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The Impact of Ethnicity on Nation-building in Post-Colonial Nigeria

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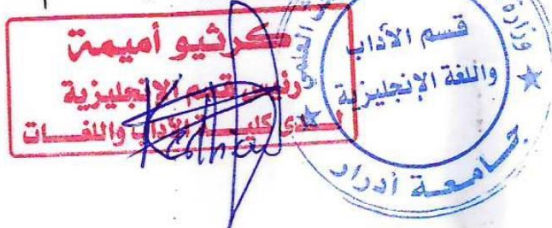كلية : الآداب واللغات

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my lovely parents who spiritually strengthened me with their prayers. I also dedicate it to my brother and dear sisters, and finally to my friends and colleagues. Your love and support were my motivation.

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Abstract

Ethnicity is a term that gives different impressions when heard by individuals. For some, it is seen in a positive way and a source of honor and pride. While others think that it is unnecessary and represents nothing in their life. However, the fact about ethnicity is that it is what gives people a sense of uniqueness from other people. In this dissertation, the ethnicity is seen from a perspective that is an obstacle in the nation-building process in Nigeria. It explains in which way ethnicity is setting back this important process and keeping the country in a motion without movement. Even though, Nigeria is considered as a rich country since it's the first oil exporter in Africa. The aim of this study is to explain how ethnicity affected the nation-building process in Nigeria, and turned to become a barrier instead of a tool for achieving. In this study, the historical background is very important; it gives a better understanding of the ethnicity issue and why it is considered an issue. This work explains how ethnicity affected the economy and caused huge loss, and killed thousands of innocent people sharing the same nationality, history and heritage.

Key words: nation-building, Nigeria, ethnicity, ethnic conflicts

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List of Abbreviations

AG   Action Group

CDC   Constitution Drafting Committee

FMG   Federal Military Government

NCNC   National Convention of Nigerian Citizens

NNDP   Nigeria National Democratic Party

NPC   Northerner's People Congress

NYSC   National Young Service Corps

RNC   Royal Niger Company

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General Introduction

Every country wishes for a peaceful, non-violent society in which people's hopes for a better future in a process called nation-building. In Nigeria, the attempts of nation-building failed for many years because of a number of obstacles, starting from the unqualified leadership, corruption, lack of democracy, and ethnicity which is considered as the main barrier to nation-building. Ethnicity is one of the main features of Nigeria which is an ethnically diverse country. It is composed of more than 250 ethno-linguistic groups. This diversity is a consequence of the amalgamation of the Northern and the Southern protectorates of the Niger basin by Sir Fredrick Lugard in 1914.

After long years under British colonization which applied the system of indirect rule, Nigeria finally got its independence in 1960. Since then, the country has been struggling to build a democratic and stable nation. The biggest dilemma the Nigerian government faced was dealing with the different tribes and meeting all their expectations, in addition to managing the relationship between them. Aside from the ethnic groups' needs, the other challenge that the Nigerian government faced was to establish and consolidate a sense of nationhood over the tribal one among individuals.

The relationship between the different ethnic groups was generally tense, leading to several conflicts. Some of these conflicts were inter-ethnic while others were intra-ethnic, in addition to the religious conflicts mainly between the Muslims and the Christians. Moreover, the minorities question, which is basically minority groups demanding political participation and various roles in the government, and being fairly treated by people from dominant ethnic groups.

All these problems kept the country stuck in the same position, unable to move on for years. Regardless the serious attempts from various leaders, to establish a peaceful, coherent and united nation.

Chapter One:

Background to Nigeria

1. Introduction

African countries generally are very rich in history and culture, and Nigeria, the West African country, is not an exception. Its history roots up in 9000 BCE according to remains found in the Southeastern parts of the country. The modern Nigerian state is home to more than 200 million people from different ethnic backgrounds, and this makes it the most populous and diverse country in Africa. Economically, Nigeria has huge economic potential. It is very rich in oil and minerals like marble, granite and silver. However, Nigeria is cursed with problems and struggles which make it hard to move forward in the development process.

Nigeria is a very diverse country, with over 250 ethno-linguistic groups, different religions and different cultures. The three dominant ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani, the Igbo and the Yoruba. They make up the majority of the population, in addition to other groups that are considered as minorities. However, the issue of coexistence between these different people has been forever Nigeria's biggest issue.

2. The Genesis of Nigeria

Nigeria is a country located in West Africa; it is surrounded by Benin from the West, Niger from the North, Cameroon from the East, the Atlantic Ocean from the South and from the northeast by the Lake of Chad that separates Nigeria from Chad. It is known for being the most populous country in Africa, and one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. The official language in Nigeria is English in addition to local languages. It is also a religiously diverse country, with Islam and Christianity as the two dominant religions. Nigeria is known as "The giant of West Africa" because of its size, population and political presence (Falola and Genova 31).

Map1. Map of Nigeria Showing Length of Borders with Benin and Other Neighbors.

Source: Border Governance and Its Complications in West Africa: What Can Be Learned from Constructivism? - Scientific Figure on *ResearchGate*. www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Nigeria-showing-length-of-borders-with-Benin-and-other-neighbors_fig1_354353147. Aaccessed 19 May, 2022.

Throughout its history, Nigeria has been home to different states and kingdoms such as Kanem, Borno and the Hausa city states (around 1000-1500 CE); and the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria in 1804, which is an Islamic state focused on spreading Islam among common people because at the beginning of its emergence it attracted only elites.

The first European-Nigerian contact was, like for most African countries, through trade mainly in gold and slaves. The period between 1300 and 1600 was "the golden age" for this trade, which was indirect because it passed through the Sahara Desert and North Africa. This trade continued till the nineteenth century but at a lower level because a direct way through the Atlantic Ocean was discovered in the late sixteenth century.

At the beginning of the 19th century, Britain abolished the slave trade but it continued for forty years after the abolishment. In the mid nineteenth century Europeans started their mission to modernize the peoples of Nigeria. The first mission was established in 1846 by the Church Missionary Society in Abeokuta, in Southern Nigeria. From that time Christianity rapidly spread in Nigeria, becoming the second dominant religion in the country, along with Islam.

2.1 Nigeria as a Colony

In the 1860s, the interest in Nigeria shifted from being merely commercial to dominance, Falola and Heaton explained how this process happened saying "The most important rules for declaring control over African lands were the upholding of the long-established practice of signing treaties of 'protection' with indigenous rulers for the creation of 'protectorates,' and the 'effective occupation' with military forces of any full-fledged colonies" (92). In 1861 Britain announced Lagos as a Crown Colony. Followed by the formation of Oil Rivers Protectorate in Southern Nigeria in 1885; its name was inspired

by the region's main product 'palm oil'; and was changed to Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893. In this year, another protectorate was established in the Yoruba region in the southwestern parts. At the beginning of the 20th century, another protectorate was established in the Northern part, in the territory of Sokoto Caliphate after killing its sultan.

