



THE QUESTIONS OF ETHNICITY AND RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS IN NIGERIAN POLITICS, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARDS

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Abstract

This paper examines ethnicity, religion, political sentiment in Nigerian politics and the questions of national unity and integration. Symbolic interactionism was adopted as the theoretical framework. Four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Cross-sectional research design was adopted. Multi-stage random sampling procedure was used to disproportionately select a research population from four major ethnic groups, 420 respondents used as the sample. A structured questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the respondents. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used in the data analysis. It therefore concludes that ethnicity, religion and political sentiment was the key foundation for social and governance related problems that breeds corruption, insecurity and nepotism in Nigeria's democratic process which has led to political interest groups' agitations that now threaten our national unity and peaceful coexistence of various ethnic groups in Nigeria. It recommended that: Nigeria should be restructured in a way that the entire federating units has equal share in political power and resources; Political appointments and allocation of resources should be done equitably amongst the federating units; Government should strengthen its National Orientation Agency and create a strategic political and peaceful initiatives that could give room for functional democratic leadership and accommodative peaceful environment that embraces the various religious and ethnic group to live in peace and harmony despite the differences of values and culture.

Keywords: *Ethnicity, Religion, Political Interests, Politics of exclusion, National Unity*

Introduction

The problem with promoting peace, national unity and integration in Nigeria has been the worries of many well-meaning Nigerians and this has to do with the quality of leadership and their effective management of the socio-economic space. The trend has been the ruling class exploiting ethnic and religious differences to promote its political and economic interests, to the detriment of nation building (Ukiwo, 2005). The cause of crisis in Nigeria since shortly after independence has been attributed to the failure of the ruling class at each point in time to resolve the socio-economic, political and cultural problems in such a way that the people would enjoy a decent life in a united and prosperous Nigeria.

The leadership crises in Nigeria was institutionalized with the British colonial government creating a structural imbalance in which political power skewed in favour of the North at the 1950 Ibadan constitutional conference. The fifty percent electoral representation which the North secured at the constitutional conference placed it in an advantageous position over the East and the West. The January 15, 1966 coup d'état spearheaded by officers of Southern origin was in most interpretations, an attempt to redress the structural imbalance which politicians of the South were unable to achieve. The counter-coup of July 29, 1966, spearheaded by officers of Northern extraction restored Nigeria to the *status quo ante* of 1950 (Azeez, 2009). This scenario and the pogrom that followed was what led to the 1967-1970 civil wars that seriously challenged the existence of Nigeria as a nation.

The April 1990, Gideon Orkar-led attempted coup was another occasion that challenged what had become Northern primacy in national politics and leadership. The political style of Northern agenda, of General IBB where his cabinet reshuffle of December 1989 left the key portfolios in the hands of officers of Northern extraction while the less attractive ones fell to the South accounted for this failed coup (Chogugudza, 2008). Further still, Babangida's annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election presumably won by Chief MKO Abiola created serious ripples in the polity as it was seen as a plot to retain the Northern ascendancy and hegemony. A notable outcome of the crisis that erupted was that leadership question in Nigeria came to be a matter of street and public discussions. This underscored the General Sani Abacha's gimmick Constitution of 1995 that introduced the principles of rotational leadership between the North and South and which informally was adopted

by the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) (Nnoli, 2011). Nigeria, a nation divided by religion and selfish interests has in her fifty-eight (58) years of existence had her political leadership dominated by people from the North (40¹/₂ years for the North and 17¹/₂ years for the South). An analysis of ruler ship of Nigeria from 1960 is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Analysis of Rulership in Nigeria from 1960 to 2019

<i>Head of Government</i>	Length of Rule						Period
	N. East	N. West	N. Central	S. West	S. East	S. South	
<i>Alh. Tafawa Balewa</i>	5yrs 4mths						Oct. 1960-Jan. 1966
<i>Gen. J.T.U. Ironsi</i>					6mths		Jan. 1966-July 1966
<i>Gen. Yakubu Gowon</i>			9yrs				July 1966-Aug. 1975
<i>Gen. Murtala Mohammed</i>		6mths					Aug. 1975-Feb. 1976
<i>Gen. Olusagun Obasanjo</i>				3 ¹ / ₂ yrs			Feb. 1976-Oct. 1979
<i>Alh. Shehu Shagari</i>		4yrs					Oct. 1979- Dec. 1983
<i>Gen. M. Buhari</i>		1yr					1983-1984
<i>Gen. IB Babangida</i>			8yrs				1984-1993
<i>Chief E. Shonekan</i>				6mths			1993
<i>Gen. Sani Abacha</i>			5yrs				1993-1998
<i>Gen. A. Abubakar</i>			1yr				1998-1999
<i>Chief O. Obasanjo</i>				8yrs			1999-2007
<i>Alh. Umaru Yar'Adua</i>		3yrs 8mths					2007-2010
<i>Dr. Goodluck Jonathan</i>						5yrs	2010-2015
<i>Muhammadu Buhari</i>		4yrs					2015-2019
Total	5.4yrs	18.2yrs	18yrs	12yrs	0.6yrs	5yrs	1960-2019

