



## ETHNICISM/ETHNOCENTRISM IN NIGERIA'S POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL SPACE. 1999-2011

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### Abstract

Nigeria got her independence in the year 1960, and it currently practices a Federal Republic modeled after the United States of America. In this system of governance, the executive power is exercised by the president of the Federal Republic. The system of governance in Nigeria is persuaded by the Westminster System model, as it composes of both the upper and lower houses of a bicameral legislature. The president of Nigeria is the head of government, as well as the head of the Nigerian state. Nigeria operates a multi-party system. Politics in Nigeria is shaped by a structure of presidential, federal and representative democratic republic, in a process whereby the executive power is the prerogative of the government. Also, legislative power is exercised by the government. That is, both the two chambers of the national assembly, which can also be referred to as legislature. These two chambers of the national assembly are namely: the Senate (Upper House), and the House of Representatives (Lower House). In legislative cooperation, the both chambers are solely responsible for law-making in Nigeria. The two chambers also serve, or act as a check on the executive arm of government. The Supreme Court of Nigeria is the highest judicial arm of government. The separation of powers contained in Baron de Montesquieu's theory, is also a reflection of the Nigeria's system of governance. Nigeria has a landmass of 910,771 square kilometers. Geographically, Nigeria is divided into two (2) regions, which are both namely: The Northern (the Hausa Kanuri's, and the Middle-Beltan minority group), and Southern region (the Yoruba's, Igbos, and other Niger-Delta minority groups). Geo-Politically, Nigeria is divided into six (6) regions, which are namely: North West; North East; North Central (Middle-Belt), South West; South East; and lastly, the South-South geo-political region.

Nigeria is a country with three major ethnic groups, namely: the Yoruba's (South-West), the Hausa Kanuri's (North-West and North-East), and the Igbo's (South-East). However, there are other hundreds of minority ethnic groups within Nigeria. These minority ethnic groups are located in the Middle-Belt region, and the South-Southern regional part of Nigeria. The official first language in Nigeria is English Language (British), and there are other three major languages, which goes along with the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. These languages are namely: Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo languages. Nigeria is also home to various religions, with the three most highly populated religions been Islam, Christianity, and Traditional/Idol worshippers. However, there are also other minority religions, mostly of the Free-Thinkers, and Atheists. Since the return of democratic rule to Nigeria in 1999, the political and historical space has witnessed ethnic/tribal conflicts. Though some of these conflicts are inter-tribal conflicts, but it must be known that, some of the various conflicts, also come from within the same ethnic group. By this, it is clearly stated that, some political conflicts arises within the same ethnic group, within the political parties, and without the interference of any other ethnic group.

This study is sparked by the fact that, so many Nigerians from various ethnic/tribal and religious groups, believes in the fact that, Nigeria as a nation should be balkanized along ethnic and tribal lines. Therefore, this study is going to concern itself, with the discussions on the various political happenings, within some selected region/ethnic group, within the Nigeria political space from 1999 to 2011, to make a case that, the problem with Nigeria should not be viewed from the angle of ethnic/tribe, or religion. That the problem with Nigeria isn't about ethnic, tribal or religious affiliation/differences. That, the problem with Nigeria is about the greediness (personal interest) of the political (ruling) class. That is, the scrambling for political power by all means possible, and the privatization of the commonwealth of the generality of the people, by the ruling class.

**Keywords:** Nigeria; Ethnicism; Ethnocentrism; Ethnic Group; Political; and Historical.

### Introduction

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with large socio-cultural differences among its existing ethnic groups, all of which have led to the cultural differences among its people. By cultural differences, it is meant the difference in its various diet systems, the various languages, the dressing among the various ethnic groups, and also, the various types of social system. The multi-ethnic composition of most modern African states greatly constitutes a major visible feature of the large ethnic and tribal affiliations among its various people within the nation state. Sometimes it can be referred to as "ethnic groups", and in some other cases as "tribes".

Nigeria, like many other African nations, with diverse cultures and ethnic groups has often been compelled to tackle issues such as national integration among its various citizens from diverse ethnic and tribal affiliation. Such of cases are during very serious and intense ethnic show-power (disagreements) which in most cases leads to violent conflicts with the destruction of both properties and precious human lives. The competitions, and struggles among the various ethnic and tribal groups have in most cases led to deadly and violent conflicts. It can be said that, some states with large ethnic and tribal groups, have in their best capacity done pretty much well in managing any arising frictions among its various ethnic groups, in other to avoid bloody and deadly violence, which in some cases may arise to civil war.

Nigeria in this case, has not done pretty well in been able to manage a peaceful co-existence among its various ethnic groups. This has often times threatened the unity and stability of the Nigeria nation. The major cause of the

Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) was due to intense disagreement between some of the major ethnic groups with the Nigeria component nation (Erhagbe, 2002; Ekeh, 1972).

Some scholars have observed that even despite the world becoming a global village, globalization has still not been able to successfully tackle these differences among the various people from the various ethnic groups. In such a case, there are definitely some reasons why globalization has not been able to tackle the differences among the various ethnic groups:

(i) Despite globalization, the social system within the various ethnic groups, has still not changed among the majority of the people from the various ethnic groups, so as to encourage and promote uniformity among all the people from the diverse ethnic groups within Nigeria.

(ii) With these diverse backgrounds among the peoples of the various ethnic groups, so much of ethnic problems abound within Nigeria, which in most cases is derived from the fierce and tense competition among the different peoples from the various ethnic groups for wealth and political power.

(iii) Again and lastly, each ethnic group within the Nigeria component holds sacrosanct its indigenous languages, which in majority of cases, helps to identify the people within the people, and among the various diverse ethnic groups.