With all this expansion to the British Colonization from West to East and North to South of what is now called Nigeria, the natives were displeased with seeing foreigners stealing their lands consequently a fierce resistance movement started especially after the establishment of the RNC (Royal Niger Company). According to Iweze:

> After the establishment of a trading post at Asaba by the agents of the RNC based on the supposed treaty it had signed with the chiefs between 1881 and 1883, the RNC attempted to penetrate the rest of Western Igbo area in search of profitable trade, and, at the same time, pretended to exercise some political control over the people. This aroused the deep-rooted hatred of the people for the British control (92).

The Eukemuku movement in the south was one of the most famous resistance movements in the area; the word Eukemuku is in native Western Igbo, it literally means 'do not talk about it' or 'do not reveal it' (Iweze 93). He adds "The Ekumeku resistance movement existed in many towns in the Asaba hinterland and neighboring Afemai, except Asaba itself…It adopted guerrilla tactics in their attacks on mission stations and colonial government institutions" (94). However, this resistance ended in 1909 with the victory of the British. It is interesting to mention that some scholars like Elizabeth Isichei, have accused this resistance movement of collaborating with the British colonial authorities to establish more power over the area. In this context she stated "Africans were used to conquer their fellow Africans. The rank and file of the British forces were predominantly Africans" (qtd. in Iweze 95).

The borders of present-day Nigeria were officially established in 1914 when Sir Frederick Lugard gathered all the protectorates of the Niger basin into one entity under the

name 'Nigeria'. The reason behind the amalgamation of Nigeria was purely economic.In this respect, Falola and Heaton mentioned that:

> Both the Colonial Office and Lugard believed that centralizing the protectorates under a single administration would be economically beneficial. Amalgamation would allow for a streamlining of existing expenses and would allow the central administration to divert resources as it saw fit – allocating southern revenue to the north as necessary (177).

Regardless of the huge differences between the two protectorates, the South was under the indirect rule that was introduced by Lugard, which allowed its inhabitants to get European values and education, unlike the North.

Post-World War I witnessed the emergence of a new generation of elites in Nigeria, Nigerians with European education, and an increasing nationalist sentiment. Hamon elaborated: "A Pan-African spirit-based on the logic that Africans, not outsiders, should govern Africa" (90-91). Though this generation did not remember when Nigerians used to govern themselves, they created a nationalist movement which aimed at leading the Africans to self-government. This movement flourished in a time Britain was having hard times because of the economic crisis following WWI.

With the wide wave of independence among colonized countries in the mid twentieth century, some signs started appearing confirming that the British colonization won't last for long in Nigeria and independence was only a few steps away. Starting from 1956, each region had the opportunity to self-govern but they still all belong to the British authority. In 1957, the British government held a conference discussing how many different groups could live together under one entity and expressed their concerns regarding it. Eventually, Nigeria became an independent country officially on October 1st, 1960.

2.2 Post-Colonial Nigeria

Nigeria's journey did not end happily with independence, but a new tragedy and struggle commenced. When Nigeria got its independence, its future seemed promising because of the huge economic potentials and the power of its youth. However, the reality was different than expectations as the first challenge for the freshly established Nigerian government was to create a common national identity that would bind all the inhabitants together and unite them as a nation. Falola and Heaton explain:

> The geographical area now known as Nigeria was created by the British colonial administration in 1914, not by indigenous peoples themselves. Thereafter, the people within the borders of Nigeria were known to the world as ''Nigerians,'' but in reality this designation meant little to most people, whose lives continued to be primarily centered on local communities that had existed for hundreds and thousands of years (158).

In addition to the issue of nationhood and the lost identity, Nigeria faced another challenge which is the corruption of the leaders and their very little experience in dealing with different problems.

Because of the lack of a common Nigerian identity and the problem of leadership, Nigeria faced a military coup in 1966 and a bloody civil war from 1967 to 1970 that killed almost 3 million people; this war is also known as the Biafra War because it started when the Biafran declared their independence from Nigeria. The Giant of West Africa faced, whatsoever, another two military coups in 1983 and 1985. Nonetheless, the situation changed by the beginning of the 21st century, and the country has since become more politically stable despite some internal issues that Nigeria is still trying to handle.

3. The Ethnic Composition of Nigeria

Nigeria is considered as a multiethnic nation, like most of the modern states. It is home for over 250 different ethnic groups spread over the different parts of the country,

creating the biggest diverse gathering in Africa. The biggest groups are Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa-Fulani in addition to other minor groups like Ibibo and Igala.

3.1 The Dominant Ethnic Groups

The three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria make up to 61.37% of the whole population. The country can be divided into three imbalanced regions based on the ethnic composition. The dominant groups are called so not only because they make up the majority of population, but also because they are dominant in the government and they control most sensitive positions.

3.1.1 Igbo

The Igbos are located in the southeastern parts of Nigeria, and they represent about 15.02% of population. Their language is also called "Igbo", and they have their own local religion. However, after the arrival of European missionaries, most Igbo became Christians. They are divided into smaller societies, but they share the same religion and language with slight differences. Igbo are a community of farmers whose main products are corn and beans, in addition to some local products like yams and taro.

After independence, the Igbo tried to secede from Nigeria in 1967 and fought the Nigerian government to create their own nation. On May 30th, Emeka Ojukwu, a military officer, declared the independence of Eastern Region as the sovereign Republic of Biafra. They did so simply because they do not have a common national identity with the rest of the inhabitants of what is called Nigeria. On his part, Yakubu Gowon, the Head of state at that time, strongly opposed this secession for the following reasons:

Map2: Major Cities and Ethnic Groups in Nigeria

Source: *A History of Nigeria*, by Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008, pp. xl-xl.

First, many in the FMG, including Gowon, sincerely believed in the practicability of Nigerian unity and were willing to fight to preserve it. Second, to allow the secession of Biafra would be to invite the secession of any minority group within the federation at any time. The prospect of Nigeria fragmenting into many small, hostile states was not appetizing to the FMG. Finally, the lands claimed by Biafra contained 67 percent of the known petroleum reserves in Nigeria. The secession of Biafra thus threatened what had the potential to be a very lucrative revenue base for the FMG However, this attempt was unsuccessful and they still a part of Nigeria, the official reincorporation of the Eastern region happened on January 12, 1970 (Falola and Heaton 175).

