

THE DYNAMICS OF IDEOLOGY, ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM IN NIGERIA'S DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE, 1999-2019

By

YUSUF, WULEMAT BOLA

Department of Languages and Communications,
School of General Studies,
Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Nigeria.
+2348062660201

AMANA, ISAAC AKOGWU

Department of Social Science and Humanities,
School of General Studies,
Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Nigeria.
akogwuisaac.amana@yahoo.com
+2348056866264

HARUNA, RUTH ANYALEWA, PhD

Department of Accountancy,
Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Nigeria.
ranyalewa@yahoo.com
+2348036085428

ZEKERI, SUNDAY

Department of Public Administration,
School of Management Studies,
Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Nigeria.
+2348038505077

Abstract

National integration and development has defied purposeful programmes initiated by successive Nigerian administrations, resulting in a dysfunctional relationship between the federating units. The absence of a clear-cut national ideology or tradition may be responsible; however, not all nations today had assumed true national cohesion at inception of statehood. It is a product of evolution and reform of the imperfections that make up the national structure. That any administration will emerge in Nigeria without a narrow nationalist agitation appears dreadful, because trends from independence indicate consistent agitation, in form of minority rights protection, defence of religious rights and ethnic mobilisation. The Fourth Republic and emerging dynamics and lexicons attest to this endless trend. Thus, leaders from one geopolitical or ethnic direction witness dissention from other native areas as a form of rejection or protest against marginalisation. As it were, protest against failure or non-performance is admissible, but it remains unresolved whether the trend is driven by genuine national motives, if not, the end appears not in sight. This paper therefore examines the rationale for this 'trending nationalism' with a view to determining the prospects for national development. The study relied to a good extent on data from secondary sources, with a dint of evidences from living sires and eye witnesses. Descriptive method was adopted to investigate the how of every phenomenon. The Instrumentalist theory is adopted for explanations. It was observed that the trend of protest in the present pattern may not attenuate soon, indicating that citizens still remain attracted to their ethnic sources as resort. Sincere democratic processes by which everyone is involved, can assuage the intensity of the problem.

Indexing terms: Ideology, Ethnicity, Nationalism

1. INTRODUCTION

The political trends and lexicons that have characterised Nigeria's current democratic journey are among other things, the agitation for a Sovereign National Conference, the Niger Delta Militancy, the issues of marginalisation and imbalance in the army and the federal civil service, poverty, corruption, terrorism, power distribution among the three tiers and organs of government and the unabating call for review of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Agbu, 2000). More bothersome is the issue of internal democracy within the political parties - being a key institution and driver of democracy –and the ethnic colouration of political parties, which comes to light during the national conventions and post primaries (Agbu, 2000). Perhaps, this phenomenon demonstrates the lack of ideological persuasions because their intensity threatens the existence of political parties themselves. The few occasions political parties in Nigeria have attempted to define their ideological persuasions, they have rather portrayed the radicalism and conservatism with which they pursue their objectives. The Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) led by Mallam Aminu Kano broke away from the Northern People's Congress (NPC) on the grounds that it preferred a *Talakawa* led social change rather than an elite or nobility led movement (Falola T. and Heaton M.M, 2008). The breakaway of the Zikist Movement, a youth arm of the National Congress of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) which professes the Fabian Socialist ideology is akin to a high ideological suasion - the *Sawaba* Declaration of NEPU in 1950 (Chukwumerije, 2009). These circumstances contrast with a similar one 1903 Congress in Brussels, to recognise the Russian Social Democrats, where the party broke into two factions. Lenin's proposal that the party be limited to only the elite and active participants was opposed by Martov, who believed in a mass party arrangement that ushered in the bolshevik and the menshevik minority opposition (Alade, 1997). Such differences can occur in the technique of philosophical movements; however, the ideals remain the same.

There is a general understanding that ideology is central to the strength, viability, and solidarity of political parties. It also shows how parties differ from each other politically. It is rife to state that political parties in Nigeria suffered the absence of cohesive ideologies, which can plausibly be explained from their nature as power-seeking parties that makes it easier for them to adjust to convenience rather than ideological coherence and consistency (Egwu, 2015).

The lenses of political philosophy in Nigeria are infested by the traction of reactions to the state of political configurations than by preoccupation with envisioning the ideal society and how it can be achieved. Democratic ideology becomes the instrument of social and political mobilisation to build political frontier among groups and agencies, to the extent that the very institutions that tripod democracy remain diluted. It can be argued that the subjective elements of the current democratic obligation area pursuit of a dream far from realistic. The goals of ethnicity and primordial attachments becloud the political thoughts.

Beginning from the era of colonial rule, Nigerians have demonstrated their awareness of the rights of any people to freedom from domination, and the right to self-determination. The processes leading to nationalist movements started with the exposition of Nigerians to the frailty of the white man on one hand and to the black man's democratic rights to membership of groups on the other, through attendance at congresses. The National Congress for British West Africa (NCBWA) secured the rights to vote from the colonialists, which development informed the formation of political parties in order to contest election into the legislative council (Iweriebor, 2014). Despite the variety of political associations and their regional appeals, the common ideological goal was freedom from domination and the institution of

democracy, where the participation of every Nigerian in governance will be guaranteed. The idea of nationhood then was a defined territorial delineation within which these rights and freedoms will be exercised.