The table above shows the level of dominance of political leadership by particular section of the country and the politics of exclusion meted out on some sections of the country in a political space where we should all be seen as equals. Apart from the founding leaders of Nigeria in the persons of Dr. NnamdiAzikiwe, Ahmadu Bello, Obafemi Awolowo, Anthony Enahoro, Michael Okpara, Tafawa Balewa, Nigeria has not been able to produce leaders

of proven integrity who are genuinely interested in nation building. What we have rather been seeing are leaders who are either working for their pockets or their ethnic groups (Fafowora, 2011). The return to civilian rule on May 29, 1999 after thirty (30) years of military rule was enthusiastically greeted by Nigerians since they anticipated first; that the advent of democratic politics would end military authoritarianism and arbitrariness in governance, with the attendant negative impacts on our national values. Second, Nigerians believed that the new government would bring about the beginning of the process of building a genuine popular democratic culture.

Regrettably, what we have been witnessing since 1999 is a total failure of political leadership with no hope in sight as things are worsening by the day. The socio-economic, religious and political crisis in the polity is seen everywhere at the various levels of governance: federal, state and local levels. A prominent and more worrisome aspect of this crisis of leadership is the emergent formal democratic structure that lacks the essentials of democratic ideals and practice in which party leadership roles are well defined (Adamu and Ocheni, 2016). Nigeria today presents a paradox of a “democratic” government but where there are no popularly organized political parties with defined ideologies, manifestos and political structures, let alone party leadership roles.

Over the years also, our ruling class has used religion to cause trouble and disintegrate the country. Islam and Christianity like other major religions evolved essentially as liberating forces against ignorance, disease, and promotion of inter-personal relationship with the supernatural. In recent times, in Nigeria some religions have acquired some form of an ideology of oppression to disintegrate the country (Raji, 2013). Unfortunately, Nigeria is now witnessing the bureaucratization and commercialization of religion with the invisible guiding hands of our political leaders and government officials vigorously fanning this deadly amber.

Other manifestations of bad leadership and governance are visibly clear in the following: institutionalization of politics of exclusions; suppression of opposition and critical dissenting voices; control of the economy by foreign agencies (World Bank, IMF) in alliance with a few corrupt internal collaborators; conscious weakening of the organs of organized civil society organizations (NLC, TUC, ASUU, etc); insurgencies, religious violence and motivated violent attacks on particular people aimed at ethnic cleansing with

the government and her security looking the other ways; domination of political space by retired military officers who looted the treasury; privatization of public enterprises in a manner that reinforces the strong hold of the ruling class; increasing takeover of the productive sectors of the economy (commanding heights of the economy such as electricity, iron and steel, energy, telecommunications, ports, etc.) by transnational companies with a few of those who were part of the nation's treasury looting process as their internal collaborators; and, economic exclusion of the informal sector of the economy (Nwanegbo, 2018).

This is the unfortunate situation that characterize the present day Nigeria. With the increasing level of poverty and the failure of the state to respond to these social crises, people are daily turning to religion for succor. This invariably explains the reason the ruling class exploits religion to cause confusion and crisis in the polity as witnessed after the 2011 general elections and the sporadic and lingering crisis in many parts of Nigeria such as Kaduna, Plateau, Benue, Borno, Taraba, Nassarawa, among others. As already noted, most countries of the world emerged from a collection of small communities, therefore diversity is a common factor in the emergence of modern nation-states and Nigeria cannot be different. The scenario playing out in Nigeria since 2000 is therefore attributable to bad leadership. Hence, the spate of separatist agitations for the Republic of Biafra, Niger Delta Republic, Oduduwa Republic, among the oppressed and marginalized ethnic groups in Nigeria (Adamu and Ocheni, 2016). More so, the June 2017 statement of the Arewa Youth Coalition giving the Igbos an ultimatum to leave the North by 1st October 2017 is not what should be swept under the carpet. This notice and the emergence of Fulani herdsmen rampaging the Middle Belt and Southern parts of Nigeria, killing and maiming innocent people and destroying their farms and properties complementing the already existing mayhem of the Boko Haram terrorist group, with the ruling federal government paying lip service to that showing their culpability, have given impetus to the rise of political interest groups and agitations for the restructuring of the country.

Statement of the Problem

The present democratic government led by Muhammadu Buhari's approach to governance has brought to the fore the problems of ethnicity, religion and the sharing of national resources. The idea of national unity and integration is

no more active and it has been further suppressed by the petitions that followed the ministerial lists submitted by President Mohammadu Buhari to the Senate of the National Assembly for screening and confirmation as ministers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Adamu and Ocheni, 2016). The Nigeria we live in is a plural society which is usually characterized by cultural and religious diversities as well as ethnic cleavages and as a result, these can become sources of problems among inter-groups in their relationships if not properly managed. Ethnicity as a social construct manifests in a situation of competition for scarce resources which involves individuals and groups who are subject to 'poverty and social exclusion' (Osaghae, 2016). Ethnicity emerges in governance when there is unequal access to resources and appointments – which informed the provisions of the Quota System in section 14(3) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria thus; “the composition of the Government of the Federal and any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in the government or any of its agencies.” What this means is that the federal character principle is concerned about fairness, equality and justice for all Nigerians, given the ethnic diversity of the country. Its objective is to ensure that in the running of the affairs of the country, no group of people from a particular locality or region would feel excluded due to lack of representation (Ako-Nai, 2008).

