Ideologies and Realities: A Critical Appraisal of Complexities of Nationalism and Ethnicity in Nation Building in Nigeria

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Abstract

It is argued that ethnicity is not necessarily incompatible with nationalism and nation-building. Ethnicity and nationalism both play a role in nation-state formation. They are each functional to political stability and, therefore, to civil peace and to the ability of individual Nigerians to pursue their non-political goals. Ethnicity is functional to political stability because it provides the basis for political socialization and for popular allegiance to political actors. It provides the framework within which patronage is institutionalized and related to traditional forms of welfare within a state which is itself unable to provide such benefits to its subjects. Ethnicity as identity and as pragmatic pursuit of economic and political advantage are, therefore, the routes to the political centre and so contribute to the legitimacy of the state. Nationalism is functional to political stability because it legitimates state power. However, as an elite ideology to legitimate the control of state power and struggles for it. Nationalism articulates ethnicity and destabilizes the society, creating an identity crisis for individuals and communities. As the people increasingly resort to religion to correct their identity crisis, new political actors arise to challenge the existing order, using established religious ideologies to criticise and challenge the oppressive structure of elite-led secular nationalism. The Nigerian experience demonstrates that nationalism is best understood as a result of a continuous tradition in which legitimation claims of a social order are sustained and challenged rather than the result of modern industrialization. This paper applied the historical approach in reviewing the complexities of nationalism and ethnicism in Nigerian political and social landscape. The discourse tend to find the balance in flexible shifting alliance between the two ideologies in display of Nigerian federal system and nation building.The argument of this paper is theoretically based but conclusions with historical facts.
Keywords: Nationalism, Nation-building, Ethnicism, Political, Historical

Introduction

Ethnicity can be incompatible with nationalism and nation-building especially if the federal system comprises a small number of large states whose populations are perceived, broadly, and ethnically different. It is argued that ethnicity is not necessarily incompatible with nationalism and nation-building. Under certain condition as being witnessed in post war Nigeria, ethnicity may be beneficial for nationalism and nation-building. An important condition is to increase the number of the constituent states in the federation and breaking up large ethnic states in Nigeria almost all sections of the population, at least the leaders and representatives of the ethnic groups, recognize that cohesion cannot occur without their coming to terms with collaboration and ethnic alliance of one sort or the other. Ethnicity as identity and as pragmatic pursuit of economic and political advantage are, in certain contexts, the routes to the political centre. In that way, there is an added contribution, which may be largely unintended, to the legitimacy of the state. The more groups participate in the political centre, and the more effects that has on regional and communal interests and pursuits, the stronger will be the perception of Nigeria as an entity commanding loyalty from its people t is also recognized that the break-up of Nigeria would not be in the interests of the many minorities who have been able to negotiate political alliances to assert and pursue their interest. This is the case of the south-south ethnic groups in Nigeria. Furthermore, even though there are threats from the Muslim north to dominate Nigeria as a whole, this could be contained by the fear that if that leads to secession on the part of other regions the north would be left in a rather poor state.

What all this amounts to is that while ethnicity may, in some circumstances and in some areas of social life, obstruct the growth of national identity and cohesion, it may not do so in others. Ethnicity,

nationalism and nation- -building are reconciled through some of the intended and unintended effects that each has upon the others.

All of this discussion assumes that allegiances or interests other than ethnic ones may now and more so in the future, intersect ethnic ties and contribute further to the process whereby ethnic ties adjust to other circumstances. This is already happening with Christian and Islamic identities increasingly displacing ethnic identities in importance in national life. This is exemplified in the Muslim – Muslim ticket that bound the Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani political interest in the 2023 presidential election. This new setting for the dialectic between ethnicity and nationalism in Nigeria is considered an increasingly important factor in legitimating Nigeria's nationhood. Elite-led secular nationalism promised the people salvation from national bondage and personal suffering, instead they became alienated victims of nationalism. Most Nigerians have consequently turned to previously established religious identities as a corrective to disorder and meaninglessness in their lives. The increasing importance of religion in national life is thus both an expression of the identity crisis facing Nigerians and a means of resolving this crisis.

