Ethnicity, Democracy, and Political Instability in Nigeria: An Appraisal

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Author' scontribution

The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

The article examined how ethnocentrism is used to further the interest of petty bourgeoisie leading to political instability in Nigeria. The establishment of elective principle midwifed liberal democratic party system in 1922. The Nigerian National Democratic Party in Nigeria was the first party to be birthed. The electoral requirements for candidates and electorates provided opportunities for the educated elite to hijack the process. The partitioning of the country into three regions-east, north and west in 1945 led to the formation of ethnic based political parties- National Congress Nigeria and Cameroon (east), Northern People Congress(north), and Action Group (west), which gave rise to fierce ethnic competition among the political elite. The political elites fell back to the region to consolidate their power base. The contention for space-dominance became more pronounced. However, over decades, this politics of ethnic acrimony has continued and increased the degree of political instability to the extent that almost all the general elections conducted in the post-independence era have been bedeviled with electoral violence leading to destruction of lives and properties. The study adopted clientelist theory and culture of violence theory in its theoretical underpinning. The study explored qualitative method of data gathering technique. The study unraveled that the competition for political position predicated on primitive accumulation of natural resources promotes ethnic cleavage. The study recommends amongst others that politicians indicted for electoral violence in past and present should be tried in the content court of jurisdiction to discourage political violence in Nigeria.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nearly six decades after the attainment of political independence, Nigeria is struggling to harmonize ethnic differences and create a solid foundation for nationhood. This low sense of national awareness is visible in virtually all facets of our national life, especially in choosing political leaders. The essence of the democratic approach is to establish a government of the people and for the people through popular votes in the electioneering process. However, plural society such as Nigeria has faced devastating challenges occasioned by fierce ethnic competition predicated on the allocation of values. Thus, ethnic cleavages and consciousness have adversely impacted democratic advancement in Nigeria since her inception.

The conquest and colonialization Africa by the Western European nations replicated the political and governing structures in their newly created African states. Thus, the western liberal democracy was imposed in Africa. The emergence of the elective principle in Sir Huge Clifford Constitution of 1922 led to the formation of a political party. The NNDP won three seats in Lagos and an independent candidate won the seat in Calabar. Subsequently, the creation of three Regions-East, North, West, by Sir Richards of 1945 gave rise to the formation of regionally- based parties –Northern People Congress, Action Group, and National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). These parties became formidable in their various regions, and the political elites protected their interests in their various region. These political parties won all the seats in their various regions. These political parties were founded on ideology. While the NPC and NCNC were known for liberal democratic ideology, AG professed social democracy. These regions developed at their own pace, the ethnic competition was relative visible [1-3]. These parties dominated their region and won all the seats allocated to their regions. The AG was involved in a welfare state with her policy on free education and other social activities, while other regions operation a free market system. It is without contradiction that the West advanced in education more than any other region in the country. However, the motion for self-determination in 1957 by Anthony Enahoro (AG) was opposed by the NPC at the Lagos legislative council. The aftermath of the independence motion resulted in the Kano riot of 1953 that took ethnic colouration leading to the destruction of lives and property. This marked the beginning of political violence in amalgamated Nigeria. Jega [4] noted that:

Although democratic ideals, principles and values can be said to be universal and much more attuned to governance in modern nations-states, democratic praxis was introduced into African countries, such as Nigeria, haphazardly and on crooked K-legs. Such values as popular participation, representation, are not alien to Africa cultures and traditions. But their modern structured attributes, which emanated from Western countries, such as elections, political parties'/candidate rivalries, etc are alien to African cultures and traditions [5-8]. And the colonists who introduced them did not try to adapt them to African cultures and traditions; rather, they not only imposed them, but they also undermined their efficacy by manipulating identities of candidates, using multifarious divide and rule tactics, thereby pitching them in the electoral process literally as enemies. In this context, electoral politics gradually became the nemesis of nation building, as well as democracy in African post-colonial societies [9-11]. Hence, elections, political parties, etc. tended to exacerbate, widen and aggravate preexisting divisions and hostilities, especially based on precolonial primordial identities. The mobilization of primordial identities has created conflicts and instability in Africa's democratic development, subverting both democracy and economic growth and development.

At the demise of colonial rule in Nigeria, the first general election that was conducted by the National Electoral Commission (NEC) was marred by political violence leading to the destruction of lives and properties in the default Western Region. Ake [12] disclosed that:

The political leaders were exposed to new conflicts arising from competition among nationalities, ethnic groups, which reflected in their ranks. Indeed, most of them have a sort of power by politicizing national, ethnic, and communal formation. Now in office, the political elite manipulated ethnic and communal loyalties as a way to deracialize their followers and contain the emerging class division of political society, which could isolate and destroy them.

So they began to emphasis on vertical solidarity and appeal along the ethnic line.

The inability to manage the state by the political class led to the military coup in 1966 and subsequent civil war fought along the ethnic line from 1967 to 1970. Afterwards, every election cycle in Nigeria has been characterized by political violence. The 2011 general election was the most devastating that attracted global attention. The Nigerian political elites play the role of entrepreneurs-political leaders who explore their kinship bonds to mobilize and organize groups to press group claims. The Nigerian political class are perceived as benign 'interest aggregators' who serve a critical representative function, or as manipulative and exploitative power-seekers who mobilize ethnic themes for their aggrandizement. The manipulation of identity to frame disputes in ethnic terms by political leaders heightens the breadth and depth of inter-group conflict resulting into political violence. Presently, ethnic outbidding-and mass responsiveness to 'playing the ethnic card' has been considered as an acute problem in Nigeria. The moderate multi-ethnic center is often unable to sustain itself against the centrifugal forces unleashed by the heated rhetoric of ethnic intolerance in Nigeria. Given the above, the paper would interrogate political instability triggered by ethnocentrism in Nigeria. The paper would also x-ray the nature and character of the political class in Nigeria state, which promotes primitive accumulation predicated on ethnic based political competition.

2. CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

2.1 Ethnicity

Ethnicity remains a central factor in African politics, both in academic discourse and social praxis. the outcome of West African Berlin Conference in 1886 led to balkanization and partitioning of Africa independent societies into various countries. This forceful regrouping into one political entity has contributed to the degree of political instability in various Africa States. These ethnic groups in the pre-colonial handled conflicts on their own and enhanced social cohesion based on cultural heritage. The amalgamation of various Africa societies has produced more conflicts than ever. Annan [13] disclosed that the "sources of conflict in Africa reflect... diversity and complexity." Nnoli (1978) argued that acceptance and rejection of linguistic and cultural groups become the character of social relations. This leads to discrimination in access to material and non-material resources. Ethnicity in Africa has always been explained in the context of social dynamics. There are four attributes of ethnicity. First, it exists in multi-ethnic societies. Second, it is characterized by elitism that is manipulated during inter-ethnic competition. Third, conflict is inherent in ethnic competition. Fourth, it involves the awareness of being one regarding others [14]. According to Egwu [15], it is primarily a political phenomenon as long as it has much to do with the allocation of values, linking ethnicity with the state, which is not just an archaic survival mechanism of African people as it is often presented. The existence of ethnic groups, or pluralism, is not the only pre-condition for ethnicity. Pluralism could be a necessary factor, but not a sufficient condition for the emergence of ethnicity. Similarly, Mafeje [16] observed that ethnicity is not merely an abstract norm but an ideologically loaded concept, which is not a natural outcome of ethnic existence in any objective sense. This explains the fact that ethnicity does not exist independently. It derives its import from the interplay between other variables such as class, state, and power. Linked the present ethnic consciousness in Africa to colonial rule, Ogele [17] asserts that "the emergence of the modern African states was not a conscious act as was obtainable in most advanced democratic societies. It was designed by the Europeans to advance her economic interests. Various ethnic groups were amalgamated under one nation-state with a new system of government. Hence, there are bound to be ethnic competitions thereafter."

2.2 Democracy

Conceptualizing democracy has been a challenge by scholars, technocrats, among others. Democracy is essentially a contested concept. Democracy is a Greek term containing two words: demos meaning the citizens within the city- state, kratos meaning power or rule [18]. The term was used to describe the practice of the Greek city-states. In the City state of Athens, citizens gather in the village square to deliberate on issues that affect the city state. They practice direct democracy. The Athens style was an inclusive democratic approach because of every made contribution. The Greek philosophers- Plato and Aristotle argued that democracy was synonymous with mob rule and was a perverted form of government, although the latter regarded democracy as the least bad of three deviant forms of rule: democracy,

tranny, and oligarchy [19]. However, democracy has evolved over the years. At present, there are two types of democracy-liberal and social democracies based on different schools of thought. Though, these two concepts are not rooted in Africa leadership philosophy but alien to our system. The concept of liberal democracy is associated with Adams Smith, Ricardo, among others who believe in free market enterprise. The mode and means of production should be left in the hands of individuals. While the Marxian group has always stood for egalitarian societies that focus on equity, equality, and welfare of the citizens. Summarily, Chomsky [20] presented a true picture of democratic governance he buttressed that:

Democracy functions insofar as individuals can participate meaningfully in the public arena, meanwhile running their affairs, individually and collectively without illegitimate interference by the concentration of power. Functioning democracy presupposes relative equality in access to resources-material, informational and other-a truism as old as Aristotle. In theory, governments are instituted to serve their "domestic constituencies" and are to be subject to their will…In the capitalist democracy, the public arena has been extended and enriched by long and bitter popular struggles. Meanwhile, the concentration of power has labored to restrict it.

2.3 Political Instability

The concept of political instability explains the political and socioeconomic conditions of a given society. Though varies from one country to the other. Empirical evidence has shown that political instability can be seen from various angles. They include political violence, electoral violence, revolt, death and killing under political motivation, revolution as well as ethno religious violence, ideological and economic violence occasioned by political manipulation.

3. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

3.1 Clientelist Theory

The paper adopted a Clientelist theory as its theoretical construct. Its origin of clientelist theory was traced to the Greek language, which denotes to obey and patronize [21]. Darabont 2010 used clientelism as a framework to explain the political economy of leadership and governance. It explains vote-buying, electoral manipulation, rewarding opposite politicians,

among others. Clientelism was a recent theory developed in the 20th century used in explaining political corruption and the electoral process globally. Political clientelism is a form of electoral mobilization. It is a political bargain that deals with the" proffering of material goods in return for electoral support, where the criterion of distribution that the patron uses is simple" [22] Graham [23] characterized clientelism as an action-set built upon the principle of "take there, give here," enabling clients and patrons to benefit from mutual support as they play parallel to each other at different levels of political, social, and administrative articulation.

Political clientelism is anchored on the transaction logic of "the distribution of resources (or the promise of) by political office holders or political candidates in exchange for political support, primarily - although not exclusively - in the form of the vote" [24]. It "involves asymmetric but mutually beneficial relationships of power and exchange, a non-universalistic quid pro quo between individuals, or groups of unequal standing" [25]. Nevertheless, access to resources is "conditioned on subordination, compliance or dependence on the goodwill of others. Those in control patrons, sub patrols and brokers-provide selective access to goods and opportunities and place themselves or their supporters in positions from which they can divert resources and services in their favour [Their] partners-clients-are expected to return their benefactors' help, politically and otherwise, by working for them at election times or boosting their patron's prestige and reputation" [25].