However, this attempt was unsuccessful, and they are still part of Nigeria. The official reincorporation of the Eastern region happened on January 12, 1970.

3.1.2 Yoruba

The Yoruba are located in the Southwestern parts of Nigeria. Yoruba is not a single group but the umbrella of many sub-groups. They can also be found in smaller numbers in Benin and Togo. The Yoruba local language is also called "Yoruba'' and just like "Igbo", they had a local religion but they switched to Christianity with the coming of Europeans. The Yoruba are known from ancient times to be skilled in working with bronze and brass.

The Yoruba had formed a formidable empire, the Oyo Kingdom, between the lower Niger River and what is now Benin before the European advent. The word "Oyo" literally means "slippery place". The Oyo was a very powerful and well-organized kingdom and it extended to cover huge areas. In this respect, Falola and Genova stated:

> According to Yoruba oral tradition, it was founded by Oranmiyan, the son of Oduduwa, who left IleIfe and decided to settle at Oyo. At the height of its power in the 17th century, Oyo extended its control to the Dahomey Empire (in present-day Benin), Asante Empire (in present-day Ghana),Borgu, and Tapas (territory of the Nupe) (294).

However, the Oyo Empire declined in the early 19th century after it started losing control over smaller states, leading to years of instability and wars among the Yoruba.

Today, the Yoruba are mainly concentrated in cities like Ibidan, the capital of Oyo state, Lagos and Ile-Ife. The Yoruba are known as the pacesetters of Nigerian politics (Falola and Genova 276). One of the first and most famous nationalists in the country was from the Yoruba, his name is Herbert Macaulay who is known as the "Father of Nigerian Nationalism" (Falola and Genova 276) for his contributions in politics. In the same context, Falola and Genova add: "They [the Yoruba] came into the frontline of Nigerian politics with their previous experience of sophisticated centralized governments, their closeness to, and participation in, colonial administration, and their access to Western education" (273).

3.1.3 The Hausa-Fulani

The third major group is Hausa-Fulani. Originally the Hausa and the Fulani were two separate groups, but almost 500 years before British colonization the Fualni conquered the Hausa. Consequently, the two groups merged with each other and created one unity, Harmon explained "The last conquerors were the Fulani people, today one of Nigeria's major ethnic groups. Under British rule a Fulani-Hausa political coalition was forged. It remains the primary ruling force in northern Nigeria. Despite past rivalries, there has been a significant blending of Hausa and Fulani cultures" (69-70). Today, the Hausa-Fulani are located in Northeastern Nigeria and the South of Niger. Most of them are Sunni Muslims and their language (Hausa) is the most spoken language in Nigeria.

Around 11th century, Islam appeared in Nigeria exactly in the Northern parts (Hausa lands), as result of contac with traders. The Sokoto Caliphate flourished in the area during the 19th century, it was an Islamic caliphate and its ruler called Sultan. In this respect, Falola and Genova add;

> The Sokoto Caliphate is considered one of Nigeria's last great empires. It stretched from Dori in present-day Burkina Faso east to Adamwa in present-day Cameroon and south to the town of Ilorin in Nigeria. The Sokoto Caliphate emerged from the amalgamation of over 30 emirates in 1812 through a series of jihads that began in 1804 and were led by a Fulani named Usman dan Fodio (331).

This caliphate declined when the British reached the region in 1903 and killed the Sultan.

The Hausa-Fulani live currently in cities like Sokoto and Kono, the second largest state in the country, in Northern Nigeria, although most of them prefer living in small traditional villages.

3.2 The Other Minority Groups

Apart from the three dominant ethnic groups, Nigeria is home to 250 other minor groups spread across Nigeria. The number of Nigerians belonging to these groups represents almost a third of the whole population. Falola and Genova indicate: "An estimated one-third of Nigerians belong to minority groups, which include the Tiv, Nupe, Igala, and Jukun in the Middle Belt and the Ijo, Itsekiri, Urhobo, and Ibibio in the Niger Delta" (33). They speak different languages, but almost all of them belong to the family tree of the Congo-Niger languages, and they have different religions: Islam, Christianity and other local religions.

These minor groups have been suffering a lot since independence as they have been marginalized and have not had a voice in political events. Falola and Genova stated that "The minority groups have protested over the past several decades for greater political representation and a larger monetary share in federal revenue allocation schemes" (33). This problem goes back to the colonial era when indirect rule was established. It did not really included these minor groups because leadership was handed to the "chiefs" of major groups while ignoring completely the minor ones.

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Chapter Two:

Ethnic-Related Challenges for Nation-building

1. Introduction

The first step following Nigeria's independence was the process of building a stable and well-organized nation, free from any violence or conflicts. One of the main challenges for heterogeneous societies is to establish a sense of nationhood among different ethnic groups, regardless of their numbers. This has been the case for Nigeria. What has kept the country in an endless "motion without movement" was not an external enemy but internal problems, most of which have been directly related to ethnicity.

2. The National Question

Ethnicity is a source of identity that has something to do with ancestors' legacy like a shared language or a specific lifestyle. Ethnicity is defined by Barth as following: "an exclusive category of ascription and identification attributed to an actor by both self and others on the basis of social origin and current behaviour, emphasising in particular the cultural content - values, beliefs, symbols, lifestyles - of this identification and behavior" (qtd. in Diamond 331). As for the definition of ethnic groups, Anderson defined it as ''Imagined community'' that possesses a "character and quality" (qtd. in Irobi 9). Gurr and Haff defined it as "ethnic groups are people with common descent, who share language and culture, common history, religion and place of residence" (qtd. in Irobi 9). In multiethnic societies, ethnic groupings are frequently recognized by two identities: a national one, shared with individuals living in the same region, and an ethnic one; from this point, the "national question" has arisen.

The national question is a complicated concept, it has a number of different definitions; Madunagu, a well-known Marxist states that "By the national question we mean the problems that arise from the composition of a nation; that is, problems arising

from the nature of the relationship between the ethnic groups in a nation state" (qtd. in Momoh and Adejumobi 14). On his part, Ade Ajayi, notes that "The national question is ... the perennial debate as to how to order the relations between the different ethnic, linguistic and cultural groupings so that they have the same rights and privileges, access to power and equitable share of the national resources" (qtd. in Momoh and Adejumobi 15).

The modern Nigerian nation with its current borders is a British-made nation, for merely economic purposes; while putting a blind eye on the cultural and social differences between the different tribes. However, this created a huge challenge for post-colonial governments to create a common national identity that united Nigerians aside from their ethnic identity.

