recourse most especially when a particular individual or group selfishly and dangerously manipulate this ‘opium’ with their wand, after all, the available raw materials (the ignorant and uneducated poverty-stricken gullible masses are in abundance (Ezeonwuka, 2014:46). In the context of this study, with due reference to place and time, militant Islam with its contemporary global resurgence and sectarian depredations presents a perfect picture.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity has a common meaning, though various analysts and scholars on the subject have approached it through various schools of thought: Instrumentalism, Essentialism, Constructivism and Institutionalism. The instrumentalists are of the view that ethnic differences are manipulated by the ambition of individuals to attain their selfish interests. Essentialism refers to the principle of primordialism, which implies that ethnic identities are unchanging. The third intends on having knowledge of the origins of ethnic groups, and has linked this identity ‘constructs’ or ‘invent’ to the activities of colonialists, missionaries, among others. Institutionalists, states the pivotal roles of political institutions and policies in the shaping of ethnic relations. The concept of ethnicity is undoubtedly a social phenomenon associated with

certain levels of distinctiveness, communal segregation and competition among members of different ethnic groups. It draws a significant picture of belonging to and having sentimental loyalty to a group, and in drawing and exercising such attachment, identity and exclusiveness would easily provide distinctiveness and sacrosanct pride. Laying more credence to this, (Sanda, 1972:32) posits that an ethnic group consists of interacting members who define themselves as belonging to a named or labeled social group, with whose interest they identify, and which manifests certain aspects of a unique culture, while constituting a part of a wider society.

An ethnic group could refer to a set of people who share one or more of the following characteristics; race, religion, paternal origin, language and cultural traditions. Omu (1992:170), further expatiates 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. It may be observed that the concept of ethnicity changes status or acquires passionate and aggressive attributes when new elements enter into the relationships. These elements include: socio-economic and political competition, fear of domination and closer group interaction, fostered by the logic of urbanization and internal migration. This development leads to the explosive interplay of inter-group relations to certain notational characters and features, such as ethnocentrism, prejudice and discrimination.

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to assume that one's culture or way of life is superior to another's. It is the tendency of human groups to judge external phenomena with reference to attitudes and values that are specific to the group, hence (Akinwumi, 2004) opine that ethnocentrism is an outlook in which one's own group is the centre of everything, and all others scaled and rated with reference to it. It usually takes the form of a wariness and distrust of outside groups and a belief in the unquestionable superiority of one's own people. **Prejudice** on the other hand is a negative attitude towards an entire category of individuals who have characteristics in common that is not shared by all people; as such it results in three components: affective, cognitive and behavioral. The affective component concerns how much the person likes or dislikes the attitude-object, person, group, things or situation; the cognitive component consists of the persons beliefs about the attitude/object, while the behavioral component concerns the way a person feels that he or she should act towards the attitude/object (Encyclopedia Americana 545a).

Discrimination could be seen as any behavior that excludes members of a group from certain rights, opportunities or privileges resulting from prejudicial attitudes. It is assumed that in most instances, prejudice creates discrimination and people tend to associate better and easily with individuals who possess similar beliefs, attitudes and values. Dislike for members of another group is not merely on ethnic or group dissimilarities, but rather on perceived-belief dissimilarity. In ethnocentrism, both prejudice and discrimination hibernate

and provide accelerative fuel and direction. Suffice it to say that the danger with ethnocentrism lies in the fact that an assumption often becomes a conviction; that the values and culture of one's group are superior to those of others, while those of others are looked upon with disapproval, scorn and even contempt (Summer, 1955:10). On its positive side, ethnocentrism keeps a group together, while on the negative angle, it is the root of inter-group prejudices and antagonism. A group exaggerates its good qualities while deriding others, hence stimulating disharmony and altercation between groups. Eyo identifies psychological fear as the cause of ethnicity when he said:

...at the root of ethnicity's fear, fear of the unknown, fear of losing the predictability of one's way of behavior..., fear of having one's established values changed, thus cutting one adrift in a wider and more uncharted sea called Nigeria that seems to lack and articulate goal and value system, fear of competition for scarce resources and a lot of other fears that maybe explicit or implicit (Eyo, 1980:8).

Tracing and highlighting one's indigenous identity has continued to be a major priority amongst Nigerians, just as the anticipated unity and elasticity of nationhood has been buried, long gone and forgotten, hence ethnicity has given rise to ethnocentrism. Identity politics requires one to descend

and highlight his primordial attachment which include thought pattern, language, laid down values, including biological affinity, which introduces once more the issue of ethnicity. Primordialism assumes ethnic identity as fixed, once it is constructed. To a large extent, belief in the primordialist argument of kinship, historical traditions and homeland accounts of several ethnic groups not only encourages, but creates an enduring strength and a lasting elastic commitment to an ethnic identity, hence it is more endearing than the ethnic theories of constructivism and instrumentalism. In the arena of identity politics, primordialism goes a long way in establishing the ‘dangerous’ and irreconcilable cultural differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

THEORETICAL GUIDE

Since challenges could come in the form of discrimination, inhibition and antagonism, it pre-supposes that it could degenerate to violence (physical and psychological). The relevance of Marx’s class struggle, Frustration/Aggression, Interdependence/Mutual Aid, including the Hobbesian natural anarchy theories to this exposition is not in doubt, but it should be noted that consensus and conflict maybe polar opposites, but neither alone can offer full explanations for the changing nature, pattern and scope of inter-group relations in 21st century Nigeria. Violence could be structurally rationalized on the basis of greed, grievances and the correction of prevailing social injustice and inequalities. Painting a picture simply based on the behavioural patterns of

human societies with other groups, not only appears stratificatious in structure, but could end with limited perspective sequel to its myopic gaze on human relations based on role and statutes.

Unarguably, this study falls within the ambit of Social Conflicts theories, and specifically closest to the Frustration/Aggression and Conflict Trap analytical fields. The subsisting 'state of order' in Nigeria is not only fragile, but cumulatively negates universally genuinely acceptable common standards, hence abundant vestiges of, and sustained evidence of 'state terror' on the citizenry have continued to create a psychopolitical chasm in the minds of the populace. Ill-motivated and uncared for, and with common expectation continuing to be distanced from attainment and actual need – satisfaction, the tendency and greater chances that anger and violence will result (Gurr, 1970:24). Aggression in which ever form it manifests, appears to always be the product of frustration, rather than a mere natural instinct or biological reaction, moreso where and when legitimate desires are for long directly or indirectly denied due to certain structural discrepancies within a society. This is apparently clear since it is known that the disparate culture groups within the Nigerian geographical space were selfishly lumped together in an imperialist '*Pax Britanica*' colonialist programme devoid of any indigenous awareness or consultations. The importance and place of socio-economic factors and forces in the contentious issues of politics, governance, religion and ethnicity, in many post-independent plural sovereignties

remains a running sore. This becomes apparently trivial when evaluated with the stagnating identity of such economies, the former colonizing power is still allowed to exploitatively maintain a domineering influence through the imposition of preferred ethno-religious cleavages on the particular polity. Reactions to such could either be passively aggressive or locally violent, as a let out of prolonged feelings of frustration. One cannot easily ignore the recurrent emergence of the many ethno-religious inclined pressure groups whose antics and statements sometimes tend to challenge the structural fabrics of Nigeria's nationhood and federation, just as the *Boko Haram* elements still remain focused on their violent strategy. Such groups as earlier mentioned include – AREWA from the North, Odua group (OPC) from the West, PANDEV from the Middle Belt, MEND from the South-South, IPOB and MASSOB from the East, including the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the Christian Association of Nigeria. The Shiite and the Miyetti Allah imbroglio are not left out.

Be that as it may, this study is fully anchored on Conflict Trap Theory. It is considered a functional apparatus *criticus* precisely because of its conceptional elasticity and heuristic coherence in the examination of a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon as ethno-religious challenges in a stereotyped colonially-contracted bottled cultural diversity, moreso in a tactile and tangled 21st century global developments. Exponents of the Conflict Trap Theory include Harvard Hegre, U.L. Flliot, P. Collier, Aikle Ikeffler,

Reginald-Queroluid and Nicholas Sambanis. They opine that once a conflict has erupted, it tends to develop a momentum of its own. Peace seemingly becomes elusive and hard to restore. Even when peace is restored, it often does not endure (Collier *et al.* 2003). Conflict Trap exponents ascribe the lengthy pattern of typical conflicts to a number of interlocking factors, most especially, they believe that conflicts in multi-ethnic societies endure as a valuable tool for massaging, rallying, mobilizing and galvanizing ethnic sentiments for both the warring groups and the government. Moving on, they still contend that where the population has significant grievances, conflict serves as an effective political strategy towards the pursuit of their goal, objectives and interests, though the seeming difficulty for those in authority and power to concede to the demands of the group may not always be assured, since such may encourage the flowering, proliferation, mushrooming and radicalization of other groups, which often have opposing objectives.

Again, a lengthy conflict is determined by the response of state institutions and apparatus, availability of fund for sustaining the conflict and accessibility of arms to the warring parties. When weak state institutions – security and legal departments prove incapable of deterring, apprehending, reforming or containing violators of the laws, belligerents tend to be emboldened and imperious, thereby widening and taking the conflict to the next level. A poignant referral to the lengthy pattern of conflict lies in the fact that such a conflict has occurred, a template is raised and established, hence

making it difficult to return to *status quo*. In buttressing this view, Collier *et al* observed thus:

Violence entrepreneurs, whether primarily political or primarily commercial may gain from conflict to such an extent that they cannot credibly be compensated sufficiently to accept peace. Those who see themselves as political leaders benefit from war because they can sustain their organization in hierarchical military style with power concentrated in their own hands (Collier et al, 2003:12).

When violence leaders already perceive their selfish economic loss and redundancy when peace is arranged and achieved consciously or otherwise, their tantrums and cooperation may actually negate real peace. The strategic importance of, and the ontological demands of inter-group relations to Nigeria's corporate existence and development *vis a vis* the sustained contemporary ethno-religious challenges and its wholesome implications to aspired nationhood can only be fully appreciated and evaluated with due recourse to underscoring and offering deep insight to the myriad of interlocking factors that sustain conflict. Conflict Trap Theory presupposes that once conflict has occurred, it lengthens and becomes challenging to restore peace on account of religious pluralism, proliferation of arms, existence of income disparities, weak state institution and the activities of criminal entrepreneurs. This tool, through its viable perspectives

would help this study to appreciate the sustained stereotyped ethno-religious challenges in Nigeria as either perfunctory, deficient, restrictive, illuminating or contemporary. In so doing, the implicit fallouts would apparently become bare.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE POLITICS OF ‘HIDE AND SEEK’

The greater challenge to the world community in this century is how to promote harmonious relations between peoples of disparate histories, languages and religions, who find themselves intertwined in a single state (Augustine, 2003).