With its independence in 1960, Nigeria's diverse culture and ethnics have not changed, as it still remains wholly the same. The people's affiliation to different and diverse ethnics and culture has totally made it very difficult for the people from various ethnics and culture, to identify with a "one Nigeria/Nation" ideology.

Today, and presently in Nigeria, the people prefer to identify with their various ethnics and family, than been called Nigerians. They rather prefer, you identify them first as Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Ijaw, Edo, etc. The end-point of such consequences, is that, the people may never in their life time believe in, or have an idea of the "concept of a nation". Issues of this nature, that has to do with the people been totally and wholly connected to their ethnics, portends, and has always portend a great disaster for the nation's political system, and in all other brotherly aspects of a nation. So therefore, ethnicism has taken the center stage of Nigeria's political system, and has always acted as a threat to the survival of its democratic system. It comes more dreadfully fierce, when various ethnics begin to complain bitterly over political marginalization, from Nigeria's new and most lasting democracy since the year of independence in 1960. It is very important to note that, in all political structures and activities in Nigeria, the dimension of ethnicism always plays an important factor. This is, from the local government's level, to the office of the President, which happens to be the highest political office in Nigeria. The practice of "ethnicism" is also very much evident in Nigeria's "civil service structure", the voting patterns, the distribution of various political offices, and also, the patronage of the citizens by the government.

Ethnicity has always been one of the major causes of political instability, and social crises in Nigeria. Generally, ethnicity has always acted as a stumbling block to the continuous growth of Nigeria's political and economic system (Oтите, 1990). In overall, the total affiliation to ethnicity in Nigeria, which happens to be a multi-ethnic nation, ends up breeding mediocrity in its "civil service", and "political system". It will be also very important to mention a few nations, within and outside the shores of Africa, how ethnicity has caused a lot of damages to nations which were once on a fast lane of development, both politically and economically. When issues of such are mentioned, and within the shores of Africa, a nation like Rwanda cannot be easily forgotten. A devastating civil war between the Hutus and the Tutsis. There is also the case of the ethnic Albanians, Serbs and Croats in Old Yugoslavia. It is on this important note that this research paper attempts to discuss and focus on the ethnic perspective of Nigeria's political system, on democratic governance, from 1999 to 2011.

## Theoretical Framework

Due to the political and historical nature of this research paper, the "theoretical framework" will be based on its word contents and analysis of events (past and present). Ethnicity as a concept will be discussed, and therefore, moving on to the power and control of the political class (elites) in using and manipulating their various affiliations to different ethnic groups, to deceiving the gullible citizens and voters. With a focus on this, then, the analysis will be based on historical and political nature of the Nigerian state. That Nigeria, been a multi-ethnic society, is a One Nation, and also that, if Nigeria is able to manage its large various ethnics groups, with transparency and enforceable laws, peace and stability will return to its urban cities, towns, and the hinterlands.

## Ethnicity

In this aspect of the discuss, and as regards to ethnicity in Nigeria, the "primordial phenomenon", which simply identifies that, ethnicity is conceived as a primordial phenomenon. The primordialist approach to the concept of ethnicity can be identified as the oldest in sociological and anthropological literature. There is the argument that, ethnicity is something that is given and assigned at birth, which is wholly derived from the traditional ethnic and cultural heritage of human society, and so therefore, it is something that is fixed and permanent (Geertz, 1963; Isaacs, 1975; Stack, 1986). Ethnicity as a concept has over decades generated plenty of definitions, with various scholars coming up with their own various definitions, as regards to the dimensions, manifestations, and its effects on the society.

In taking a view on the concept of ethnicity historically, it could be argued that: ethnicity was not a natural usage until around the latter part of the twentieth century. In many of academic literature, ethnicity is a term that has been strongly contested. In relating term ethnicity to nationalism, it could be said that, ethnicity is a benign manifestation of identity, while politicized shared identity can be said to be nationalism (Joireman, 2003).

In the past, most European scholars, writers, historians, political scientists and anthropologists used the concept of "tribalism" to describe African ethnic groups.

This therefore, makes it very common that the two concepts of "tribalism and ethnic groups" are therefore mutually inter-changeable. This is therefore the most qualitative reason, why most contemporary writers prefer to use the word

"ethnicity", instead of "tribe or tribalism". This is because, these contemporary believe that the word "tribe or tribalism" is very much uncivilized, in describing or categorizing groups (E. Erhagbe, 2013).

It is very much important to note, that, "ethnicity" as a concept, has to do with the identification of various groups with any independent/sovereign, or a nation still undergoing colonialism. This identification can be likened as those common features that make one able to identify one ethnic group from the other. Such identifications can be evolution, cultural features (such as languages), and origin as well. Also of noteworthy is that, ethnic groups seems the way they appear, and are very distinguishing from the other, therefore, making each ethnic group static. In other sense of it, ethnic groups do have natural existence, the awareness and alertness about them, and also making them workable, or functional in society within a given nation, which makes each of the ethnic groups been very much natural and traditionally different (Otite, 1990; Nnoli, 1978).

Ethnicity, and as shown in most countries, is a ready tool, ready to be manipulated by ethnocentric politicians on the gullible citizens, and at the end, it generates conflicts and wars, within the society of a nation.

It is basically on this note that, most Nigerians who are commentators on the nation's political history, have therefore summed up, that, ethnicity is a "satanic tool", which must be expunged from the general society at large. That, ethnicity is a major setback to Nigeria's political, social and economic stability, which happens to be a plural society (Ajayi, 1998).

So therefore, ethnicity can be viewed as been the inspiration to the emergence of spurious forces, which at the tail end, leads to political, economic and social instability, within the Nigeria body polity (Ajayi, 1998). The history of the various relations among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, even within its immediate past, has spared up questions among scholars of history and political analysis, to therefore begin to ask, how ethnicity has for long acted as an obstacle and road-block to a peaceful and reconciliatory Nigeria. This is noteworthy, because, as the country has continued to battle with forces (ethnic bigots in this case), that have always threatened the unity and stability of the country, politically, socially, and economically. This is exactly the case of the violence that erupted after the 2011 General Elections (E. Erhagbe, 2013).