The issue of the National Question had been raised in Nigeria since the amalgamation of the Northern and the Southern protectorates in 1914. Both major and minor ethnic groups did not feel a sense of belongingness to what is called 'Nigeria.' Abubaker Tafewa described the Nigerian nation as "existing only on papers'' he continued saying that it "still far from being considered as one country" (Momoh and Adejumobi 35), Obafemi Walololow, one of the most famous politicians in Nigeria, referred to Nigeria saying that "Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression'' (Wiwa 1). In fact, even after the amalgamation, the two protectorates were treated differently and ruled separately by the Colonial Authorities in a colonial policy known as 'divide and rule.' This widened the gap between them. Larry Diamond explains: "This separate administration of north and south not only profoundly hindered the development of a common national identity but also generated an immense development gap" (26-27).

The first Nigerian constitution (also known as the Clifford Constitution) that was established in 1922 was not in favour of the unity of Nigeria. It rather opposed the development of a united Nigerian nation (Momoh and Adejumobi 32). However, for the

first time after the amalgamation the constitutional arrangement of 1947 aimed at establishing a foundation for increased engagement amongst Nigerians to prepare for the political integration between the South and the North.

In 1949, the British government held a Constitutional Conference to discuss this issue of the National Question in addition to a number of issues opposing national integration in Nigeria, such as minority question. The conference was in two levels: divisional and provincial. It included Nigerian nationalists from different ethnic groups in constitution-making. Momoh and Adejumobi described this process saying "Their participation was an elaborate and democratic process of adequate consultation and involvement of the people in constitution" (34); however, the colonial authorities were strongly criticised by some nationalists from minor groups for ignoring their recommendations like adding more regions.

Despite the engagement of Nigerians from all regions in drafting the Macpherson Constitution that was put into effect in 1951, a sense of hesitation was shared amongst individuals. For example, Mallam Muhammadu, the Wali of Borno Mallam, shared his thoughts saying: "We merely pretend to call ourselves Nigerians ... as soon as there is something to discuss or to consider before us, in five minutes time we automatically take two different strands the North and the South ... I think there is a very strong misunderstanding amongst us all which hinders our unity" (Momoh and Adejumobi 35). In 1960, Nigeria attained its independence, which ended the presence of Britain in Nigeria after a series of actions, such as the unequal ethnically based division of the area, which led to the creation of the national question issue.

The first few years following independence were very tense in Nigeria, and the political view was a total mess. It is worth noting here that each of the Nigerian political parties developed primarily as an instrument in the hands of the local leadership groups

seeking to attain a number of given economic and social ends (Momoh and Adejumobi 38). In 1962 there was a conflict between two major parties, the Action Group (AG), and Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP), which led to bloody events where a military coup was held and notable politicians were killed like the Prime Minister Abubaker Tafewa and the premier of western region. Most of the victims were from the Northern and the Western parts. The events climaxed when a civil war started, and the southern region announced its secession from Nigeria.

The civil war changed things dramatically to making it more complicated for Nigeria especially in the 1970s, where an economic crisis added to the already existing problems. The government dropped section 164 of the constitution which required the federal government to consult with the regions before altering fiscal arrangements, and subsequent revenue allocation formulas since 1975 have enhanced the economic powers of the federal government (Momoh and Adejumobi 43). This led to the creation of the expression 'the national cake' among politicians and which referred to each citizen's right to benefit from the national resources. The post-civil crisis continued till the 1990s, as Momoh and Adejumobi state:

> By January 1994, when most ethnic groups seemed to have lost hope in Nigeria, a group of southern ethnic minorities advocated declaration of independence for all nationalities, total commitment to self-determination and mutual agreement on all future associations within the Nigerian territory and union. This development was a reflection of the political furore of the past, and of the National Question which continued to threaten the continued existence of Nigeria. (44)

Eventually, the National Question was left with no real answers, leading to tragic events in the history of Nigeria. The lack of unity and the absence of a sense of nationhood among Nigerians, in addition to rising tribal and regional feelings over the national one were the major barriers to nation-building in Nigeria.

3.   Ethnic Conflicts

In multiethnic societies, like the Nigerian one, conflicts are inevitable because of the differences between different groups. Immanuel Wallerstein, the famous sociologist, explained this issue saying:

> Ethnic consciousness and conflict occur when the ethnic groups feel threatened with loss of previously acquired privilege, or conversely feel that it is an opportune moment politically to overcome a longstanding denial of privilege … the present manifestation of ethnicity in Africa is an elite and class phenomenon where one elite community feels excluded by another from the control of economic and political power. They then indoctrinate members of their ethnicity to believe that this is a conspiracy by a whole community against another, which should be violently resisted. (qtd. in Saad and Jacob 69)

So basically, each ethnic group wants to be the dominant one and the decision maker, creating thereby tense relationships and a series of endless clashes between the different Nigerian ethnicities.

Before the colonisation and the creation of Nigeria, the different ethnic groups that lived there did not always have a peaceful relationship. They attacked each other every now and then. Describing this relationship, Harmon wrote that "Long before the Europeans arrived, the various tribes and kingdoms regarded one another with mistrust, scorn, envy, and fear. They sometimes fought and raided one another; they carried away human slaves" (74). Apart from that, they traded with each other and established a relationship based on each other's interests. Harmon states: "On the positive side, they also learned to get along; they traded. Those who farmed the earth and those who raised livestock knew the benefits of peaceful coexistence and communication" (75). On the other hand, many alliances were created such as the one between Oyo kingdom and Borgu.

Nigeria has been suffering since 1960, to properly manage the varying interests of various groups. Seven ethnic and political cleavages have been identified in Nigeria they are between north and the south; between the three majority ethnic groups; between the

major ethnic groups and the minorities; inter-state rivalry between states; inter-ethnic rivalry in a mixed state; inter-clan and intra-clan rivalries; and intra-ethnic rivalry within each majority ethnic group (Falode 191). Some of the factors that led to these conflicts are the issue of land resources and the settlers-indigenes dilemma. Some of these conflicts are the Zango-Kataf conflict in Kaduna State (1999-2001); the Ife Modakeke crisis and the case of Jos, Plateau State.