Starting from the colonial period, Nigeria has not only been a bad brand in homogenous plurality, but an item of display in ethnic rivalries; mainly between the Hausa-Fulani in the North against the Yoruba in the West, and the Igbo in the East. These ethnic polarizations from the beginning led to the creation of political parties which inevitably were polarized along stereotyped culture lines, hence divisiveness got entrenched in the political geography of the country. Possessing one of the highest number of political parties in the world, Nigeria’s developmental economy is repulsively retrogressive even with an estimated national population of above a hundred and eighty million in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. One may not be wrong to say that from

on start, the contrapted effigy termed ‘Nigeria’ in 1914 had already started manifesting clear signs and symptoms of pathophysiological auto-rejection, even as it went through the political baptism of 1960 independence, onwards to the depredations of the ‘wild wild West’ in the western parts of Nigeria, the 1963 national census imbroglio, the emergent intractable corruption and nepotism, the January 15th 1966 *coup d’etat*, the penultimate Igbo pogrom, including the three years genocidal war against the Easterners of the 1960s. It may be recalled that Nigeria has along its course of history flirted with the Unitary System of governance, romanticized with the Parliamentary, while solemnizing with the Presidential system in its strides as a portent federation. Fully and odiously aware of its endemic problems and challenges, and ominously poised strategically towards entertaining and dislodging any potential proactive solution, the melodrama has been that of deceit and delay through the application of, and reliance on half measures.

Even before 1960, Nigeria’s faulty physiognomy did create and stir worrying questions from many elites in the country’s North and South, but the British amoral and vaulting machinations and interests cocooned it. Separatists demands and yearnings got reclined, readjusted and fixated, opting rather to meander out as pacification from above in the form of ‘state creation’. Undoubtedly, this policy would have helped the nation’s democratic setting, by lending voice to the minority culture groups, but was later hijacked by the powers that be. Towards dousing fulminating tensions, emanating

from perceived further political marginalisation, and geared towards maintaining Nigeria's stability, the following technocratic prescriptions were administered as remedies – Federal Character Principle, Quota System and Resource Derivation Policy, among others.

Dotted in the pages of pre-independence Nigerian history are the many 'separatist' musings and rantings, quelled and re-packaged as 'state creation movements and vanguards'. At the beginning of 1952, the following groups became vehemently occupied with this quest: Benin – Delta Peoples Party (BDPP), Calabar – Ogoja – Rivers Movement (COR), and by March 6th 1956, one Mallam Ibrahim Imam tabled a motion, requesting that the issue of the creation of Middle Belt State be officially considered on the floor of the Northern House of Assembly (Ekanade; 2015:158). In August, 1959, some Anioma Communities in the present day Delta and Edo States were carved out of the core Igbo heartland, despite protests from the Anioma traditional rulers then to the British Colonial authorities, while a large chunk of Ezza Community in the present Ebonyi State was allotted to the present day Benue State.

The frenzy and incipient apprehension such moves stirred amongst the populace greatly generated dangerous passionate feelings of marginalization and domination in most minority culture groups, hence the Colonial government set up the Willinks Commission to ascertain the feasibility and strength of such agitations. Apart from acclaiming certain levels of

credibility to these agitations by this Commission, coupled with the outright rejection of the Willink Commissions Boundary Adjustment Report by these agitators, it was observed that in the bizzare contests between the regions in the First Republic, politicians used ‘self-determination’ as a bait to attract minority voters away from the regional majority party (Peil; 1976:85). Since ‘rights’ drives the vehicle of justice, and since the issue of rights connote the unobstructed ability to choose or decide for oneself from a series of alternatives, chief amongst these rights just as the political discourse in the aftermath of the second World War put it, was the right of diverse people to **self-determination**. In Nigeria, issues of self-determination have been a perennial accoutrement of the country’s political architecture since the onset of the colonial state, hence in the immediate aftermath of the Amalgamation Act of 1914, a notable Northern nationalist, Ahmadu Bello, had insisted that;

Lord Lugard and his Amalgamation were far from popular among us at that time. There were agitations in favour of secession, we should set up on our own, we should cease to have anything more to do with the Southern people, we should take our own way. (Tamuno: 1970).

It has remained a proven fact that the sword of separation and self-determination have been brandished by the many minority groups in Nigeria early enough and by the bigger

ethnic nationalities – the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo, throughout the Colonial and immediate post-colonial era, (Dudley, 1982: 63; Ayoade, 1973:68; Suberu, 1999:391). The law of self-preservation spurs man to apply all his strength to abhor what will destroy him. This basic tendency towards securing life, its survival and flourishing are encapsulated in self-determination, and a tendency towards breaking away; an instinct of self-preservation, triggered by the fear of forces against human life.

Shortly after Nzeogwu's January 15th bloody coup, separatist demand assumed a militaristic, not an outright rebellious dimension. On February 23rd 1966 Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw former student of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and an indigene of the Niger Delta Area, hastened to arms against the Nigerian State on the account of the deprivation of the region. Boro sought for the outright secession of the Ijaw nation from the Nigerian body politic, charging his men to 'fight for your freedom' (Kalu; 2008:175). By the same token, taking into cognizance the litany of events that cascaded the country eventually into a bloody civil war, and the resultant Igbo attempt to actualize their right to self-determination, rather than heed to the plain need for proper solution, the Gowon regime clandestinely complicated the problems through a nefarious state creation exercise. Apart from the creation of the twelve states imbroglio while hostilities raged on between the Eastern Region and the Nigerian government, a deliberate designated partitioning programme was strategically embarked on even as the war ended, to remove the Igbo

advantage of posing as the highest oil producing region hence:- In 1976, Ahoada, Obigbo and Port Harcourt were ceded to Ijaw dominated Rivers State (Thus separating oil rich Obigbo in Aba division of old Imo State from their Ndoki and Azumini kith and kin); Olugbu an oil and gas rich Ndoki Community was ceded to Akwa Ibom State, the Egbema Community of old Imo State was balkanized into three parts, with the highest oil producing area ceded to Rivers State, whereas Ndoni who are kiths and kin to Ogbaru Community of Anambra State was carved out of Aboha, and ceded to Rivers State.

Just as the ghost of self-determination and separation have been held down from Nigeria's pre-independence period uptill the present twenty-first century, through the chess board of state creation and massive realignment of paternal affinities, the Quota System and Federal Character Principle became handy as veritable tools for domestic equity. This frenzy was fed by Northern fears, having been warned by the British 'not to lose the Federal Civil Service in its anxiety to Northernise its own Service', and afraid of Southern domination in an independent Nigeria (Albert, 1998). It may be recalled that in 1950, the North had at the Ibadan Constitutional Conference, through the Emir of Zaria, seconded by the Emir of Katsina raised the issue of equal representation for the North in the forthcoming central legislature, or in the alternative, the secession of the North (Osuntokun, 1979:101). Under the threat of Northern secession, the colonial government, the Eastern and Western

regions quickly capitulated to the Northern demands of parliamentary equality to the South, hence other areas soon fell, to the quota system, like in the army (Adekanye, 1998; Adejumobi, 2002), and in office distribution (Orji 2008; Osaghae 1989). By the turn of the seventies, quota was being used actively for admission into tertiary federal institutions (Mustapha, 2004:34). The overwhelming Southern despondency with the quota was without doubt, but it was bound to remain largely helpless in the face of an overwhelming Northern Political strength, homogeneity and determination to prevent Southern political hegemony over the 'Caliphate'. Despite its lack of motivation and spirit of competition in the sphere of national development, the military regime under Murtala Muhammed went on to garb and enshrine it into the Nigerian Constitution, under the guise of the Federal Character Principle.

Since the Federal Character Principle oscillates on the pedestal of equitable resource distribution and representation, and since such does not necessarily translate into operating from the national 'commanding height', overtime, same minority groups vehemently instituted a sustained agitation (passive and aggressive) towards re-addressing revenue distribution *vis a vis* resource derivation. In the unfolding eco-terrorism, many Niger Delta militants took up arms against the Federal Government and many lives and properties were lost. A *rapprochement* was adopted which not only allotted certain percentage to the source of the revenue, but granted a presidential amnesty and other

motivational engagements to the youths of the Niger Delta region (oil producing communities).

In discussing anything that has to refer to ethno-religious discrimination, marginalization, state creation movements, self-determination and separatist agitations in Nigeria, without prior and proper mention of the part played by the Igbo ethnic nationality, would simply be a 'high sounding nothing'. The dramatic events starting from the failed January 15th Nzeogwu Coup, the counter coup, the Igbo Pogrom in the North, the genocidal manifestations of the three years Nigeria/Biafra debacle, the post-war years of hardship and lack of inclusion, coupled with the painful unfolding game of marginalization and 'holding the Igboman down syndrome' in all fronts by the rest of the country, through a whole lot of discriminative organogram enshrined covertly into the Nigerian functional body politic, simply bear witness to the faulty federalism operating in Nigeria. Perhaps the most marginalized ethnic group in Nigeria, who have lost both identity, form and freedom may not be the Igbo, but the pure Hausa stock under the depredations of the marauding and subtle Fulani. Be that as it may, the many unfolding bizarre security challenges within the Nigerian nation in the contemporary twenty-first century have continued to query not only the supposed homogeneity of the Northern part of Nigeria as a viable political entity, but the puzzling doubts on the Nigeria project's ability to sail securely through the troubled waters of international politics.

Separatists and secessionist agitators have largely evolved, grown and solidified into portent destabilizing vanguards, as terrorists, extremist groups and passive/coercive pressure groups. The actions and continued activities of the dreaded *Boko Haram* Islamic sect in Nigeria's North East appears larger than life. Simply attacking and destroying lives and properties within the Nigerian enclave is not its mere ambition, but to establish and sustain an independent Islamic Caliphate, carved out of the country remains their mission and vision. One cannot equally lose sight of the prolonged and widespread depredations of the Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria. Its continued socio-economic implication on Nigeria's developmental gait remains deleterious. The immediate fallout of this Fulani Herdsmen imbroglio is the high rendition in the discordant ethno-religious tunes amongst the diverse primordial demarcations subsisting in the Nigerian environment, hence vehement reactions from the Plateau Peoples Development Association (PANDEV), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Igbo Umbrella Socio Cultural Organization (OHANEZE). Against this backdrop, one must call into focus the sustained reactionary campaign conducted by both the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and in particular that by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) bent on Biafran self-governance through a United Nations organized referendum.

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CHAPTER THREE

STRUCTURAL IMPLOSION

This study couldn't have come at a better period than now – a time of great distress and deep eclipse of hope and fraternal confidence in the body politic of Nigeria: the Presidency is subtly melancholic; the judiciary not just compromised, but steadily oozing out contradictory pronouncements and bench warrants that threaten the national redline; unimaginable level of youth unemployment and poverty in the land; the national economy and political terrain in a quagmire; the educational sector, visionless and missionless; the Nigerian citizens over-policed but under-secured. Several works have been done on the subject of identity crisis as a product of ethno-religious challenges in Nigeria, and some have expectedly generated development debates. Though the present scope revolves within the 21st century, a deleterious historical damage would be created if this study fails to situate the contemporary ethno-religious challenges in Nigeria as a bonafide product traceable back to the 20th century. Post-independence, the horrendous experience of negative politicking as portrayed by the actors of the first, second, third and fourth republics, shows that no political party can be exonerated from the awful political ineptitude inherent in the practice of politics in Nigeria. Regardless of the many catalytic reasons feeding the orgy of ethno-religious conflagrations, selfish elites and ethno-religious entrepreneurs easily stoke the sentimental

embers of ethnicity, religious schism, selective illusions and inferences largely lacking in balanced historical acuity to mobilize support and unleash mayhem on their perceived opponents. The twin problems of rigid identities and excessive religiosity remains a cancerous running sore in the survival gait of the Nigerian project, hence an observant analyst reacted thus:

A large proportion of able-bodied Nigerian youths are idle, unemployed, frustrated and aggrieved with the social system, and so remain willing and ready to be recruited and mobilized to engage in destructive and ethno-religious conflicts, because such offer them opportunity to break into public and private property and cart away whatever they can find (Imobighe, 2003).