Under the present Buhari government, 2015-2019, ethnicity and religion have become a platform for determining “Who gets what, when and how”. Ethnicity and religion determine how power and resources are shared, giving rise to agitations of political interest groups and the issue of restructuring. The question that is on the lips of many Nigerians has been, why should people from some sections of the country be treated as strangers in their own country? Why should people from a section of the country precisely the North West dominate all federal appointments since 2015? There has not been a decisive answer to these questions which hinges on ethnicity and religion as social problems. This has been the basis for the agitations of political interest groups which has prompted this study.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine ethnicity and religion as social problems and platforms of corruption in Nigeria's democratic governance which engenders the rise of political interest groups that now threaten our national unity. The specific objectives include; to,

- i. Examine the nature of inter-ethnic relations as a social problem and a platform of corruption in Nigeria.
- ii. Examine the influence of ethnicity and religion on appointments leading to agitations of political interest groups which now threatens our national unity.
- iii. Examine the influence of ethnicity and religion on accessibility to leadership positions and critical sectors of the Federal Government.
- iv. Examine the relationship between ethnicity and motivation to work in the Federal Public Service.

Literature Review

Historical records show that there were positive ethnic contacts among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria before the amalgamation, portraying unity. This means that the amalgamation of 1914 was not a mistake; it was the culmination of a historical process which the dynamics of colonialism merely hastened and used for imperialistic purpose (Anugwom, 2000). The post amalgamation period witnessed increased movement of people throughout the country with heavier traffic towards the north, that is, expanded trade culminating in the movement of goods from south to north and north to south. The unity of Nigeria or its corporate existence was brought to question in 1951 following the lopsided appointments into the legislative council which favoured the North.

The structure of the Nigerian federation has constitutional backing. Section 3(1) of the constitution listed the 36 states in Nigeria; 19 of which are in the North, and 17 in the South. Furthermore, Section 6 provides for 774 local government areas for the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. Of these 439 are in the North and 335 are in the South. The significance and implication of these figures is that it is on this basis that Nigeria's Federation Account Allocation is shared to the states, local government areas; and it is the population of each state, that determines state representation in the Senate

and House of Representatives of the National Assembly. What this means is that the North is favoured by extra 2 states and 104 local government areas with an average of N230 bn monthly allocation from the Federation Account (Federal Ministry of Finance, 2017).

More so, as at 31st December 2017, twelve (12) Northern states have declared Sharia in their domains in obvious violation of Nigeria's secularity. Section 10 of the 1999 Constitution states: "the Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State religion", but the Buhari Presidency is threatening to crush those ethnic nationalities agitating for resource control. Why should states that promote Islamic Sharia share in the Value Added Tax (VAT) revenue which is generated partly from selling alcohol, when they are opposed to people drinking it? This kind of lop-sidedness and leadership failure promotes agitations from political interest groups (ThisDay, 2018).

Historical evidence shows that the idea of ethnicity implies that the culture of one group is different from that of another group. Very often there is a hierarchy of ethnic groups within a society, with some groups enjoying more status and greater material rewards than others. Ethnic group is different from social class since membership of an ethnic group generally cuts across the socio-economic stratification within society, encompassing individuals who share (or are perceived to share) common characteristics that supersede class (Nnoli, 2008). As an instance, the Jews in the United States thus constitute a typical ethnic group, since they include individuals of different racial origins (from Eastern Europe to North Africa), social classes, mother tongues, political beliefs, and religious commitments (from orthodox to atheist), yet consider themselves to share common Jewish identity that distinguishes them from, while not necessarily placing them in opposition, to wider American society. To Eriksen (2012), there are always cultural differences both within and between groups of human beings. Those who are believed to belong to an ethnic group are not all the same: religion, as a social phenomenon, does not create distinct ethnic groups. An ethnic group only comes to existence through its relationship with other groups, that is, when differences between groups come to be seen as socially significant. In Africa, ethnic groups are seen as culturally distinctive within colonially created states as colonialism merely brought together many diverse ethnic groups to form nation states. Considering the complexities of Nigeria nation, Mustapha,

(2007) cited in Adeleke and Charles, (2015) identified eight major cleavages in which Nigeria could be classified thus:

The interplay between this tripodal ethnic structure on the one hand, and administrative divisions and communal identities on the other, has led to eight cleavages in the Nigerian political life..., the most important of which are: the cleavages between the three major groups; between three major ethnic groups on the one hand and the 350-odd minority ethnic groups on the other; between the north and the south; between the 36 states of the federation and 6 zones – three in the north and three in the south – into which they are grouped; and finally, between different religious affiliations. Some of these cleavages overlap: for example, the Southeast zone overlaps with Igbo ethnicity and Christian religious affiliation, while the North central overlaps with Northern ethnic minorities. The ethnic, regional and the religious cleavages in the Nigerian society are made more problematic by systematic and overlapping patterns of inequalities that correspond to the cleavages (Mustapha, 2007:3-4 cited in Adeleke and Charles, 2015:61).