### **Ethnocentrism among the Citizens**

Ethnocentrism is a mental and psychological state (concept), which revolves around the believe that one's ethnic group is much more important, than the ethnic groups of others. This is to mean that, an ethnocentric person judges others from other ethnic groups, according to the tenets and belief-system, of his or her own (ethnocentric) ethnic group, in regarding to spoken-language, behavioural-system, religion, and custom affiliation. An American scholar by name William G. Summers, who is recorded in history books, to have been the first professor of sociology at the Yale College, in the United States of America.

Professor William G. Summers explained ethnocentrism, to mean, the technical name in one's own perspective, and in which one's own ethnic group is the beginning and end of everything, and that, all other ethnic groups must be measured according to the tenets and belief-system of his or her own (ethnocentric) ethnic group.

Taking into consideration, the various public comments f Nigerians, and behind the wonderful cross-ethnic marriages across various ethnic groups in Nigeria, as well as the very richness of the population of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, and even Nigeria itself, there lies the word "ethnocentrism", that is gradually, and has been eating away the "national psyche" of majority of Nigerians. It is very important to note that, most Nigerians always love to identify themselves first as members of their various ethnic groups, rather than identifying themselves as citizens of Nigeria. The most disgusting aspect of it all is that, most of the fellows who indulge in this menacing attitude see their own ethnic group as much more superior than that of others, who do not belong to their own ethnic group.

Ethnocentrism has always been a big problem for Africa, and Nigeria, because of the historical perspectives behind the various ethnic groups in Africa, nay Nigeria. In what can be described, or termed as, the "partitioning of Africa" from November 1884 to February 1885, by the German named Otto Von Bismarck, in which the various African territories were partitioned at the Berlin Conference, among European powers. The various lands in Africa were divided among these European countries. The Berlin Conference put to a stop, to the continuous "scrambling for African territories", which had hitherto wanted to lead to wars among the various European big nations in the nineteenth century. The Berlin Conference created colonies, and later states in Africa. These states were known to be composed of ethnic groups that never for any reason, trusted each other, and these ethnic groups were hostile to each other. However, it must be of noteworthy, that since independence took center stage among the various African nations, some citizens of African nations have always tried to rise above the menace, called "ethnic identities". This is to create unity and stability, and also, a "national identity", by first seen themselves as, citizens of their various nations, before been identified with their various ethnic groups. Examples of ethnocentrism in the African continent, which has led to wars and conflicts, are: the Biafra war (1967 to 1970); the Rwandan Genocide of 1994, between the Hutus and the Tutsis; the conflict between the Arabs (and the Tuareg, who are Berbers) and sub-Saharan (black) Africans; the Sudan war and conflict, which led to the dislocation of the old Sudan, as a nation, which has now been separated along ethnic and religious lines. This led, to the granting of independence to South Sudan. Above all, South Sudan (a new independent African nation) is presently engaged in war and conflict, and strictly along ethnic lines. The wars and conflicts, along the Great Lakes Region, is also a vivid example, of the various ethnic conflicts within the African region.

Of utmost importance to note, is that, in Nigeria, the political atmosphere is presently lined towards ethnic identities. However, and to note, is that, these ethnocentrism been practiced along political lines, is not practicable in all states, within the Nigerian state. This is because, not all states in Nigeria, are made-up of different ethnic groups. However, and even within those states with a single ethnic group, still lies distrust among the people. This very aspect will be discussed, in the "analytical stage", of this research paper.

Ethnocentrism, as an "evil menace", within a multi-ethnic society, has made the people within different ethnic groups, and within a given society, to cause distrust among themselves. Let's take it this way. Most Nigerians (especially from southern Nigeria), believe that, the Hausa-Fulani's of Nigeria are power drunk, and always believe that, they own Nigeria, as far as political power is concerned, at the federal level. And also that, due to their religious (Islam) affiliation, they are violent. So also, we have the northerners (from Northern Nigeria), believing that, those Nigerians from Southern Nigeria are not fit to rule Nigeria, as far as, political power is concerned at the federal level. This is stereotyping, from both sides of the regions, that is, northern and southern Nigeria. These stereotyping have over the years, led to breakdown of marriages, employers looking-down on employees because of their ethnic/regional affiliation. This has overtime, acted as a blockade for a national discourse, and national identity. Those Nigerians who have been able to move out from their various ethnic states of origin, to more cosmopolitan states (like Lagos), always attest to the fact that, they have met Nigerians (from various ethnic groups), whose professional excellence, and faithful capability, actually make them believe and proud that, Nigeria is a "one nation" with multi-ethnic, and multi-religious background. So also, you hear from Nigerians who have travelled wide, to continents like Europe, America, and Asia, believing so too.

However, it is important to note that, "ethnocentrism" is an "evil menace". It exists and continues to rear-up its ugly head, because, ethnocentrism is not even the major problem of Nigeria, nay Africa. Ethnocentrism is simply a symptom of a multi-ethnic society, struggling and always struggling to build-up a perfect system of hard-work, where citizens of the nation, and from all ethnic groups, would have confidence that their nation would be able to deal with them fairly and transparently, and according to their academic and mental standard, for a continuous development, and advancement of the nation. However, we must take into cognizance, that, no society is completely perfect, and so therefore, ethnocentrism abound or exists in all societies that that are multi-ethnic in nature, but though, in various aspects.

