NIGERIA'S NATIONAL UNITY VERSUS REGIONAL POLITICAL TENDENCIES: ASSESSING THE TENABILITY OF REMAINING TOGETHER

Joshua Timothy

Department of Political Science,
Wesley University, Ondo, Ondo State.
Email: joshua_timothy84@yahoo.com. Josday37@gmail.com

Abstract: *History is replete about instances in which two or more ethnic groups have come together with a desire to live and be governed by the same political administration. Although there have always been ethnic tensions at the beginning, these groups have often found a common ground that helped them to tolerate one another, and this has been positively exploited by some countries, such that they were able to see and tap into the enormous strength in their ethnic diversities. Nigeria, a country in the Western Sahara, is blessed with several ethnicities, but they have struggled unsuccessfully to live together as one country, due to ethnic chauvinism, which has been exploited by the political class so blatantly, that it has become commonplace for citizens to vote on ethnic lines during general elections. This paper assesses the historical coexistence between the various ethnicities in Nigeria, with a particular emphasis being placed on the reasons why they have found it difficult to live together. It further analyses the tenability of the forced amalgamation in the face of daunting events which point to uneasy coexistence. Having dissected the above, this paper recommends some policy alternatives, which, if adopted, will solve most of the problems militating against Nigeria's unity.*

Keywords: Ethnicity, Diversities, Union, Constitution, Regionalism, Primordialism, Instrumentalism, Coup d'état, Colonialism.

STUDY BACKGROUND

The preamble to the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria posits that Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble Sovereign Nation. In this sense, it is a nation-state legally bound to remain together, without any form of division or secession for whatever reasons. It comprises three regions representing the three major ethnic groups in the federation, although it had since been divided into six geopolitical zones consisting 36 states and the FCT. It is blessed with human and mineral resources, the former which includes crude oil deposit and exploration, fertile land for farming as well as access to both the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. It is equally blessed with different ethnic groups, with the major ones being Hause/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo respectively. However, unlike the strength in diversity experienced in the United States, where several ethnicities and races have come together to build a gigantic nation-state, the most powerful country in the world in the terms of its developed economy, highly sophisticated military, diplomatic leadership and a very mature social cohesion. Nigeria's multi-ethnic coexistence has been the bane of its growth and development, in a sense that, trillions of dollars had been and are still being lost to ethnic clashes and regional discontents, leading to national disunity before and after independence. Right from the outbreak of the 1953 Kano Riots, at a time when the birth of the country was being conceived, Nigerians had shown flashes of a bitter coexistence still to come, even though the British colonial government, in conjunction with the nationalists, reached a concession through the impasse, which culminated in the agreement to belong to the same country in 1960, the decision that many now view as a marriage of convenience.

According to Obaro (1980), prior to British colonization, what is today known as Nigeria had various ethnic cultural communities with varying forms of state formation processes? The various ethnic groups were joined together in 1914 through the Lord Lugard project and ruled as imperial state. The imperial state was organized and consolidated through ethnic based policy of regionalism, a political formation that post colonial Nigeria elites found difficult to depart from. Today politics of ethnicity or regionalism has become the ideology creating and sustaining power structure among the elites in Nigeria. People are now made to treat ethnicity or region as relevant to their personal and collective choice of candidate during elections. This

ethnic or regional dynamic is further reinforced by the relative economic prosperity associated with real or imagined favour derived from political advantage that accrue to group or region in control of public affairs in Nigeria, because the elite's overriding concern is to preserve the postcolonial status quo with themselves in its commanding positions. The masses that had been mobilized and politicized on behalf of a universal goal now had to be depoliticized rapidly in the service of elite domination. Because ethnicity is close to core of individual identity, ethnic movements is created and used by the elite in furtherance of their own special interests which are time and again constitutive interests of the emerging social classes. In this way, ethnicity becomes a mask for class privileges. The dominant classes unable intrinsically to increase production because of their dependent nature on the capitalist relation of production, this class depend on the state device to increase their benefits from the society. Part of the ethnic scheme is seen to be part of 'the mechanism through which the political elite maintain power and exercises influences. It is the attribute of elite behavior… the educated elite become the chief proponents and purveyors of parochialism'. Hence, Dudley (1973) and Mamdani (2002) noted that the transference of cultural identities to the political domain by the political elites was to hijack power by using identity as a basis for condemnation, discrimination and marginalization. Such segregation along ethnic division is employed to discriminate, not because of the superiority of a particular ethnic group over another, but in competition to control the economic spoil of the nation – state. This stance was intensified in 1949, as Azikiwe showed his ethnic bias when he remarked that: It would appear that the God of Africa has specially created the Ibo nation to lead children of Africa from the bondage of the ages…the martial prowess of the Ibo nation at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the role of preserver. The Igbo nation cannot shirk from its responsibility (Nnoli 1978).