According to their analysis of these eight cleavages identified by Mustapha, these eight cleavages grouping could be seen as the seed of discord sown, which had germinated into hydra headed monster tormenting and straining the nation's socio-economic activities which has also constituted a nuisance to the political development of the nation. Hence, most of the conflicts in Nigeria were so much attributed to religious, economic and ethnic factors. (Adamu and Ocheni, 2016).

McKay, (1982) explaining ethnicity from a primordial approach asserts that people often had a primordial attachment to territory in which they lived, or from which they originated, to their religion and to their kin. This attachment involved strong feelings of loyalty and, a state of intense and comprehensive solidarity. Some writers (Afegbua, 2010; Chogugudza, 2008; Ekeh, 2004) have seen primordial attachments as a basic feature of social life and a natural inevitable phenomenon in human groups. From this point of view, humans always divide the world into groups of 'insiders' and 'outsiders', 'us' and 'them' and have an emotional and intuitive bond with those who belong to their group. This comes either from socialization or from some basic psycho-cultural needs for belonging. McKay suggests that strength of the primordial approach is that it can account for the emotional strength of ethnic bonds.

The mobilizationists on the other hand suggest that there is nothing inevitable or natural about ethnicity. To them, ethnic identities are actively created, maintained and reinforced by individuals and groups in order to obtain access to social, political and material resources. Thus, people use the symbols of ethnic identity to further their own ends, and ethnic groups tend to be formed when people believe they can gain some advantage by forming them. Nnoli (2008) is slightly more sympathetic to this approach than the primordial model, but he still believes that it has its limitations. It tends to underestimate the emotional power of ethnic bonds and assumes that ethnicity is always related to common interests being pursued by the group. He argues, this is not always the case and states that the fact that some ethnic groups pursue political and economic interests does not mean that all ethnic groups have identical goals. More so, this perception sometimes confuses class and ethnic stratification, seeing the two as being a little different. Ethnicity, though, involves more than class interests and can cut across boundaries (Aquiline-Tarimo, 2008). In places like Africa, Iraq, Lebanon, among others, ethnic conflicts have been stronger than conflict between classes, and people have tended to identify with their ethnic group regardless of their social class.

The affective, emotional ties emphasized in the primordialists' explanation and the instrumental ties stressed in the mobilizationists' explanation tend to be interrelated and both are manifestations of ethnicity playing out in Nigeria's body politics. Rather than being irreconcilable opposites, the two paradigms can be combined. Ethnicity may be based primarily on mobilizationist, or primordialist interests in different sets of circumstances (Adeleke and Charles, 2015). By producing a matrix based on combining the two, one can distinguish five types of ethnicity. The five types of ethnicity – ethnic traditionalists, ethnic militants, symbolic ethnics, ethnic manipulators and pseudo-ethnics were clearly enunciated in the works of Mordi (2006), Ojie (2004), Otite, (2001), Brown (1997) and Quin (1964). Mordi and Ojie in particular, examined the role of ethnicity in the administration of public institutions. In illuminating our understanding of the role of ethnicity in power relations and commensal bond, Mordi (2006) developed the doctrine of ethnicism. He sees ethnicism as the practice that emerges out of ethnicity in Nigerian public institutions in which the interest of the dominant ethnic group or groups is presented as if it is the interest of everybody or the institution. The ideology of ethnicism has a definite material base from which

it operates and impacts on people from the same ethnic group. This, by and large, contradicts the Weberian concept of bureaucracy: - impersonalization, technical qualification and non-transferability of positions – leading to inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the management of resources (Fakanbi and Raji, 2013). This kind of situation breeds corruption.

Thus, rationalism in modern bureaucracy implies technical effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, any ethnic colouration in the administration of public organization (and in the management of public resources) distorts effectiveness and efficiency. The ethnic colouration by implication is corruption within the World Bank (2009) definition thus:

...behaviour on the part of officials in the public or private sector, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves and/or those close to them – ethnic/relations – or induce others to do so, by misusing the position in which they are placed, (World Bank 2009:75).

The ethnic colouration can take a variety of forms. At the Federal level, the top political actors use ethnic association (ethnic traditionalists) and ethnic manipulation (ethnic manipulators) to protect their interests and control power. Hence, the assertion by Duruji(2010) that ethnic cleavage took a new dimension under the new distribution of power and arrangement of political relations. As noted by the World Bank Report (2007), the Nigerian economy is poorly managed, lacks frontier infrastructure (from food security to national security, from transport to health, from power energy to education and utilities, etc) with Low Human Development Index (LHDI). Linked to poor political structure, ethnic ideology plays out as a strategy of social control in the distribution of resources and power relations. As a result the system suffers in terms of corruption, inefficiency and ineffectiveness giving rise to agitations by political interest groups (Adamu and Ocheni, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

Ethnicity involves contextual discrimination by members of one group against others on the basis of differentiated systems of socio-cultural symbols. It is a social construct which emerges from the tendency of ethnic groups to project and glorify their distinct primordial features at the expense of others (Etang, 2004). In this regard, the study adopts symbolic interactionism as its theoretical framework. In interpretive sociology and politics, symbolic interactionism considers immediate social interaction to be the place where

'society' exists. Because of its emphasis on face-to-face contact, symbolic interaction theory is a form of micro-sociology, whereas functionalism and conflict theory are more macro-sociological. Derived from the work of the Chicago School, symbolic interaction theory analyses society by addressing the subjective meanings that people impose on objects, events, and behaviours. According to symbolic interactionists, people behave the way they do based on what they 'believe', not just on what is objectively true. Thus, society is considered to be 'socially constructed' through human interpretation (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Blumer, 1969; Shibutani, 1961). Symbolic interactionists see meaning as constantly modified through social interaction. People interpret one another's behavior, and these interpretations form social bonds.