Ethnocentrism is often caused by people from a particular ethnic group, and who feel insecure among, or within other ethnic groups. For example, and in the case of Nigeria: The Warri Crisis is a very good example. It was mainly based on riots and clashes, between the Ijaw and the Itsekiri ethnic groups in Delta State, and the both ethnic groups were located in Warri. I happened between March and May, of 1997.

An important factor to note, is that, these insecurities among, or between the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, has for long been exploited by the politicians, to mobilize support for themselves, towards electoral victory during elections. Among most politicians, and within most ethnic groups in Nigeria, it is natural, to find politicians building followers around ethnic identities. Most of these politicians see or view ethnic identity as a "winning tool" for mobilizing the gullible people towards electoral victory, even when it seems that, what they (the politicians) are engaged in is destructive.

### **Ethnocentrism within the Nigeria's Political Class (Ruling Elite)**

It should be noted that, political parties are political organizations established to seek or manipulate influence in various government policies, through an electoral system. It is therefore not surprising to find individuals and groups from the same ethnic group, presenting candidates of their choice for political office, even at the national and federal levels. It should be noted that, by going the way, or employing political strategies in the various campaigns is somewhat another protest action, and so therefore, these political parties bring to fore their ideologies, manifestos and visions, with the support of ethnocentric money-bag politicians who are so desperate to gaining or acquiring political power. It is therefore very common to see individuals and groups with similar ethnic ideologies, coming together to form political parties along ethnic and regional lines, to seeking and acquiring political power, from the local level to the highest office of the land, which happens to be the seat of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In Nigeria, and to give all political parties a "national appendage and outlook", and in accordance with the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 and the Electoral Act 2001, the Independent National Electoral Commission in these guidelines also referred to as the commission, states the following:

- (i) That, a political party is defined as an organization of registered voters that has met all qualifications to take part in any election.
- (ii) That, an application by a political association seeking to be registered as a political party, shall be addressed to the Chairman of the Commission and as well submitted to the commission's headquarters not later than 4pm on the 180th day preceding the commencement of the next general elections (states and federal elections in this instance). This is because, in Nigeria, local government elections are the sole prerogative of the various state governments, and its state controlled electoral commissions.
- (iii) That the intending political association, wishing to be registered as a political party, must produce a register showing that the membership of such a political association (wishing to be registered as a political party), is open to all citizens (who happens to be a registered voter) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and irrespective of his or her circumstances at birth time, place of origin, ethnic group affiliation, sex or religion.
- (iv) That these information's must be produced by the political association, such as: the names, dates of being a member, signatures, residential addresses of registered voters in at least 24 states (federating units) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and as well the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, who are members of the political association, and do not belong to other political party or parties, or any other political association.
- (v) That the address of such a political association (wishing to be registered as a political party) in Abuja and the addresses of its other offices, list of its staffs, and the list of its operational equipment and furniture in at least twenty-four (24) states of the Nigerian federation.
- (vi) That the political association (now wishing to be registered as a political party), must take into consideration when composing members of its executive committees and administrative personnel, the principle of Nigeria's "federal character", and the secularity and diversity of the Nigerian people. That is, the name, symbol, motto and acronym of the

political party do not offend or act against the provisions of the constitution (Electoral Act 2001) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

(vii) That the political association (now wishing to be registered as a political party), must be structured, committed, and must adhere to the principles of democracy, the secular nature of the Nigerian nation, and all other social objectives as clearly spelt out and highlighted in Chapter two (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

From these presented provisions of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as regarding to requirements that must be met by political associations before registering a political party, or transmuting into a political party from political association, it clearly shows that, there are already laid down constitutional provisions for the registration of political parties in Nigeria, and which all political associations must adhere to, before transmuting into a political party. The case however, is not the same when comparing the provisions of the constitutions, with the behavioural attitudes of the politicians.

To give a broader perspective of the above constitutional provisions, before having a political party registered in Nigeria, some of the above provisions in numerical order will be explained further.

The fifth (v) clearly states that: "The address of such a political association (wishing to be registered as a political party) in Abuja and the addresses of its other offices, list of its staffs, and the list of its operational equipment and furniture in at least twenty-four (24) states of the Nigerian federation". This is in other that, such a political party (when registered) does not have an ethnic or religious colouration, and so therefore, it must have its offices in at least a minimum of 24 states of the Nigerian federation.

Moving further to the sixth (vi). It clearly states that: "The political association (now wishing to be registered as a political party), must take into consideration when composing members of its executive committees and administrative personnel, the principle of Nigeria's "federal character", and the secularity and diversity of the Nigerian people. That is, the name, symbol, motto and acronym of the political party do not offend or act against the provisions of the constitution (Electoral Act 2001) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria". This is also same as the fifth (v), as it is meant to avoid having a supposedly national political party, with ethnic colouration.

However, what is the situation in Nigeria today as regarding to the activities of politicians. Some of these politicians (especially at the federal level), when they come to seek for votes from the people at the local level, they either go ethnocentric, or they begin to blab towards religious affiliation. The gullible people (who are mostly less-informed) always do believe them. Note that, not all certificated (academic degrees or whatever) humans are free from the political pranks of these ethnocentric politicians. Those of them who come to the grassroots to seek for votes to represent the people at the national level, especially of the Senate (Upper House) and the Federal House of Representatives), has this mental and psychological mindset. Once they are voted-on on a platter of ethnicism or religiosity, they disappear to their various posh houses in Abuja (Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory) and never to appear again until the next four years, when it is time for another round of electoral campaigns and vote-seeking from the gullible and less-informed people. This type of treachery also happens among those ethnocentric citizens (politicians) seeking to be "state chief executives (also known as state governors)", in states that are multi-ethnic, and even states with just a single ethnic group. In some cases, when a state is structured along a single ethnic group, these politicians go the religious way, by instigating voters to vote strictly for Muslims, or vote strictly for Christians. With ethnic or religious statements of these types coming from potential leaders, the gullible voters take to the streets, once a candidate who happens not to be their choice candidate is declared as the victorious candidate in the electoral process, by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). These analysis and emphasis are strictly mine.