In like manners, the NPC equally made such sentimental remark that; it is the southerners who have power in the North. They have control of the railway stations, of the Post Offices, of Government Hospitals, of the Canteens; the majority employed in the Kaduna secretariat and in Public Works Department are all southerners; in all the different Departments of Government it is the Southerner who has power. With intensive competition among Nigerian elites for control of the spoils of office, politics became a

winner-takes-all affair. The political parties in control in each region easily became weapons in the hands of major nationality groups for the continued marginalization of the minorities. Oppressed minorities began seeking solace in the opposition parties with inevitable consequences of politicization of ethnicity. The expulsion of Eyolta, a minority Efik, from the Igbo dominated National Council of Nigerian Citizen (NCNC)led by Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1952 resulted in Eastern Region minorities forming the rival National independent Party, with Eyolta as president (Ojo and Fawole2004). The implementation of the Macpherson constitution of1951 accelerated the drift towards sub-group nationalism and ethnicity. Educated Nigerians who aspired to fill new position of power and status opened up to Nigerians by that constitution realized that their most secure base of support would be the people of their own groups, the realization which was strengthened by the indirect electoral system. Manipulation and exploitation of ethnicity became a veritable tool of political contests. Thus, a symbiotic relationship developed between politicians who wished to achieve their own positions, and their 'people', who fear political domination and economic exploitation by a culturally distinct group allegedly organized for themselves. A politician thus gains a tribal power by successfully manipulating the appropriate cultural symbols and by articulating and advancing his people's collective and individual aspiration. (Graft 1983).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The entity called Nigeria is endowed with both human and natural resources that are capable of putting her among the developed countries of the world, especially where the inherent strength in ethnic diversities is well tapped into for national development. However, the reverse seems to be case here, with her diversities causing more arms than good overtime as it has become a source of conflict and a reason for disunity in the polity. Looking closely at the US ethnic and racial diversities as a catalyst for its development, it would marvel one, especially why what has been employed as a source of strength for one country has wrongly been deployed as a means of political tension in another. The unity that exists here is on paper, and has been maintained more by the use of force than by the willingness of the various ethnic groups to remain together as one. There seems to be more dividing facts than the unifying instances, and even though this obvious truth had been identified, but ignored and deemphasized before, during and after independence, the

spillover effects are rife in the national interactions so far. This paper did study the unity among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, in order to unravel the tenability of the precarious federation or of remaining together as one country. In this case, such questions are asked such as: Are Nigerians really united? How comfortable are the ethnic groups to be part of the nation? In light of the happenings in the country from inception till now, is federal system or remaining together still tenable? The objective of this endeavor is to answer the questions listed above, before offering alternative policy suggestions in form of recommendations to policy-makers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ETHNICITY THEORY
(Synergizing Instrumentalism and Primordialism)