Theory of Ethnicity
The success of anti-colonial nationalism in sub-Saharan Africa around the 1960s generated great optimism about the future of the newly independent states. It was commonly hoped and expected that these states would rapidly follow the path of economic, political and cultural development established by European and colonial-settler states. When this proved not to be the case the claims of modernization theory were discredited. One of these claims was that nation-building' would rapidly erode traditional 'ethnic cultural identities and cleavages. Post-modernization theory views ethnicity as a major source of instability for post-colonial states that is unlikely to disappear in the foreseeable future. If this pessimistic view is correct then sub-Saharan Africa is likely to have a future of civil conflict that will severely hamper attempts to create economic, political and cultural development. Indeed, one may easily produce a list of cases in support of such a view: Katanga in Zaire, Biafra in Nigeria and, more recently, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan, Liberia, Somalia, Kenya and even South Africa. Nevertheless, many multi-ethnic states have existed for decades without any widespread conflict. Even those states which have experienced such violence have normally settled down subsequently to a relatively peaceful existence.
No post-colonial state in Africa has yet been permanently divided along ethnic lines (although both Ethiopia and Somalia may do so along demarcations dating from colonial times). This co-existence of state structures and ethnic identities is not adequately explicable in the terms of either modernization or post-modernization theories.

Theories of Nation-Building
For over a century traditional sociological wisdom regarded nation-building as incontrovertibly desirable. Assimilation of cultural groups into a national society was considered a necessary aspect of political and socio-economic development. Ethnic and parochial identities were looked upon as primitive and inimical to progress. Nationalism was hailed as the sentiment that both dissolved atavistic parochial sentiments within divided societies and held together such societies. This view of nationalism made its debut in nineteenth century European history where philosophers like Herder and Fichte described how the new sentiment dissolved the old society with its clerics, kings and local loyalties and then provided a common allegiance that gave the reconstituted societies an unprecedented cohesiveness. This approach lost favour in studies of European societies in the 1950s as nationalism was blamed for the European tragedy, that is the two world wars. The approach, however, found favour in studies of non-European societies, particularly the colonial multiplicities that are the focus of this discourse. Theories of functionalism, social change and conflict, all regarded parochial values and allegiances as inimical to rational social planning and economic progress in the newly independent states of Africa and Asia. They held up nationalism as the ultimate force of social change in these states, claiming that their political stability and economic viability depended on their becoming nation-states in the image of the classical European models.

Many theories and ideas were put forward to explain the transition from ethnicity to nationalism. The most influential of these ideas, the modernisation school, claimed that the basis of nation-building and the erosion of ethnic identities was modernization. Processes of modernisation such as industrialization and urbanisation would automatically be accompanied by nationalism, that is loyalty to the state. This approach was largely influenced by the ideas of Kart Deutsch who attempted to quantity and measure nationalism by looking at the patterns of social communication. He claimed that the trends in the social mobilisation which accompanies the growth of markets, industries and towns and eventually of literacy and mass communication could do much to decide whether existing national trends in particular countries would be continued or reversed (Karl, 1966). For him, nationality is indicated by the complementarity or relative efficiency of communication among individuals (Karl, 1966). His original contribution to the theory of nation-building is in calling attention to all kinds of social and economic factors other than language as the basis for the nation-state.

Theories of 'pluralism' were developed to explain the relationship between unity and diversity in a state. There are two traditions of thought within this school. The first is the pluralistic model, which is essentially a political theory, and the second is the plural society model developed largely by sociologists and anthropologists engaged in the study of the multi-ethnic societies of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

The plural society model was formulated by Furnivall (Furnivall, 1948). He used the term plural society to describe colonial Burma and Indonesia, claiming that colonial domination imposed a forced union on the different ethnic groups that socially co-exist within these societies without much social contact in plural societies, there is no common will, and interaction is involuntary, imposed by colonial power and force of economic circumstance. He argued that democracy was impossible in such a society because it would give political power to one group while leaving economic power with others. He suggested a federal state and the fostering of nationalist feelings as solutions to the problem of cultural pluralism. The problem with Furnivall's analysis lies in the assumption that the European states are characterised by a common social will and a common culture. He overlooks the fact that in western democracies voting power is often controlled by one group and economic power by another (Nicholls, 1974).