Sixty years after independence, the goals of political association and the ideology of nationhood remain albeit narrow and intense. The regional appeals among political parties and the yearning for democracy as a means of enlistment have rather been driven by ethnic suasions. The recurring maxim of restructuring which has dominated the Nigerian political space today does not portray any improvement beyond the pre-independence period when the goals of a democratic and free society becloud the nationalists' dream to the extent that modalities for achieving the dream society was lost. Looking at the commonality of interests, it is nebulous at what point the nationalist ideology of democracy and its consolidation was substituted with ethnic nationalism. Colonialism had been proposed by the Nkrumahist metamorphose into a neo-colonial stage. Little can be said whether Nigeria and Africa are undergoing the prescribed stage of colonialism by other means, or the democratic transition has skipped the stage of democratic consolidation.

Why has the national independence not produced a nation in the sense of solidarity in Nigeria? What are the elements of nationalism that have challenged loyalty to the centre? Are there prospects of the survival of the state and if yes, can there be genuine national cohesion and national development? The aim of this research is to examine the factors responsible for the absence of commitment to the ideal Nigerian nationhood where democracy and development thrives. Other objectives of the research are to examine how national independence has fostered national cohesion in Nigeria. To determine the nationalist components which have continued to generate and sustain narrow sub-national identities and to examine the prospects and challenges of true national solidarity and development.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

2.1. Ideology

The term ideology was devised by the French Philosopher Destutt de Tracy on May 23, 1797 to describe the science of ideas, policies, sensations and emotions (Johari, 2013; Omotola, 2009; Nnoli, 2003). Ideology refers to a form of values and objectives, inflexibly spelt out and rabidly adhered to, which serves as the identity and persuasion of individuals or groups (Phillips, 1964). It serves as a durable conviction and platform which determines political parties' attitude and official position on matters including the management of conflicts and its own legitimisation. Characteristically, ideology can be sacred like religious beliefs and resistant to fundamental changes, though it may not be permanent (Nnoli, 2003). Ideology serves certain purposes; apart from being central to the strength, viability, commitment of people and cohesion of a party, it also differentiates parties from each other within the body polity (Vassallo & Wilcox, 2006; Volkens & Klingemann, 2002). The movement or mobilisation for change from an existing order or a total change to a new order in a society can be inspired by ideology.

Illustrations show that despite their incompatibility, liberalism (being individualistic) and conservatism being (welfarist) existed side by side as prominent ideologies in Western democracies especially in USA and UK. It is commonly held that Nigeria does not have an ideology, this does not mean that there are no values at all, which Nigeria seeks to pursue, rather there is no unanimity in terms of commonness among policy makers and scholars alike, to which all policies must conform. This may be owing to the lack of a national heritage or a common history of nationhood (Phillips, 1962). Nigeria may be perceived as a

free and egalitarian state that lacks a mutual phenomenon around which solidarity was woven. It explains why parties in Nigeria are pliable to changes rather than to consistent philosophical rationality. It behoves us to ask in the first place, what ideology undergirds Nigeria's political parties?

Western liberal democracy was adopted by Nigerian nationalists as a model of nation building. However, Western democracy itself seems to be at the verge of relapsing into the end of its own organic end of ideology (Fukuyama 2006). To Fukuyama, (2006) the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy peak of human governance. The state that emerges at the end of history is liberal in so far as it recognises and protects through a system of law, man's universal right to freedom, and democratic insofar as it exists only with the consent of the governed, (Fukuyama, 2006). African ideals have remained in the methodological socialist text expressed in Julius Nyerere's '*Ujamaa*' (Campbell, 1972) or Muamar Ghaddafi's 'Third Universal Theory' or 'Third World Alternative' (Quaddafi, 1976). African ideologies have been reactionary, they take the form of nationalism rather than the prognostic Western capitalist ideas or the Eastern socialist type.

It is rife that political parties in Nigeria suffered the absence of cohesive ideologies, which can plausibly be explained from their nature as power-seeking parties that made it easier to adjust to convenience rather than ideological coherence and consistency (Egwu, 2015). They produce 'vague and fuzzy' interpretations of liberalism and free market principles such as 'Fabian Socialist' that are delivered for its ideology. Evidently, this was meant to satisfy specific interests: perhaps its rich benefactors, or simply to wax its liberal credentials. The benefactors could be the colonialists who tended to influence the political parties towards the ends of de-radicalising the nationalist movements and delaying the process of independence. (Chukwumerije, 2009) On this ground, the political parties were to remain as agents of the West, from whom they inherited the political orientation. Scholars have thus continued to blame colonialism for the nebulous ideological atmosphere in Nigeria and Africa. Kwanashie (2011) has postulated that colonialism by its very nature could not and did not create Nigerian nationhood rather it perpetuated existing cleavages and created new ones; it prevented and created obstacles to nation- building in Nigeria. Egwu (2015) has also corroborated the view that the problem of African ethnicity was the bifurcated nature of the colonial state which organized rural and urban power differently in order to fragment resistance, with the state playing a crucial role in its reproduction. In the same vein, Akinrinade (2016) averred that the western educated elite inherited the colonial character and coloured its agenda of modernisation, sustained by the tyranny of imposed ideologies.