In a democratic experiment, especially in developing countries, Clientelism has evolved into a more complex exchange network of client-broker-patron, which has adversely impacted governance in Nigeria [26]. Linking the theory to this paper is predicated on the fact that over time, the Nigerian state encouraged a client and prebendal politics where elites acquire power at all cost for personal wealth accumulation using their client in a patron-client relationship during elections. This is traced to the colonial administration where the elite group was created to serve the interest of the colonist during colonial and post-independence in Africa.

3.2 Culture of Violence Theory

The culture of violence theory is an offshoot of cultural violence developed by Johan Galtung.

Galtung defined culture as those aspects of humans that symbolizes sphere of our existence [27]. Galtung identified religion, ideology, language, art, among others, as an aspect of culture that is used to legitimize or justify violence. Galtung further noted that "culture could be imagined and even encountered with not only one, but a set of aspects so violent, extensive, and diverse, spanning all cultural domains" [28]. In this situation, cultural violence may metamorphose to violent cultures which may be warranted. The perpetrators of violence make it look legitimate so that after a long time it is acceptable in the community. Galtung argued that cultural violence makes the direct and structural look, even feel, right… or at least not wrong. Just as political science is about two problems-the use of power and the legitimization of the use of power" [27]. Galtung buttressed that:

Cultural violence highlights how the act of direct violence and the fact that structural violence is legitimized and thus rendered acceptable in society. One-way cultural violence works is by changing the moral colour of an act from red/wrong with green/right or at least two yellow/acceptable; an example being murdered on behalf of the country is right, on behalf of oneself wrong [27].

The cultural violence over the period has resulted in a culture of violence in Nigeria's political space. The fact remains that the culture of violence has invariably become a political culture and has increased in Nigeria overtime. Political culture is a pattern of attitudes and practices held by people, which over the period have shaped their political behavior. Every election cycle has experience intensified election violence. The electoral violence of 2011 pre and post-general election, which took ethnic colouration adversely impacted Nigerian socioeconomic advancement [28]. At present, political parties and candidates include violence act in their strategic plan toward achieving an electoral victory.

4. METHODOLOGY

The paper adopted a secondary method of data gathering technique. These include journals, books, reports, and newspaper publications on ethnicity, democracy and political instability in Nigeria. To achieve this, the paper adopted a content analysis in analyzing the data collected from the internet and library.

5. COLONIALISM AND ELITE CLASS FORMATION IN NIGERIA

The transition from tribal societies to modern state involves huge losses of freedom and equality, especially in some egalitarian societies as the case of many independent tribes in Nigeria. There is no doubt, virtually all human societies engaged in one violence, particularly at the tribal levels. However, that was not the case of various societies that constituted Nigeria today. These independent societies were sometimes hostile to one another. Hierarchy and the state emerges when one segment conquered another one and took control of its territory. This requires maintaining a political control over the conquered people by the conquerors for it to establish a centralized repressive institution, which may evolve into an administrative bureaucratic state. The British took over Nigeria and establish central control over the existing traditional politics that was localized in various emirates, kingdom, chiefdom. Many of these political system predates industrial revolution and had been established before the emergence of British rule hegemony over Nigeria. The British government was confronted with two factors - shortage of personnel and insufficient funds to administer Nigeria state. Hence, the Governor-General, Sir Fredrick Lugard introduced an indirect rule in the country. Utuk [29] noted that "Nigeria was the home of the classical system of Indirect Rule, which Sir Fredrick (later Lord) Lugard, the father of that system, stamped upon a society widely different in kind, size and culture."

Beside the introduction of indirect rule, there was need for skilled and unskilled workers to support the colonial administration. Subsequently, some elites and foremen who were educated and trained as technicians, supervisory staff, and unskilled labour (artisans) were recruited to take responsibility of these minor challenges. Ake [30] noted that:

Education was perhaps the single most important factor contributing to the creation of a petit-bourgeoisie in indigenous colonial society. Colonial educational policies reflected the typical contradictions of colonialism. And yet there were also good reasons for educating Africans. You cannot fully dominate without educating, without penetrating the personality and culture of the person to be dominated. And

the penetration has to be accomplished not so much by coercion as by education

For the imperialist, colonial education was necessary for the realization of a cultural and political atmosphere favourable to ensure the continuous domination of the colonial system. Anikpo [31] disclosed that:

They need to articulate their economic interests gave rise to the imposition of a new political structure sustained on the administrative framework of the civil service. Thus the eclipse of the traditional social institutions became total, superseded by a new model of organization that eventually monetized the traditional economy; a new political structure based on the Westminster type of parliamentary democracy, and a new social order based on Christian religious ethics and Europeanized 'school' education.

The colonist achieved the creation of a new social order through the manipulation of the system to suit their economic interest. It was not long, the educated elites became conscious of the segregation in the country and also got interested in participating in the affairs of the country at the decision making level in the country. This was very simple to the colonist having gotten indoctrinated educated elites who will always represent their interest. Arikpo [32] noted that:

In 1920, some Nigerian lawyers, doctors, and merchants from Lagos and Calabar participated in a conference held in Accra, Gold Coast (Ghana) by a body known as the National Congress of British West Africa. The purpose of the conference was, in the words of its Chairman, 'not to organize an antigovernment movement, but to help the work of the government loyal and constitutionally.