An example of an ethnic conflict is the crisis of Ife-Modakeke between 1849 and 1997. The two cities in the Yoruba lands, which makes this conflict an intra-conflict. For a better understanding of the roots of this conflict, it is important to provide a historical background. Modakeke city was founded in the 19th century when the Oyo Empire collapsed, migrants from the collapsed Oyo went south looking for trading and better life opportunities and settled down in what is called today Modakeke. As for Ife, it is "the cradle of Yoruba race, occupies a pride place in Yoruba history; as such its traditional ruler, the Ooni of Ife, is seen as the Arole (custodian) of Oduduwa, the progenitor of Yoruba" (Toriola 21). The Ifes assumed that they were the landowners of the Modakeke lands, since the Modakekes were migrants. For that, the two cities have had a long history of conflicts. For instance, the conflict of the late 1940s was because of the land tribute, as explained by Toriola:

> The Issue was decided against the Oyos at the Magistrate Court in Ibadan While those who agreed to pay the Isakole stayed and paid to their landlords, those whose feelings were contrary left the farmlands in protest to look for greener pastures elsewhere outside Ife land. The step paid them in those new farms (*Oko Iwaju*) with better yield, which were established in more conducive atmosphere in 1997. (22)

Another inter-ethnic conflict was the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen and pastorals in states like Kwara, Delta and Eungu, and which occurred over grazing opportunities (Ogwiube and Onah 6). Many community clashes occurred as shepherds swarmed and grazed available vegetation on the route. This often led to community

protests. This scenario created a tense competition between farmers and herders, leading to violence, loss of life and property. In some cases, the entire community was wiped out, and the people who could escape became refugees elsewhere.

The challenge of creating a peaceful coexisting environment between 250 ethnic groups has always been post-colonial Nigeria's biggest challenge. The constitution was the source to maintain a balanced relationship between the people, despite the fact that four constitutions have been established since independence so as to elevate the quality of their relationship. Not many changes have been noticed since the 1946 constitution, Ekanola assumes: "there has not been any positive change in this regard since then. Instead, the relationship among the constituent ethnic nationalities and religious groups has worsened drastically in spite of all pretenses to the contrary" (qtd. in Saad and Jacob 73).

1. Minorities Marginalisation

Aside from the three major groups, Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa Fulani, Nigeria is home for other ethno-linguistic groups considered as minor ones. According to the United Nations minorities are defined as the following:

> groups that are numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a state in a non-dominant position, whose members possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from the rest of the population and who has, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity directed towards preserving their culture, tradition, religion or languages" (qtd. in Rose and Awul 91).

These minor groups have been living in the shadow since the independence of Nigeria in 1960, struggling for equality and rights in the distribution of resources, and positions available to the community of which they are part.

When Sir Fredrick Lugard amalgamated two protectorates in an arbitrary and chaotic process to create a single entity for purely economic purposes, differences were not taken into consideration, and this created imbalance into which the country was divided. In 1947,

a central legislature located in Lagos was established to administrate the whole country, in addition to regional Houses of Assembly in each region's capital. Rose and Awul stated:

> To exploit the opportunities provided by the new constitutional arrangement, the Action Group (AG) was formed in 1951. It became an opposition party to National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon which later became National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) led by Nnamdi Azikiwe. In October 1951, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was formed specifically to serve the interest of the Northerners. (93)

These political parties supported regional thinking and were exclusively in favor of the three dominant groups, with an exclusion of the minor ones.

The minor ethnic groups started to ask for more regions apart from the three big ones. In the Easter region minorities established Calabar-Ogoja-Rivers. In the Northern region a number of organizations were created, and the same happened in the midwest. All these associations' major demand was additional regions. Consequently, the Willink commission was established in 1957 under the authority of the British administration. Its main purpose was to highlight and reduce the concerns of the minorities. Accordingly, two types of concerns were identified by commission, as explained by Usuanalele and Ibhawoh:

> First was the use of physical force by the major political parties to intimidate smaller political groups. In the view of the Commission, this trend was a grave threat to national integration and inter-ethnic harmony. A second reason for the fears of the minority groups, the Commission found was the tendency of regional governments, secure in their majority, to disregard the wishes of the minorities. (7)

Eventually, adding more states was declined by the commission; instead, they recommended the establishment of a bill of rights to preserve the minorities' rights. The constitution that followed independence included more detailed sections that preserve the rights of each Nigerian regardless of their tribal background. However, this constitution was not as useful as it was supposed to be for minorities because they were still treated as

second class citizens. In addition to that, the democratic constitutional framework adopted after independence might have complicated the issue of minorities (Usuanalele and Ibhawoh 7). This led to creation of "Dictatorship of numbers" which meant with the majority imposing its will on the minority on political, cultural or religious grounds.

In 1966, a military coup was held in Nigeria and ended in the overthrow of the government and the coming to power of Yakubu Gowon, an officer from a minor ethnic group called Angas. Gowon decided to divide the country into 12 states, an act that fully changed the federal structure of the country and reshaped the relationship between the majority and the minority groups. Creating more states had been the major demand for minor ethnicities, so this decision gave them a sense of satisfaction. Suberu wrote:

> By giving relative satisfaction to the long-standing ethnic minority demands for new States, Gowon's 12 State structure not only overturned the structural hegemony of the North, but also liberated many minority communities from the regional stranglehold of the majority groups and undermined local ethnic minority support for the secessionist bid of the Eastern region (qtd. In Rose and Auwal 94).

A military coup was not the only crisis that Nigeria witnessed in the late 1960s, it also had a bloody civil war which complicated the minority question even more. The government's biggest challenge after the end of this war was to restore people's confidence in the government. Accordingly, the government proposed a number of solutions to resolve such an issue and deal with the minority question. The two major solutions were adding more states to reduce the concentration of ethnic groups in particular states (Usuanalele and Ibhawoh 8), and changing the system to an American inspired one. Another ambitious suggestion was to redesign the revenue allocation system to reverse the scenario where those who produce the major part of the national revenue were politically excluded and remained the least developed. These suggestions were ambitious ideas put into effect in the constitution of 1979; however, these solutions did not give an answer to the minority question because "the minority problem has been approached with a focus on the three

dominant regions—Eastern, Western and Northern—that formed the basis of the colonial

administrative apparatus and the federal system of government adopted at independence"

(Usuanalele and Ibhawoh 9).

In the mid-1970s, when oil became the basis of the Nigerian economy, people living

in the producing oil communities, called 'oil minorities,' started to demand for their source

rights. The situation of oil minority was explained as follows:

> Clearly, the new principles were a response to the change in the shift of the wealth
> of the nation from agriculture to oil, and the d desire by the hegemonic faction of
> the Ethnic majorities to continue to retain the larger chunk of nation al revenue.
> These moves further marginalized the oil producing ethnic minority states who saw
> in these changes in inter govern mental revenue sharing in Nigeria, a ploy to deny
> them the benefits of the oil produced from their ancestral lands and waters and
> perpetuate their marginalization and exploitation within the Nigerian nation. This
> served to exacerbate contradictions between the oil-producing nationalities and
> majority nationalities in Nigeria. (qtd. in Said and Momoh 101)

However, the world went through a severe economic crisis when the oil prices collapsed in

the late 1970s, and since Nigeria's economy was fundamentally based on oil exportation

the crisis affected it considerably. Consequently, the relationship between the government

and the oil minority became even worse. This tense relationship continued till the 1990s

and was often expressed in protests in the Niger delta region.