2.2. Ethnicity

The perception of common origin, history, memory, identity and solidarity wielded around shared standards, values, objectives and hopes as defined by Chazan, (1992 in Agbu, 2011) is an anthropological approach to the understanding of ethnicity. However, that ethnicity is a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups as put succinctly by Nnoli, (1978 cited in Agbu, 2011) is highly informative, though semantic. Foremost thinkers maintained the idea that in family attachments, there is a substantial social value that can only be called primordial. Further arguments that this is because there is an ineffable significance attributed to the ties of blood.

Also, interpretations are taken from the mobilisation of ethnicity as historical force and the political instrument of the ruling class, towards the shaping and construction of state power

and democracy (Egwu, 2015). Ethnicity is invoked by interests which are not necessarily described in ethnic terms, for it could be mobilized in pursuit of perceived 'ethnic interest' or not related to ethnic interests at all. Therefore, of concern in this research is how ethnicity, ethnic nationalism and democracy relate as the core ideological elements in political deployment and struggle, and how they are used to create political boundaries between differently situated social clusters and agencies in the words of Omotola (2009).

2.3. Nationalism

Nationalism is ambiguous, meaning in one context the ideological tool of dominant states, meant to consolidate the unity of their population (Balber and Wellerstein 1988). The word nationalism expresses different realities: a love of country, the assertion of national identity and national dignity, but also the xenophobic obsession to obtain these things through violence and sacrificing other nations. Nationalism builds on ethnocentrism towards the in-group, and xenophobia towards the out-group. The psychological dimension of nationalism may be, in one context, to emphasise the establishment of a bond between the individual and the nation based on the idea that the nation is a family in a larger circle.

Nationalists may in fact have been accused of allying with European authorities to get rid of the dreadful group or groups. When 'modern' nationalism began in Northern Nigeria it is said to have been directed against Southerners and the Northern nationalist leaders were prepared to tolerate European rule until such a time that these southerners had been dislodged from their position in the colonial machinery and the likelihood of their dominating a Nigerian state removed. Rather it arose from the very nature of the colonial situation, especially from the way the colonial economy was organized and operated (Kwanashie, 2011). While some scholars have sought a class analysis as against a purely tribal one- of the Nigerian political scene in the terminal colonial period and after, this analysis is still carried out within Coleman's basic framework which equates colonialism with modernization and sees Nationalism as a product of this modernization.

Basically, ideology and ethnicity whether taken from the narrow or the broad perspectives, stimulate nationalist contents in social and political ventures by defining the form and character of groups and organisations. Political parties in Nigeria are characterised at inception by ethnic patriotism, aimed at creating more representation for their people under the colonial system. Through the current dispensation, the motives for political party formation have remained the same, thereby generating unanticipated reactions from the losers or the form of protest which often resort to violence and even war as it occurred in 1967-70. Eliciting examination is whether the narrow nationalism is characteristic of all heterogeneous societies or whether it is prevalent only in monolithic societies. The nexus we wish to establish here is that ideology and nationalism mobilise political structures represented by political parties. The near absence of ideology in Nigeria's political parties therefore makes Nigeria's nationalism fluid, and pliable, without substance. Nationalism becomes an ideology in the views of Kwanashie, (2011) and Egwu, (2015) for the galvanisation of linguistic, religious and ethnic support.

4. AN OVERVIEW OF IDEOLOGY, ETHNICITY, NATIONALISM AND PARTY POLITICS IN NIGERIA

Trends and Trajectory

The earliest forms of political organisation in Nigeria started as a method of protest against colonial ordinances, such as the Newspaper Ordinance of 1903, the Seditious Offences

Ordinance of 1909 (Iweriebor, 2014). Iweriebor (2014) postulated that Nigerians have a social democratic culture and tradition established by convention, the art of participation and contribution to the formulation of policies. The intelligentsia from the 1920s led the People's Union (PU), the Nigerian Reform Association (NRA), the Nigerian branches of the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and subsequently Herbert Macaulay's Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), towards the enforcement of the social rights of Nigerians. Nigeria's first political party the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) was established in 1923 by the intelligentsia in view of the need to contest elections into the new Legislative Council. Among the nationalist agitators were Herbert Macaulay, Joseph Egerton Shyngle, Eric Moore, C.C Adeniyi – Jones, Dr. Adeyemo Alakija and Dr. J.T Caulcrick (Iweriebor, 2014). The NNDP's statement of objectives among others included to secure the welfare and safety of the people and to struggle for democracy “until the realization of its ambition of a government of the people, by the people and for the people (Iweriebor, 2014).