Education was a major instrument of class formation in Nigeria and Africa at large. Education contributed to the creation of petite bourgeoisie indigenous colonial society. Ake [30] noted that:

The colonizers attitude towards education was ambiguous. Colonial education policies reflected the typical contradiction of colonialism. Yet, you cannot dominate without educating or penetrating the personality or culture of the person been dominated. The penetration must be accomplished without coercion as by education. In the same vein, you cannot exploit without education. Without contradiction, one might conclude that the essence of education in all societies is to facilitate domination and exploitation. Nevertheless, there are practical reasons for educating Africa. One of the reason was that the colonist did not have enough manpower to administer and exploit the colony. The man shortage was acute in British colonies. It would have been capital intensive and inconvenient to import workers her mother land, hence, they trained and used African as technicians, accountants, medical auxillaries, among others.

According to Ake [30], the colonial education sought to achieve two objectives: to increase semi-skilled labour and create a cultural and political atmosphere favourable to maintain colonial system. The curriculum was designed to inculcate western culture. That is, the read, write, speak, western thinking and accept colonizers ideology. The volume of such programme emphasis on Western superiority of culture, the virtue of submission and obedience, and the need to collaborate with colonial system. Now, how did education contribute to social formation in Nigeria? Few people who took advantage provided by colonial education to occupy special position in government. Besides they also had the opportunity for upward mobility and new status were accorded to them. There new skill and status positioned in the leadership ladder, and by the position, they involved in wealth accumulation. Education was used consciously to create social class in Nigeria. Importantly, the colonist consciously created that would be completely dominated by their values, and their willing to collaborate with their design at the demise of colonial rule in Nigeria.

One of the strategies adopted by the colonists was to establish distinctive schools, that have comparative advantage over other schools. For instance, like other African Countries, the kings College, Lagos was established in Nigeria. The Kings College was for the privilege few that have high socio-economic status in traditional society, particularly sons of chiefs. The Rumfa College, an all-boys school was the first secondary school established in Kano by British colonial administration in 1927. The school was established to provide education in the form of reading and writing for the sons of the ruling emirs in the north who were expected to run Native Administration alongside colonial

administration. The development of education varies in the north and south. While the southern progressed academically, the north was lagging behind. Lugard believed that the Fulani ruling emirs were unfit for colonial administration, hence, declared that "I hope and believe that with careful guidance their sons and grandsons will form invaluable rulers under British supervision and that their superior intelligence can be developed as a useful asset in our administration" [33]. Ibrahim [34] puts that "in the north, the British evolved a selection process to create a new educated elite to replace, or rather, to work with, the emirate aristocracy…for training of northern Muslim and conservative leaders... this explains why Lugard allowed the establishment of Christian missionary schools in and around palaces of the emirs, or even in areas directly under the jurisdiction of the emirs…." It is on record that the former Governor General of Nigeria Lord Lugard, was very preoccupied with the education of the sons of Fulani rulers of the Emirate of the Northern Nigeria, in other to give them English Public School boys idea of honour, loyalty and above all responsibility to become efficient, reliable and honest cooperators with the British [30]. It was along this line that colonial education started creating class differentiation among the indigenous population. It is important to note that most of those Africans who went to special schools became post-colonial leaders and political powers were transferred to them in the new independent states.

6. COLONIALISM AND LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

Several issues confronted Lord Lugard Constitution. One of them was the non-inclusion of Africans in the administration of their country, which was the reason for the emergence of the Clifford Constitution in 1922. The new Constitution (Clifford) established an elective principle. The reason was to involve Nigerian elites in the management of the affairs in their country. The inherent contradiction in managing plural societies was a major challenge. This challenge led to Sir Clifford describing Nigeria as a "collection of independent native states, separated from one another… by great distances, by differences of history and traditions and by ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers" (Nigerian Council Debate, 1922). The elective principle

gave rise to party politics in Nigeria. The first political party was the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP). The NNDP was formed in 1923 by Herbert Macaulay, the grandson of Bishop Ajayi Crowther. The party won three seats in Lagos and Calabar in the Legislative Council. It is imperative to note that the elective requirement disenfranchised many Nigerians from participating in that election such as having the minimum annual income of £100. The elective principle was elitist oriented. The condition set by Clifford Constitution ushered elite politics in Nigeria, which is one of the features of liberal democracy. Anikpo [31] noted that:

The aristocratic posture of the NNDP was alienating to the younger radical elements of the Lagos community. In 1934, this new group of educated and radical younger men formed their association called the Lagos Youth Movement (NYM) [which later became Nigeria Youth Movement (NYM)]. Nnamdi Azikiwe was one of its members.

In 1941, Nnamdi Azikiwe resigned from NYM because of the internal contradiction inherent in the organization to join Herbert Macaulay in NNDP. "The party succeeded in rallying massive support for the national crusade for self-determination, and in 1944, it initiated the formation of a broader-based party, the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC). Macaulay was elected National President and Azikiwe became the Secretary-General" [31]. The NCNC had branches all over the country and agitation for self-determination was its main objective. This gave rise to the emergence of the new Governor-General Sir Arthur Richard Constitution of 1945.

7. THE EMERGENCE OF ETHNO-POLITICAL CRISIS IN NIGERIA

In 1945, the Sir Authur Richard's Constitution divided the country into three regions. Subsequently, regional/ethnic-based political parties were formed - the NCNC (east); the Action Group (AG) (west); and the Nigerian People's Congress (NPC) (north). The power struggle among the elites became more pronounced after the formation of these parties. Ogele [26] noted that Nigerian leaders' individual self-ambitions in the turmoil that gave rise to the formation of the ethnic-based parties in Nigerian politics. There was fierce contestation of political power among these

elites. Against this backdrop, Chief Awolowo made a submission that Nigeria is mere geographical expression, and further distinguished those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not (Ekpu, 2017). Akin to Chief Obafemi Awolowo's assertion in 1948, Sir Arthur Richard regrettably said that it is only the accident of British suzerainty which had made Nigeria one country. It is still far from being one country or one nation socially or even economically… socially and politically there are deep differences between the major tribal groups [35].