4.   Ethno-Religious Conflicts

The ethno-religious conflicts are a type of conflict generated on the basis of real or

imagined difference rooted in ethnic and religious identities (qtd. in Falode 192). The birth

of Nigeria was the result of the amalgamation of two regions which differ in language,

culture and religion. There is Islam in the North and Christianity in the South, in addition

to some local religions. The main reason for the ethno-religious conflicts is the congruence

and the mutually reinforcing relationships between ethnic and religious identities in the

social and political process (Falode 192). The history of ethno-religious conflicts in

Nigeria is so bloody and has proved to be the most violent inter-group crisis (Ugwiube and Onah 5).

Ethnic and the religious conflicts are so interrelated which make it difficult to differentiate between the two. In Nigeria, religious conflicts are divided into three types intra-religious disturbances between different denominations or sects; inter-religious conflicts between adherents of different religious beliefs capable of assuming socio-ethnic dimensions; and inter-religious conflicts which has socio-economic origin but ends up as religious conflicts (Falode 192). Some of the main examples of these conflicts are the Kaduna Sharia riots of 2000, and the Jos riots of 2001.

An example of the ethno-religious conflicts is the Maitatsine Crisis in Northern

Nigeria that happened between 1980 and 1985. This crisis is considered as one of the most famous ethno-religious crises in the country. The Maitatsine is an extremist group led by Mohammed Marwa Maitatsine. They were situated in Kano and had more than 10.000 followers. Ngwoke and Ituma note that "The Maitatsine group was known for its exhibition of religious intolerance towards anyone who did not share the same belief" (2). As for the origin of the group's name, "… [It] name was derived from the name of the leader Maitatsine, which is a Hausa word meaning 'the one who curses' because of his curse-laden public speeches" (Ngwoke and Ituma 2). The purpose of these clashes was to support Islam in the Northern region and stop modernization. The Maitatsine group killed hundreds of people who did not follow them and considered them as non-believers.

Another example of the ethno-religious conflicts is the Jos crises. Jos is a city located in Plateau State in central Nigeria. The city was so peaceful that it was called "Home of peace and tourism" (Osaretin and Akov 352). However, nowadays it changed to be "Home of pieces and terrorism" (qtd. in Osaretin and Akov 352). The contains both Muslims and

Christians as a result of migration to work in mines, which make them the two sides of the conflict. Muslims are considered by the Christians as settlers and minority but dominant, and Christians are the indigenous majority but marginalized. The conflict started in 1994 when open clashes mainly between the Berom indigenes and the Hausa-Fulani settlers over farmland and chieftaincy broke out. The events climaxed when a Hausa-Fulani man was selected to be chief of Jos North Local Government which complicated the situation even more. The indigenous did not accept being ruled by a Hausa-Fulani Muslim man. Sha explains why a settler was selected as a chairman by stating: "interpreted the action as the confirmation of the fear that the federal government wanted to provide basis for the Hausa-Fulani to assume political hegemony in Jos" (qtd. in Osaretin and Akov353).

More clashes happened in 1996 and 2001 and resulted in the death of nearly 3000 people. Ethno-religious clashes are one of the worst and most violent type of conflicts that Nigeria has witnessed, based on the number of victims and the amount of destruction. They proved that the existing conflict management, settlement and resolution strategies were weak and ineffective (Ugorji 47).

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Chapter Three:

Reflection on Nation-building

1. Introduction

Even though Nigeria is a childbirth of the British colonisation, there would not be a Nigeria without Nigerian. People are the soul of this geographical area, and they share the same present and will share the same future. During its intractable long journey of searching for nationhood, this diversity was accused to be what setback the process of nation-building in Nigeria.

Ethnicity in Nigeria was the direct cause of numerous conflicts that ruined lands and killed many people, and each step the nation took forward these conflicts would return it ten steps back. However, there is a solution for every dilemma, and each solution requires thoughtful minds and brave men to be applied in real life.

2. Nation-building in Nigeria

Nation-building in Nigeria was a priority for the government since independence till the moment. But it was not achieved because of many internal problems such as conflicts that led to civil war in the late 1960s.

2.1 Conceptual Clarification

Nation-building is a concept used frequently by politicians and even individuals in discourses and interviews. The term became popular in the 1950s and 1960s during the period when most modern states took their independence. Nation-building is composed of two words: nation which is a Latin rooted word meaning "birth", and nation can be defined as a group of people born in the same place (Omotosho 177). On his part, Anifowoshe distinguishes between two meanings of the term nation: political and ethnological. For the

political one he says "…a sovereign state, having a definite territory, a population, a government, formal independence and a sense of national identity made possible by a combination of both subjective and objective factors." (177). He further continues by saying that "… for that which is ethnological, this is a group with homogenous setting and cultural affinities relating to blood, language, marks, legend and custom" (qtd. in Omotosho 177). The other term is "building" which means constructing. Thus, the concept of nation-building can be defined, according to Chiazam and Anthonia, as ''…the process of mobilizing socio-cultural, political, and economic forces of a nation to transform the lives of the citizenry of the nation, while moving the state to a new level of civilization''(2).

It is important to mention that state building is not the same as nation-building, even though the two terms are used interchangeably. State building is defined as "the building of public institutions that enable weak, failing or failed states to gain the capacities to perform the core functions of modern states" (Falode 23). On the other hand, Falode defines nation-building as "… the process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller ethnic groups, villages or petty principalities to the larger central political system" (25). However, the two terms require the disposal of regionalism and ethnic-chauvinism, in addition to focusing on what unites people instead of what divides them to be successfully achieved.

2.2 Theories of Nation-building

Since independence in 1960, Nigerian governments have been constantly trying to turn the Nigerian multiethnic society into a functional and integrated entity in a process called nation-building. Theoretically, there are six ways for nation-building: Systems Theory, Internal Colonialism Theory, Regionalism Theory, Modernization Theory,

Imagined Communities Theory, and Ethnic Theory. However, according to Falode, only two of these theories can be applied to the Nigerian case; Modernization Theory by Gellner and Imagined Communities Theory by Anderson (183).