These politicians, from the members of the Senate (Upper House), the House of Representatives (Lower House), to the various "state chief executives (also known as state governors)", and the various houses of assembly (state legislative) members, they are all guilty of these "ethnocentric and religious campaign strategy". The gullible citizens are always at the receiving end of these "political power play". It must also be noted that, these politicians (irrespective of ethnic or religious affiliation), are one and the same. They simply do not care for the betterment of the ordinary Nigerians. Either developmentally or academically. At the state level, all they do is siphon the commonwealth of the generality of the people, same as been done at the federal level. Meanwhile, their kids (children) are been sent overseas to receive the best of education in globally recognized and respected academic institutions, while the public universities and polytechnics in Nigeria are starved of research and developmental funds. These kids (children) of theirs been given and offered the best of global education, are being strategized to take over political leadership from their various parents. These ethnocentric politicians have been able to, and with their "evil behaviours" been able to brainwash majority of the citizens, from their own ethnic divide, to the extent that, most of these gullible citizens, now see these "ethnocentric politicians" as demi or semi god. This clearly shows that, though Nigeria been a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, but it must be noted that, ethnicism and religious affiliation, are both not the problems with the Nigerian structure. This scenario could also be likened to a discussion I had with a group of friends on facebook (social media platform). It goes thus: That colonialism is not the problem of Africa. African leaders continue to use the strategy of colonialism in other that the blame for underdevelopment will continue to be in the doorsteps of its colonial masters. This situation I simply label as "the blame-game tactics". Most nations in Asia today, that are rapidly developing, were also colonized by the same Britain, who colonized Nigeria. These nations have since moved ahead, with the history of colonialism behind them. But what do we see in Nigeria/Africa? The political leaders still blaming the colonial masters, as they (the political leaders) continue to plunder the people's commonwealth. And I ask again. As a human and in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, I have personally not heard of a situation where anyone is asked or forced to have a bank account opened. This is because, I so believe that, these African leaders who go to Swiss Banks to have secret bank accounts were never forced or compelled to do so by any powerful nation. Colonialism should be left for the history books, and not to be used as campaign strategy, or making speeches at any gathering of African Heads of Government. In a nutshell, when they (the politicians in Nigeria) come to seek for votes, they go the ethnic and religious way in other to be voted for, by the gullible citizens. But when they are

finally elected into the various political offices, they all become friends and close acquaintances, and the gullible citizens become their enemies (emphasis mine).

## Analysis

At the stage of this research paper with a deep historical analysis, it is important that the researcher explains the mental and psychological state of an "ethnic bigot". It is a situation of trying to describe an ethnic bigot, though more in a fictional way. But in this case, this has to do with reality, as no name will be mentioned, though most Nigerians are cut across this style of mental thoughts and psyche.

### Example of an Ethnic Bigot

He is not a Yoruba (South West Nigeria) by tribe, and yet, he is permanently resident and work (professional) in Lagos. His wife is not even from the same ethnic group as him. He has been in Lagos (South West Nigeria and commercial capital of Nigeria), but yet he hasn't been able to buy or build his own private residence, so he stays in a rented apartment with his wife and two kids. But then again, his Landlord (his apartment owner) happens to be a Non-Yoruba, and not even from the same ethnic group as him or even his wife. His Landlord' wife, isn't from the same ethnic group as that of her husband (that is the landlord himself), and even as well as, the tenants wife. In any given opportunity, he is always ready to extol the virtues and simplicity of the landlord and his wife to the generality of the public. His employer whom he works for from Monday's to Friday's for and who in every way possible, doesn't joke with his monthly salary, isn't from the same ethnic group as him.

The employer isn't also from the same ethnic group as his wife and not even a Yoruba by ethnic affiliation. When he resumed work as a new intake, the man or woman, who was mandated by his employer to teach and put him through on the ethics of his work place, so that he do not go against the establishment laws, isn't even from the same ethnic group as him or his wife.

The school (primary or secondary), which his kids attend is "privately owned" by an individual, and not publicly owned by the government. By all standards, his kids are well presentable in the public, both academically and socially. His adorable wife works (white-collar job) too, so therefore the both of them are always busy, and sometimes comes home late, and so therefore they both arranged for the services of a House-Keeper, to assist in all domestic upkeep of the house, and the House-Keeper isn't even from the same ethnic group as him or his wife. Finally, even his place of work is so multi-ethnic in workforce, and his co-workers at his work place, haven't for any reason whatsoever, gotten him into any troubles. Some Nigerians of this nature who have the opportunity to work in a different environment, which they are not originally from, often go on facebook and other social media platforms chanting "war songs", that Nigeria isn't a ONE NATION. A Nigerian of this nature, mental psyche and behavioural attitude is the exact definition of an "ethnic bigot", and the law needs to take care of people of this nature. They are destroyers of other people's destiny, and they are open to ethnic manipulation in every way possible. Ethnic manipulations which at the end causes havoc on societies. It starts little by little and degenerates into a magnanimous conflagration.

Going further with more detailed analysis, why from time immemorial the researcher have always believed that, ethnicity and religion are not the major problems with Nigeria. Some of the problems have to do with the people themselves as "Black Africans". That the various political conflicts and tensions in Nigeria, which are often instigated and manipulated by the politicians, are not really for the benefit of the people, but just a thing of "personal interest" of the political class (ruling elite). Below examples will be given. These examples are scenarios of political tensions in different states (federating unit) of Nigeria. What makes this very relevant is that, most of these happenings, though happening at different times, happened within the same ethnic group. This very scenario and political tension happened in South-West (Yoruba) Nigerian states (federating units). It also happened in South-East (Igbo) Nigerian states (federating units). Going further, it also happened among other minority ethnic groups, which will all be discussed here.