The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM), National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC), the Zikist Movement (ZM), the Northern Elements Progressive Association (NEPA), F.O Coker's Nigerian Labour Party(NLP), the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), Action Group (AG), the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) emerged between the 1930s and 1950s (Iweriebor, 2014). Nigerian parties allegedly had very limited and self-serving objectives targeted against the colonial objective of obtaining legitimacy for the colonial government through very limited franchise restricted to Lagos and Calabar following the introduction of elective principles by the Cliffords Constitution. In terms of character, the NPC was an essentially conservative and elitist party, while the AG and NCNC appeared to be progressive and welfarist, predicated upon the socialist ideology. They were also driven by a commitment to the Nationalist struggle. The ambiguity in respect of their ideological disposition can further be gleaned from the pattern of alignment between /among the parties. For example, the resolve of the NPC and NCNC, two ideologically incompatible parties, the former to the right and the latter to the left, to enter into the alliance that formed the government during the First republic attests to this.

During the second Republic, there was a mere replacement of the old political parties with new names, including the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) and the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) replacing the NPC, AG and NCNC, respectively. Others were the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP), and later Nigerian Advance Party (NAP). Political vagrancy permeates the political landscape, leaving in its wake major realignments and coalitions among the parties (Osaghae, 1998 in Omotola, 2009). Notably, the formation of the so-called forum of the “progressive” governors consisting of PRP, GNPP, NPP and UPN was unable to survive long, as the ruling NPN used its federal might and patronage to attract decampers from other parties. Eventually, it succeeded in wooing the NPP of the East, in a manner reminiscent of the First Republic into an alliance, which like the earlier one, collapsed sooner than expected. The NPP and GNPP appeared to be liberal in ideology with a strong belief in mixed economy: the NPN conservative with emphasis on free market system and respect for traditional institutions. The PRP, a leftist and most radical party had a populist, anti- neo-colonial agenda and advocates social revolution and income redistribution: and the UPN: the most disciplined, socialist/welfarist in orientation was based on the philosophy of free education and health care delivery (Ojo, 2014; Omotola, 2009).

The experiences of the botched Third Republic pertain to the official formation of parties by the state after a series of experiments with different political associations (Oyediran and Agbaje, 1991 in Omotola, 2009). The political parties imposed by the military government were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC), the former being a little to the left and the latter a little to the right (Omoruyi, 2002 in Omotola, 2009). This has been as part of the grand design to execute a “hidden agenda” to perpetuate the military regime in power (Osaghae, 1998 in Omotola, 2009). Ordinarily, the existence of two political parties should represent two basically different ideological camps, as has been the case between the Labour and Conservative parties in Britain and Democrats and Republican parties in the USA. This was not the case with respect to the SDP and NRC in Nigeria. Although, while one was a little to the left and the other a little to the right, nothing much differentiates the parties, at least not in ideological dispositions (Jinadu, 2012).

Those of the Fourth Republic are obviously worse. According to him, the PDP, for example, draws its founders from “all and sundry political persuasions: conservatives, radicals and progressives (Omoruyi, 2002 in Omotola, 2009).

Although the PDP and APP (ANPP) were status quo-parties, given their capitalist and conservative dispositions: and the AD progressive and radical in appearance, none of them seems to have clear policy positions as a basis of popular mobilization and legitimacy of their actions (Omotola, 2009). Rather, they were products of adversarial elite behaviour taken to the points of irreconcilability. Nigerian parties have not been able to attain a reasonable degree of institutionalization especially in the areas of internal cohesion and discipline. For example, between 1999 and 2005, the PDP has been led by Chief Solomon Lar, Barnabas Gemade, Audu Ogbe, Ahmadu Ali and later Vincent Ogbulafor (Omotola, 2009). One obvious fact is that in none of these changes was succession orderly, open, free, independent and reflective of the actual wishes of the party faithfully. Rather, each was predicated upon the whims and caprices of a given section of the party elite led by the president (Iyare, 2005 in Omotola, 2009).

First, is the compelling reality of the disappearance of left/ right divide from Nigerian political parties, which has resulted in a situation in which conflicts are focused on the issue of personalities, ethnic groups, and geo-political zones in their mobilization strategies (Egwu, 2015). The second but related issue relates to the fact that all the political parties since 1999 have imposed liberal economic policies supported by the Bretton Woods institution on the country, in contravention of the spirit of the social democratic provisions in chapter Two of the constitution on the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, which is expected to be the guiding principles for the development of party manifestos and programmes (Egwu, 2015).

However, the Nigerian experience portrays a paradox of contract illustrating Gunnar Myrdal’s concept of the ‘hanging state’ or the ‘over-developed state.’ Western liberal democracy which already seems at its close to be returning full circle to where it started not only justifies an ‘end of ideology’ but exposes a vacuum for Africa in ideological space. Fukuyama (2006) argues that the end of history refers to the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. The state that emerges at the end of history is liberal in so far as it recognises and protects through a system of law man’s universal right to freedom, and democratic insofar as it exists only with the consent of the governed Fukuyama (2006). African ideals have remained in the methodological socialist text expressed in Julius Nyerere’s ‘*Ujamaa*’ (Campbell, 1972) or Muamar Ghaddafi’s ‘Third Universal Theory’ or

‘Third World Alternative’ (Quaddafi, 1976) African ideologies have been reactionary taking the form of nationalism rather than the prognostic Western capitalist ideas or the Eastern socialist.