In this paper, symbolic interactionism provides a better theoretical platform to understand ethnicity since it involves exchange of symbols. Ethnicity in Nigeria is the contextual discrimination by members of one group against others on the basis of differentiated systems of socio-cultural symbols (Adamu and Ocheni, 2016). Thus, ethnicity in Nigeria is enmeshed in social interactions that produce distinct primordial features at the expense of others. Most societies in Africa and world over just like Nigeria are plural in nature and therefore, characterized by cultural diversities, social cleavages and dissension. Against this background, societies are generally dominated by cultural minorities – the elite. In this regard, inequality is demonstrated through symbols.

Hypotheses

In this study, Nigerian Unity is the dependent variable (y), while the independent variables (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4) are inter-ethnic relations; ethnicity, religion and appointments; ethnicity, religion and accessibility to leadership positions; and, ethnicity and motivation to work. To this effect the following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between ethnicity and the nature of inter-ethnic relationships as a social problem and a platform of corruption.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between ethnicity, religion and appointment.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between ethnicity, religion and accessibility to political positions.

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between ethnicity and motivation to work.

Methodology

This study adopted the cross-sectional research design. The population of study constitute the over 350 ethnic groups in Nigeria of which the major ones are the Igbos, Yorubas, Hausas, Fulanis, Ijaws, Urhobos, Tivs, Jukuns, Nupes, Ibibios, Igalas, among others. From these the study adopted a population of 2,600 made up of political leaders, senior civil servants, lecturers, traditional rulers and members of organized youth associations in Igbo, Arewa, Oduduwa, and Niger-Delta ethnic nationalities. Adopting the non-probability sampling process since the population elements are not deliberately given equal chances of being selected, the study used multi-stage random sampling method to disproportionately select 420 respondents used as the sample. In this regard we had the following as the sample: Igbo ethnic group – 120, Arewa ethnic group – 60, Oduduwa ethnic group – 120 and Niger Delta ethnic group – 120 respondents respectively. On the instrument for data collection, an unstructured questionnaire containing twenty-four (24) items was designed to elicit information from the 420 respondents. The choice of this instrument was the issue of anonymity in eliciting honest and unbiased responses from the respondents. In designing the questionnaire, we familiarized ourselves with the research area and subjects – political leaders, senior civil servants, lecturers, traditional rulers and members of youth organizations from the ethnic nationalities to feel their perception on the problems of ethnicity and religion in the polity. On the reliability and validity of the instrument, the questions in the questionnaire were pre-tested and they yielded a pre-test reliability of $r = 0.83$. In the construct validation, we found a high validity score of $t = 1892$ df 23, $P < .05$. The statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used in the data analysis.

Results

Nigeria has an estimated population of about 200 million (National Census Office, Abuja, 2018) and about 350 ethnic groups. Many Nigerians who do not understand the emergence and development of nation states blame the

British colonial authorities for the emerging problems of Nigeria – the separatist agitations. They fail to see that the socio-political problems in Nigeria revolve around two issues: poor leadership and lack of strong institutions. The two issues have impacted negatively on the management of the economy leading to inter-ethnic agitations to control the center that controls the national resources.

Hypothesis I (Ho₁): There is no significant relationship between ethnicity, religion and the nature of inter-ethnic relations as a social problem and a platform of corruption.

Table 2a: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation (predictors) of respondents' perceived ethnicity, religion and politics of exclusion and inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria.

<i>Predictors</i>	N	Perceived Impact of Ethnicity, Religion/Exclusion				\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Decision
		Very High	High	Low	Very Low			
<i>Performance, Productivity& Responsiveness</i>	420	170	124	82	44	3.00	1.01	Agree
<i>Organization, Structure, Vision of Govt. & Goal of the Administration.</i>	420	111	95	130	84	2.55	1.09	Agree
<i>Quality of Governance</i>	420	154	95	117	54	2.83	1.06	Agree
<i>Summated Mean</i>						2.73	0.22	

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Table 2b: Model Summary

<i>Model</i>	R	R-	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.942(a)	.888	.887	.74814

a. Predictors: (Constant), Performance, Productivity& Responsiveness, Organization, Structure, Vision of govt.& Goal of the admin., Quality of governance.