There are two sides to the theory of ethnicity namely: Primordial and instrumentalist theories, but this research work picked the latter. Within instrumentalist thought, ethnic conflict does not emerge directly from differences in ethnic identity. Rather ethnic conflict arises only when ethnic identities are politicized or manipulated to generate political and socio-economic advantages for an ethnic group at the cost of depriving or neglecting other ethnics (Collier and Hoeffler 1998; 2000 & 2004. Chandra 2004). Accordingly, instrumentalists point to factors other than ethnic identity to explain ethnic conflicts. These include, security concerns (Posen 1993); competition and inequality (Gurr 1993a; 1993b and 1994); and greed (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). Sentiments of discontent underlying these factors suggest that ethnic conflicts, under instrumentalism, are commonly motivated by grievances/frustration (Ellingsen 2000). Relative to primordialism, instrumentalism appears a more nuanced theory as it recognizes the relevance of political and socio-economic structural dynamics to account for temporal and geographical variations in the occurrence of ethnic conflicts. But, while instrumentalism highlights elite manipulation or politicization of ethnicity as the foundational source of grievances which induce ethnic conflicts, it cannot independently explain why people easily, cooperatively, and effectively mobilize along ethnic lines. It must draw on the wisdom of primordialism in recognizing the power of ethnicity to perpetuate a sense of 'common blood', a sense of shared values, shared interests, shared threats, and most fundamentally, a sense of solidarity, which is indispensable for collective action. While primordialists emphasize mere differences in ethnic identities, instrumentalists accentuate ethnic grievances

arising from the politicization of ethnic identity differences – to explain ethnic conflict. Interconnection can be seen between these juxtaposed standpoints in a 'model' wherein ethnic identity and grievances interrelate to increase insidious ethnic group cohesion and the likelihood of ethnic conflict. Also, while recognising the belligerent danger of ethnic group cohesion, the model draws on the received wisdom that perceived threats from out-groups engender solidarity within the in-group in response to the threats (Stein 1976). Ethnic identity is a universal feature of ethnic conflicts. However, the different theories of ethnic conflict attach disparate degrees of primacy to ethnic identity. Under primordialism, mere differences in ethnic identities constitute a direct source of mutual fear, mistrust, ancient antipathies, and conflicts between ethnic groups (Esteban, Mayoral, and Ray 2012). Conversely, under instrumentalism, ethnic identity becomes relevant to conflict outbreak only when manipulated for political gains. The politicization of ethnic identity perpetuates grievances/frustration which in turn induces ethnic conflict (Ellingsen 2000). However, grievances arising from the instrumentalisation of ethnic identities contribute towards crystallizing primordial ethnic divisions when the grievances are aired and disseminated through informal and formal interactions, including media broadcasts. A shared sentiment of frustration against a perceived threatening out-group fosters cohesion within the in-group whilst crystallizing divisions and enhancing hatred, fear, mistrust, and the danger of violent conflict between the groups. It is pertinent to note that in-between grievances and mass ethnic conflict are salient familial and formal interactions which, though overlooked by the two classical theories of ethnic conflict, potently increase group cohesion and crystallize ethnic divisions (Chandra, 2012; Stein 1976).

Domestic and personal interactions in private settings, including homes, gardens, farms, provide members of rival ethnicities the opportunities to share their personal experiences and collective grievances (Mamdani, 2001). Such informal chats potentially increase own-group consciousness and demonize the out-group as menacing to all members of the in-group, perilously perpetuating cohesion within and cementing divisions between the rival ethnics (Stein, 1976). As crucial as familial interactions are for the formation of ethnic identity, so they are for expressing and disseminating hatred and distrust of the perceived adversarial out-group. In addition to

informal familial interactions, 'formal' hate ideologies may also be developed and disseminated via social, print and broadcast media and through ethnic political parties (Mamdani 2001; Chandra 2004). Formal and informal interactions increase 'ethnic bonding', instrumentally emboldening primordial identities and facilitating mobilization for collective action, including mass violence, to redress grievances. Without cohesion, frustration is less likely to cause severe and sustained large-scale rebellion. As instrumentalist grievances/frustration become part of the identities of rival ethnics whilst perpetrating cohesion within the ethnics, mere contrasting ethnic identities, which constitute a foundational source of conflicts under primordialism become emboldened, increasing ethnic identity consciousness and raising the risk of ethnic conflict. Thus, by contributing towards crystallizing differences between ethnic identities (at the heart of primordialism), instrumentalist frustration emerges relevant to primordial accounts of ethnic conflict.