4.1. Military Rule

Of Nigeria’s sixty-two years of independence, the military held power for a substantial period; substantial not merely for the length of time, but for the volume of wealth acquired during the era, especially the oil boom of 1970s, being the peak of Nigeria’s wealth. The Nigerian military seized power in an unprecedented instance in 1966, leading to the emergence of Aguiyi Ironsi as the Head of State. It was followed by a counter-coup which brought Gen Yakubu Gowon to power. In 1975, the government was taken over by General Murtala Muhammed because Gen Yakubu Gowon reneged on his promise to end the transition to civil rule. The transition programme of General Murtala Muhammed and General Olusegun Obasanjo commenced on July 20th, 1975 when General Mohammed was proclaimed the new military head of state, having terminated the regime of General Yakubu Gowon also for low performance and ineptitude.

As part of the process of securing legitimacy, General Mohammed pledged to hand over to a democratically elected civilian government on 1st October 1979 after he might have successfully implemented his transition time table. General Murtala Muhammed was removed by Colonel Dimka in an abortive coup of February 13th, 1976. With the assassination of Murtala Muhammed, General Obasanjo, who took over the reins of power, wasted no time in implementing the transition programs, towards handing over power on October 1st, 1979. On September 21st, 1978, the ban on party politics was lifted and five political parties were registered by FEDECO including the Unity Party of Nigeria (U.P.N), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP), and Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) (Omotola, 2009).

President Shehu Shagari won in an election whose result was contested by the UPN on ground of irregularities and considered incredible. Without waiting for the outcome of any judicial processes, Gen Obasanjo handed over power on 1st October, 1979. Barely three months after the commencement of the second term, General Muhammadu Buhari took over government in a coup *d’etat*. After twenty months in power, the draconian rule, which prohibited political activities and closed land borders was overthrown by General Ibrahim Babangida specifically on 27 August, 1985. General Babangida started the political activities towards a transition to civil rule in 1992 (Omotola, 2009).

However, despite the conduct of the most acclaimed popular, free and fair election, the result was annulled and the winner, M.K.O. Abiola was denied his mandate. Following heated protests, General Babangida ‘stepped aside’ for a transition government which was overthrown by General Sani Abacha in 1993, leading to a low in Nigeria’s political programme. In a nation-wide broadcast on July 20th, 1998, General Abubakar terminated the Abacha transition, and announced a new transition program that would culminate in the transfer of power to elected civilians on May 29th, 1999. A new electoral body known as Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) was established to oversee the registration of parties, voters, and conduct elections (Egwu, 2015).

4.2. The Civil War

The Nigerian Civil War was remarkable in Nigeria’s political development in that it left an indelible footprint in Nigeria’s relations internally and internationally; albeit positively and

negatively too. Earlier in September, 1966, the coup and counter coup had generated ethnic tension leading to the massacre of Igbo Christians in the north (Okolo, 2010). The military governor of the south east, Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu citing this pogrom in the north and the electoral fraud which informed the first military coup, declared the independence of the Republic of Biafra on May 30, 1967 (Okolo, 2010). Following the failure of the Aburi Accord, the war began on 6 July, 1967 and lasted for thirty months. Four neighbouring countries supported Biafra and opened their ports for use in delivery of military wares and platforms to the Biafran soldiers. While the war made Nigeria to intensify integration efforts internally through Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Rebuilding regime, the lessons of the wars made Nigeria to intensify efforts at creating cordial relations.

4.3. The Minority Issues

The struggle for minority rights in Nigeria intensified as way back in the 1950s, as a result of real or potential fear of marginalisation of the minority groups by the dominant ethnic groups, who apparently enjoyed patronage of the colonialists, especially the regional arrangement that conferred majority advantage on the dominant three. The Willink Minority Commission, whose report, Bill of Rights, took after the European Convention on Human Rights pattern was set up by the colonial government in 1957 (Izuagie, 2016). Eliciting further conceptualisation is how best the minority can be represented than inclusion and good governance, because neither the Bill nor the creation of states which some of the minorities later enjoyed has really assuaged the apprehension.

4.4. The June 12 Legacy

The credibility of the June 12, 1993 election adjudged as the most free, fair and popular election in the annals of Nigerian history lay in its traverse across ethnic and religious lines and the acquiescence of the majority of Nigerians (Okorie, 2020). Several factors may be responsible, from the candidate to the level of poverty, but most importantly the exasperation of military rule. It bears witness that the absence of ideological suasions among Nigerian political parties may not be far from the absence of a leader in the class of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere amongst others who led freedom fights among their people. Invariably the process of independence shows some degree of dissension among Nigerians, or the other way round it appeared that some sections of the country were comfortable with the colonial system and were not in haste to regain freedom. Leading to the elections, the political parties though born out of government ingenuity, appeared ideologically different and cut across ethnic and religious lines, but the insincerity of the government was illustrated by the annulment. The spectre of the deceit may trail Nigeria, may be into the near future.