Table 2c: ANOVA

<i>Model</i>		Sum of Squares	Df	Means Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1846.147	3	615.382	1099.417	.000(a)
	Residual	232.843	416	.460		

Total	2078.990	419			
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- Predictors: (Constant) Performance, Productivity&Responsiveness, Organization,Structure, Vision of govt.&Goal of the admin, Quality of governance.
- Dependent Variable, Ethnicity.
- F Critical: 5.82

Table 2d: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
/	(Constant)	9.044	0.117		77.461	0.000
	Quality of Governance	-0.740	0.113	-0.3540	-6.561	0.000
	Organization,Structure, Vision &Goal	-0.413	0.085	-0.201	-4.837	0.000
	Performance, Productivity& Responsiveness	-0.912	0.106	-0.414	-8.612	0.000

- Dependent Variable: Ethnicity

Based on the three predictors that made up the platform for national unity, the regression analysis showed that there were statistically significant relationships between ethnicity, religion and the nature of inter-ethnic relations as a social problem and a platform of corruption. The first predictor – performance, productivity and responsiveness of the government (PPR $b = -0.414$, $\rho = 0.000$) was significant and its coefficient was negative indicating that the greater the proportion of performance, productivity and responsiveness of the government, the lower the perceived ethnicity and politics of exclusion. The coefficient for PPR was -0.912 in Table 2d meaning that for a one unit increase in PPR we would expect a 0.9 unit decrease in perceived ethnicity and politics of exclusion in the country. Similarly, the other two predictors: Organization, Structure, Vision and Goal (OSVG) and Quality of Governance (QOG) posted the same picture. In Table 2d, OSVG $b = -0.201$, $\rho = 0.000$ and its coefficient was -0.413, meaning that for a one unit increase in OSVG, we would expect a 0.4 unit decrease in perceived ethnicity and politics of exclusion. The third predictor, Quality of Work Done (QWD) or

Good Governance (Quality of Governance) posted QOG $b = -0.354$, $\rho = 0.000$ and its coefficient was -0.740 , meaning that for a one unit increase in QOG we would expect a 0.7 unit decrease in perceived ethnicity and politics of exclusion.

Accordingly, in table 2c, the Null Hypothesis was rejected because the F calculated 1099.447 was greater than the F critical value of 5.82, which was supported by the Regression Model Summary in table 2b with a value of 0.942 which is less than 1, implying that a significant relationship exists between perceived ethnicity, religion and politics of exclusion and inter ethnic relations in Nigeria's governance performance.

Hypothesis II (Ho₂): There is no significant relationship between ethnicity, religion and appointments.

Table 3a: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation (predictors) of respondents' perceived relationship between ethnicity, religion and appointments.

Predictors	N	Perceived impact of Ethnicity, Religion/Exclusion				\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Decision
		Very High	High	Low	Very Low			
Appointments	420	143	124	59	94	2.75	1.15	Agree
Distributions	420	171	163	42	44	3.10	0.96	Agree
Summated Mean						2.92	0.24	

Source: Fieldwork 2019.

Table 3b: Model Summary

Model	R	R-	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.944(a)	.892	.891	.73411

a. Predictors: (Constant), Appointments, Distributions.

Table 3c: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Means Square	F	Sig.
/	Regression	1854.264	2	927.132	1720.378	.000(a)
	Residual	224.726	417	.539		
	Total	2078.990	419			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Appointments, Distributions.

- b. Dependent Variables, Ethnicity.
- c. F Critical: 5.82

Table 3d: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
/	(Constant)	9.537	0.128		74.622	0.000
	Appointments	-1.516	0.084	-0.652	-17.991	0.000
	Distributions	-0.610	0.070	-0.314	-8.670	0.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Ethnicity

On the two predictors of appointments and distributions, the regression analysis showed that there were statistical relationships between government appointments and ethnicity and religion as shown in Table 3a, b, c, and d. Thus, Table 3c showed that the Null Hypothesis was rejected because the F calculated 1720.378 was greater than the F critical value of 5.82, supported by the Regression Model summary in table 3b with a value of 0.944 which is less than 1, implying that there exists a significant relationship between ethnicity, religion and government appointments.

Hypothesis III (H₀₃): there is no significant relationship between ethnicity, religion and accessibility to leadership.

Table 4a: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation (predictors) of respondents' perceived relationship between ethnicity, religion and accessibility to leadership.

Predictors	N	Perceived impact of Ethnicity, Religion/Exclusion				\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Decision
		Very High	High	Low	Very Low			
Leadership in Government	420	154	124	91	51	2.91	1.03	Agree
Party Structure	420	193	137	65	25	3.19	0.91	Agree
Summated Mean						3.05	0.17	

Source: Fieldwork 2019.

Table 4b: Model Summary

Model	R	R-	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.964(a)	.929	.929	.59456

b. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership in Government, Party Structure.

Table 4c: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Means Square	F	Sig.
/	Regression	1931.580	2	965.790	2732.054	.000(a)
	Residual	147.411	417	.354		
	Total	2078.990	419			

d. Predictors: (Constant), Leadership in Government, Party Structure.

e. Dependent Variables, Ethnicity.

f. F Critical: 5.82

Table 4d: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
/	(Constant)	10.379	0.109		95.430	0.000
	Leadership in Government	-1.619	0.074	-0.658	-21.948	0.000
	Party Structure	-0.708	0.065	-0.328	-10.923	0.000

b. Dependent Variable: Ethnicity

In the third hypothesis, the two predictors of leadership in government and party structure, the regression analysis showed that statistically significant relationships exist between access to leadership in government and party structure and ethnicity and religion. In accessibility to leadership (LIG) $b = 1.619$, $\rho = 0.000$ was significant and its coefficient was 0.658, indicating that a one unit increase in access to LIG we would expect an approximate value of 0.7 unit decrease in perceived ethnicity. In the same vein, leadership in Party Structure was correlated with ethnicity as given by LPS $b = -0.708$, $\rho = 0.000$ in table 4d with a coefficient of -0.328.