ASSESSING NIGERIA'S ETHNIC COEXISTENCE SO FAR

The territory now known as Nigeria earlier existed as dispersed hostile kingdoms, with separate leaders, ways of life and boundaries, before the advent of the colonialists, and this informed partly, why the peoples are so glued to their ethnic groups. Taking a keen look at the cultures and traditions of these people, there seems to be less area of convergence than has been made to believe between them. They speak different languages, have different cultures and can be differentiated facially (although this is not too pronounced). Historically, there were minimal contacts between these groups before the slave trade took hold of them, meanwhile imperialism was almost the first time these groups came together to relate administratively. Their religions differ, as well as their social and political practice. The first amalgamation brought together three hostile kingdoms and placed them under the same administrative system. Ever since the beginning of this marriage, these groups have never, for once, seen themselves as one or capable of living together; the Hausa/Fulani detested paganism and Christian religious practices in both western and eastern protectorates, whereas these southerners saw the northerners as vastly uneducated and unfriendly. These were the suspicions held towards one another even before they began to relate and these have been more pronounced by the way the colonialists conducted their business in each region; first, the Hausa were allowed to keep

their religion as the only forum of education, while the south were introduced to western education that offered more opportunities to thrive in the pro and post-colonial era respectively. This continued unabated, such that, by the time the southerners were pushing for self-autonomy, the northerners were academically far behind. It should be noted that the colonialists did little or nothing to bridge this gap, let alone create any peaceful atmosphere for ethnic coexistence among the groups, until the eve of independence when they began to have sympathies for the northerners about the gap. Irrespective of the above, the British colonial government still went ahead to negotiate a federation with the nationalists, knowing full well that the marriage would yield little or no long term positive results. To be candid, the facts of the Kano Riot of 1953 were enough to convince any well-meaning administrator that the viability of these groups living together was very much in doubt, especially considering how the riot took a bloody turn. But, in collaboration with the desperate nationalists then, the date for independence was set and was eventually given. The British colonial activities were very much to blame for making this country ethnic-based, as there were no efforts put in place to establish a common language, educational system and pattern, sense of unity or oneness and youth togetherness in the polity. And during the establishment of political parties, they were made ethnic-based parties, despite aiming to create a 'one country' entity. Each region conducted its elections exclusive of the others, leaving everything at the mercy of each ethnicity to the detriment of national unity.

Conversely, it would be argued that the fact that the colonial government still held on to power, such that elections could not be conducted at the national level justified the ethnic-based politics of the time. Irrespective this reason, the three major ethnic groups should have been united through policies with fundamental national coloration, capable of preparing the people for future coexistence. Before independence, the then general elections were ethnic-based, so much that campaigning in another region was viewed as an act of political encroachment by the dominant party in the region. When Obafemi Awolowo made incursions into the North-East (Jos/Benue) to campaign and eventually won some seats in the legislative house, it was seen as an act of usurpation. This, partly explained why the NPC party could not agree to form government with the action group when it became mandatory for a coalition between two of the three major political

parties then to form government as is the case with parliamentary system. To this end, it would not be abnormal to conclude that the seeds of disunity had been sown long before and during independence, as it was already clear that the contract signed by the three major ethnic groups on1st October, 1960 was a marriage of convenience, just to allow the colonialists declare their independence. What baffles one in this case is the reason for the choice of a federal system, despite the handwritings boldly crested on the political wall then pointing to a bleak political future. Ever since independence, ethnic politics has been rife among successive leaders, who have tilted disproportionately more to ethnic sentiments and politics against national unity, for personal gains. The A.G. crises of 1962 was badly managed by the federal government, who could do nothing but to further weaken its direct opposition party-Action Group, by creating the Mid-Western Region, in order to leave the Western region insignificant in political matters to some extent. Federal cabinet was formed with members coming from the ruling party, which meant that the west was unequally left out of the federal politics. The 1965 census crises did not help matters, as it put the erstwhile coalition parties (NPC and NCNC) and their leaders at loggerheads, because Nnamdi Azikwe, the president at the time rejected the results of the census, blatantly refusing to sign it, thereby bringing to fur the spillover effects of the 1953 Kano Riots in which Hausa and Igbo ethnic groups had simmering conflict. This census imbroglio became a timed bomb which escalated and eventually led to the military take over of the Nigerian politics on January 15, 1966, which itself was another ethnic coup detat, in that the causalities then were majorly the northern oligarchy.