Much of these problems trace back to the post-colonial Nigerian State which is neocolonial, hence not focused towards solving the domestic problems (socio-economic), and by implication not poignantly and eloquently poised to reconcile conflicting claims between and betwixt the peoples of Nigeria, having been silenced and hounded with a ‘political unity’ by colonialist Britain. Indeed, at the twilight of the 20th Century, the preponderance of intra and inter-ethnic squabbles and inter-religious conflicts seriously diminished the sanctity of the state in Nigeria. Succumbing to the weight of these centripetal and centrifugal forces, sequel to lack of autonomy, as its legitimacy withered, the State promoted and

intensified primordial dispositions in the contestations amongst co-habiting groups for scarce resources and commanding positions; wild spread disenchantment, and feeling of alienation and cynicism for the government in its policies grew. When primordial loyalties became the defining variables for belonging, social chaos and anarchy cascaded the country to the 1967-70 civil war, the ethno religious mayhems of the 1980s and 1990s. Disturbingly, the state has responded to its loss of legitimacy by fragmenting the country into more states and local government areas to appease rival groups (Falola, 1998: 50).

Nigeria is reputed to be the most crowded African country with a population of above 201 million, (World Population Prospects, 2019:21). The Demographic and Health Survey certify 53% as Christians, 45% Muslims and 2% as other religions. Similarly, as controversial as the following report could be, Afrobaro Pew forum declared 46% Christians, 52% Muslims and 1% for others in 2009 (Pew Research Center, 2010). Whatever the exact percentage are, it is clear that Nigeria is a country with very large Christian and Muslim population. This situation makes Nigeria a potential fault line between Christians and Muslims. In this sense, Nigeria can be defined as a ‘Cleft Country’ and then a ‘test case’ of Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations Thesis (Paden, 2006; Olojo, 2014:7).

It is noteworthy that, within the wide Christian and Muslim categories, there lie many sub-cleavages and denominations

potentially active politically as occasion demands. Among the Christians, potentially under – the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Pentecostal fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) and the Catholic Bishops Conference, salient intra-group disconnect remain. Amongst the Christian group are – Anglican 10%, Baptist 8%, Methodist 5%, Lutheran 5%, (Protestant) the Catholics 15%, the Pentecostal Churches 30%, and the Evangelical Church of West Africa 2%, Jehovah Witnesses 5%, Aladura, Cherubim and Seraphim, Celestial Church of Christ 20%. (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005:11). However, these figures may appear controversial to some people, but it is not the crux of this study. Among other issues, it should be noted that Protestant – Catholic cleavages have continued to play an important role in elections among the Igbo communities living in the South East of Nigeria (Osaghae and Suberu, 2005:11). This is not only stereotype in action, but a serious psychosocial challenge. It is disheartening to reflect on the high level of nepotic and sectional discrimination subsisting amongst the Igbo States in the Nigeria's South East blatantly brought to the fore by the antics of predominantly Imo and Ebonyi States.

Potent Muslim sub-cleavages in Nigeria include Ahmadiyya 12%, Sanusiyya 5%, Tijaniyya 3% and Quadiyya 8%. While the fundamental global historical polarity remains between the Iranian –backed Shiites, and the Saudi Arabian backed Sunni groups, one could helplessly observe a rising wave of new sentiments based on *waahabi* and *salaafi* ideologies *vis-à-vis* sectarianism, Islamic theocracy and extremism, have evoked dangerous *and* suicidal orthodoxy in the largely

Muslim North, at least promising to provide and console in eternity what the state has utterly denied them physically, hence the emergence of *Boko-Haram*, and allegiance of other groups to other international terror groups like the *Taliban*, *Al Qaeda*, *Al Shabab*, among others.

Beside the dominant Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups, more than 250 smaller ethnic or culture groups exist in Nigeria. These populations operate under the religious identity of Christianity, Islam and traditional religions. Underlying the North-South cleavage in Nigeria is the problem of the inter and intra ethnic and religious divide and suspicion. This is obviously the problem of identity, and the manifest dimension since the beginning of the 21st century appears challenging to certain designated textbook analysis, hence Rothberg's Nigerian stable identities and identity formation treatise (Rothberg 2002: 88) may have to be re-examined. Nowadays, in such conflicts occurring along the convergence of ethno-religious lines, 'it's rather often very difficult to tell the differences between religious and ethnic crises, because the dividing line between them is slimmer than thin'. (Osaghae and Suberu 2005: 19; Enuhora 2005: 633). Ethnicity and religiosity have emerged as the most basic and politically 'salient' identities in Nigeria. Though both cleavages may sometime run parallel, religion remain deified and as an amplifier for mobilization, may be relevantly handy.

SOME CASES OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

April 14th, 2000	Nassarawa-Agyaragu Crisis	Over 150 persons killed, properties worth millions destroyed
May 2000	Kaduna Sharia roits (Muslims and Chrsitains)	Over 1,500 persons killed, properties worth millions lost
October 2000	Lagos –Kano (Idi Araba/OkO-Oba	Over 1000 persons killed, many properties destroyed
June 28th, 2001	Azara Crisis	Over 80 persons killed
June 2001	Zaki-Biam	Many people killed
September, 2001	Plateau (Tiv –Jukun)	1,180 people killed
October, 29th 2001	Plateau (Tiv –Jukun)	79 people killed, many properties destroyed
June 1st, 2002	Yelwan-Shandan	84 people killed
May 2002	Kaduna (Christians/Muslims)	Over 200 killed
Nov. 2002	Kaduna (Christians/Muslims)	Over 600 killed
June 2004	Numan Crisis	17 persons killed, worship centres destroyed
May 2004	Yelwan-Shandan	48 people murdered via church
May 12, 2004	Kano mayhem	Uncountable people killed, many Churches burnt
May 2005	Sokoto (Shia-Sunni Muslims)	Many people killed

Source: *Author's records from Newspaper low-case reports *Those committed by Boko Haram, Zamfara and Kaduna Bandits and Fulani Herdsmen terrorists which still remain a novel case, and still on-going are not included in this chart.*

Recurrent features of traditional, regional and state illegitimacy have continued to breed hardship, poverty and social disharmony in the country, hence manifest as rancorous war of words and high intensity contestations. The on-going *Boko Haram* atrocities and mayhem, including the novel

Fulani herdsmen asymmetric onslaught has turned and relegated the 1966 Igbo pogrom and the subsequent three years genocidal civil war (ethno-religious crisis) as a fore play.

Having considered and weighed the myriads of challenges emergent from Nigeria's ethno-religious crisis, this study situates that the problem is not merely the unfolding of Anderson's inevitable character of heterogeneous nation-states, but the problem of deliberate infusion of manipulative Caliphate colonialism, stringently and strategically employed to sustain British imperialist intentions, far from the developmental demands of 21st century Nigeria. The unemployed, young and vibrant in the North today appear to prefer the option to poverty by taking to kidnapping, drug abuse, ransom-taking, raping and banditry.

The many continued horrifying ethno-religious carnages appear to have negatively affected the psyche of majority of the citizens; hence they are largely politically disenchanting, apathetic and cumulatively unpatriotic to state affairs. Driven by the atmosphere of rancor, ethno-religious discrimination, impunity, corruption and injustice, violence remains a recurrent resort since intolerance presents as a preferable option. This is simply a drag on proper democratic ethos and practices, most especially when law and order remain elusive. The citizen may not only see democracy as irrelevant (Wada, 2001: 62), because of the system operators' inability to safeguard their lives and properties, but equally when it

becomes obvious that the leadership is out-rightly manipulating primordial loyalties -ethnicity, region, religion and personalities in order to keep the opposition divided and divert attention from its own failing (Ihonvbere, 1994: 48).

Ethno-religious discrimination is basically a social problem, and it is alarming and disheartening to observe that a high degree of discrimination is exercised against one another in Nigeria today. This disposition is evident in all spheres of life-politics, sports, education, economic, including other social endeavors. Dominant feelings and roles engage the dominant three ethnic groups [Igbo, Hausa-Fulani and Yoruba] on the national stage, moving with this experience amongst the smaller groups in the states and regions, currently deepening in aggression, identity-recluse and discrimination. Discriminatory influences have seriously pervaded the psyche and behavior of Nigerians that organizations, institutions, the civil service, including appointment into positions in governance have all lost the natural technique of honoring meritocracy and value. Just as fair competition is relegated to the background, incompetency is harvested abundantly through low national productivity, inefficiency, poor performance in academic field, international sports and governance; hence the call for national integration remains a mirage. It is heart-rending to observe the extreme level of ethno-religious discriminatory practices openly practiced in the admission of students into higher institutions, Army/Police, Prisons, Immigration and the Federal Road Safety recruitment sessions. When

mediocrity receives accolades, natural motivation for proper useful engagement and mindset dulls. Besides, such incidents and developments create and leave in its trail bizarre experiences in the minds of Nigerian youths, with a tendency for uncontrolled anger and reprisals. The perturbing question would be, how far would this emergent Nigerian populace go with these negative experiences and stereotypes in the cause of nation-building?

On a daily basis, it is disheartening indeed to observe the way and manner the violence quotient of Nigerians, especially those in the far North is rapidly growing. Apart from the wanton destruction of lives and properties and incalculable harm to the socio-economic and political life of the country, disregard for the value of life is fashionably fanning the embers of ethno-religious intolerance. Issues and problems which would have easily been handled and orderly resolved through legal adjudication and redress are rather impulsively and hastily handled through biased mob-mentality and ethno-religious sentiments. Today, in Nigeria, fear, anxiety, suspicion and curiosity remain widespread, most especially from the Middle belt up the core Northern enclave. The global information highway though quite informing, is not helping matters. Target news, target audience and media trial leaves no time for verification and confirmation; so long as such information is in tandem with subsisting sentiments and ethno religious stereotypes, reprisals remain justified and automatic.

Subsequently, this has affected adversely labor and employment migration; hence while some core Northern states remain in dire need of qualified and enabling non-Northerners in the Civil Service, the Southern states ever remain congested and over-supplied. On the other hand, migrant workers from the core Muslim North who traverse the South, including the ravaging Fulani herdsmen, stealthily move in columns, calculating and digesting every step.

Consider the existing scenario prevalent in the country at this stage, when the Nigerian army remain actively involved in the assistance and provision of domestic security in every state of the federation, rather than remain resolutely committed to defending the nation against external threat. This is so because the Police and other sister security agencies either appear to be overwhelmed or are deeply compromised, resulting in gross incompetence or deliberate in- action, hence aiding violence and terror. Moreover, the army in most places and at various occasions has been accused of high handedness and ultimate disregard for laid down rules of engagement, human rights violations and the erroneous application of force multipliers. Nigeria has apparently inherited the social problems of internally displaced persons, accompanied by its attendant psychosocial maladies and gender-related challenges. The complexities generally manifesting and massaging ethno-religious atrocities and challenges in 21st century Nigeria appear not only overwhelming, but beyond objective expectation.