The motion for independence by Anthony Enahoro marked the beginning of ethnic based political violence in Nigeria. Nnoli [36] pointed out that the genesis of the crises was essentially political, the self-government crises at the House of Representatives. On 31st March 1953, Anthony Enahoro moved motion to fix Nigerian independence in 1956. However, the NPC led by Alhaji Ahmedu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto did not officially opted for such policy. Therefore, Alhaji Ahmedu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto replaced the date with a phrase "as soon as practicable" [37]. The reason been that the north was not prepared and cannot compete favourably in all the public sectors. The development of education and manpower in the country was so uneven that the Sir Huge Clifford lamented in 1922 that:

In the Northern Provinces there has been until recently a certain tendency to regard education of the local population with some uneasiness and suspicion, as a process likely to exert a disintegrating and demoralizing effect upon the character of those who are subjected to it; and where this feeling has been overcome, a further tendency is observable to regard education too exclusively as a handmaid of administration… after two decades of British occupation, the Northern Provinces have not yet produced a single native…who is sufficiently educated to enable him to fill the most minor clerical post in the office of any government department [38].

Given the above, the rejection of the motion by the Northern political elite was understandable predicated on the fact that they lacked the manpower to survive in the post-independence Nigeria if the motion had survived. However, the rejection of the independence motion triggered verbal attacks at the Northern political elite by the Lagos crowd. The situation was unacceptable by the Northern political elite who swore not to come to the Southern Nigeria for any meeting. Afterward, Samuel Akintola led delegation to Kano for independence awareness campaign. This visit triggered ethnic tension. Nnoli [36] noted that though the AG supporters in the city were Yoruba settlers, once violence erupted, it involved mainly the Hausa on the other side and the Igbo on the other. The riot lasted for four days, 16-19 May 1953, claiming 36 dead, 15 Northerners and 21 Southerners, 241 wounded.

8. LEADERSHIP CRISIS AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN THE POST - COLONIAL NIGERIA

In 1960, political powers were transferred to the educated elites in Nigeria. The management of the democratic government was vested in them. However, the political culture acquired during the colonial era remains. Thus, "identity acrimony has been entrenched in Nigeria before her political independence in 1960" [28]. But there were changes in dealing with the masses that were used independence struggle. Ake [11] noted that:

At independence, the nationalist movement, the bourgeoisie revolution, had to change its character. For in power the nationalist leaders would be the new butt of mass discontent and the class character of their politics would be revealed starkly. They had to deracialize the masses and at the same time, try to conceal contradictions. There was hardly any other way available for doing this except appeal to ethnicity. Ethnicity would smother class consciousness among the masses and allow a vertical integration of leaders and the masses across class lines.

Chief Awolowo remained ideologically different from his counterparts in the country. The Action Group mounted serious opposition at the centre. However, there was need to whittle down the powers of AG in the Western Region. One of the first steps was to balkanize the region. Mid-West Region was created out Western Region. Second, the NPC-dominated federal government declared a state of emergency in Western Nigeria, sacked the AG-controlled regional government (under the premiership of Chief S.L. Akintola) and appointed the Prime Minister's physician, Dr Majekodunmi, as the Region's Sole

Administrator. The people of Western Nigeria was of the expectation that a fresh election would be held at the end of the emergency, but the federal government merely reinstated Chief Akintola as the premier because the political atmosphere in that Region was not conducive for holding fresh elections [39]. Thus, up till 1965, Chief Akintola never properly faced the electorate. He was appointed as premier of the Western Region by the AG leadership in 1959 to succeed Chief Awolowo following the latter's resignation to contest for the position of prime minister.

In 1964, the first general election conducted by the National Electoral Commission. The election was to define the intra-power relation among the political class and the masses. Sadly, the election was characterized by electoral irregularities, especially in the Western region. There was unprecedented electoral violence before and after the election. The resultant violence claimed the lives of several hundreds of people on both sides of the conflict. There was a widespread drenching of houses and people with petrol before setting them alight. The 1965 election represented the ultimate debasement of the democratic process through chicanery and thuggery.

The exact number of the victims and the value of properties lost in the 1965 post-election crisis in Western Nigeria may never be known. According to a Federal Government estimate, the violence had claimed the lives of over 160 persons by 13th January 1966 – these were 64 civilians killed by the police, 91 killed by other civilians, and seven policemen among others [40]. The UPGA, however, estimated that casualties of the 1965 crisis ran into hundreds. Whatever might have been the number of the dead and the maimed before, during and after the 1965 election, one incontrovertible conclusion is that the crisis robbed Western Nigeria of the contributions many of the people who were killed or permanently disabled would have made to the educational, social, economic and political advancement of that region [39]. This led to the collapse of the First Republic.

8.1 The Aborted Third Republic 1993

There were many elections with cases of election rigging that took place under the Babangida regime, following the annulment of the results of the June 12, 1993, presidential election. Olaoye [5] noted that the "1993 election was believed and adjudged by the 3000 accredited local and international observers to be fair and the best in Nigeria's political history." On June 14, 1993, the election results were announced in many states. The results showed that the Social Democratic Party (SDP) under the flag bearer of Chief M. K. O. Abiola had won 14 states as announced by the Professor Humphrey Nwosu, the Chairman of National Electoral Commission (NEC). Despite the fairest nature of the 1993 election as acknowledged by electoral observers and Nigerians, the presidential election was annulled on June 23, 1993, by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. Obadare [41] disclosed that:

In his 23 June 1993 broadcast, Genera Babangida had alleged that the two parties subverted the electoral process by bribing voters and that there was an expected conflict of interest between the personal businesses of the presidential candidates (Moshood Abiola for the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and Bashir Tofa for the National Republican Convention (NRC).