The coup brought it the first military government led by Gen AguyiIronsi, an Igbo man, but when he relented in his promise to arrest Nzeogu Kaduna (also an Igbo man), the culprit in the coup detat, the northern oligarchy staged a counter-coup by eliminating Ironsi and establishing Gen. Yakubu Gowon (a northerner) in the July 25, 1966 coup detat. The Igbos, having been defeated and somewhat eliminated from the national politics, aired their frustrations through the then Eastern Region military Administrator, Odumegwu Ojukwu, who refused to recognize the Gowon led military government at the centre. After several agreements could not be reached by mediators between both parties, Ojukwu declared Biafra Republic, a secessionist decision which already affected the preamble to the constitution

and the territorial boundary of Nigeria. His reason was that the leader of the January 15 coup was not the most senior military officer, which was why Ironsi, who had no connection to the coup became the Head of State. But that Gowon, the leader of the July 29 coup was also not the most senior military officer, which meant that he should relinquish power for the next in ranks to take over, who happened to be from the West. In the interval, Gowon refused to heed this call, rather, he declared a state of emergency in the Eastern region, which firmly commenced the process of the civil war between 1966 and 1970, and which has remained the most destructive civil war fought between Nigerians, which was as though it were an inter-state war. Human and material losses were very enormous, so much that it was tagged a genocide perpetrated by the federal government: food and arms supplies were cut from the east and this weakened them greatly. After the war, the eastern region was brought back into the federation, but it has not been easy living together ever since. No eastern politician has been politically supported to form government since the war and all the coup detats that later occurred in Nigeria were staged by the northerners, those who subsequently formed governments successively, beginning from Gowon, Murtala, via Obasanjo (a westener) to Shagari (first executive president, Buhari, Babangida, Abacha and Abdulsalam, before the return of power to a civilian government in 1999. This does not imply that the easterners were removed completely from the politics but that it lent weight to the argument herein presented.

In the late 1980s, the south-south and south-easterners protested against oil spilling atrocities perpetuated by the foreign oil exploration companies in their region, but the Abacha led government could not do anything to ameliorate the sufferings of these people; instead it resorted to using the military against them. This persisted for sometime, reaching its peak when they embarked on a wide scale protest, led by the human right activist, Ken Saro Wiwa. The ring leaders were arrested, prosecuted and hanged by the federal military government in 1995 on the allegation of treason, basically pitching the north against the south, which was viewed as a northern ethnic crack down on the Igbos, under the guise of national interest. Also, when the people of Odi in Bayelsa state protested against the federal government, the mobile police force stationed in their region to forestall any protests against the government cracked down on the people of the town, killing more than

a thousand of the youths. And, for a very long time, the oil-rich region had been marginalized and left to leak it wounds until the emergence of the N/D militants, those who took up arms and faced the security forces in their region. They kidnapped foreign oil workers, engaged in open fire battle with the military, blew up oil pipelines and occupied the creeks, thereby disrupting oil exploration activities and consequently brought the federal government unto its knees(at least), and prompting the latter to call for cessation of conflict under the guise of amnesty programme to the restive youths. Ever since this considerable success, the people in the region have found taking up arms a veritable tools in making government accede to their demands. The recent case being the Niger-Delta Avengers of 2015and 2016, an armed group that blew up pipelines in the region and disrupted economic activities, albeit temporarily, before the reemergence of the IPOB group from the east. It is now common place for an ethnic group or region which is not in power to use its restive youths to disrupt governmental activities and make the country regionally ungovernable for the incumbent. A testament to this is the advent of the deadly Boko Haram religious sect in 2009, which made the six years of Goodluck Jonathan veryun profitable and a hell for him, as the group embarked on mass slaughtering of civilians in the North-East, those who were mainly Christians, Ibos and Yorubas at first, until they later extended the killings to their own people, and using knives, riffles, explosives in public places. They have since moved their base to Sambiza forest, from where they now stage clandestine attacks on the people. Now that the southerner had lost in the presidential elections, a rejuvenated Biafran agitator has emerged threatening the unity of the country by its campaign to secede from Nigeria. This began last year and it is rapidly gaining momentum and adherents in the region. This has been quelled temporarily by the army's operation python dance carried out in the region, which attempted to re-arrest the ring leader-Nnamdi Kanu.