Constructive demands and agitations remain corporate and important part of internationally acceptable democratic etiquette, but not in Nigeria. Over the years, consistent and persistent complaints of ethnic discrimination, political marginalization and lack of political inclusiveness have coalesced into the adoption and use of the word restructuring, as a somewhat veritable panacea for equitable sustenance and management of the endemic Nigerian complexities. To maintain clarity while addressing the implications of these agitations in the developmental economy of twenty-first century Nigeria, this study opts to first evaluate the dictates of International Law on the issue of the procedural steps undertaken by a political entity towards obtaining the status of self-determination from an existing mother entity or sovereignty. It is only when this is done, could it be realistic to properly evaluate the restructuring option in the same political entity, as a sort of equitable *rapprochement* for fairness, understanding and trust.

The right to self-determination, secession and separation are different things and as an ongoing right of all peoples, are not strictly confined to colonial peoples. In the non-colonial context self-determination is an entitlement to democracy and the right of participation in democratic process. Self-determination under international law classifies different ethnicities in their territories within the population of states as constituting minorities (Mullerson, 1994:91). Furthermore, since ethnicities do not live in isolation, in clear-cut units or territories, ethnically-based claims and agitations for

autonomy practically always conflict with those of others and interests. Issues of separation and self-determination, as in many politically sensitive entities in world affairs present varying political, humanitarian, economic and contextual complexities that defy definite set of rules for every particular situation regardless of the backing of international law to the demands of self-determination in separation. The underlying factor is whether separation or unification would best promote security and facilitate effective shaping and sharing of power and of all other values for most people, hence a proper balance between freedom of choice and the viability of countries must be maintained. The right to secession is simply out of question here, because it is similar to the 'right to revolution'. In the case of gross violation of human rights by a state, the population may overthrow the government and liberate itself from tyranny; while in the case of gross violation of minority rights, (as obtained during the Igbo Pogrom), the minority may either overthrow the government or secede from the oppressive regime. It must be noted that in both cases, (and they usually go hand in hand as democratic states would hardly grossly violate the rights of minorities), such a state is in flagrant violation of international law, and the world community has the right to intervene (through economic sanctions, humanitarian interventions, among others), and in the case of utter violation of minority rights, such interference may consist *interalia*, in the recognition by the world community of the right of the oppressed minority to secession (Mullerson, 1994:91). The stipulations of the Nigerian Constitution on this matter remain obvious, and

since Nigeria has domesticated, ratified and signed the **African Charter** through the official engagement of the National Assembly, by implication, all its citizens are liable to enjoy the provided fundamental rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Be that as it may, by all intents and purposes, restructuring depending on which ever angle one decides to approach it, could be seen in the perspective of a change, though it could be soft, hybrid or hard restructuring. Restructuring *vis a vis* content and nature in the perspective under study, would classify soft restructuring as tinkering with certain amendments of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution; while hybrid would entail negotiating a new Constitution with sufficient regional autonomy within the federation; and hard restructuring grants outright confederation or independence for any desiring part of the country (Soludo; 2018:2). Cognisance of the overriding momentum noticeable in Nigeria presently, there seems to be a preponderance of main stream opinion around the hybrid option centred on the political and ethno-religious agitations and disturbances. This study is at peace with this view, considering the level of Nigeria's decay and degeneration as a sovereign entity, evidenced by a plethora of ill-inept leadership and civil service, salary arrears, exchange rate collapse, inflation, output stagnation, import dependency, soaring poverty and unemployment, institutionalized insecurity in all spheres, among others.

Unequivocally, the Nigerian Constitution has proved to be an inappropriate trajectory for a prospective developing democracy right from independence. Sequel to its pathophysiological deficiencies, even as peripheral efforts were made one time or the other to reform, reinvent and re-energise it with a better and clearer focus proved abortive, Nigerian developmental economy remains held down by its extremely weak institutions. Since the economic realm of any sovereignty cannot progress in isolation from that of the political, and coupled with the fact that one cannot give what one lacks, it's not absurd why the Nigerian nation has continued to regress. Political governance, property rights, rule of law, speedy and fair dispensation of justice, fiscal structure management and distributional arrangements for investment and entrepreneurship, over-policed but under-secured citizenry among others – the management of all these remain within the ambit of strong and powerful institutions as sustainable base of democratic checks and balances. In driving home this point most especially on the part of economic development, Acemoglu and Robinson in their seminal paper tersely stated thus:

...we argue that the main determinant of differences in prosperity across countries are differences in economic institutions. To solve the problem of development will entail reforming these institutions. Unfortunately, this is difficult, because economic institutions of a society depend on the nature of political institutions and

the distribution of political power in society. As yet, we only have a highly preliminary understanding of the factors that lead a society into a political equilibrium which supports good economic institutions.... Nevertheless, some countries do undergo political transitions, reform their institutions, and move onto more successful paths of economic development. We also can learn a lot from these success stories.... Making or imposing specific institutional reforms may have little impact on the general structure of economic institutions or performance if they leave untouched the underlying political equilibrium.... A piecemeal approach may be dangerous (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012:7).

It is fundamental at this juncture to remember that context and history matter, just as the building of progressive institutions is a continuum, consequently, issues concerning the economic development of Nigeria can never be a cut and paste affair. A good institution unleashes and maximizes the creative energies of the citizenry for the promotion of the highest possible security, prosperity and happiness of the populace. Just as no universal template exists through which political and economic institutions are synchronized, suffice it to state that each entity must be spurred to galvanize and spurt through its peculiar channel of uniqueness (past experience and agreed formula). The global economy is already in the

fourth Industrial Revolution or digital age, dominated by Robotics, Artificial intelligence, machine learning, virtual reality, augmented reality among others, hence an economy basically oscillating on most aspects of the old economy can only stagnate. The annals of Nigeria's governance are filled with wonderful and insightful politico-economic blueprints brandished here and there, but never implemented, hence the problem is apparently beyond mere theory. When the leadership and a nation's civil service are streamlined by the dictates of primordialism and stereotyped quota system, 'when oil revenue accounts for more than 90 percent of Nigeria's export and foreign exchange earnings and more than 65 percent of government revenue' (Soludo; 2018:4), when at above 58 years and in the 21st century, Nigeria continues to subsist on oil dependant/entitlement mind-set (oil structural disease), in a country where the clamour for and creation of new states and local governments have turned to a patronage and political tool for elite buyout and political balancing allowing indolent loafers to make it with effortless ease thereby discouraging hardwork and competition; when 'the national rentier system is fashioned in such a way that leaders are not people with best ideas and talents, the component states rather than unleash their creative abilities through competition in a synergistic boom, (Soludo, 2018:6) (leading to more than 30 states governments finding it incapable of paying salaries without allocation from Abuja), poverty continues to grow in the land, supported by unbelievable unemployment, population thrust and

disenchantment. By the latest United Nations data, Nigeria's population is now 201 million.

These have continued to support heightened survival challenges and affected criminality, social misdemeanors and insecurity, including Nigeria's low life expectancy. Once a large number of a given population remains immersed in such malady, violence quotient increases, coupled with political agitations for redress, restructuring and self-determination, moreso, when the Federal government through several notable incidents has continued to maintain complicity in compromising one ethnic nationality over another. This creates and nurture discordant tunes in Nigeria's body politic, especially considering the country's diverse inclinations. Unfolding developments continue to challenge domestic food security sequel to both the *Boko Haram* atrocities in Nigeria's North East, the Zamfara banditry saga, and the widespread Fulani Herdsmen and farmer's attritious clashes, the Shiites imbrigliio, the Kaduna and Jos recurrent mayhem. From insurgency to terrorism and onwards to banditry – what next? In the same vein, from inflation to recession, onto depression – what next? Where lies the attraction and motivation for the foreign investor to be spurred in engaging his capital and resources in a country lacking even the basic requirements for proper economic investment – Electricity, balanced transport system, security, infrastructural development, among others. Rather than spend quality time thinking about innovative ways to attract and sustain productive activities, the Nigerian leadership is simply concerned with the monthly Federal

Accounts allocations. Through clandestine state operations, specific enterprising indigenous entrepreneurs are discouraged and frustrated, merely due to their ethno-religious alignments. Today it is Ibeto and Innoson Groups!!

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CHAPTER FOUR

STRUCTURAL IMPLOSION

The story of, and the unfolding scenario with regards to Nigeria's institutional dysfunction and incipient circular stagnation has continued to be enigmatic, considering its population advantage, (manpower and consumer strength), abundant material and mineral resources. The naked truth in this 21st century is that:

Every penny of capital spending by the Federal Government of Nigeria is borrowed and its fiscal position is precarious. Put starkly, not one kobo of oil money is invested in infrastructure by the FGN, it is all consumed by the obtuse Federal bureaucracy (Soludo; 2018:8).

Since the current system tilts the balance in favour of distribution and consumption, thereby creating a near permanent dependency on the life support of the oil rents, it is simply an anachronistic economic adventure. If after more than twenty-six years of existence, more than 30 states (Federating units) cannot meet even their minimal running costs without the handout from the Federation Account, then one could conclude that the existing structure may no longer

be in tandem with the time sequence. Everything in life remains exposed to change, and such change can either be peaceful or violent, depending on both human factors and natural phenomena. Beyond mass mobilizations for change, restructuring and self-determination, lies the articulate realities of the looming national catachilism that lies ahead of Nigeria, a hopelessness and a daily growing frustrated majority whose candour is fast exhausting. Nigerian politico-economic edifice is webbed in incompetence and lack of fairness, and this study remains deeply convinced that both anomalies drives corruption against democracy and development. When the terrain is bedeviled and bequeathed with underdevelopment, dictated by the dysfunctional values of corruption, nepotism and wholesome impunity, a tangible dialectical platform emerge, engaged with promoting the wrong principles of governance under Nigerian democracy. This is simply a painful façade to federating principles, devolution of powers, fiscal federalism, private-sector participation and equitable representation. It is painful that Nigerian politicians have formed a habit of taking the advantage of the ethno religious chasm existing in the county, to selfishly enrich themselves.

When Rule of law, Freedom of the press and association, the operational modicum of the domestic security operatives, and the rules of engagement guiding military operations (which remain encapsulated in basic United Nations guidelines on the ruses of war), are discarded and trampled on by the government of a Third World democratic experiment like

Nigeria, where then lies the hope of the ordinary citizenry towards obtaining desired attention. One is apt to pause and wonder what the reactions of many Nigerians would be in a situation where the dreaded *Boko Haram* activities in Nigeria's North East appears reclined into insignificance in comparison with the atrocities of the Fulani Herdsmen throughout the country; one may equally want to know what the outcome would be when some respected, revered and retired army generals and national elders descend into the dangerous frustrated rhetorics of encouraging and urging their ethnic alignments to take up arms and defend themselves, since the Nigerian government has been found wanting and compromised. Frustrated and in a quagmire, some Nigerians have taken recourse and solace through diverse ethno-religious cleavages demanding for national restructuring and even separation from the Nigerian entity. On daily basis, Nigerians are butchered through the Zamfara and Kaduna terror infernos. Kidnapping, raping and ransom payments are now part of the national value system.

Unfortunately, 21st century Nigeria has inherited a terrible and unimaginable all-round structured failure system that could be identified in these spheres – Economy, Politics, Governance and social sectors. The danger of Nigeria's patented stereotype lies in the fact that – it is still firmly attached to the apron strings of Britain, its former colonial master after more than half a century of independence. The nation still oscillates solely on an import-dependent economy, and a mono export of oil, which all started since the 1960s. With a blind eye on

the trending global haze of diversification; the country continues to creak and sob under a primordial monolithic conservative political system which is totally allergic to proactive dynamic change, rather opting towards maintaining an encumbered preference of driving contemporary Nigeria with the dictates of the beleaguered and anachronistic Caliphate mentality of the old. How can one explain the fact that a nation which could boast of having a great bunch of the best of technocratic heads and policy experts in statecraft continues to take preference in wallowing in the recycling of designated past political and military ‘rulers’ whose grey matter negates modernity in developmental nationhood. The consistency of incomprehensive planning and implementation has continued to remain a national mirage, leaving on its trail an economy which could be best described as a Pandora’s box, full of many paradoxes.