Furnivall's thesis was enlarged by Smith and applied to sub-Saharan Africa (Smith, 1971). For Smith, the plural society is composed of socially or culturally defined collectivities separated by autonomous institutional structures. The collectivities are closed corporations bound within a state dominated by one group for whom the state becomes the agency of subjugation. Integration is by force of regulation rather than by consensus. He argued that the transition from plural societies to pluralistic societies was necessary, if the African states were to be transformed into cohesive national units. Smith's model has limited analytical value for most African states. Sub-national groups in these states are not institutionally exclusive. The model may, however, be useful for the study of racially stratified polities like South Africa or some of the Caribbean states where the very rigorous conditions of pluralism stipulated by Smith can be approximated (Young, 1977).

The pluralistic model postulates two principal bases of social integration in a multi-ethnic state. These are accommodation and elite consensus. National integration seen as consisting of a complex web of multiple affiliation, intersecting lines of group cleavage and shifting alignments depending on specific issues, and commitment to common values and to the rules of the political game. Ethnic groups are seen as cultural groups whose behaviour is to be analysed within the context of assimilation and cultural change. Underlying this concept is the notion of the melting pot and the experience of European immigrant groups in North American industrial cities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The common point of reference for both the assimilationist and the plural society models is the nation-state. Both assume that the nation-state is the ideal to strive for and that nation-building is necessary and desirable. However, the plural society model is strongly orientated towards the conflictual aspects of multi-ethnic societies while the pluralistic model takes too optimistic a view about man's capacity

for rationality. In short, one model is over optimistic and the other over pessimistic. Moreover, both models do not address the key issue of ethnic identity which is essential to any analysis of group conflict and integration. They believe that ethnic and national (state) sentiments are incompatible. It is thus a question of either ethnic groups being assimilated or being in conflict.

Evidence began to show in the 1960s that these theories were faulty about the capacity of modernization to erode parochial sentiments and identities In the United States Glazer and Moynihan questioned the idea of the melting pot with the publication of *Beyond the Melting Pot*, a study of ethnic groups of New York City which had appeared when in theory they were supposed to be disappearing (Glazar and Moynihan, 1963). They claimed that 'the notion that the intense and unprecedented mixture of ethnic and religious groups in American life was soon to blend into a homogeneous end product has outlived its usefulness, and also its credibility (Glazar and Moynihan, 1963). In post-colonial African and Asian states ethnic divisions continued despite modernization. Agencies regarded as vehicles of integration became divided on ethnic lines. For example, the nationalist parties that fought for independence were regarded by modernization theorists like James Coleman and Cart Rosberg as primary vehicles for integration (Coleman and Roseberg, 1964), but they became divided on ethnic lines immediately after their attainment of independence Anti-colonial nationalism did not undermine ethnicity as was hoped. In Nigeria the, modernization process produced conflict and ethnicity rather than nationalism (Melson and Wolpe, 1971). Two of the most traumatic ethnic crises in Africa and Asia during the period were the war in Nigeria and the successful bid for independence by Bangladesh. Other evidence of ethnic conflicts from Canada, Belgium and the United Kingdom confirmed that the integration of the modem state into a national state could not be taken for granted.

A Synthetic Theory of Ethnicity and Nation-Building
Ethnicity and nationalism are compatible. This is so where they are each functional to political stability and, therefore, to civil peace and to the ability of individuals to pursue their non-political goals. Where this is the case there is an effective rationale for people to resist any de-construction of the nation-state' along ethnic lines. This is the case in Nigeria.

Nationalism is functional to political stability in Nigeria because it legitimates state power. Popular expectations of nationalism, and the frustration of its aspirations, have been the major factor in legitimizing and de-legitimizing all Nigerian governments and, therefore in causing their downfalls. They have only been replaced by military officers or party politicians who have successfully appealed to that sense of nationalism. No military coup can succeed unless the public in general desire a change (Jakande, 1990). 'If Dimka, Vatsa and Orka failed in their respective disastrous bids for political power, it is not necessarily because they were more incompetent and inefficient than their successful counterparts, but because the people in general were not, at the time they struck desirous of a change of administration (Jakande, 1990).