However, it is obvious that there seems to be more determination now than previously envisaged, especially with their activities now shown and propagated worldwide through social media. Socially, events have shown that these ethnic groups are more divided than united. For instance, there is no national language as is the case in the US, where English is used officially, despite their many languages and races. An American believes he is an American, and being a new yorker or Minnesota comes second. In Nigeria,

there verse is the case, being that they tend to speak their ethnic languages even at official events in the states. When an indigene of Ekiti state goes to seek job in Niger state, preference is first given to applicants from that state whether or not he/she is the most qualified. People are more attached to their state of origin and ethnic affinity than to national unity. The government always insists on quota system and this has been internalized wrongly so much that whoever is in power will employ and promote those from his own region more than others. At the national level, even during the distribution of public political offices, priority is given to ethnic considerations, the recent being the marginalization of the south east from the cabinet of Buhari's government when the list of the ministers and other heads of parastatals came out in 2015. Ethnicity is often the spirit behind all these anomalies. It is so bad that a foreigner can easily differentiate between members of the three ethnic groups when they stand together or speak. Even at comedy shows, mockery is made about the way each group talks and behaves. So many things seems to point more to disunity than to unity. An instance was the way Fulani herdsmen were attacking farmers even in other regions in 2016, but it took several berating from the local public and international community before the presidency, a Fulani man, could come out to reluctantly condemn the acts. It was revealed by the World Bank representative in Nigeria to the media that President Muhammadu Buhari instructed the body to concentrate all its efforts on the northern region for now, a statement which further justifies the ethnic chauvinism firmly gripping the politics in the country. Whatever this international body intends to do should normally be evenly distributed to all the geo-political zones of Nigeria, but the president, who is supposed to maintain this stance is the one who wants other regions to be marginalized, despite being the supposed president for all.

With the above analyses, it is so far asked if the federal system is still tenable or whether the forced almagation of 1914 is still important, in the light of disuniting activities perpetuated by both government and the citizens over time. In recent times, there have been calls from some quarters for a restructuring of the federation, while others prefer reversion to the old regionalism or a confederation. Others earnestly wish that the country would break, while some want the management of mineral resources to be placed in the hands of the states where they are found. One cannot but pause to ask if

Nigerians actually would want to be together considering the forceful nature of the coexistence. It could be argued that the fear of the government brutally flowing from the barrel of guns is what has kept this people together so far. The cracks in the wall are so glaringly deep that collapsing is not improbable in no distant time. The country is solely dependent on the south's mineral deposit and the latter believes that this is the sole reason the federal government would not allow them to leave peacefully. If what was said in the social media and news three months ago is anything to go by, the Biafrans have established their police and secret forces, being reinforced by the amount of firearms seen being transported to the region and those recovered from the house of the IPOB leader. It only portends that it is a matter of time before these agitators take up arms to fight for secession. It is strongly believed that the present international community would not fold its alms and allow Nigeria perpetrate the atrocities of late 1960s this time around. However, it is also opined that things could yet be mended between the ethnicities in the country, even though this will take time determination to fix.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To this end, Nigeria is a country blessed with multi-ethnic diversities, which would have been expected to lift her through the strength they possess together, and by managing their potentials in such a way as to make room for national unity capable of creating sustainable development and peace in the polity. But their ethnic diversity seems to be somewhat a curse and a point of discord in the polity. Since the inception of the federation, several signals of disunity had emerged that pointed to a difficult marriage between three major hostile kingdoms. But somehow, the nationalists ignored these warnings and opted to live together, which had brought more pains, destructions, retarded development and discord than necessary. It is now being considered whether or not this union is tenable in the light of these disloyalties. It has been argued, using the above indices that the federal system has not worked and that forcefully remaining together would only last for sometime, as the federation is standing on a timed bomb. The 2020 prediction by US CIA, which forecast a breakup of the country, cannot be ignored at this juncture. Having presented the analyses above, this paper suggests that the people of Nigeria should organize a conference where ethnic or regionally recognized representatives will come together in