Lack of dynamism, coordination and the enticement of globally accepted principles and best practices in both the domestic and external transactions have continued to marginalize the country’s development. Successive governments have cumulatively made Nigeria a bad brand – prolonged economic brutality sustained by a moribund energy sector operating behind civilization; inequality in wealth distribution, political emasculation and nepotism, indiscriminate human rights violation; a penal and judicial process that has allowed its ‘rule of law’ pathology to be overtaken by the impunity of political leaders. These condenses, impoverishes and marginalises the life span of

many Nigerians, giving a voice to eco-terrorism in the nation's Niger Delta areas, including the many separatist and restructuralist agitations within the country. In desperation, anguish and pain, many Nigerians, especially the youths in their hopelessness continue to flee the country at the slightest opportunity, while some handful resort to an easier escape of the rot that is Nigeria, through classical suicide. Nigeria is an economic power house, whose strength lies in its diverse people and variegated natural endowments (Ezeonwuka, 2014:70). Profligate and inept leadership have post-independence continued to spread poverty and pain; fenced and protected by stereotyped ethno-religious sentiments feeding fat from the populous ignorant indoctrinated 'talakawa' ever-ready to kill and burn perceived infidels as a shortcut road to martyrdom and blissful paradise. The Nigerian quagmire is not only an invitation for, but a hatchery for insecurity and extremism. Nigeria is under siege from fraud, stemming from the higher to the lower places. It has almost become a bi-monthly routine, raising alarm over missing or looted funds from the state coffers. What of over invoicing in collaboration with multinationals; foraging through that of the notorious fuel subsidy issue would reveal a 'cesspit of smelling darkness'. The challenges in Nigeria's oil sector have continued to draw a battle line with deliberate acceptance of and recourse to viable options – or else how could one explain the issue of the continued lack of local participation, policy inconsistency, the delay in the passage and signing of the Petroleum Industry Bill, international market shift and poor financing.

Nigeria is at war with itself. For an economy that often goes with the paucity of an annual spending plan, retrospective implementation could even be more damaging when statistical fiscal plans are uncertain. Consider the political malfeasance evidenced in the yearly long-drawn budget battle between the Executive and the Legislature over inflated or deflated budget, including high recurrent expenditure over that of capital. Against this backdrop, one time speaker, Nigeria's House of Representatives tersely confirmed that 'Budget implementation is the sole point of governance in Nigeria' (Tambuwal, 2013); the nation has continued to groan, and its throes are as a result of home-grown enemy leadership.

Nigeria's health and educational sectors still remain not only archaic, but a drag on national development. Historically, no nation is known to have progressed and developed with lackadaisical approach to national health policies and practice. Nigeria can never get it right checkmating the increasing and debilitating medical tourism on its national economy, if the foundational and operational challenges of its primary healthcare is not interrogated and improved on. The country continues to grapple with the lack of realistic statistical data that maybe fluke-proof, since helpful surveys, and even death and birth recordings, including the national census-project figures are often manipulated to massage ethno-religious sentiments. Moreover, purposefully avoiding and expunging History from the national educational curriculum persisted as an ethno-religious selfish intent

myopically implemented without due consideration of the cumulative national underdevelopment outcome. Any nation that is afraid of, or wary of its past at any given time, and goes forward to erase it, deserves sympathy and ultimate re-awakening. History must continue to interrogate the many loose ends and bizarre condiments, of Nigeria's chequered past. Who actually were the signatories of the 1914 amalgamation pact? Who were the main actors of the 1966 *coup d'etat*? What actually led to the Nigeria/Biafra War? Was there genocide against the Igbo? How was the war prosecuted, including the war's aftermath: Is Nigeria truly a federation? Who authored the 1999 constitution? Why is Lagos the only functional seaport in Nigeria; at the detriment of Calabar, Port Harcourt and Warri Seaports? Why has Akanu Ibiam International Airport for more than 8 years since its status was lifted from local to International, continued to be marginalized in such a way that only Ethiopian Airlines have stubbornly stuck to sustaining its services there amongst other international airlines, regardless of the incriminating federal government imposed taxation on it? When sectionalism and ethnicity remains the compass of the government in power at the center, in a supposed federal structure, fairness would always remain a far cry, while conspiracy would ultimately remain the manifest destiny of the favored in Nigeria. Otherwise how could one ever expect a proper positive solution to the perennial Lagos Port congestion, whereas the government policy of not re-opening the viable alternatives of Port Harcourt, Warri and Calabar Ports is deliberately meant to marginalize the Igbo interest.

Apapa gridlock must then remain a recalcitrant national embarrassment.

Considered, viewed and weighed from another perspective, this study situates that stereotyped Nigeria is not merely suffering from the unfolding scenario of Anderson's inevitable character of heterogeneous nation-states as has earlier been noted, but the problem of deliberate infusion of manipulative 'Caliphate Colonialism', stringently and strategically employed (oozing out from London's chatam House) to sustain British imperialist weblink, moreso with the challenging emergent consequences of Brexit *vis a vis* the European Union.

It is a pity that conflict has permeated into the Nigerian land space as a result of ethnicity, ethnocentrism, primordialism and stereotyping, hence punctuating seriously the country's drive towards achieving democracy; attaining a high level of neutrality in its polity, and at the same time a fluctuation in her development. Beginning from the colonial period, Nigeria has been an item of display in ethnic rivalries; mainly between the Hausa-Fulani in the North against the Yoruba in the West, and the Igbo in the East. These ethnic discriminations have led to the creation of political parties which inevitably was dominated by one ethnic group. Just as political parties got polarized along stereotyped culture lines, divisiveness got entrenched in the country.

To understand the psycho- political implications of ethnicity in Nigeria's political and national development, a brief

background of the history of Nigerian politics is required. Political party as we know it today surfaced in the 18th century, but slowly and with time gathered pace with the electoral reforms in England in 1832 (Lapalombara and Weiner; 1972:71). The major aim of a political party is to gain access to political power. It is an organization in which its members share similar ideologies. The present political parties in some parts of the world today are characterized by inept leadership and present platforms for anarchy, with the aid of ardent adherence to ethnicity as a tool of state craft and ethnic mobilization towards the attainment of state power. Theories pertaining the origin of political parties include; the Historical Situation Memories, which insists that the systems may have encountered some certain issues during its development; the Institutional Meeting, which focuses on the inter relationship between early parliaments and the rise of political parties; and finally the development that links the parties to modernization (Ojo, 2000:65). The birth of political parties in Africa nay Nigeria began with congresses or organizations that were concerned with fighting for the rights and liberation of the African in all British colonies. The Peoples Union (PU) for instance was formed by Obasa and Randle, with the basic aim of protesting against the increase of water rates, and other costs of living (Olusanya, 2004:553). There was also an Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) involving some important personalities like: Bishop James Johnson and J.P Jackson (Olusanya. 2004:553).

A major party during this period (after the amalgamation of 1914) was the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), founded in 1918 by Joseph Casely Hayford and Savage Akinwade. They agitated for a constitutional reform in the Anglo-West-African territories in other to gun for African representation in the legislative council, (Oliver and Fage, 1962:240). These early political parties laid a foothold of inspiration to men like Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ernest Ikoli among others, who were equally inspired by Marcus Garvey.

In 1922, the Clifford Constitution was officially adapted in Nigeria, making Nigeria to be the first country to have elective principle in West Africa (Olusanya; 2004:519). Election into the Nigerian legislative council was based on voting franchise which was extended only to Lagos and Calabar (Ojo, 2006:65). Prior to the events that took place, in 1916 the Nigerian council was set up to legislate the whole country. The 1922 legislative council nearly returned the country to its *status quo*. Isolated politically, the North was, removed from whatever influence which shaped the political attitude of southern politicians (Dudley. 1982:18). With time, under these colonial ideological actions, the North grew “more conservative, suspicious, and resistant to western ways of life, education, as well as other forms of universalistic religions”, ‘thus the British were responsible for the South/North dichotomy that led to different modernization (Otite, 1990:96).

Subsequently, the development of modern political parties in Nigeria, began in the early 1920s, with the formation of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) in 1923 to counter the elective principle of Clifford's Constitution of 1922. In 1934, the reign of NNDP was brought to an end by the National Youth Movement (NYM) that metamorphosed from the Lagos Youth Movement (LYM), and managed by young intellectuals who were vibrant. The establishment of the NYM, marked the beginning of the second generation of political parties (Ujo 2000). It paved way for the formation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in August 1924. The groups included tribal unions, social and literary clubs, Professional associations (Turdooff, 1984:63; Olusanya, 2004: 560). Prior to the breakup of the Cameroon's in 1959, it was renamed to National Council of Nigerian Citizens (Olusanya, 2004).

There, the first stage of divisiveness began; NNDP joined but the NYM refused as a result of the political quarrel (Ujo, 2000). No one suspected that the withdrawal marked the sowing of the first seed of ethnicity which had been consecrated and sown in Nigerian politics. Olusanya (2004) posits that this withdrawal provided lots of thought to other ethnic groups, who saw it as a plot by the Igbo to continually dominate the politics and affairs of the country.

However, this helped create more regionalism in the NCNC, more so through the actions of the Action Group Party. (Olusanya, 2004). The Action Group (AG) emerged from the

political wing of the cultural association of Yoruba elites, the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*. The NCNC was seen as the Igbo Union, while the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) was founded by the Fulani aristocracy, whereby the smaller ethnic groups relied on the local political parties for their voice to be heard. More significantly, the division of the country into three regions for administrative convenience by the Richard's Constitution of 1946 led to the development of strong regional feelings. The consequence of this was such that by 1953, the major political parties in Nigeria-NCNC, AG and NPC were associated with the major ethnic groups and the three regions; Western, Eastern and the Northern regions. To further reveal the tripartite ethnic stereotyped and primordial cleavages the party leaders were viz; the Sarduana of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello led the NPC of the North: Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe led the Igbo NCNC, while Chief Obafemi Awolowo led the AG Yoruba West, each representing the polarised ethnic groups. Thus, "while the AG and the NPC were born with ethno-regionalist philosophy, the NCNC moved from its initial nationalist ideological position to full ethno-regionalist stance" (Orji 2009:22).

The Action Group (AG), became a political party dedicated solely to Yoruba nationalism. According to Awolowo; the Action Group (AG) had been formed primarily to meet the political needs of the Yoruba's first, before attending to the rest of the country (Olusanya, 2004: 566). "Thus, the AG became the first party of Nigerian nationalism to be inspired by, founded on and nourished by ethnicity. For the first time,

a nationalist group desirous of wresting power from the colonialists, associated itself with the destiny of one ethnic group, considering itself to be merely the political wing of an ethnic group's cultural association (Nnoli; 1995:67). Awolowo considered that the performance of the Yoruba at the Regional and General Conferences towards reviewing the Richards' Constitution had shown that they were unorganized and lacked a concerted programme and effective leadership. The primary function of the AG was, therefore to provide that much needed leadership (Anifowose; 1982:176). The AG on the other hand was able to fully develop all manners of extremist ethnic tool; such as its call for political vigilance in the West so that region would not be excluded in the post-colonial scheme of things (Nnoli; 1995:67).