Ethnicity is functional in Nigeria because it provides the basis for political socialization and for popular allegiance to political actors at the level of the central state. The logic of competition in the federal political arena requires that people be mobilised in terms of what matters to them and ethnicity definitely matters in Nigeria. Ethnic identity is a real matter for both social and political calculation and engineering in Nigeria. People use their ethnic ties and cleavages rationally, in order to attain their individual aims, whatever they are. Ethnicity, as identity and as pragmatic pursuit of economic and political advantage are, in certain contexts, the routes to the political centre. In that way there is an added contribution, which may be largely unintended, to the legitimacy of the federal political arena.
The nation-state provides the arena within which ethnic identities are constructed and defined, and within which political alliances may be formed and reformed to the mutual advantage of different ethnic and political groups. It is acknowledged that the break-up of Nigeria would not be in the interests of the numerous minorities who have been able to negotiate political alliances to access their interests. It is also recognized that the secession of the other regions would not be in the economic interest of the dominant Muslim north.

Ethnicity provides the framework within which patronage is institutionalized and related to traditional forms of welfare within a state which is itself unable to provide such benefits to its subjects. The informal network of patronage which ethnicity provides helps to bridge the elite/mass divide, one of the two conditions which Rosberg and Coleman identified as necessary for integration (Coleman and Roseberg, 1964). The average Nigerian (a popular term used to refer to a typical Nigerian) maintains various ethnic identities and associational networks which he/she and his/her patrons or the state appeals to at various times. These ties are important for negotiating opportunities for self-improvement - 'survival' in Nigerian parlance. The type of ethnic group identity prevalent in Nigeria thus differs from the primordialist and the instrumentalist types expounded in both nation-building and anti-nation-building theories which assume that individuals have only one privileged ethnic identity (Glazar and Moynihan, 1981).

The form of 'nation-state and of nationalist ideology which have developed in Nigeria are different from those of the European model adopted by classical nation-building theory. Nationalist ideology in classical nation-building theory holds that the political and national unit should be congruent (Gellner, 1983; Breuilly, 1985). The Nigerian nation is a weaker form of imagined community than those found in Europe because it co-exists with (and is often secondary to) more immediate forms of popular identity It is generally the opposite of the ethnically and linguistic homogeneous entities which came to be seen as the standard form of nation-state in the West. It is more of a project the achievement of which is in progress. However, it is a project conceived in the spirit of Mazzini rather than of Uvarov (Anderson, 1983).

Dual Phenomenon of Nationalism
Nigeria is imagined as a homogeneous unit. The 1979 constitution described Nigeria as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation-state to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nigerian nationalism is, then, not unlike the classical European model which emphasizes popular support and national unity. This similarity is underlined by Nigeria's colonial legacy. However, unlike the classical model, Nigerian nationalism accepts that a stable and free society can be based on cultural pluralism, in a multinational state based on political accommodation and democracy. This is why the state pursues nation-building, that is planned policies that combine both a popular nationalist enthusiasm and the inculcation of nationalist ideology through the mass media, the educational system and national institutions, and administrative regulations. Thus, nationalist ideology in Nigeria is more appropriately described as a blend of the European popular and the 'official nationalism of the Czars (Anderson, 1983).

Nigerian nationalism is a dual phenomenon. It exists as both an elite ideology and as a popular feeling. What distinguishes popular nationalism is that it represents the common interest against particular interests, the common good against privilege. Unfortunately for Nigeria, whilst nationalism is very effective as an elite ideology, it is very weak as a popular emotion. As an elite ideology nationalism is used to justify the exercise of state power. This tends to undermine rather than strengthen the appeal of nationalism as a popular emotion as it alienates the vast majority of the people from the state, engendering friction between the people and ruling elites. Therefore, despite the high public profile of its hyperbolic rhetoric, Nigerian nationalism largely fails as a means to unite the imagined nation.
Viewed as a dual phenomenon, nationalism would be seen as both integrative and disintegrative. This is why it is able to transform societies. The notion that ethnicity is the most destabilizing factor in African politics would be seen as erroneous. In Nigerian politics, nationalism as an elite ideology for domination of the state is the most destabilising factor. This stems from the close structural relationship between political power, the state and class formation on one hand, and political power and popular democracy on the other. Because the accumulation of wealth and status depends almost entirely on political power, both those who aspire to rule and those who wish to consolidate their rule need secure positions within or near the state. In an authoritarian state such security can be assured, whereas in a democratic state such as Nigeria which lacks social consensus legitimating capital accumulation, it cannot be assured (Diamond, 1988). The position of ruling elites is under constant threat, especially during elections. Under such conditions, power elites and aspirants to power can be expected to use all

available means to maintain or acquire power, including ethnicity, electoral fraud and brute force. Elections thus become warfare and rules of the game are disregarded as elites struggle for the state. Such undemocratic politics is the consequence of the idea of nationalism as a guise for the accumulation of capital and the domination of the country.