Against this background, table 4c showed that Null Hypothesis was rejected because the F calculated 2732.054 was greater than the F critical value of 5.82, supported by the Regression Model summary in Table 4b with a value of 0.964 which is less than 1, implying that a significant relationship exists between

perceived ethnicity, religion and politics of exclusion, and accessibility to leadership positions in government and party structures.

Hypothesis IV (Ho₄): There is no significant relationship between ethnicity and motivation to work.

Table 5a: Mean Rating and Standard Deviation (predictors) of respondents' perceived relationship between ethnicity, religion and motivation to work.

<i>Predictors</i>	N	Perceived Impact of Ethnicity, Religion/Exclusion				\bar{X}	Std. Deviation	Decision
		Very High	High	Low	Very Low			
<i>Politics of Revenue Allocation</i>	420	211	137	42	30	3.26	0.91	Agree
<i>Motivation to Perform</i>	420	147	72	67	134	1.07	0.96	Disagree
<i>Political Appointments to Resource Units</i>	420	171	163	42	44	3.10	0.96	Agree
<i>Summated Mean</i>						3.07	0.20	

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Table 5b: Model Summary

<i>Model</i>	R	R- Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.967(a)	.935	.935	.56777

a. Predictors: (Constant), Resource Allocation, Motivation, Political Appointment to Resource Units.

Table 5c: ANOVA

<i>Model</i>		Sum of Squares	Df	Means Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1944.887	3	658.296	2011.064	.000(a)
	Residual	134.104	416	.322		
	Total	2078.990	419			

a. Predictors: (Constant) Resource Allocation, Motivation, Appointment to Resource Units.

b. Dependent Variable, Ethnicity.

c. F Critical: 5.82

Table 5d: Coefficients

<i>Model</i>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

/	(Constant)	10.498	0.109		96.685	0.000
	Motivation to Perform	-0.438	0.068	-0.210	-6.468	0.000
	Political Appointments to Resource Units	-0.513	0.090	-0.221	-5.680	0.000
	Politics of Resource Allocation	-1.379	0.083	-0.563	-16.587	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Ethnicity

In the fourth hypothesis, the three predictors that made up the variables for motivation to perform, the regression analysis revealed that a statistically significant relationship exists between it, ethnicity and religion. The motivation variable posted MTP $b = -0.438$, $\rho = 0.000$ which was significant with a coefficient of -0.210 . The second variable political appointment to resource units was equally significant (PAR) $b = -0.513$, $\rho = 0.000$ with a coefficient of -0.221 . The third variable Politics of Resource Allocation showed a significant relationship, (PRA) $b = 1.379$, $\rho = 0.000$ with a coefficient of -0.563 in Table 5d. Thus, the Null Hypothesis was rejected because the F calculated 2011.064 were greater than the F critical value of 5.82 as supported by the Regression Model summary in table 5b. The implication here is that there was a significant relationship between perceived ethnicity, religion and motivation to perform in public offices in Nigeria.

Findings

The significant findings here include that:

- i. Significant relationships exist between perceived ethnicity, religion and politics of exclusion and inter ethnic relations in Nigeria's governance performance.
- ii. There exists a significant relationship between ethnicity, religion and government appointments.
- iii. Significant relationship exists between perceived ethnicity, religion and politics of exclusion, and accessibility to leadership positions in government and party structures.
- iv. There is a significant relationship between perceived ethnicity, religion and motivation to perform in public offices in Nigeria.

Discussion

Ethnicity and religion are social problems in Nigeria. As earlier stated, ethnicity is seen as the contextual discrimination by members of one group against others on the basis of differentiated systems of socio-cultural symbols.

To that effect, ethnicity is a social contract and it emerges from the tendency of ethnic groups to project and glorify their distinct primordial features at the expense of others. Most societies of the world particularly developing societies (including Nigeria) are plural in nature because they are divided into different linguistic, ethnic, religious or social groups and communities. Arguably, this description could apply to almost any society since the term plural society is sometimes treated as synonymous with multi-cultural society. Smith (2016) sees plural societies as characterized by cultural diversities, social cleavages and dissension. In this paper, our data showed that ethnicity negatively impacted on governance leading to ethnic agitations. On corruption, the World Bank sees corruption as acts of those officials in the public or private sector who improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves and/or those close to them – ethnic/relations – or induce others to do so, by misusing the position in which they are placed. This definition means behavior which violates rules against the exercise of certain types of duties for private gains – which includes bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriate (illegal appropriation of public resources for private uses) (Nye, 2017; Banfield, 2011). In this paper, there was evidence that ethnicity provided a platform of corruption by way of political appointments and political allocation of resources – leading to ethnic agitations. The actions of the present Buhari’s government typifies this hence, the lamentation by Kanu, (2017:2) on the mode of appointment by Buhari’s administration when he noted; “Now President Buhari has serially, deceitfully and masterfully completed the configuration of the entire National Security structure/architecture firmly in the hands of the Northern Muslim Hausa-Fulani alone to the detriment of all other ethnic blocs in Nigeria.” This was seen as very, very dangerous for the South and for the Northern Christians. The appointments being here referred to include: Chief of Army Staff, Police Inspector General, Minister for Defence, Minister of Internal Affairs, National Security Adviser (NSA), DG Department of State Services (DSS), Chief of Staff, ADC to President, CSO to President, Private Secretary to President, Protocol to President, DG Customs, DG EFCC, DG Prisons, DG Immigration, Minister for Petroleum, Minister for FCT, all occupied by people from the Northern Muslim Hausa-Fulani extraction. Others include Head of National Assembly/Senate