The various scenarios of political tensions below, is meant for those class of Nigerians and Non-Nigerians, who so believe that, using the case of political tensions and distrust experienced between Ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo, a Yoruba from South-Western part of Nigeria, and Ex-Vice President Atiku Abubakar, an Hausa-Fulani from North Western part of Nigeria, as a basis that, Nigeria is not a ONE NATION, and that the both political leaders could not work in cooperation, because of their ethnic differences, and so therefore that, Nigeria should be balkanized along ethnic, and tribal lines. Each scenario will be mentioned and highlighted, then discussed briefly.

(i) The case of political tension and distrust between Ex-Governor Orji Uzor Kalu, and Ex-Deputy Governor (now Senator) Enyinnaya Abaribe. Both of them were from the same state (Abia), and also from the same ethnic group (Igbo). This simply buttress my point that, if both the state governor and the state deputy-governor from the same state and ethnic group, could work in harmony to uplift the living standard of their citizens, it simply shows that the both of them were working for their own personal interest, which mainly has to do with political power and greediness for the state funds. The deputy governor was impeached twice in the year 2000, and a third time in the year 2003. However, it is on record that the deputy governor resigned his position seven days before his impeachment by the Abia state house of assembly. The deputy governor was impeached by a vote of 18 to 6, over allegations of gross misconduct in office as deputy governor. He resigned on March 7, 2003, and the resignation letter was sent via DHL Courier Service, in other that, he could have a written record of his resignation letter. These are all "power play" of "personal interest", and not really for the betterment (socially and developmentally) and upliftment of the gullible citizens. Discussing further on Abia state, and the political tension between Ex-Governor Orji Uzor Kalu and Late Dr. Chima Nwafor (ex-deputy governor) was impeached on August 31, 2004, but was later pardoned. He was again later impeached finally by the Abia state house of assembly, based on a petition from a resident of Abia state by name Agbai Obasi. Mr. Agbai Obasi petitioned the Abia state house of assembly in the case of the pardon granted Dr. Chima Nwafor by the Abia state house of assembly, after his impeachment as deputy governor on August 31, 2004. After due legal consultations and

discussions, the Abia state house of assembly had to review the earlier pardon granted to the deputy governor, and thereafter resolved that: "it was a careless violation of Section 188 (9) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999. Abia state been a state with a single ethnic group, clearly shows that, political conflicts and tensions still arises even among Nigerians from the same ethnic group. These are all geared towards "personal interest and personality clash" of all parties involved, and never for the betterment of the residents of such states (federating unit).

(ii) The case of political tension and personality conflict between incumbent governor Theodore A. Orji and ex-deputy governor Comrade Chris Akomas. Comrade Chris Akomas sent a resignation letter to the state governor (Theodore A. Orji) on July 27, 2010. The deputy governor in a statement he made available at a press conference, stated that, it has come to his notice, that the Governor Theodore A. Orji was no longer interested in having him (Comrade Chris Akomas) as his deputy, and has therefore instigated the Abia State House of Assembly to impeach him. Speaking on his resignation, the deputy governor stated that, "he had by all standards and within the ambits of the constitution, performed all duties assigned to his office as deputy governor of Abia state, despite the humiliating and most shameful circumstances under which he had to discharge his constitutional duties as the deputy governor of Abia state". The deputy governor went further by saying that, "his travails began due to the crisis which erupted after Governor Theodore A. Orji resigned/decamped from the political party (Progressive Peoples Alliance-PPA) on whose platform the governor was elected as governor of Abia state, and thereafter joined the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) without having it important or necessary to inform him (the deputy governor), or even inviting him or discussing with him, both verbally and in writing". Like all others before, issues of this nature are bound to happen, due to the craze for political power, and the craze for the people's commonwealth. It is never for the interest or betterment of the people of Abia state.

(iii) The case of political tension and distrust between Ex-Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and Ex-Deputy Governor Kofoworola Bucknor-Akerele. Both were from the same state (Lagos), and also from the same ethnic group (Yoruba). She was accused of anti-party activities. However, it is on record that the deputy governor tendered and forwarded her resignation letter to the Lagos State House of Assembly, but the resignation letter was rejected by the Lagos State House of Assembly, on the grounds that, she must have the resignation letter forwarded to the governor (Bola Ahmed Tinubu), and not the Lagos State House of Assembly. Nigerians and friends of Nigeria must be aware that this wasn't a case of political tensions arising from wanting to uplift the standard of life of the average Lagos resident. It was strictly a case of distrust between two greedy political camps, who were both flexing their political muscles to the detriment of the citizens.

(iv) The case of political distrust and tension between Ex-Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and Ex-Deputy Governor Otunba Olufemi Pedro. Both are from the same state (Lagos), and also from the same ethnic group (Yoruba). This was mainly due to the fact that the deputy-governor (Otunba Olufemi Pedro) had an ambition of becoming the next governor, and also that the governor (Bola Ahmed Tinubu) suspected the deputy governor of having a political romance with the opposition party (Peoples Democratic Party), of which the ruling party in the Lagos state then was Alliance for Democracy (AD). The deputy governor had to switch his loyalty to the opposition party (Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), because he believed that there was no way he could accomplish his ambitions of becoming the next state governor of Lagos state under the platform of Alliance for Democracy (AD). However, it is on record that the deputy governor announced his resignation from office, 24 hours before he was impeached by the Lagos State House of Assembly. The impeachment of the deputy governor was via a resolution adopted by the 32 members of the Lagos State House of Assembly. This again clearly shows that, it wasn't a case of wanting to uplift the standard of Lagos residents. It was purely a case of selfish interest between both parties.