Nationalism must, then, be recognized as a destabilizing process. This is not to argue like Connor that nation-building is the destruction of distinctive cultural groups. The point is that nationalism is a stressful process. It tends to emphasise the adjustments and sacrifices that individuals and communities have to make for the sake of progress. Put differently, nationalism alienates large sections of the society in the quest for modernity. The destabilizing nature of nationalism stems from the process of socio-economic change which goes in tandem with it. Nineteenth century accounts of nationalism romanticised nationalism, in doing this, they gave the impression that nation-building was a smooth and unproblematic process when in fact it brought much suffering and pain to individuals and communities in other words, nationalism in the European context was not without conflict and divisions. It was both disintegrative and integrative, and consequently transformative. Anthony Smith arrived at a similar conclusion but for him the divisive and disruptive aspect of nationalism lies in the confrontation between the 'scientific state' and traditional religion and belief systems (Smith, 1983). This process of modernization 'both repels and attracts the rising intelligentsia. The crux of the matter was that the 'scientific state' demanded a heavy price for its benefits: it demanded ineluctably the 'privatisation' of religion (Smith, 1983). The consequence is a 'crisis of faith among the intelligentsia and the clash between reason and revelation, science and tradition, sons and fathers, which so agitates them (Smith, 1983). Smith, however, ignores the role of economic factors in creating the conditions for the intervention of the intelligentsia. This paper suggested that the basis for the intelligentsia's actions in Nigeria is determined by the close structural relationship between political power, the state and class formation on one hand, and political power and popular democracy on the other. The tension between common good and privileged interests provides the opportunity for the intelligentsia to act.

This paper is not reducible to a simple class analysis. It involves a tension between common and privileged interests on one hand and privileged versus privileged interests on another hand with ethnicity mediating on both levels It is also not a matter of elites exploiting the masses by exploiting ethnic identity nor a matter of false consciousness on the part of non-elites. It is rather, a matter of both elites and ordinary people exploiting ethnicity. They are both engaged in a reciprocal process in which ethnic ties are used as bargaining tools. Ethnicity, unlike wealth or education or machine guns, or status, is equally available to both elites and non-elites (Frank, 1979). Elites employ ethnicity for electoral mobilization because it is the most readily available and efficient means for such purpose given the country's social circumstances. Non-elites respond to ethnicity because it is the principle of differentiation that is least disadvantageous to them (Frank, 1979). Hence, they too are engaged in the manipulation of ethnicity. Both elites and non-elites calculate the sacrifices and benefits to them and balance these according to circumstances which they may objectively or subjectively define. Such circumstances may be re-defined by the affected individuals and groups at any given time. Thus, it is an exchange in which the elite chop and the masses chop. l chop, you chop' (meaning I eat, you eat, that is, a quid pro quo) was the name for a party proposed by Fela, a popular musician, for the 1979 elections. The name reflected an awareness of the mundane reality beneath ethnic exchanges, and the nationalist rhetoric of party politics in Nigeria. The key factor in this complex system is reciprocity.

The model of ethnic groups in conflict portrayed by both nation-building and anti-nation-building theories is misleading. It assumes that a relatively united group A confronts a relatively united group B with reference to a specific issue or group of related issues. Many sociological problematics arise from this. How can one explain the existence of the particular issues, the form the conflict has taken, or the particular balance of power that has developed? How does one predict the future outcome of the current situation? The analytical value of such a model of groups in conflict is weakened by its teleological assumptions that the achievement of broad class, national, or ethnic group consciousness, is a normal, ordinary event that is universal and permanent. Yet, the achievement of broad class or ethnic group

consciousness is a rare event, often conflictual and even pathological in its end state, but usually partial and short-lived when it appears to have reached such a state (Brass, 1985).