Urban centres in Nigeria usually contain a mix of the rich and the poor, with the latter always in a clear majority [42]. The June 12 crisis was mostly in Lagos and other parts of the country where bombs were detonated by the military juntas to install fears. There were few political assassinations such as Chief Alfred Rewane, kudirat Abiola, among others. Babangida did not only annul the results of the 1993 presidential election, but the presumed winner Chief M. K. O. Abiola was also imprisoned and subsequently died behind bars. The political violence was pronounced in the southern Nigeria.

8.2 The Electoral violence 2011

The 2011 electoral violence was different from the others. The electoral violence took ethno-religious colouration. Several events surrounded 2011 electoral violence ranging from the demise of President Umar Yar'Adua and President Goodluck Jonathan assumption of office as the incumbent president. The protest after the declaration of President Goodluck Jonathan as the winner of the 2011 general election resulted into a violent riot and sectarian massacre in the northern states Kano, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Kaduna, Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto, Niger, Yobe, and Zamfara. It was estimated that the 2011 post-election

violence in Nigeria left over 800 people dead [43].

The North Central, East and West of Nigeria are made up of Moslems and Christians re. Though these religions cut across ethnic lines. President Jonathan, a Christian from southern Nigeria contesting against General Muhammadu Buhari, a Moslem from Northern Nigeria triggered violent clash in the northern Nigeria when President Jonathan was declared the winner.

In the North Central Zone, two people and one was injured in the capital of Plateau State during the registration of voters at Tina Junction in Jos [44]. In Niger State, two bomb explosions on Thursday 18 January at a PDP rally in Suleja killing at least thirteen persons and injured over twenty persons. Some of the injured security personnel include members of the Federal Road Safety Corps and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence [45]. At Sabon Gari, an area dominated by the Igbos, a female officer of the Civil Defence Corp's hand was severed and three cars were burnt. Five churches in Angwan, Maitunbi, Kaje, Shango, and other areas of the town were burnt down. Curfew was declared in five major towns of Minna, Kontagora, Suleja, Bida, and New Bussa to contain the spread of the violence. In Benue State, a gunman shot and killed Emmanuel Ajibo, who was an aide to the ACN senatorial candidate for Benue State. A campaign train was attacked by armed thugs at near Igumale community, the Ado LGA headquarters in Benue State [46].

In Bauch State, there was a violent clash between the PDP and ACN that left two persons dead. Twenty houses and five cars were destroyed in Katanga Warji, headquarters of Warji Local Government Area in the North East, where the clash took place (Nigerian Compass 30th March 2011, p. 1). Six members of the NYSC were killed in the post-electoral violence in Bauchi State after the declaration of Dr Goodluck Jonathan as the winners. Eighteen people and two policemen were killed by the rioters who alleged rigging of the poll (Nigeria Compass 20th April 2011, p. 1. Most villages in Tafawa Belewa and Bogno local government areas in Bauchi State were invaded. Over 50 Christians were killed and about 100 buildings were set ablaze by the attackers. The villages attacked include Imbira, Mingil, Goshkarbo, Namu, Gongo Fada, SabonLaji, Yola-Bogoro

and Goshe. The youths were targeted their voter's cards (Nigeria Tribune 9th April 2011, p. 4). In Adamawa, properties worth millions of Naira was destroyed by irate youth.

The North-West zone experienced intensified post-electoral violence. Over 20 churches and houses assumed to belong to members of Peoples Democratic Party were destroyed [47]. In Katsina State, the home state of the General Buhari, irate youths burnt down worship centres, business shops, and private houses in six local government areas and other villages in protest against the declaration of Jonathan. All the houses identified with PDP posters were torched and the party secretariat in the area was destroyed [47]. In Kano State, the stronghold of General Buhari, the irate Muslim youths were uncontrollable as they attacked Christians and non-natives, and other notable politicians such as the two former Speakers of House of Assembly, Salisu Buhari and Ghali Na'Abba. The multimillion Naira factory on Hadejia Road belonging to Salisu Bohr was also vandalized (National Mirror, April 19th 2001).

No specific number of deaths in Kano State post-election violence. In Kaduna State, more than 65,000 people were displaced and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. The Vice-President's house, Namadi Sambo was burnt down by the angry protesters. The irate youths forcefully opened Zaria Central Prison and freed all inmates. The INEC offices in Malabalindo, Trikania, Sabin Tasha, Ungwan Sarkin Naragi, and Kawo were set ablaze. The Christian dominated communities in the southern Kaduna State, including Matsirga, Zonkwa, and Kafanchan left more than 500 dead, burning down their mosque and properties. Hence, the Kaduna State Government imposed a 24-hour curfew on the metropolis and its environs [43]. The degree of destruction and loss of lives occasioned by the terrible security situations in two states propelled President Jonathan as cited in The Nation Newspaper that:

They killed and maimed innocent citizens. They set ablaze business premises, private homes and even places of worship. In some cases, they showed utter disrespect to all forms of authority, including our most revered traditional institutions. They systematically targeted population groups. They singled out and harassed nationalistic politicians. They intimidated travelers [47].