4.5. Niger Delta Militancy

Another dynamic that has characterised Nigeria's political space is the militancy in the Niger Delta region, a form of minority agitation albeit violent, which started in the 1960s led by Isaac Boro, and peaked in 1998 with the Kaiama Declaration by the Ijaw Youth Council asking oil companies to suspend exploration owing to land degradation (Otoghile & Eghweree, 2010; Otoghile & Okonmah, 2009). The agitation had culminated in the hanging of the 'Ogoni 9' whose reactions threw Nigeria into the darkest phase of its international relations. The ensuing government response through military clamp down on the militants of various nomenclatures was ineffective, as militant activities continued to affected oil production and therefore government revenue. It was not until the Yar'Adua government set

up a technical committee and granted amnesty to the militants who were ready to surrender their arms that the crisis declined (Otoghile & Eghweree, 2010).

5. SOME DYNAMICS OF NIGERIAN POLITICS IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

The undercurrents that have characterised Nigerian polity in the Fourth Republic include the call for sovereign national conference, the Sharia Law saga during the first few years; the ethnic movements like the Indigenous People of Biafra, the Odua Peoples' Congress, the Arewa Consultative Forum; the Boko Haram insurgency and other forms of criminality; and the call for restructuring. It is common knowledge that Sharia Law predominated the northern Nigeria especially the emirate councils before the establishment of colonial rule and independence. However, it remains expressly stated in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, that Nigeria is a secular state. In a controversial circumstance, in year 2000, Sani Yerima, then governor of Zamfara State introduced Sharia as the state religion, to be followed by 11 other northern states (Okekeocha & Ewoh, 2013). Incidentally, the then President Obasanjo was a southerner, thereby it raises the question of sincerity in the whole gesture.

The call for convention of sovereign national conference may have been sparked up by the experience of Benin Republic and the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election by Gen Ibrahim Babangida. The agitation continued into a larger part of the first 12 years of the fourth Republic, until President Obasanjo and President Jonathan convened national conferences in 2005 and 2014 (Cheri, 2014). One of the questions this demand generated was the issue of sovereignty where there's an elected parliament. Though not in the views of the Pro National Conference Group (PRONACO) a sovereign national conference, the tension doused to some extent.

Founded on 29 August, 1994 towards actualising the rights of the Yoruba at the hands of the military, dominated by the northerners, the group continued to advance its course through protests and international mobilisation on print and electronic media (Abdulazeez, 2020). This movement yielded the Campaign for Democracy and the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO). What appears to be a difference among the members of the OPC was the position of the two leaders, Fasehun and Adams on whether to accept the Abacha transition programme (Abdulazeez, 2020). Ideologically speaking, it was more of an ethnic nationalism targeted against leadership headed by a section of the country on the grounds of marginalisation rather than fashioning any strategic pathway to governance.

More worrisome is the activities of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) which has intensified since 2012 under the leadership of Nnamdi Kanu, as a radical arm of the movement for the actualisation of the rights to self-determination in international law. Their activities have given the Nigerian government little sleep, thereby drawing the harmer of proscription by the Nigerian government in September, 2017 (Jonah, *et al*, 2021). It can be observed that the agitation for the state of Biafra has remained consistent since the era of the Civil War, merely changing in intensity and publicity. The paramount question begging for answers is whether an Igbo presidency was enough to attenuate or eliminate the agitation. It could have been a means of settlement in the past, but has assumed a worrying stature in the last few years.

Boko Haram insurgency and other forms of criminality in the north east of Nigeria peaked within the period under review. Precisely, in the year 2009, the activities of the sect heightened with the extra judicial killing of its leader Muhammed Yusuf (Falode, 2016). It later assumed a national and an international concern, however, the activities had more of a

doctrinal and religious colouration than ethnic crises. The death toll and level of destruction made it one of the most devastating crises Nigeria has had to handle in decades.

The concept of restructuring has assumed a resounding decimal in Nigeria owing to its unending discourse as early as the immediate post-colonial periods. It has come to be understood from one angle as the concentration of powers in the centre, or the excessive concentration, control and management of power and resources by the Federal Government, which is not in tandem with the letter and spirit of federalism. In another realm, it has been used to describe the lop-sidedness of military and civil service structures and appointments to the advantage of one section of the country and the detriment of the other sections of the country (Mathew, 2017 cited in Iwegbu & Uwaifo, 2020). It may mean different things to the different peoples of Nigeria, for example while restructuring to the people of eastern Nigeria means the opportunity to secede, to the Yorubas of western Nigeria it means regionalism and resource control, as much as it refers to the south-south of Nigeria too. It is obvious that the calls for restructuring are coming from the opposition whose kith and kin are not in power at the time in question intermittently. The call for restructuring and the resistance to them are politically motivated, to drive self-interest even at the call for national unity (Baba & Aeyssinghe, 2017 in Othman, Osman & Mohammed, 2019).