Flexible Shifting Alliances of Intra and Inter- Ethnic Groups
In Nigeria, groups in conflict are fundamentally divided within themselves. In each solidary group there are several sub-groups. These sub-groups have actual and potential interaction within and across solidary boundaries. It is thus possible for sub-categories, for example elites or intelligentsia, from different ethnic groups, to collaborate in relation to common interests while retaining a strong sense of separate ethnic identity. Such inter-ethnic collaboration may be informal or formal. This is most evident in politics. For instance, the identity used by Akintola and Awolowo in the Struggle for political leadership in the Western Region in the First Republic was not the pan- Yoruba identity but their Yoruba sub-group identity. In both the First and Second Republics elites from different ethnic groups entered into multi-lateral, bi-lateral and trans-ethnic alliances which alternated according to changing circumstances. The Hausa/Fulani-controlled National Party of Nigeria (NPN) entered into an alliance with the Igbo-controlled Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) to form the federal government in the Second Republic just like they did in the First Republic. During the Second Republic, Governors of the five Oil Sates, belonging to three rival political parties two UPN, two NPN and one NPP bridged the bitter political divisions between their parties to unite in a common position over their share of the federated account.

The analytical implications of the Nigerian model are immense. This is because it is attentive to patterns of intersectional communication and collaboration between segments of separate ethnic groups, and between the state and particular sub-groups or groups. The relationship between the state and particular groups is very crucial as the state may be pursuing its nation-building to the advantage of particular groups within it. A major reason for the salience of ethnicity in modern and modernizing states is that it is often intimately related to issues of domination, hierarchy and stratification (Epstein, 1978).

Ethnicity and Constitutional Rationalism in Nation Building
In Nigeria, the place and role of the Hausa/Fulani in nation-building is a crucial one. Their domination of political power in Nigeria since independence is source of frustration and anger for other Nigerians and consequently it is seen as critical to the national question in the country (Ikime, 1987). The domination of power by this group is more interesting as the group is economically backward in relation to its two major rival is, the Yoruba and the Igbo. It is curious that an economically disadvantaged group can maintain political power over its economically more progressive and powerful rivals that occupy contiguous geographic areas. This skewed balance of power has sorely affected integration in Nigeria. It was the attempt to change it that led to the Nigerian Civil War, Other evidence from Africa, for instance Uganda and the Sudan, demonstrates that alliance between the state and some sectional groups is strenuous for integration.

One way that Nigeria has attempted to deal with this problem since the war is structural, that is by establishing a more plural federation and by constitutional rationalism. The new political changes have largely emancipated both the minorities and the state from the stranglehold of the three major ethnic groups whose security dilemma over the state brought Nigeria to the brink of dissolution. Because of the break-up of the three ethno-regional political blocs into smaller political units, the Nigerian state is now in a much stronger position than it was in the period before the war. None of the new units is in any position to challenge its authority and power as was the position before the war when legitimation of the state proved impossible to obtain. A strong Nigerian state means that the state has the capability to direct a positive focus of loyalty from its people to itself. As Leonard Tivey has claimed "the state does not merely reflect the qualities of nations, it fashions them" (Tivey, 1981).
Despite its enhanced power, the Nigerian state continues to be associated with Hausa Fulani Muslim domination. However, the Hausa Fulani threat could be contained by the fear that if that leads to secession on the part of other regions that would leave the Muslim north a rather poor state. It is thus in the economic interest of the Hausa/Fulani to keep Nigeria one.

Nationalism and Plural Federation in Nation Building
The division of the country into smaller political units has given prominent expression to the uncommon ethnicity of the numerous minority ethnic groups who together make up about half of the population. Ethnic relations in Nigeria has been approached from a tri-polar perspective of power-conflict between Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups. Such an approach is based on a faulty premise that the politics of Nigeria is the politics of ethnic majorities. It ignores the influence of the numerous minority ethnic groups who altogether constitute the other half of the population and consequently retards the understanding of the revolutionary and legitimation potentials of ethnic identities in nation-building. It is recognized that the ethnic minorities are a major force in Nigerian politics and nation-building. The principle of respect for ethnic difference obliges the major ethnic groups to consider not only each other but also their smaller neighbours. It is in the space between the major groups that minority cultures are able to prosper. They have exploited the rivalry between the major groups in order to negotiate political alliances to promote their interests. Keeping Nigeria, one is of major interest to this group of uncommon ethnicities. They are therefore the strangest supporters of Nigerian unity.
A crucial aspect of the new structural changes for nationalism and nation building concerns the role of the northern minorities, that is the peoples of the middle belt. These groups who were subjugated and denied identity by the dominant Hausa Fulani in the old Northern Region have now been trimmed down by the creation of a more pluralistic federation. The uncommon ethnicity of these minorities has found expression in Christianity. The struggle between these minorities and their former Muslim rulers is redrawing culture boundaries in Nigeria. The final outcome will no doubt have implications for nation-building in Nigeria.