The destruction of lives and property in the pre, during and post-election in 2011 was unimaginable. Following the figure released by the Inspector General of Police Hafiz Ringim was shocking. According to Ringim, 520 persons were murdered in post-election violence in only Kaduna and the Niger States alone. Kaduna State recorded 518 deaths, including six policemen and two persons were killed in Niger State. Mr Ringim also disclosed that 77 persons were injured in Kaduna State. Over 22 000 persons were displaced by the crisis in the Kaduna State. Mr Ringim revealed that about 1435 houses, 157 churches, 46 mosques, 437 vehicles, 219 motorcycles, among others were set on fire [48].

9. THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF NIGERIAN POLITICAL CLASS

The nature and character of the ruling class are crucial in the determination of the rules for and the process of political competition. Character shapes the form of political organizations or parties that emerge or that are allowed to participate in the competition for state power. In discussing the nature and character of the ruling class several factors are important such as the degree of patriotism of the class, the nature of the values that it subscribes to as a class, the degree of its ideological cohesion, among others [49]. Nigeria was integrated into the world capitalist system through her colonization by the British imperialist whose sole aim was to maximize profits through the production process. Capitalism is anchored on exploitation and Nigerian elites inherited a system of economy which was exploitative - the direct use of coercive power for expropriation. This style politicking was inherited from the arbitrary nature of colonialism. Ake [12] revealed that:

The colonist controlled all aspect of the colonial economy tightly to maintain it power and domination and to realize the economic objective of colonization. The power of the colonial state was not only absolute but arbitrary. There are two features of state powers; it absolutism and arbitrariness, framed colonial politics. Since the colonial state was for its subjects, at any rate, an arbitrary power, it could not engender any legitimacy even though it made rules and how profusely and propagated values. Accordingly, in struggling to advance their interests, the colonial subjects did not worry about confirming to legality or legitimacy norms. Colonial politics was thus

reduced crude mechanics of opposing forces driven by the calculus of power. For everyone in the political arena, security lay only in accumulation of power. The result was an unprecedented drive for power, power was made top priority in all circumstances and sought by all means. As the rulers and subordinates extended their rights to their powers, the idea of lawful political competition became impossible, and politics was inevitably reduced to single issue: the determination of the exclusive claims to rulership. This politics hardly encouraged moderation and compromise.

Given the above, many politicians in Nigeria seek power to promote primitive accumulation. Politics is now seen as a vehicle for making quick and easy money. This rent-seeking and rent - collection mentality of Nigerian politicians can be seen from the desperation of incumbents to hold on to power by any means. The counterweight to this is the determination and the desperation of the elites outside to get into power by any means necessary. To these elites, the result of getting control of political power is justified by whatever means is employed. This means includes violence. Ake [50] argued that:

When the process of primitive accumulation is directed against specific factions of the bourgeoisie or petty bourgeoisie, it is equally counter-productive… that those elements of the petty bourgeoisie or bourgeoisie who are expropriated and or liquidated by the politically hegemonic faction are likely to be the ones that have entrepreneurial skill. More importantly, using violence to expropriate other members of the ruling class increases the level of insecurity within this class for everyone, including the hegemonic faction. This sets in motion a vicious circle of extremism and political violence. Insecurity makes political actors struggle even more grim and tenaciously for political power and the high premium on political inclines political actors to use a method which will produce the desired result rather than confine them to a method of competition which is moral or legal.

Nevertheless, as a facilitator of the capital development process, the Nigerian state is a major owner of the means of production. Buoyed by the expanded oil revenues of the early 1970s, the state effectively dominated all aspects of the national political economy [51]. This is because the imperialist did not even

develop an indigenous bourgeoisie in the country, but tired the entire production process of the state. At the juncture, the state became the biggest employer of labour. As noted by Joseph [52], the expansion of petroleum products and the resultant increased revenues heightened "the centrality of the state as the locus of the struggle for resources for individual development as well as group security." Under this guise, entrance to the Statehouse provides an opportunity for primitive accumulation. To sustain state control for economic gains, the politicians employ a series of strategy to carry out the nefarious act. Ake [50] argued that:

Sometimes it is done under the cover of political conflict; some people are denounced for many political crimes and then murdered or imprisoned and their property seized. Sometimes, it is done gangster style. Sometimes it is done under the cover of religious or ethnic conflict; a religious or ethnic group denounced for being unpatriotic and subversive or economic exploited of other groups, and popular hatred is built up against them. Then, under cover of this popular antipathy, the unfortunate group is abused, sometimes to a point amounting to genocide, and their property is taken from them...

As the hegemonic faction of the ruling class continue to successfully use force to expropriate another faction of the ruling class as well as peasants and workers, the concentration of energy on politics is reinforced. The consciousness of political power becomes so strong, that once one that has political power can have everything else including economic wealth. At this point, violence becomes inevitable. However, apart from the primitive accumulation which is the character of the ruling class in Nigeria, other factors could be considered as part of what propels electoral violence in Nigeria.

10. MOTIVES FOR POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

Some of the challenges resulting into political instability is attributed to high stake. Politicians in Nigeria view politics as an investments considering the degree of scarcity, poverty and inequality. The candidate believes that winning a state office key to livelihood, not just for an individual, but for his or her entire clan, faction, or even ethnic groups, hence, parties and candidates often refuse to contemplate the consequences of failure. Sisk and Spies [53] pointed out that based on the reports from the studies on election-related violence, the perpetrators are often viewed the process as 'patronage politics' or a system in which politicians are gang-like 'bosses' that control resources (such as access to jobs and income) and dispense public services such as housing, health care, or lucrative government contracts. Democratic elections in this aspect are often seen as opportunities to engage in corruption and economic rent-seeking. This, in turn, leads to highly fictionalized politics, such as along religious, sectarian or ethnic lines, or along party-political divides.