(v) The case of political tension and distrust between the present incumbent Governor Owelle Rochas Anayo Okorochoa, and Ex-Deputy Governor Mr. Jude Agbaso. Both are from the same state (Imo), and also from the same ethnic group (Igbo) of South-Eastern Nigeria. The impeachment of the deputy governor was due to a N458 million bribery allegation, which was leveled against the deputy governor. Like all others above, this was a case of distrust between the both parties, and primarily for selfish interest in keeping hold of political power, and the people's commonwealth. These political tensions had no link of ethnicism or either of both parties been ethnocentric in character. Despite coming from the same ethnic group, both political leaders could not work in harmony.

(vi) The case of distrust and political tension between Ex-Governor Donald Duke, and Ex-Deputy Governor Chief John Oyom Okpa. Both are from the same state (Cross-River). Three major ethnic groups compose Cross-River State, and they are namely: Efik, Ejagham, and the Bekwarra. The then deputy-governor had to resign from his position as deputy-governor of Cross-River State to avoid impeachment by the Cross-River State House of Assembly. This was due to the differences (personal interest) between him and the governor (Donald Duke). And in January 29, 2003, he wrote a letter to the governor (Donald Duke), informing him that within the next one week, he will complete the removal of all his personal and private properties from his official residence, and thereafter, hand over all official properties to the state government. To the gullible citizens, these differences may seem to mean that one of either political camp were mainly acting for the betterment of the people. But however, that seems never to be the case.

(vii) The case of political tension and personality conflict between incumbent Governor Godswill Akpabio, and Ex-Deputy Governor Nsima Ekere. Both are from the same state (Akwa Ibom). Akwa Ibom State is composed of four major ethnic groups, and they are namely: Ibibio, Annang, Oron, and Obolo. Governor Godswill Akpabio belongs to the Anang ethnic group. Just like in the case of Ex-Deputy Governor of Cross-River State Chief John Oyom Okpa, who was smart enough to quickly tender his resignation letter, in other to avoid impeachment by the state house of assembly, which will end-up acting as a stumbling block to his future political ambition. Nsima Ekere also practiced the same action, by resigning as the deputy governor of Akwa Ibom State. In a letter of resignation dated October 31, 2012, Mr. Nsima Ekere mentioned that he was resigning on personal grounds. The resignation of Mr. Nsima Ekere to avoid impeachment by the Akwa Ibom state house of assembly, was all due to political personality conflict between himself and the incumbent governor (Godswill Akpabio). The ex-deputy governor had political ambitions to take over the affairs of the state in 2015 as governor, of which the state governor (Godswill Akpabio) was very uncomfortable with the ambition of the deputy

governor. Like in previous cases, these personal conflicts are mainly for two things, and namely: craze for political power, and the people's commonwealth. This clearly shows the mental psyche of most of these politicians, once they are elected into political office. Most of the gullible citizens are so gullible, that they believe anything been said to them by the various political camps they believe, or trust in.

(viii) The case of political conflict, tension and distrust, between Ex-Governor Timipre Sylva, and Ex-Deputy Governor Mr. Peremobowei Ebebi. Both are from the same state (Bayelsa). In this case, both of them are Ijaw by ethnic group. Like in others already explained, these political tensions and conflicts arises due to personal interest from both sides involved. One party of the conflict trying to out-do the other politically in the scheme of things in the state. Mr. Peremobowei Ebebi's nemesis was due to an open confrontation with Governor Timipre Sylva. Outside the case between ex-governor Timipre Sylva and ex-deputy governor Peremobowei Ebebi, there is also the case of political conflict and tension between the political camp of ex-governor Timipre Sylva and the incumbent president (Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This political conflict arised during when the late president (Umaru Musa Yar'adua) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was hospitalized. Ordinarily, the vice-president was supposed to take charge of duties in an acting capacity. But however, the political cabal in Abuja (Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory-FCT) refused totally to hand-over the affairs and constitutional control of the Nigerian state to the vice-president (Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan), who later became the president, when the Nigerian Senate (Upper House) and the House of Representative (Lower House) applied the "Doctrine of Necessity". During this political imbroglio and tensions in the Nigerian state, the then incumbent state governor of Bayelsa State (Timipre Sylva), supported the "Abuja Boys (political cabal). It is of noteworthy, that the then vice president and now the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, by name Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan is from Bayelsa state. When it was officially announced that the then incumbent and sick president (Umaru Musa Yar'adua) had died, and somewhat after on, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was sworn-in as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the new president (Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan) and his political camp did everything possible, and was able to dismantle the political structure and political powers of the then incumbent state governor (Timipre Sylva). To the political camp of Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, it was a payback time to dismantle the political camp of Timipre Sylva, which made it impossible for the then incumbent governor (Timipre Sylva), to ascend the throne of a state governor for a second tenure. All these political tensions and all others already explained, are a thing of personal interest between these various political camps, and not necessarily for the betterment of the lives of the gullible citizens. Both political figures Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and Ex-Governor Timipre Sylva are of the Ijaw ethnic group. The Ijaw ethnic group is a minority ethnic group in Nigeria and it's geographically located in the South-Southern part of Nigeria. Lastly, as small (geographically and in population) as Bayelsa state and as stupendously wealthy as the same Bayelsa state, due to the fact that, it is one of the crude-oil producing states in Nigeria; unemployment, poverty, and kidnappings are the lot of the people of Bayelsa state. This clearly shows that, and like already explained that these politicians are self-serving and are never interested to uplifting the standard of living of the people and citizens of Bayelsa state. In October 2010, and during a presidential visit by President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to Yenagoa, angry citizens of the state threw stones at the presidential entourage. Below are the statements made from both the camps of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, and Ex-Governor Timipre Sylva.