Sociological and Psychological Analysis of Conflict in Nation Building
In explaining ethnic conflicts in Nigeria, this paper adopted both a sociological and a psychological position. It stressed one aspect at the expense of the other, it is useful to do so. One of the advantages of this approach is that it makes it possible to show the extent to which both perspectives are operative rather than asking which one has more explanatory power. It permits ethnic groups to be treated as partially primordial and partially structural, acknowledging that they can simultaneously adopt solidaristic and exclusionistic strategies of social closure. It sharpens awareness that the processes of collaboration or competition with other groups leads to new identities which may be broader or narrower than the preceding one. Ethnic identities would thus be seen as variable and dynamic, especially in political forms. This approach is useful for probing the links, reciprocity, and exchange systems in the interaction of ethnic groups. It helps to locate those instrumentalities linking members of the various ethnic groups together at many levels. It has the additional advantage of exposing those informal bonds that hold an over-arching system together by exploiting the very conflict that would otherwise be highly explosive. This is illustrated by the increasing conflictual and transformative role of religion in national life in Nigeria.

One of the basic assumptions underlying this paper is that conflict is a form of association. It is a consistent and recurrent feature of human grouping. Traditionally, political competition between the constituent Nigeria groups largely took the form of war, with its prize as honour and wealth in slaves or land for hunting, animal husbandry or agriculture. Now, inter-ethnic competition continues within the boundaries of a state which itself claims a legitimate monopoly of the use of physical force. Such competition therefore seldom takes the form of war but rather centres upon competition for state power, the distributive source of honour and wealth. Conflict can be beneficial to nationalism and nation-building. Its resolution can facilitate the tackling of an array of ethnic obstacles to national unity which would otherwise have been ignored. It may therefore help improve conditions for the advance of nation-building projects. For example, the defeat of Biafra in the war ensured the supremacy of the federal government. It symbolized triumph for Nigerian state-building process (Elaigwu, 1985). The federal government by projecting the war as a war of national unity, sowed the seeds of a truly Nigerian nationalism with the slogan: 'To Keep Nigeria One is A Task That Must Be Done'. The mass mobilization of the population for the war effort helped to diffuse an unprecedented sense of belonging and identity with Nigeria. The very task of fighting the war provided the first real national experience which was common to all Nigerians. For the first time, the educated elite and the unlettered masses saw

themselves as on a single common historical course (Ayandele, 1974). The war showed how interwoven the destinies of Nigerians had become over the years, marking the transformation of that Nigerian state from a 'mechanistic state to an 'organic' political community (Elaigwu, 1985). Few people would shed their blood for a 'mere geographical expression' to which they had no commitments (Elaigwu, 1985). By demonstrating the pathology of ethnic extremism, the experience of war mitigates the strident imperative of ethnicity (Kirk-Greene and Rimmer, 1981). Nigeria today is more integrated because of the terrible experience of the War (Ronen, 1976).

Psychological factors have been emphasized in the causation of ethnic conflict, but seldom have they been advanced or expressed as the fear of domination. Although Kirk Greene proposed the 'Angstkomplex theory' of ethnic conflict in Nigeria, this intuition was not sufficiently developed (Kirk-Greene, 1975). The pervasive significance of fears and anxieties about domination among the Nigerian ethnic groups suggest that analysts ought to be more attentive to the salience, importance and intensity of such fears and anxieties.

The concept of fear explains why ethnic boundaries are flexible. It stresses the historicity of ethnic identity and groups and explains their socialized nature. In doing this it acknowledges interactive variables and symbolic ethnic interests and values. Thus, it demonstrates that group cohesion is somehow instrumental, in other words that cohesion is both a function of emotions and of institutional factors. For instance, group integration decreases during a crisis when there is no available solution and increases if a likely cooperative solution is present (Hamblin, 1958). Thus, the consciousness of being different in relation to the wider society is of fundamental strategic importance to the Consciousness of belonging. It thus synthesizes the instrumentalist and the primordialist perspectives on ethnicity, reducing the need to choose between the two polar models, a tendency which has damaged the proper understanding of ethnicity. The role of fear in ethnicity makes it difficult, if not impossible for political engineering to produce predictable results. However, it also suggests that in those areas of social life where fear is blunted positive consequences for integration can be expected.