2.2.1 Modernization Theory

Modernization Theory by Gellner is based on the primacy of material conditions in shaping political thought and social change (Falode 32), and how modernization changes society. Gellner focused on the transition that occurred during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in most parts of the world which changed traditional societies to industrial ones and how that affected the society. Falode explains:

> The strength of Gellner's theory is in its analysis of the transition of traditional societies to industrial societies. The latter, described as "agro-literate" societies, witnessed a strict division between the categories of those who were educated and governed, and who, by reason of their power and their literacy, had access to a great tradition; and the former, who were those who worked on the land and who bore a "little tradition." (33)

Hence, for Nigeria, the British colonial authorities changed the agricultural nature of the Niger Delta inhabitants to an industrial economy and introduced the area to legal commerce which helped Nigeria to integrate into the international economy.

On his part, Otomosho contributed to the theory by relating it to the ethnicity dilemma. He explains: "on the way of nation-building and hence the need to reject ethnic thinking that is presumed primitive and primordial which would impede rapid development closer to the door steps of the colonized (now liberated) in their post-colonial era, but, only if these locals could abandon old beliefs and practice that stuck them to tradition and tribal chauvinism" (180).

2.2.2 Imagined Communities Theory

Anderson's theory of Imagined Communities is based on a number of necessary steps for nation-building. He called the first step "print capitalism." Falode explains this step as following "This means commercial printing on a large scale. Print capitalism is the medium through which the idea of the nation and the ideology of nationalism are propagated. Through print capitalism, vernacular languages are strengthened by the publishing of dictionaries and indigenous literature" (37). The purpose of this process is to create a sense of nationalism through a common language. This happened in Nigeria for the first time in 1847 at Calabar and continued years after that.

The second condition is called "modernization." It is the same point Gellner elaborated about the transition from a traditional society to a modern one. Furthermore, the last condition Anderson mentioned is called "notions of pilgrimages." According to Falode, "Pilgrimages are essentially the pattern of social communication and 'life chances' of different people. This may be a matter of sharing a common language, or of being the object of differential treatment by the state. It is these pilgrimages which define the boundaries of the nation, and lead people to identify with it and not with another social or political entity" (38).

Anderson's Theory explains the nation-building process in Nigeria in its early phases; it eloquently explains the importance of print capitalism and indigenous newspapers for nation-building before and after independence.

2.3 The Impact of Ethnicity on Nation-building

The process of nation-building is a tough but inevitable challenge all freshly independent nations have to go through. For Nigeria, the nation that gathers 250 ethnic

groups and hundreds of sub-groups in one entity, the process was even more complicated and very intractable. Aside from the problems of federalism, corruption and lack of democracy the major problem for Nigeria was ethnicity.

The whole problem started in 1914, when the British colonial authorities gathered two of their territories under one entity and called it "Nigeria." The amalgamation was so random and made no sense to the inhabitants of the two protectorates. Ahmadu Bello shared his thoughts concerning this amalgamation saying: "What kind of trouble had we let ourselves in by associating with such people? We should set up our own: we should cease to have anything to do with the southern people: we should take our own way. We were certainly viable; we could run our own show" (qtd. in Eke 74). The two regions were ruled separately at the beginning of the amalgamation, which did no favor the unity of Nigeria, rather it widened the gap. Ibrahim Gambari claimed that: "it was almost as if these regions were two separate countries, held together by currency and transportation system" (qtd. in Eke 47).

The huge differences between the two regions and between the ethnic groups living there created a tense relationship between them even before independence. Moreover, the Richard Constitution of 1947 promoted regional thinking by encouraging regional based parties. Thus, the conduct of politics along regional and ethnic lines continued unabated, thereby making several attempts at nation-building unsuccessful (qtd. in Eke 74).

After the attainment of independence, ethnicity continued to threaten the nation-building in Nigeria, leading to the failure of the First Republic in 1966 and a civil war in 1967 even though leaders did some efforts to establish an integrated stable country by adopting federalism and advocating a policy of unity-in-diversity (Eke 75). The consequences of the military coup and the war were so devastating to the newly created nation that was trying to find its way.

The post-civil war period was even tougher for the Nigerian government because a new challenge occurred which was restoring people's lost confidence. This lost confidence between the people and the government made people seek trust within their ethnic groups, thus increasing regional thinking and ethnic chauvinism. In this respect, Eke states that: "The result is that citizens are no longer motivated to support the state because they do not feel that the state is adequately concerned about them. In other word, they feel marginalized by the central government and as a result have decided to seek refuge in their respective ethnic groups" (75).

Nigeria also witnessed a number of bloody and devastating ethnic and religious conflicts that set back nation-building. These conflicts took thousands of human lives, destroyed many properties, and caused the loss of huge amounts of money that could have been used in a more useful way. For Nwabughuogu:

> The cost of such conflicts usually runs in million dollars, money that could have been used to develop the communities and states involved. The cost of maintaining border communities is usually staggering especially when the conflicts drag for too long. These communities of necessity become dependent on the state for their food and sustenance since the military forces usually occupy their farmlands. The greatest victims of these conflicts are usually the young men, the productive population of the community and state who are the future hope of its development. (qtd. in Okoi 66)

Young people are the major victims of such conflicts because they lower their chances of getting a better future. Moreover, ethnic conflicts in the Nigerian society also encourage certain practices like opportunism, mediocrity, discrimination in appointment and promotions, admissions into institutions of higher learning and award of scholarships (Okoi 66). Such conflicts do not only threaten the unity and the process of nation-building in Nigeria, but they also shake the image of Nigeria, the giant of West Africa and the biggest oil producer in Africa, internationally.

Apart from the conflicts, there is also the minority question which is basically them being excluded from political representation before and after independence. In addition to that, the emergence of oil minorities in the 1970s, who claimed their portion from "the national cake". Or in another word their rights from the oil extracted from their lands.

The federal character is an important concept to understand the relationship between nation-building and ethnicity in Nigeria. According to Eke, "The term Federal Character is one of the ideas of the constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) inaugurated by the late general Murtala Mohammed on October 18, 1975" (75). The CDC was split into two groups, the first one emphasized on including a federal character principle on the constitution because of the long history of inter-ethnic rivalries in order to secure the domination of government by one ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups to the exclusion of others (qtd. in Eke 76). The first group also asked for adding provisions to prevent the dominantion of one person or one single ethnic group in the government. On the other hand, the other group argued that it was not necessary to include the federal character principle in the constitution, because adding new states in addition to strict constitutional provisions were enough to satisfy all ethnic groups. The second group argued "it is unnecessary to insist on the participation of all the communities in government and that such participation may be impracticable, and that it may retard national loyalty by playing up the role of sectional representative in the conduct of the affairs of the state" (qtd. in Eke 76).