To worsen matters; in December 1949 at one Igbo state conference, Dr. Azikiwe debased his status forever when he openly declared that

“...it would appear that the God of Africa has specifically added the Igbo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of ages. The marital prowess of the Igbo nation at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the role of preserver. The Igbo nation cannot shirk from its responsibility”. (Coleman; 1958:347)”

Though many of Azikiwe supporters and friends believe that he wasn't a conscious tribalist, "yet his objectives, ambition and motives acted contrarily to his nationalistic inclination (Coleman; 1958: 343). Meanwhile with the advent of the Richards Constitution which was a token to the political life in the North, things however began to change. In the 1920s, with the appearance of such perceived challenge, many people became drawn from all parts of North with the slogan of "one north, one people, and one destiny". Irrespective of religion, rank and tribe, the NPC was formed for Northerners and by Northerners to fulfill objectives and aim limited to the North (Nnoli 1995:67). "The NPC was formed to ensure that the inevitable movement for self-government in the North would be led by moderate northerners rather than radical southerners, who were feared by the traditional and educated elites of the North as a potentially oppressive alien power (Anifowose, 1982:47). With all these settings, it was obvious that the politicization of ethnicity, which had been proved with the appearance of ethnic parties and the regionalization of politics, was given a firm tooting with the promulgation of the Macpherson Constitution. By 1953, the three major political parties of the main major ethnic groups were entrenched in the once principal geographical regions of the country, (Nnoli, 1995:69) and the alignments that would characterize Nigerian politics after independence had already solidified North against the South, East against West, and the minority groups in each region against their respective dominant communities. These splits shaped the history of modern Nigeria. (Rabushka and Sheple, 1972:192).The

regionalists in the three major ethnic groups, Yoruba, Igbo and the Hausa had successfully created the impression that they were champions of the people and carefully linked the struggles and travails of their respective parties to the ambitions and future of their ethnic groups (Nnoli, 1995:84) Consequently, the first competitive elections among these ethnic group made it clear that it was an ethnic game of “Win Win” or “loose-loose”. The First Republic was characterized by series of ethnic rivalries. Uwazurike in summarizing the first republic noted that

“...the Nigerian pattern of party politics has exhibited virtually the worst terms of an unstable democracy; most parties were narrowly based, tied to some “great and unassailable” leader who tended to stamp the organization not with any grand ideological vision but his personal biases. Besides, each was ethnically based, mass mobilizing, and confrontational in orientation” (Uwazurike 1990:65).

In the Second Republic, the legislation in the 1979 elections, gave room for only five parties which were accredited by the Federal Electoral Commission. (FEDECO): NPN, NPP, GNPP, UPN and PRP (Oyediran, 1981), and all these parties had ethnic configurations (Joseph, 1981:17). The NPN had its followers majorly from the Hausa-Fulani, the NPP constituted of the Igbo, the UPN that of the Yoruba while the PRP and

the GNPP were offshoot of the radical NEPU with a base in Kano state, and among the Kanuri ethnic group (Joseph, 1978:92,93:Otite, 1990:97). After the untimely end of the Second Republic, attributable more to corruption than ethnic rivalry, the federal military government saw it necessary to aid, through the National Political Bureau to collate the views of Nigerians on the political fixture of the country. Meanwhile, some prominent Nigerians had advocated the urgent adoption of zoning as a panacea to ethnic rivalry (Suberu, 1996).

The Third Republic which was punctuated by series of military rules saw a Constitution that was drafted in 1989 by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB), the military Head of State, who promised to end military rule in 1990. It was in this period that the National Republican Convention (NRC) and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), came on board, as an intriguing part of the ‘evil genius’ miasma towards selfish political perpetuity and camouflage.

The advent of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which can be traced to a civil society organization (NADECO), germinated in late 1997 with the aim of enlightening the citizens about their rights. Unfortunately, the PDP equally got polarized and became unfocussed. This separation and in-harmony however led to the emergence of a single authority that produced Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as the President (The unwholesome product of a Yoruba/Hausa Fulani arrangement

doctored by the American CIA, as pacification for the intriguing demise of both General Abacha and Chief Abiola).

Starting from 1999 (Fourth Republic), the political parties include: the Peoples Democratic Party, which zoned the Senate Presidency to the South East, the post of Speaker of House of Representatives to the North-West, the Deputy Senate Presidency to the North-East and the post of Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives to the South-south. The AD chose Obasanjo instead of Olu Falae, despite his apparent incompetence, and extravagant lifestyle. His ethnicity was the advantage he had- “Yoruba man” (Tell, August, 12, 2002). Bola Tinubu, the Governor in Lagos and member of the AD, promised to give 5 million votes to the PDP to aid him in the election (Tell, Jan, 20, 2003). Ultimately, the People’s Democratic Party zoned the presidency to the South and this thereby led to a fight between the two southern rivals – Alex Ekwueme and Olusegun Obasanjo, and at the same time, two northern. “Outsiders” (Tell, Jan. 13 2003). Obasanjo easily sailed through. This scenario of intra party political chess game continued even into the Presidency of Umaru Yar’adua.

Prior to the illness suffered by the late President Umaru Yar’adua in the middle of his administration on November 2009, the principle of zoning was not just awakened, but it revitalized a sense of ethnic variations, increased the intensity of ethnicity within the political party structure in not only the local, but also on the national sphere. The North, South, East,

and West got into political turbulence and out of control. There was a sudden split into two major groups in North/South, and this was as a result of the conflict for succession. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan who by right should be the successor was dragged into the ethnic dilemma (The News, May 17; Nov; 15 2010). The Northerners who were in control both in the Executive and in the Legislature even verbally played and challenged all ethnically-variant interests with dangerous primordial and stereotyped vituperations and interpretations. They personalized the term and offices, and were anxious to take over the mantle of leadership; which they saw as “their turn”. While the vice-president was being denied of power, a motely group which consisted of majority of the Northerners, usurped power and the country began to drift dangerously towards ethnocentrism. (The News, Jan 18th 2018). This infamous group of people were led by the wife of the President, Hajia Turai (the News, Jan 18th 2000). While the country faced all these chaos, it didn’t just end there, there was the portent hatching of the Boko Haram insurgency which began in 2011; the National Security Adviser Patrick Aziza saw this crisis as a power struggle in the ruling PDP between the North and the South. Rather than espousing the national ideal into prominence, the country continued to pride itself in the idea of party zoning. This portrayed how debased the political terrain has become. Adamu Ciroma, the former Minister and Central Bank Governor, insisted that zoning was far more than “a gentle manly agreement, as its spirit was captured in Article 6 section 2(3) of the PDP constitution”. Till today, the national caucus of the party has not met to

review the decision on zoning of public offices within the party. Even if they have met, nobody can change the decision because it is in the party's constitution (The News, Sept. 20th 2010).

The PDP still stock with their zoning policy. Meanwhile, it gave room for Jonathan to contest" (The News, Sept. 20th 2010) and his major opposition was a northerner, Muhamadu Buhari. The 2015 general elections experienced a bazaar of hate campaign detailed on ethno religious divide. Muhamadu Buhari was castigated by the PDP as an ethnic warlord, a hater of southern culture and lifestyle, while on the other hand, the sitting President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was said to have turned himself into an ethnic leader of the Ijaws, thereby leading to the marginalization of the North and other regions of the country. The spread of these ethnic diatribes by the opposing parties did permeate into the News media for instance. The PDP produced an advert which was displayed in several newspapers, calling on the INEC Chairman Attahiru Jega as "General Buhari Jega" signaling ethnic connections (Guardian, Feb. 18: 2015). This little display or action brought about a high level of suspicion and triggered the Human Rights Commission in the post-election period to call for an investigation and possible prosecution.

The 2015 election was characterized by outright indication of ethnic, primordial and stereotyped cleavages. The country's peace and security was disturbed, the campaigns were violent in many ways, some persons got abused and a campaign

ground got bombed (Guardian Newspaper, Feb 12th 2015). The unpredicted failure of President Goodluck Jonathan's re-election bid had many ethnic-oriented articles written emphasizing on why he failed woefully. With the unprecedented defeat, despite the outcome of the elections, the two contestants conducted themselves in such a way that the nation was put to awe. The predictions of global crisis and wars that were to take place were proved wrong and this made a remarkable event in the history of Nigeria.

Devoid of all positive expectations, the 2019 elections in Nigeria have gone a long way in exposing the level of degeneration and decay in the nation's democratic experience. Participating political parties, lacking ideologies, completely dwelt on the deification of individuals and all sorts of election manipulation to capture and retain power. Be that as it may, Olagunyi cautions thus;

The day the fool gains wisdom is the day the wise loses his power. Nigeria just had an election conducted by a President from the North, an INEC chairman from the North, all Security Chiefs from the North, [the acting Chief Justice of the Federation from the North], the two presidential candidates from the North (Nigerian Tribune, 4th March, 2019).

The vehement effort and intention to allow the Nigerian electoral laws to remain moribund is apt by the blunt refusal

of President Muhamadu Buhari to sign the 2019 Amended Electoral Laws into use prior to the election. When not designed to be accountable, how can one expect the unbundled Independent National Electoral Commission which has been diagnosed to be structurally defective to give what it doesn't have. It is sad that elections have remained a force and a farce in Nigeria, hence the 1964 elections which threatened national unity, was boycotted in the East, partly held in the West accompanied by certain levels of deadlock; though the President had to invite the Party with the largest winning candidates to form a cabinet, while advising the complainants to 'go to court'. Since the 1960s, Nigerian political electioneering has been subjected to the courts, with the exception of that of 2015 because somebody deliberately chose to be a fool for peace to reign. Since no constitutional additives have been made from the 1999 constitution till date to better this condition, the fact remains that obtaining justice on the political arena in the Nigerian Courts would always remain a feat. Violating the peaceful conduct of elections in Nigeria and the militarization of this process could comfortably be traced back to the 1963 'Operation Harmony'. Nigerians are good and ingenuous at circumventing the law, but when lawfully established and designated institutions like the Independent Electoral Commission prefers to manipulate the psyche of the electorate through inconclusive elections; Joseph Stalin would be right in stipulating that the power of who would win in any election is simply bestowed on those who count the ballots, and never the voters.

The Nigerian federation remains under political and developmental lockdown since independence sequel to persistence on stereotyped rigidity. Mental slavery is the worst form of slavery. It creates in one an illusion of freedom, trust, and love to the extent of defending your oppressor, while making an enemy of those who are trying to free or positively enlighten one. Nigerian historical annals are replete with bizarre political oddities which have continued to challenge the borders of internationally accepted standards and etiquette. Efforts at functional democratization and application of the basic tenets of federation have painfully marginalized freedom of choice and fairness, hence promoting mediocrity and what Kalu referred to as ‘reciprocal distrust in inter-personal relations, mutual suspicion and frictions in trans-ethnic transactions, and the eventual conception of electoral contest as inter-group warfare or battle (kalu, 1986:23).