Critics have disputed the utility and validity of nation-building because of the persistence of ethnicity. Some critics have even given the impression that nation-building entails nothing but the destruction of distinctive ethnic cultures (Connor, 1978). To see nation-building solely in terms of its benefits as do the theorists of nation-building, or solely in terms of its sacrifices, as do many of their critics is to misunderstand the processes of nation-state formation.

Nation-building is a complex and difficult process. It involves social, cultural, political and economic sacrifices and benefits to the individuals and communities that constitute the state. The relative balance of these sacrifices and benefits varies or depends on circumstances, which may be objectively or subjectively defined, externally or internally induced, and which may be redefined by the affected individuals' sub-groups and groups, at any given time. National identification and what is believed to imply, is thus flexible, changing and shifting in the time, even in the course of quite short periods. This approach has the advantage of enabling issues like nations and nationalism to be discussed in terms of new and contextually meaningful models rather than obsolete ones. For example, it is useful for understanding the resurgence of ethnicity in western industrialized nation-states like Britain and the US it rejects the idea that ethnic pluralism ceases to be relevant in modern industrialized nation-states or that nationalism and nation-state-building are delimited by industrialization and modernization as Gellner's theory of nationalism implies (Gellner, 1983; 1964). According to him, industrialization would obliterate deep social abysses which could be activated by ethnically, and the old plethora of folk cultures are unlikely to survive except in a token and cellophane-packaged form (Gellner, 1983).

Conclusion
In this paper, the nation is approached as a dual phenomenon. It is essentially constructed from above by the state, but it cannot be understood unless also analysed from below, that is in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs and interests of the individuals and communities that constitute the state (Hobsbawm, 1990). The preoccupation of both modernization and post-modernization theories of

nation-building with the perspective of nation-building from above makes it difficult to pay adequate attention to the view from below. That view tells us more about how individuals and communities manage to maintain themselves within an ethnically-divided society demonstrating the links, exchange and operation that go on between ethnicity and nationalism in the process of nation-building. The descending approach tends to be more concerned with the survival of the state and those near to it. Consequently, it emphasizes privileged interests and the negative aspects of ethnicity in national life as ethnic elites use ethnic identities to struggle for the possession of state power. The complete picture of the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism in the nation-building process therefore requires that analysts pay attention to both official and popular views.

Ethnicity is not regarded as inimical to nationalism and nation-building in this paper. The salience of ethnicity as a dynamic of societal behaviour in Nigeria lies in the opportunistic and socialised nature of ethnic identities. Contemporary Yoruba, Igbo, Tiv, Ibibio or Hausa identities are historically modern identities, the product of the emergence, first of the colonial state and then of independent Nigeria. This development is significant for nation-building in Nigeria. Until the imposition of the colonial state on the groups, only the sub-groups constituted meaningful socio-political units' identity or similarity of language and culture did not necessarily result in common political action (Ikime, 1985). In that setting, it did not make sense to speak of Hausa, Yoruba, Ibibio, Igbo, Tiv. It made far more sense to speak of Kano, Katsina, Zazzau, Awka, Onitsha, Afikpo, Ife, Ijebu, Ondo, Oyo, that is in terms of groups that regarded themselves as socio-political units (Ikime, 1985). The growth of the groups to their present shape and size involved a degree of fusion of formerly separate ethnic and particularistic interests. It is, therefore, assumed in this paper that non-ethnic allegiances or interests may now, and more so in future, intersect contemporary ethnic ties in Nigeria. If and when that happens, it would contribute to the process whereby ethnic ties adjust to other circumstances. This is presently happening with Christian and Muslim identities increasingly becoming more important in Nigerian politics. Religious and Political party affiliation is taking the center stage of national affairs in Nigeria. These new identity has galvanized the north and west in Forth Republic and plural federalism has given the minorities access to national politics more than ever.

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