who are Northern Muslims, Head of Judiciary/Chief Justice of Nigeria - Northern Muslim Hausa-Fulani; and, Head of Federal Court of Appeal - Northern Muslim Hausa-Fulani.

This was perceived as very dangerous for some people and sections of the country because it came on the heels of Buhari government's compulsory retirement of four (4) Major Generals each from the South East and South South, One (1) each from the South West and Middle Belt and only one from the entire North; Two (2) Brigadier Generals from the South East, Eight (8) from the South South, Two (2) from the South West but only Three (3) of this rank from the entire North; Three (3) Colonels from the South East, One (1) each from the South South and South West, Two (2) from the Middle Belt and only Two (2) of this rank from the entire North; and Two (2) Lieutenant Colonels from South East, three (3) from the South South, Two (2) each from the South West and Middle Belt and only two (2) from the entire North. Those affected in this retirement included the younger brother the murdered environmental right activist and author Ken Saro-Wiwa a Major General from the South South, ADC to former President Musa Yar'Adua, a Brigadier General also from the South South, ADC to former National Security Adviser Dasuki Sambo, who is a Colonel from the South East, the younger brother of former Chief of Staff Lt. General Kenneth Minimah, who is also a Colonel from the South South and ADC to former President Goodluck Jonathan who also is a Colonel from the Middle Belt. This was why Danjuma, (2018:1) commented; "the intention of Mr. President towards Nigerians is really manifesting in the lop-sided appointments, the hegemonistic and mediaeval chauvinistic colonization and Fulanization of Nigeria". This is seen as corruption and the basis for the numerous separatist agitations going on in Nigeria in the recent past.

Ethnic politics has also created an avenue where corrupt leaders are being supported by their ethnic groups. Instead of the citizens to vehemently reject corrupt leaders and condemn their activities, they do support them due to ethnicity, thereby encouraging these leaders to continue in the corrupt manner with impunity. Corruption without mincing words has been undermining Nigeria's political development. It has permeated all levels of government in Nigeria while ethnic groups of the corrupt politicians are always defending them.

The consequences of corruption on Nigerians are devastating. The resultant effect was aptly captured by Adeleke and Charles (2015) when they decried that wastage of enormous human and material resources in religious and ethnically inspired violence, encounters, clashes and even battles, heightening of fragility of the economy and political process, threat to security of life and property and disinvestment of local and foreign companies with continuous capital flight and loss of confidence in the economy; and increasing gaps in social relationship among ethnic nationalities including structural suspicions and hate for one another is now the order of the day. An unquestionable generalization therefore is that ethnic nationalism is responsible for the uprising of ethnic militias across the country today.

Conclusion

There was evidence that ethnicity, inter-ethnic relations and religion impacted negatively in the functioning of the present government in Nigeria (2015-date) leading to separatist agitations threatening Nigeria's national unity. As a result, ethnicity became a social problem and a platform of corruption which negatively affects performance and productivity in Nigeria. Leadership is a critical factor in managing human and material resources for the benefit of society in its entirety and for socio-economic development. Access to leadership should not have any ethnic colouration as it distorts rationalism within the Weberian thought. In this regard, technical effectiveness and efficiency can be negatively affected leading to bad governance. The revelation here is that ethnicity has grossly distorted the process of producing credible leaders in Nigeria all these while as her previous leaders were selected on ethnic considerations. The resultant leadership has promoted bad governance leading to agitations from political interest groups to control the center where the national resources are allocated.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are therefore made:

- i. Nigeria should be restructured in a way that every federating unit has equal share in political power and resources. This will correct the lop-sided structure of the Nigerian federation. Accordingly,

- Nigeria's constitution has to be amended to reflect the new constructed polity.
- ii. Political appointments and allocation of resources should be done equitably amongst the federating units. Nigeria like every other country is a nation-state in diversity therefore; the diversities should be harnessed advantageously for the development of the country.
 - iii. Government should proscribe all ethnic associations and militias, and provide good governance by opening up the socio-political space to accommodate every Nigerian.
 - iv. Government should strengthen all anti-corruption institutions – EFCC, ICPC, Code of Conduct Bureau, Public Complaints Commission, etc – with credible officials and proper funding to deal with all forms of corruption.
 - v. Government should strengthen its National Orientation Agency and the National Youth Service Corps scheme in the propagation of the Nigerian project. The Nigerian youths should be taught that they have a future and everything should be put in place to direct their energies to more productive ventures in the areas of sports, music, ICT and entrepreneurship.

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