6. THE THEORY

Under the label of instrumentalism one can range a variety of approaches which are based on the idea that ethnicity is the result of economic, social or political processes, and hence that it is by definition a flexible and highly adaptable tool. Ethnic groups have no fixed boundaries; they are rather collective entities which change in size according to changing conditions. As to individuals, not only are they not assigned permanently to an ethnic group, but they can be members of more than one at the same time. Ethnicity is then seen as dynamic (Ogbu, 2011). Some instrumentalists insist that ethnic affiliation is simply a ploy to promote economic interests, and that individuals are ready to change group membership if that suits their sense of security or their economic interests. Marxists have tended to see ethnicity as false consciousness, as a ruse of the dominant groups to hide class interests of a material kind. Furthermore, the persistence of ethnic ties in modern societies do not quite tally with the expectations of Marxist theorists, who predict that these ties will eventually fade away and be substituted by working class solidarity. The greatest achievement of Marxist Scholarship in the deconstruction of ethnicity is to characterize it as a form of “false consciousness” and to demonstrate its essentially obscurantist role in the social process (Egwu, 2015).

Ethnicity according to Instrumentalists is somewhat twisted and preserved by an irregular reduction of economic exploitation and that ethnicity as a tool is used by individuals and groups. It thrives mainly within the political process and is part and parcel of similar political affiliations, thus not inherently conflictual (Agbu, 2011).

7. CONCLUSION

This study has underlined the fact that ethnicity has usually beclouded the ideological and nationalist arrangements that drive political parties prior to Nigeria’s independence. From the fore goings too, it appears there has not been remarkable changes regarding political party structures and the objective of national cohesion since independence. Not even theoretical prescriptions of the character and the principles of political parties in Nigeria seem to be accurate because of the amorphous conception of what is called nationhood within the definition of the political parties. Democracy is a philosophy; therefore, it appears that

Nigerians had not been acculturated to liberal democracy owing to the colonial pattern of administration that created a disparate system within the same colony.

The colonial factor is not enough explanation for continued absence of the vision of a nation of Nigerian's dream, not to talk of the strategic pattern towards achieving the goals. Not even the absence of a shared value around which solidarity could be wielded adequately justifies the absence of ideological lines along which parties tinker. Political parties cannot deliver beyond the vision of its leadership and founding fathers. Therefore, given the prevailing configuration, where leaders of political parties can be individuals without intellectual fervour and elected executives are legitimately absolute and statutorily leaders of the party in power, the hope of purposeful leadership in the near future is farfetched. Ethnic nationalism may therefore remain with us for a reasonable time. One of the questions that elicits further studies is whether the purported marginalisation to which stakeholders have responded through ethnic mobilisation is realistic.

The assumption of ownership of the state by executives, the concentration of powers in their hands, their immunity and excessive wages accruing to their service must be altered. Therefore, barring the antagonism it might elicit, while chief executives should be considered like heads of institutions, the legislature whether part-time or regular must earn the equivalents of Permanent Secretaries, Professors and their equivalents. When the objective of leadership becomes service to the nation, the degree of appeal that evokes money-politics and do or die electioneering will wane.

7. REFERENCES

- Abdulazeez, Y. (2013) Odua People's Congress and the Changes in Nigeria's Political and Security Structures. *Journal of Social Cultural and Political Protest*, 12 (2) 235-243 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1089/14742837.2012.704175>
- Agbu, O. A. (2000) The Challenges of Democratisation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, Nigerian Forum, *A Journal of Opinion on World Affairs* (Special Issues on The Challenges of Democratisation in Nigeria, First Volume) Vol.21(3-4) pp.59-69
- Agbu, O. A. (2011) Ethnicity and Democratisation in Africa: Challenges for Politics and Development. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Discussion Paper 62. www.nai.uu.se
- Akinrinade, S. (2016) A Society Under Pressure: Thoughts on Leadership, Followership and the Reinvention of the Nigerian State. *Journal of African History, Publication of the Historical Society of Nigeria*. Vol.25 Makurdi:
- Alade, C. A. (1997) *Readings in Russian History from Tsarist Absolutism to the 1905 Revolution*. Lagos: Elmi Educational Ltd,
- Campbell, S. and Rodney, W. (1972) "Tanzanian Ujamaa and Scientific Socialism", *African Review*, Dar es Salaam: www.marxists.org Assessed 10 May, 2017
- Cheri, L. (2014) National Conference: Answering the Nigerian National Question. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* Vol.19 (5) 36-39 doi:10.9790/0837-19533639
- Chukumerije, U. (2009) Nigerian Political Parties: The Need for Ideology. A Lecture Presented at the 26th Memorial Anniversary of Mallam Aminu Kano, held at Sa'adaZungur Auditorium, Mambayya House on April 17, accessed from www.gamji.com/news8583 on May 12.
- Egwu S. (2015) Technology of Power and Dramaturgy of Politics: Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. UniJos Inaugural Lecture Series 72, Jos. July 9,