#### **Below are the quotes from both sides of the political camps in Bayelsa State:**

From President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's camp: "People who are stoned are those who the society have condemned. For a sitting governor of a state to be so condemned, the verdict was very much clear".

From Governor Timipre Sylva's camp: "The stoning was widely believed and suspected to have been arranged by a few misguided citizens, who had the support of Mr. President, and therefore used the presidential security to subvert and threaten the security of Bayelsa state".

Finally, and in all of these political tensions and conflicts across the various states (federating units) of Nigeria, "personal interest" goes first before "the interest of the people", as far as majority of these politicians are concerned.

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the detailed explanations from the historical and political perspective of this research paper, it clearly shows that "ethnicism" is not and never the problem of Nigeria. This study was able to discuss the various scenarios how political elites use the tool of "ethnicism" to deceive the gullible and less-informed citizens. Like mentioned in this research paper, it clearly shows that not all people who are educated are informed. In fact, most of these gullible citizens who fall prey to the politician's antics are also educated. It is somewhat like a 50-50 thing. By 50-50, it is meant that, 50% of the gullible citizens are educated but less informed, so also it applies that, the other remaining 50% of the gullible citizens are illiterates and not educated. However it is of noteworthy that, ethnocentrism can be done-away with in Nigeria. This can be achieveable by building institutions of the state around transparent and enforceable laws, and not around money-bag politicians, who will always manipulate the processes of these institutions, using the tool and strategy of "ethnicism". Institutions must be accountable to the laws of the land, and not around individuals who are politicians. This gives citizens the confidence that their right and ambitions will be highly protected by the Nigerian state through these viable and strong institutions. Also, enlightenment must be a periodic exercise, so that the citizens will be aware of their rights as citizens. Quoting Thomas Jefferson (3rd President of the United States of America-1801 to 1809) that: "When a people fear the government, it means tyranny and dictatorship. But that, when the government fears the people, that is liberty and democracy at work". This enlightenment must be taken to schools with young children and youths, in other that they can have a positive psyche about the affairs of the Nigerian state. The issue of "state of origin" should also be discouraged and criminalized among organizations corporations during employment, or when seeking for jobs. Ethnocentrism as a concept should also be criminalized in government establishments and institutions. This can be achieveable with the appointment of competent, highly sophisticated and educated citizens into positions of authority.



Just as noted in his (Bill Clinton's) autobiography, that: "After all, we are not all that different". Also the various school curricula's, both public and privately owned academic institutions, should be periodically scrutinized to making sure that, the educational system is rich and positive. A good and rich education acts as liberation to the people from ending-up as ethnocentric and tribal citizens, which at the tail end becomes a disaster to humanity in general. This will surely also act as a guide to the citizens, and giving them (the citizens) a bogus confidence, that, they do not need to destroy the hard earned reputations of others from different ethnic groups, in other to rise to their various pinnacle of success on their chosen endeavour. Politicians who during campaigns make ethnic statements or threats should be arrested, charged to court, and thereafter jailed for inciting the people towards violence. This will definitely serve as a deterrent to other politicians and citizens. Ethnic statements from politicians act as a threat to the nation's unity and economic/political stability. Ethnic statements from politicians divides the people along ethnic lines, which at the end, sparks off ethnic wars and conflicts, which in some cases leads to genocide, as in the case of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. Also, the role of traditional rulers is very important here. Traditional rulers must learn how to accept and trust citizens from other ethnic groups. And when they (the traditional rulers) notice any "ethnic deviants" among the people in their domain, such citizens should be immediately handed over to the security agencies for immediate action to be taken. Traditional rulers also must be discouraged from been members of political parties. This is very important, due to the fact that, a traditional ruler been a member of a political party, automatically becomes a politician, and can never in any way possible preach or clamour for peace in his or her domain, especially when it has to with a different political party, to which he or she is a registered member. Media establishment/outfits must also be discouraged and stopped from fanning ethnic differences. Once noticed, such media establishments should be closed down, and its management arrested, charged to court and jailed, for inciting the public towards violence. Taking a case of Kenya (Eastern Africa) in 2007, and one of Africa's emerging nations, both economically and politically, but later descended into ethnic based tribal conflicts due to statements from ethnocentric politicians. The case of Kenya, after the death of hundreds of citizens, was put to a halt, due to the intervention of the international community and Kofi Annan's (former United Nations Secretary General) vast and skilled diplomatic knowledge in managing conflict and conflict resolution. It should be noted that, Kenya is yet to recover from that very conflict. Just as Nigeria is also yet to recover from the civil war of 1967 to 1970. No multi-ethnic nation survives constant bickering's and ethnic conflicts. It is very important that we all be aware that, we must all be proud of our various ethnic identities, thereby using our own various ethnic groups, cultures, traditions, belief-system, as a tool to preaching unity across Nigeria. There should be simplicity in diversity. Nigerians must note that, the differences and conflicts among politicians isn't due to ethnic or tribal affiliation, but simply about their personal interest, greediness, and craze for political power and the people's commonwealth. For those Nigerians, and non-Nigerians calling and clamouring for the balkanization of the Nigerian territory along ethnic and tribal lines, this is a very good case to ponder about. That, even if every local government area/council of the 774 constitutionally recognized local governments in Nigeria is granted independence to operate as a sovereign and independent nation, political conflicts, political murders, ethnic wars, maladministration, underdevelopment and poverty, will still reign supreme in majority of the 774 independent nations. Finally, we must also note that, Nigeria needs every Nigerian to clamour and seek for the development we all seek towards. A nation with political and economic stability. Every Nigerian, and from all ethnic group must be carried along, as it remains a disaster ignoring a single Nigerian, because of his or her belonging to any certain ethnic group. All ethnics groups must be carried along for Nigeria to achieve a great, peaceful, and united nation.

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