Another reason why politicians promote violence is associated with a higher expectation of the candidates and his supporters on a dividend of electoral success. The candidate and his supporters or party men may expect or imagine the fruits of victory or the perils and risks of loss. Elections may aggravate social conflict under circumstances of high uncertainty about the results and situations of high certainty alike; exploring the connection between expectations and violence is a complicated problem. For example, when there is doubt about the result of the election; when the margins of victory are very close; and there is a greater likelihood that allegations of fraud will lead to frustration and potentially too violently clashes, or where parties may use violence to affect uncertain outcomes by trying to limit voter turnout of opponents' expected supporters.

The announcement of the election results is usually the most critical period in electioneering process in Nigeria. This is a situation where the announcement of results generates violence. When parties are sure that they might loss or excluded from the electoral contest is certain, particularly they are likely to prepare for violence. The certainty of election outcome is a strong causal driver of violence. For instance, the post-election violence in 2011 general elections stemmed from the announcement of the election results. When a party or faction expects to be systematically excluded from political power, they may well turn to violence to either prevent their exclusion or to prevent the election's success. The exclusion could bring about violence, which is often caused by supporters and peripheral elements rather than the party members or officials themselves. That electoral process produces winners and losers is an indicator of their capacity to catalyse or to

open 'windows of vulnerability' to violence. When a strongly insecure party or faction expects to be systematically excluded from political power, it may well turn to violence to either prevent its exclusion or to prevent the election's success.

Another reason for political instability is ethnocentrisms. This involves the roles of so-called ethnic entrepreneurs-political leaders who articulate beliefs in kinship bonds and common destiny, and who mobilize and organize groups to press group claims. The elements are common in Nigeria even before her political independence attainment. They are known for the ethnic entrepreneurship kind of politics. The Nigerian political class are perceived as benign 'interest aggregators' who serve a critical representative function, or as manipulative and exploitative power-seekers who mobilize ethnic themes for their aggrandizement. The political class frame disputes in ethnic terms to heighten the breadth and depth of inter-group conflict resulting into political violence. At present, ethnic outbidding- and mass responsiveness to 'playing the ethnic card' has been considered as an acute problem in Nigeria.

11. CONCLUSION

The paper examined the role of political elites in political instability in Nigeria using ethnicity as a point of departure. The nature of independence struggle for self-determination was all inclusive. All the groups including ethnic associations were part of the mobilization for self-determination. The establishment of elective principle midwifed party politics, which birthed liberal democracy in Nigeria. The electoral requirements for candidates and electorates provided opportunities for the educated elite to hijack the process. However, the partitioning of the country into three regions in 1945 gave rise to ethnic politics and competition in Nigeria. The political elites fell back to the region to consolidate their power base. Afterwards, ethnic based political competition commenced in Nigeria. The political elite placed more values in capturing political powers for themselves and grew increase fearful about what seemed to them to be the grave consequences of losing to their competitors in the race for the control of state power. The struggle for power was absorbing that everything else, including development was marginalized and political instability increased. Those who were out of

power consistently worried about their exposure to every kind of assault by a state that hardly subject to any constitutional or institutional restraints rather would device a means of remaining at the corridor of power by encouraging a military intervention or political violence.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need to reform the justice system to fashion out ways of tackling political instability perpetuated by the political class. Indicated politicians in the past should have been banned from participating in party politics. A situation where a politician is indicated and no persecution, yet she or he moves freely should be discouraged. They move with impunity having the mindset that they are untouchable.

2. Another factor that has increased political instability is the soaring degree of unemployment in Nigeria. Anxious politician uses unemployed youths as 'raw materials' during election. These political chauvinists indoctrinate these unemployed youths with different kinds of ethnic sentiments that trigger electoral violence during elections. The 2011 general election was an example unemployed youths were used to promote ethno-democratic sentiment.

3. Lack of internal democracy also promotes political instability occasioned by ethnic consciousness. When a candidate emerges transparently or a "zoning arrangement" is strictly adhered to, there will be less crisis during elections. Part of what triggered 2011 presidential election violence was attributed to violating the zoning arrangement. Hence, whatever decision taken by the party members should be respected and transparent internal party democracy should be taken seriously.

4. The government or electoral board should enforce relevant sections of the Electoral Act as amended that dealt with excess spending by politicians. The political class corrupt the electoral system with stolen wealth. Since there is no strong institution, they use the monies to promote political instability by buying weapons, or bribing

the electoral officer to do their biddings. The political class prepare for election as if they are going to war. Most times, monies expended for elections is enough to execute interstate wars.

5. The National Assembly should amend the Electoral Act to include stiffer punishment for the political that promote ethnic sentiments during political campaigns. Ethnic politics triggers political instability are the degree of corruption in Nigeria. The political class believe that the nation's wealth is considered as "national cake" that every ethnic group in Nigeria should be giving the opportunity to cut their own share. Party politics is considered as the easiest platform to express their frustration and discontent. Hence, they inform their followers that their ethnic groups have been denied of their fair share of the national cake.

6. Another promoter of political instability is the insincerity of the electoral umpire. The electoral umpire should honest and transparent in managing electoral process to avoid unnecessary perception of dishonesty. Hence, Nigerian government should adopt electronic voting that give precise number voted casted at the unit, afterward transmitted to the INEC headquarters.

7. The Nigerian security architecture should be overhaul to meet the 21th century electoral security management. The federal government should also increase the number security personnel to meet the demand for maintenance of law and order during electioneering process. The number of security personnel match the total population in a given area. This will enable the security to handle those youths used by the political class to foment troubles, intimidate opponents, among others during elections.

COMPETING INTERESTS

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Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/83980