- Eniemeh, M. E. Ibrahim, S. Y. (2011) Ethnic Politics and Nigerian Democracy: The Way Forward, *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences (IJRISS)* VOL: 5 (II) February, pp. 177-186
- Falode, J. A. (2016) The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War 2010-2015. A Strategic Analysis. *Perspectives on Terrorism* Vol.10 (1) 41-52
- Falola, T. and Heaton, M. M. (2008) A History of Nigeria. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. www.cambridge.org/9780526081575. Retrieved on 11 May, 2017
- Falola, Toyin. and Heaton, M. Mathew, A History of Nigeria, United Kingdom:2008. Cambridge University Press. www.cambridge.org/9780526081575. accessed on 11/5/2017 5.00p.m
- Fukuyama, F. (2006) The End of History? In Chan, S. and Moore, C. (Eds) *Theories of International Relations. Vol.II Approaches to International Relations: Pluralism*. London: Sage Publications Ltd. pp.313-
- Iwegbu, C. J. &Uwaifo, E. C., (2020) The Principle of Effective and Efficient Restructuring and the Future of the Nigerian Nation: The Role of Social Science Education. *UJAH* Vol.21 (3) 2020 (Special Edition) 47-65 <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ujah.v21i3.3>
- Iweriebor, E. (2014) Origins of Nigeria's Democratic Traditions, The Struggle for Rights and Freedom: 1880s-1960. In Uhomoibhi, M. &Iweriebor, E. (Eds) *Strengthening Democratic Traditions and Institutions in Nigeria*. Abuja: Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
- Izuagie, L. (2019) The Willink Minority Commission and Minority Rights in Nigeria, *Ekpoma Journal of Theatre and Media Arts*, August (EJOTMAS) Doi:10.4314/ejotmas.v5i1-2.16 accessed 20221023 at <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308531248>
- Jinadu, A. L. (2012) Theoretical Perspectives on Nigeria's Foreign Policy. In Anyaoku E. ed. *of Nigeria's Foreign Policy: Issues and Perspectives*, Lagos: Presidential Advisory Council on International Relations and Nigerian Institute of International Affairs,
- Johari, J. C. (2013) Contemporary Political Theory, New Dimensions, Basic Concepts and Major Trends, New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, (Reprint)
- Jonah, O. I., Ochuba O. O., Onuoha, I. J. O. &Onu, P. A., (2021) Biafra Separatism and National security in Nigeria. *University of Nigeria Journal of Political Economy*: Vol. 11 (2) 546-573
- Kwanashie, G. A. (2011) Nationalism and Nation-Building: Some Observations on the Nigerian Experience under Colonial Rule, in Seminar Series, History Department, ABU Zaria.
- Llobera, J. R.(1999) Recent Theories of Nationalism, University College London WP núm. 164 Institut de Ciències Polítiquesi Socials Barcelona
- Nnoli, O. (2003) Introduction to Politics. Enugu: PACREP, Revised 2nd Edition.
- Ojo, E. O. (2014) The Military and the Challenge of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Positive Skepticism and Negative Optimism. *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Volume 15, (4)
- Okekeocha, C. & Ewoh, A. I. E. (2013) Questioning the Constitutionality of Sharia Law in some Nigerian States. *African Social Science Review*, Vol.6 (1) 15-28 <http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/assr/vol6/iss1/2>
- Okolo, P. O. (2010) The Nigerian Civil War: Its Causes and Lessons for the Future. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358969803>
- Okorie, E. N. (2020) Okorie, Annulment of the June 12 1993 Presidential Election and the Elusive Question of Democracy in Nigeria. *South East Political Review (SEPSR)* Vol.5 (1)

- Omotola, S. (2009) Nigerian Political Parties and Political Ideology, *Research Gate*.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/40542718>
- Othman, M. F., Osman, N. & Mohammed, I. S., (2019) Restructuring Nigeria: The Dilemma and Critical Issues. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies* Vol.5 (1) June, 79-98 doi:10.26710/jbsee.v5i1.567
- Otoghile A. & Okonmah, I. E. (2009) Influencing Local Terrorism in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Militants or the Joint Task Force. *Nigerian Forum A Journal of Opinion on World Affairs*. Vol. 30 (11-12) 369-387
- Otoghile, A. & Eghweree, C. (2010) Niger Delta Crisis, Resource Control and Nigerian Federalism; A Short Treatise. *Nigerian Forum A Journal of Opinion on World Affairs*. Vol. 31 (1-2) January – February. 5-28
- Pamir, P. (1997) Nationalism, Ethnicity and Democracy: Contemporary Manifestations. *The International Journal of Peace Studies*,
gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijp/vol2_2/pamir.html
- Philips, C. S. Fr. (1964) *The Development of Nigerian Foreign Policy*, USA: Northwestern University Press,
- Quaddafi, 1976-79 Translated from Arabic by Kovalev NG Moscow: infra pp4-38. See 911-truth.net/other-books/muammar. Retrieved 10/5/2017 11.00p.m