In their pains, Nigerians are proving to be good managers of poverty; in their dilemma they feel betrayed by the ever-growing terror infernos and insecurity, all apparently encapsulated in a dysfunctional strategic silence in the national political behavior, even when the Presidency habitually and blatantly refuse to obey court directives and judgements. Rather than attract outright condemnation, Nigeria remains so ethno-religiously polarized that incidents that would have served as platforms for equitable assessment on individual leaders and political office holders in each political dispensation are often beclouded with ethno-

religious identities/conflagration, hence divisiveness of the highest depth. This dulls constructive criticism from sound minds, and rather recruiting dullards, praise singers and sycophants towards swaying national assessment and mood. In the absence of a portent opposition or checks and balances, one wonders how Nigeria's democratic experience would improve. It is even odiously most dangerous when the Nigerian leadership brazenly tend to stroke the embers of this macabre dance forgetful of the fact that; 'inciting and unleashing the horrendous hordes of the many unemployed and uneducated poor Northern Youths against the Southerners, based on cooked up 'domination perception' would not continue to sell always, since a good number of them appear to be getting better informed. To make things worse, the many fallouts and challenges emanating from the 2019 elections have gone a long way in proving how structurally defective the Independent Electoral Commission has been as an institution. Be that as it may, sequel to the moribund nature and contemporary deficit of the Nigerian electoral laws, it has practically been difficult for the Independent Electoral Commission as an institution to smoothly operate. The government's refusal towards signing the new electoral laws into law has simply not only marginalized it, but has incapacitated it towards exposing and checkmating electoral mischiefs. All along Nigeria's chequered history, one may not be wrong to conclusively say that the Nigerian electoral process is not designed to be accountable.

Nigeria's descent into anomie is not far from its age long social instability, erosion of standards and democratic values. Education adds value in any developmental economy, but when one's idea of paradise, in a multi-cultural entity is the dictionary definition of hell for another hoodwinked into such entity, disorderliness and anarchy remains the outcome. Undoubtedly, good diagnosis aids prognosis and treatment. A persistent Northern fever has not only remained a systemic marasmic problem which few northerners have managed to escape, but occupies the epicenter of Nigeria's developmental paralysis. Like the reeds of the desert, Nigeria's Northern population, appear short in growth, abrupt in promise and wholesome in support. Out of the above 13.2 million out-of-school children in Nigeria today, one may not need to hire the United Nations data unit before concluding that 70 percent of that figure belongs to the Northern part of Nigeria (Daily Sun Newspaper, 3rd June, 2016). Beyond harvesting these children on election season by their adroit and bestowed morally degenerate elites as a captive electoral audience, in their Plato's cave, they remain ready markets for terror recruitment, so much so in their social nakedness and repugnant vagrancy. The *Almajiri* Saga is no more a 'Northern' problem, since in their steady influx to the Southern parts of Nigeria, it's simply scary to witness the increasing security concerns too. It is quite incredible to observe that since the periods of 1931 and 1952, when the British Colonial Master allegedly assigned a preponderant population number to the North, matters have mischievously gotten worse, in that the core North has not only continued to

relish on such census figures, but has vehemently equally made sure that all that has to do with census and elections follow the British unverifiable figures.

The British application of divide and rule in their colonial administration of Nigeria, injected elements of divisiveness into the figured polity, hence ethno-centric instead of Nigeria-centricism remains dominant. Laying credence to this Eyo asserted thus:

Today, state creation has two driving forces behind it; one open and the other, hidden. The open force is the much touted one of spreading socio-economic development laudable in principle. The hidden or subconscious force is the movement back to the living reality of the pre-colonial nationality (Eyo, 1997:229).

Since 1960, and even into the first quarter of the 21st century, it is practically painful to observe that there is nothing like the Nigerian identity. Rather, beyond the glaring facade is a stubborn ethno-religious personality, proudly flouted and driven by impunity, hence very much detrimental to national interest and cohesion. In the midst of abundant human and material resources, there is enormous economic downturn, endangering saving and solidifying deepening hardship, poverty and high death rate.

Eyo reiterates further by observing that;

We delude ourselves into believing that if we fight for ethnic and our religious supremacy hard enough and long enough; if we stay in power and defraud the nation long enough, we will be acceptable to Nigerians and the international community, and our suffering will end (Eyo, 1997:236).

The 2019 elections have opened glaringly the dangerous depth of Nigeria's ethno-religious divide. It officially marked the official collapse of Nigeria's moral veins, hence no foundational support to its monumental edifices. The Nigerian factor is simple-Abnormal is the normal!, hence the Independent National Electoral Commission had to recline so backwards as to challenge the borders of impossibility in its vehement effort to defend the many undemocratic plots. How could one explain the political gag planned and executed against the Nigerian of Igbo extraction in Lagos State by the leader of the ruling national party, which practically disenfranchised them from enjoying their democratic rights. When the enabling authorities, including the different security apparatus of governance deliberately allowed such to happen in the world of the 21st century, one wonders the chances or prospects of peaceful co-existence that may still remain. What of the government projected *Fulfulde* radio station? Nigeria is simply on the road!!

The elections in Nigeria have witnessed ethnicity being expressed fully and robustly through electioneering. With the crave for growth and development in Nigeria, the political system needs to be readjusted, hence the ethnic antagonism within her political system needs restructuring.

Political ethnicity in Nigeria has solidified corruption, impunity and nepotism from the high quarters. Professionalism is daily being sacrificed on the alter of ethnic mediocrity and inefficiency, hence the purely educated have continued to relegate the political terrain to the untutored and disorganized political thugs and pundits, who are largely psychopaths. The cumulative effect is that proper democratic process remains a mirage in a consistently stereotyped Nigeria, where old age, ill health, illiteracy and inefficiency are easily over-looked in all aspects of developmental strides, so long as one is from a preferred culture group. Constructive criticisms from sound minds are dulled by the louder acclamation and chant of recruited praise singers and ethno religious dullards, thereby liquidating portent opposition and watchdogs who give vent to national consciousness and growth. For the Nigerian State to classify IPOB passive agitators as terrorists, while protecting and pampering armed Fulani herdsmen as peace agents is simply absurd. Recent developments in the country may have given more credence to the fulanization and islamisation speculations and proclamations. Self help is a cousin to vigilantism and it may offer dovetails into anarchy, most especially where and when deliberate government silence or inactivity feeds on the

speculative curiosity of the haunted. No single ethnic group has a monopoly of violence!

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Literatures abound both in Nigeria and abroad centered on ethno religious altercations in Nigeria starting from the colonial period till date. Regardless of this, this study has ventured into side lining and understudying the implications of a religio-ethnically polarized Nigeria before and after independence, up to the contemporary time. It is quite important to do this and carry out this research succinctly, since Nigeria “is” and continue to claim to be a democratic federalist state. In most developed countries, the political culture follows internationally-acclaimed and established ethics and norms, hence creating a psychologically balanced atmosphere, which is not only citizen oriented, but progressively developmental in approach. As a democratic nation, Nigeria is simply bereft of equitable leadership; the political platform is serviced by ethnic cleavages and chauvinism; the citizenry are wallowing in suspicion- culture bound discrimination, disunity and disorganization. Political ideologies with regards to political party in Nigeria, have continued to be sacrificed on the altar of ethnocentrism. This political polarization has created widespread political apathy and disenchantment among the citizenry; it has equally in most aspects allowed unqualified and indolent loafers to make

it with effortless ease. When mediocrity is honored, meritocracy is sacrificed, underdevelopment, widespread corruption and ingenuity remain unwelcome. Today, Nigeria could boast of having the greatest number of political parties in the world. This simply shows disharmony, dishonesty, disorderliness, and political anarchy. The political psyche of Nigerians appears all the more weakened, and seriously challenged, since positive prospect on the horizon appear vague.

It may seem like the whole country needs to be re-started from the scratch, the myriad of economic and social problems cannot just go away. The 21st century Nigeria is in dire need of “restructuring”. With regards to Federalism, powers are meant to be shared between the government and the regions, at least this will reduce the rate and campaign for secession, and at the same time the political parties should be less zoned.

There is no doubt that Nigeria is destined to be a great nation, let’s not say it but rather act on it. The thought of Nigerian developmental economy in the 21st century taking a clue from the many advancing economies of the world may forever remain mere hallucinations if adequate attention is not paid to the several agitations for restructuring and the total reorganization of the country’s federalism and economic myopia is not interfaced. One of the biggest gains and achievements of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) group in not only the South Eastern part of the county, but throughout Nigeria and even beyond, is the raising of

awareness and the designated pressure mauled on the Nigerian government on the need for either restructuring or the granting of referendum for Biafran self-determination. Along the lines of running battles, broken and damaged lives, properties and portent ‘sit at home’ declarations, the Nigerian government have largely applied extreme strategies and rules of engagement in quelling and containing the tantrums of this pressure group. In its spread and possible acceptance as not only the heart of progressive politics and excellent economics in contemporary developing economies, restructuring has really permeated beyond political parties debates and pedestrian manifestos into a *tsunami* force whose time has come in the Nigerian environment that has been left behind amongst the comity of nations.

In recalling several historical hiccups littered along the contours of Nigeria’s turbulent evolutionary history, this study ventured towards pointing at the many foundational mistakes, pre and post-independence subtle maneuvers, which were largely cumulatively antagonistic against the will and demand of the several culture groups and ethnic nationalities inhabiting the Nigerian environment. Since freedom and the right to exist remain part of the internationally accepted global etiquette accruable to humanity, and so long as a people cannot be tricked and subdued forever, the need for restructuring is now.

One could always easily, with direct reference to the persistence and rapacity of these agitations, evaluate and

conclude that Nigeria's stability as a sovereignty is queried, moreso considering the rising debt profile, infrastructural decay, overdependence on oil/gas and food insecurity. It remains quite understandable that all these and more continue to affect and weigh down the collective inertia to act beyond mere mass mobilization for change, into articulate actions. This is not to say that continued organized political agitations is not helpful towards igniting reforms. When incentive systems are freed through a new versatile Fiscal Responsibility Act, irresponsible fiscal behavior which could trigger a wholesale bailout of state governments (Consumption hinged on unsustainable public finance) would be contained. Nigeria's Tax-to-growth domestic ratio constrains flexibility in deploying fiscal instruments for development. (Soludo, 2018). When all corporate taxes and value added Tax are paid into the federation account, where lies the incentive for states and local governments to attract, sustain and promote industrialization? Economic development would become an attractive decimal when federating units have the flexibility to deploy taxation as a veritable instrument to attract and promote enterprise, and also an independent revenue. By the same token, does it not negate commonsense and contemporary political-economics to operate a uniform salary scale/common minimum wage scheme across the country in a federalism? (Soludo, 2018). Moving at the same speed for the different components of the Nigerian Society negates sensitization, innovation, ingenuity, entrepreneurship and appears incendiary to national development. A people's constitution is advocated which

would not only address resource derivation/control, the separation of religion from the state, but institute the much needed political identity of Nigerian citizenship in place of that of cultural identity.

With due reference to the European Union Charter which opined thus:

Subsidiarity means that Public responsibilities shall generally be exercised, in preference, by those authorities which are closest to the citizen. Allocation of the responsibility to another authority should weigh up the extent and nature of the task and requirements of efficiency and economy (European Charter, 2000).