Ethnicity has always been the biggest challenge for Nigeria and the major barrier for the nation-building process in the country. Ethnicity led to bloody ethnic and religious conflicts which increased discrimination and nepotism in the country. It also made Nigerians doubt their belongingness to Nigeria and give their whole loyalty to their tribes.

3. In an Attempt for a Unified Nigerian Nation

There were some really serious and successful attempts by some leaders to unify the different ethnic groups and to raise the sense of nationalism among them. For instance, the adoption of the WAZOBIA concept which means 'come' in the three main local languages in the country Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa (Omotosho 184) . This concept aim is bringing the different ethnic groups together and giving them the feeling that they are one. Moreover, there was the establishment of the NYSC (National Young Service Corps) after the Civil War in 1967, which is an obligatory service that all young graduate men under the age of 30 should go through. The latter are asked to go to their father's land and help to rebuild and reconstruct what was destroyed in the Civil War.

3.1 Scholar's Recommendations

Many scholars specialised in African studies generally, and Nigeria particularly, suggested some ideas to resolve the dilemma of ethnicity and nation-building in Nigeria. Even though most of these ideas are theoretical, they are the result of a deep study for the Nigerian society. For example, the suggestion of Okoi which is basically addressing the root causes of widespread poverty and diversifying the economy away from dependency on crude oil. The report finds that post-colonial administrations should abandon administrative strategies that generate boundary conflicts, hostility, ethnic intolerance, and divisiveness among Nigerians (67). On his part, Falode emphasised on the importance of investing in education to raise awareness among the younger generation he explains:

> One can even say that education is the important plank that the other nation-building requirements stand. Print capitalism requires a literate majority. Likewise, technological innovations. For both of these factors to be successful, education is a *sine-qua-non*. Thus, Nigeria must devote considerable resources to the mass education of the citizenry. (195)

The Nigerian experience with ethnicity and nation-building is a tough but not an impossible process. It requires the contribution of all citizens, and the focus on the interest of the nation first before that of the tribes.

General Conclusion

Ethnicity is the major barrier to the nation-building process in Nigeria. It has led to a number of bloody conflicts and kept the citizens lost between national and tribal identities, which caused an identity crisis in Nigeria. The impact of these issues caused the death of millions of people, many of whom had great potentials which might have changed the future of Nigeria to a better one. People's death has definitely been the biggest loss for Nigeria that conflicts have caused. As for the survivors, they lost money and property, and became refugees somewhere else where they would be considered as settlers with fewer rights.

The clashes caused also the loss of millions of dollars, spent on reconstructing the damaged areas. This money could have been invested in a better way, for example it can be invested in education. Providing good education to the new generation may be helpful to convince them that the nation comes first then the tribe, and only by that that a peaceful and democratic nation can be a reality.

The contribution of the government to this mess cannot be ignored. The corrupted leaders and politicians made people lose trust in the government and believe that they are not valued by the state. Add to that, the political parties and their encouragement to the regional thinking over the national thinking, and discrimination between the different ethnic groups.

To conclude, ethnic diversity in Nigeria should not be barrier to nation-building if it is dealt with in a positive way. Ethnic diversity is a point of strength and can be the motive and foundation for creating a better Nigeria.

Appendix

Table: Ethnic& Regional Composition of Nigerian Population: 1952/3.

Ethnic Group	Population	Percentage
Edo	468,501	1.5
Fulani	3,040,736	9.76
Hausa	5,548,542	17.81
Ibibio	766,764	0.25
Igbo	5,483,660	17.60
Kanuri	1,301,924	4.18
Nupe	359,260	1.15
Tiv	790,450	2.54
Yoruba	5,046,799	16.2
All Nigeria	*31,156,027*	*100*
North	16,835,582	54
East	7,967,973	25.6
West	6,352,472	20.4

Source: Mustapha, Abdul Raufu. "Ethnic Structure, Inequality and Governance of the Public Sector in Nigeria." *Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (CRISE),* no. 18, 2005, CRISE Working Paper.

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Abstract

Ethnicity is a term that gives different impressions when heard by individuals. For some, it is seen in a positive way and a source of honor and pride. While others think that it is unnecessary and represents nothing in their life. However, the fact about ethnicity is that it is what gives people a sense of uniqueness from other people. In this dissertation, the ethnicity is seen from a perspective that is an obstacle in the nation-building process in Nigeria. It explains in which way ethnicity is setting back this important process and keeping the country in a motion without movement. Even though, Nigeria is considered as a rich country since it's the first oil exporter in Africa. The aim of this study is to explain how ethnicity affected the nation-building process in Nigeria, and turned to become a barrier instead of a tool for achieving. In this study, the historical background is very important; it gives a better understanding of the ethnicity issue and why it is considered an issue. This work explains how ethnicity affected the economy and caused huge loss, and killed thousands of innocent people sharing the same nationality, history and heritage.

Key words: nation-building, Nigeria, ethnicity, ethnic conflicts

ملخص

العرق هو مصطلح يعطي انطباعات مختلفة عندما يسمعه الأفراد. بالنسبة للبعض، يُنظر إليه بطريقة إيجابية ومصدر شرف وفخر. بينما يعتقد آخرون أنه غير ضروري ولا يمثل شيئًا في حياتهم. ومع ذلك، فإن حقيقة العرق هي أنه ما يمنح الناس إحساسًا بالتفرد عن الآخرين. في هذه الأطروحة، يُنظر إلى العرق من منظور انه يمثل عقبة في عملية بناء الدولة في نيجيريا. وهو يشرح الطريقة التي يؤدي بها العرق إلى تراجع هذه العملية المهمة وإبقاء عجلة التنمية ف البلاد في حالة ركود. على الرغم من ذلك، تعتبر نيجيريا دولة غنية لأنها أول مصدر للنفط في إفريقيا*. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو شرح كيفية تأثير العرق على عملية بناء الدولة في نيجيريا، وتحوله إلى حاجز بدلاً من أداة للتحقيق. وتكتسي الخلفية التاريخية أهمية كبيرة في هذه الدراسة ؛ بحيث انها

تعطي فهماً أفضل لقضية الإثنية ولسبب اعتبارها قضية. يشرح هذا العمل كيف أثر العرق على الاقتصاد وتسبب في خسائر فادحة، وقتل الآلاف من الأبرياء الذين يتشاركون نفس الجنسية والتاريخ والتراث.

الكلمات الرئيسية: بناء الدولة، نيجيريا، العرق، النزاعات العرقية