Standing firm on this premise, this study strongly advocate that the federal government should loosen its hold on policing, electricity provision, railways, ports, aviation, business incorporation, taxation powers, regulatory functions, among others. A politico-fiscal arrangement in tandem with explicit devolution of powers is not only advocated, but section 162 of the 1999 Nigerian constitution desires to be urgently expunged to create a bazaar for hardwork and innovation. Since restructuring demands dismantling and recoupling, the country should be guided by the economics of scale and high investment rates to dictate the viability of either maintaining the thirty-six state structure or harmonizing into six regional partitions hence six vice-presidents and one

president dictated by the principle of equality of regions; multivariate judicial systems among others (Soludo; 2018:8). A competitive federation is required to unleash the creative energies of all the component parts into a synergistic boom.

Weak institutions can never provide veritable checks and balances to an evolving functional democracy destined for growth and development, moreso in the African context. Suffice it to say that, a hybrid restructuring program should be initiated forthwith, from mere declarations to action, encompassing the negotiation of a new constitution with sufficient regional autonomy within a federating Nigeria. This is tantamount to sweeping away the old order with its pathological ingredients of neo-colonialism, ignorance, tyranny, savagery, corruption, negative values, primordialism and conservatism. Faith in Nigeria from Nigerians is the only way patriotism, hardwork, ingenuity and healthy competition could promote public wealth rather than individual wealth. Developmental economics is driven by faith, benevolence, commitment and ingenuity, since belief in ones country grows from inside, not impacted.

Nigeria is a country where principles and ideals collide, ideas and dreams strike against commonsense, fairness, practicality and expediency. Inundated daily with the orgy of violence, large- scale killing of citizens, kidnapping, bombing, amidst massive destruction of properties coupled with the attendant displacement of people, like a ‘drunk giant’, Nigeria is staggering on. Though this condition dates back to the 1960s,

this cankerworm elicits immediate attention sequel to the increase, persistence, rapacious dimension, national spread, and classical execution playing out recently. Deeply inept and parochial as the leadership continues to be, bad policies continue to create and replicate an endless spiral of unimaginable uproar of poverty and aberrations in Nigeria. Ethno-religious stereotyped sentiments easily provide a perfidious indoctrinable recourse for this gap. Sparks and upheaval from global resurgent Islam appear to not only threaten internal balance, national unity and development in Nigeria, but tends to increase the fragility of the national fabric. Once hard work is neglected, mediocrity and corruption receive accolades; the majority vulnerable poor are inevitably intimidated, blackmailed, deceived and manipulated by the imperious comprador few that benefit from this orgy of violence. Surprisingly, all identified domestic ethno-religious trigger factors are not Nigeria-new, but the pervasiveness and complexities of each new incident, somehow portend how close the country is to the precipice. So long as 'Nigerian federalism' remains a mere theory, the agitative mind must continue to beckon and invoke the cherished goals of re-structuring, self-determination and actualization, hence re-enacting the misfortunes of a nation whose indigenes live in critical emergency. In view of the *raison d'eter* of this study, efforts were made to examine and proffer solutions to the litany of psychosocial fall-outs of ethno-religious challenges facing the contemporary Nigerian identity.

In today's world order, ran through the dictates of strategic importance and the developmental dialectics of economy and security, the desire for nation-building demands more than mere tantrums of orientation and psycho-social grease. In the pursuit of the theory of nation-building, socialization when awakened, must be heated, melted and sieved through the dangerous waters of suspicion and the ambivalence of human interests. Subsequently, secularism, law, patriotism and ideology would always galvanize integrative forces. In hosting proper political federation, Nigeria should stop its deliberate irrationality at overriding the many traditional and social norms, which has continued to plague it with crises of values, moral relativism, nihilistic and even Machiavellian traditions. While restructuring remains the major exercise that would bring out the full latent potentials embedded in Nigeria's component parts, such also would grant and aid the much required solid avenue towards building common trust and complementary relationship amongst the diverse cultural entities in Nigeria. It is not by closing the physical distance that real closeness emerges, and a sense of unity established for socio-cultural exchange and interaction, but by the closing of psychological distance signified by shared modes of conceptualizing issues, events, peoples, including nationhood. (Eyo, 1997). A true Nigerian identity remains highly elusive so long as people prefer to operate and engage from their individual psycho-cultural habitat. Even though no particular ethnic group realistically opted for the 1914 amalgamation, it could rather be taken as a *Felix culpa*- a happy fault, which in encouraging peaceful competition and cooperation for

socialization and development, trigger the much needed integration. Once the small seeds of patriotism starts germinating at the peripherals, national and formidable regional glaciers must be guided by proactive human consciousness to checkmate the ambivalence of human interest, coupled with the perception of ‘the other’ in the present Nigerian quagmire. Quite aware of the intricacies involved in achieving proper integration; moreso in a much polarized environment like Nigeria, Dukor cautioned that the process of integration is that of building a new society and a new social order based on justice and fair play. He went on to emphasise that integration requires that socio-economic progress be made within the democratic framework and sharing of power with minorities (Dukor, 2003:195). It is a naked fact that national unity and cohesion cannot simply fall from the sky and forcefully impact on Nigerians; the country must not only work for it, but create the enabling environment for its take off and sustainability. In giving credence to this, Babangida asserted thus;

The creation of national unity is an infinite process in which identities gradually partialize and coalesce. There is no doubt that given statements and actions by many leaders of opinion in Nigeria, we have not yet transcended the fears which made our founding fathers to opt for federalism. Federalism provides a unique medium for coping with certain problems in our association as ethnic groups which form a

new political community. (Babangida, 1993:9).

Interesting and insightful as this contribution and observation maybe, it is simply paradoxical and anachronistic, and only passes for scholarly exposition in textbook analysis if some time is spent in reviewing the antics, depredations and contributions of the former president Babangida's government to Nigeria's existence.

This work explored and highlighted the dimensional condiments of the psychosocial implications of the persistent ethno religious challenges ravaging contemporary Nigeria. While peaceful co-existence and interaction has remained highly elusive, the disparate groups and entities appear to be retreating back to pre-colonial primordial status, while utterly disregarding enabling constituted laws that promoted nation-building, social justice and equity. The current ethno religious discriminatory tendency in government appointments as exhibited by the President Buhari regime in a multi-cultural and religion-diverse entity reflects negative signals.

Quite aware and concluded that ethno-religious challenges is conscienceless and incendiary to Nigeria as an entity, this work posits that the nation cannot continue like this, since no sovereignty can survive this sustained level of barbarous, unchecked sanguinary fury. To attempt a check on this endless cycle of reprisal and retaliation in order to place the federation on a sound footing, total re-structuring must accommodate sound devolution of powers from the centre to

the federating units, hence anchoring citizenship rights on **residency** as obtained in other plural societies.

Moreover, since intergroup relations remain ontological to Nigeria's existence and development, inter-cultural and religious dialogue must be stimulated through emphasis on the histories of federating units. By so doing, ethno religious understanding, awareness, accommodation, tolerance and co-existence would be achieved. As a logical sequence to this, the dialectics of existence ordinarily dictates that each human group must consciously and or unconsciously relate with other groups to be able to survive, after all, contact, interaction and interdependence remains a basic constant for life. (mutual aid).

Due to the complexities inherent in intergroup relations as a social phenomenon with broad continuum, **Behavior scientists** must be able to soar above the mutational nature of the polar opposites of consensus and conflict, to conceptualize intergroup relations as states of friendship or hospitality, co-operation and competition, dominance or subordination, alliance or enmity, peace or war between two or more groups and their respective members. (Sherif and Sherif, 1969:88). Zoning of political offices though not a democratic ideal, may help most especially if constitutionally entrenched and sustained.

Since no group of human community not withstanding its level of development can be an island entirely to itself, this

work tersely contends that there's always a light at the end of the tunnel, though the burning of tunnels between the diverse ethno-religious groups is only making such tunnels to be long. Historical narrative alone could constitute a source of ethnocentrism demonstrated in stereotyping cultures, whereas Psychologists remain more concerned on how they grow and operate in 'individuals' mind. A national orientation is advocated, purposefully deployed towards smoothening those edges that sharply distinguish and divide, in so doing promoting those that accommodate and unify.

In politics, two emotions remain very strong-fear and greed. While greed leads to certain extremist tendencies like corruption, fear opens the door to certain excesses of religion, nationality and identity cult. This scenario directly introduces a hedge towards national integration and development. Undoubtedly, the Nigerian country as a product of the faulty foundation of 1914 has not only continued to prove the chemical law which shows the incompatibility of oil and water, but the terrible intrigues embedded in ambivalent nature of human interests. Though no normal individual willfully and knowingly seeks his own destruction, moreover since lack of knowledge could attract wrong choice, most especially when in a dilemma, for Nigeria, all exit routes are not yet blocked. In driving the rationality of human behavior, knowledge, intention and voluntariness are always handy towards distinguishing 'human act' from 'the act of man'. The Nigerian society is suffering from the ambivalence of human interest, hence the upsurge and celebration of a litany

of vices-embezzlement, mismanagement of public funds, election rigging, impunity among others. This situation is so widespread that it stands to be disproved that the Nigerian Civil Service is not the most corrupt in the world. To make matters worse, since the law of self-preservation in spurring one to avoid what would destroy him, attracts him rather into selfish interests rather than collective, a great number of the populace entangled in one way or the other in the sharing of these booties and loots, ignorantly remain implicated in encouraging and celebrating the underdevelopment of Nigeria. Human interest is ambivalent according to Asouzu, because it has a double capacity and as such can represent something negative and positive at the same time. When such interests has to mislead to unintended, yet willful and insightful actions and conclusions, lies the danger of its inherent ambivalence (Asouzu, 2003:5).

All in all, Nigeria's survival as an entity lies on its ability towards stimulating and instigating viable mannerisms and actions emanating from the various diverse culture groups aimed at downplaying group interests that is clearly detrimental to national good. Though the road towards attaining such really appears far, it is apparent that the first solid steps must come from the political class *vis a vis* the political parties, as major actors in the country's developmental process. The journey to greatness is driven by dreams and ideas, but lofty ideas devoid of structured plans ends in mere mental hallucination. Patriotism is an anathema in the Nigerian context, simply because neither the political

parties nor the country itself have ever ventured an attempt at a driving ideology. A country or society without ideology is like a family without focus, plan, vision and mission. Ideology gives support, and can validate action by giving meaning or explaining in details, and even bind society or people together amongst other things. Mullins states that, the significance of ideology in mobilization is not that it causes one to do, but that it gives one cause for doing, and so provides grounds or warrants political activity engaged in (Mullins, 1972:509). Since ideology conceptualizes the historical process, and orients human beings for shaping it, ideology in itself is an active agent for social change and a stubborn base for the evolutionary growth of strong institutions in human societies. Wherever strong institutions are lacking, strong personalities quickly grow and fill in the gap leading to the promotion of corruption, political redundancy and impunity. Strong societal institutions are propelled by certain ideologies which stream from national consciousness, empowering such institutions to remain as viable elements of checks and balances to politicians and state actors.

However, since ideology sometimes may appear as an elusive essential condiment of society, one may easily equip and organize it through the following five attributes:-all inclusive, configurative, functional and compositional, distortive and pejorative and transformative. Mittleman goes further by stipulating that the elements of ideology are critique, activism and prescription. In order words, ideology includes a theory

of history, a program of action, and a conception of a desired state of affairs. He sums up by observing that an ideology is operative in so far as behavior is structured, manipulated and justified in terms of its beliefs and values (Mittleman, 1978:45). Ideology usually is for legitimation, rationalization, interpretation, solidification, communication and mobilization. Infact, ideas can become powerful forces, but

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