consultation with their people to renegotiate the union. This is needed in that the military document called the constitution seems to have outlived its acceptability and viability. It must give way for a more democratic and civilian document that reflects the yearnings and aspirations of the people. Truly, this is in the best interest of the survival of Nigeria as an entity. Secondly, government must reverse its ethnic based politics in order to embrace a more unifying politics by making policies which first recognize all as Nigerians. If the South Africans could adopted the Afrikaans as their official or national language, despite comprising more races and ethnicities than Nigeria, then the latter can also create a language learnt from birth that unifies them, not the one that makes them look like the white man's slaves. Third, there should be a national policy that deemphasizes utter reliance on ethnicity; they should see themselves and be treated more as Nigerians than as either Yoruba, Hausa or Ibo. State of origin should be removed from job applications and replaced with state of residence and place of birth. Finally, bridging the educational gap between these regions is equally vital and in this case, purposeful compulsory education from nursery to university level should be judiciously pursued and implemented alongside civil education.

REFERENCES

Chandra, K. 2004. Why Ethnic Parties Succeed . Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chandra, Kanchan (ed). 2012. Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Conflict. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Collier, P. and Anke, H. 2000. 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War' World Bank Policy Research, Working Paper 2355, Washington DC, 2000.

Coleman, J.S (1987). Nigeria Background to Nationalism, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Dudley, L. (1973). Instability and Political Order: Politics and Crises in Nigeria, Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.

Ellingsen, T. 2000. 'Colorful Community or Ethnic Witches' Brew? Multi-ethnicity and Domestic Conflict During and After the Cold War' *Journal of Conflict Resolution 44 (2), 228–249.*

Esteban, J. Laura, M. and Debraj, R. 2012. 'Ethnicity and Conflict: An Empirical Study' American Economic Review 102 (4), 1310–1342.

Fearon, James and David Laitin. 2003. 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War' American Political Science Review 97 (1), 1–16.

Graft,W. 1983. African Elites Theories and Nigeria Elites Consolidation: A Political Economy Analysis in Y. Barongo (ed) Political Science in Africa. A Critical Review, London: Zed Press Ltd.

Gurr, R. 1993a. Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Conflict. Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Gurr, R. 1994. 'Peoples Against States: Ethno political Conflict and the Changing World System' International Studies Quarterly 38 (3), 347–377.

Hammond, R. and Robert, A. 2006. 'The Evolution of Ethnocentrism' *Journal of Conflict Resolution 50 (6), 926–936.*

Horowitz, D. 1985. Ethnic Groups in Conflict. California: University of California Press.

Kiwuwa, E. 2005.'Democratization and Ethnic Politics: Rwanda's Electoral Legacy' Ethno politics 4 (4), 447–464.

Mamdani, M 2004. Making sense of political violence in postcolonial Africa, Identify Culture and polities, 5(1,2):9-20.

Mulinge, M. 2008. 'Botswana, Africa's Haven of Ethnic Peace and Harmony: Status and Future Prospects' African Journal of Sociology 4 (1), 61–85.

Nonli, O. 1978. Ethnic politics in Nigeria, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers. African Studies Review 41 (1), 29–47.

Ojo, O. and Fawole, N. 2004.Ethnic Relation and Politics in Nigeria. *Legon Journal of International Affairs, (1):142-159.*

Posen, B. 1993. 'The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict' Survival 35 (1), 27–47.

Ruane, J. and Jennifer, T. 2004. 'The Roots of Intense Ethnic Conflict May Not in Fact be Ethnic: Categories, Communities and Path Dependence' European *Journal of Sociology 45 (2), 1–22.*

Sklar, R. 1967. Political Science and Political Integration, *Journal of Modern African Studies, Vol. V, No 1, pp6-8.*

Smith, A. 1996. 'Culture, Community and Territory: The Politics of Ethnicity and Nationalism' International Affairs 72 (3), 445–458.

Uvin, P. 1999. 'Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda: Different Paths to Mass Violence' Comparative Politics 31 (3), 253–271.

Vanhanen, T. 1999. 'Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis' *Journal of Peace Research 36 (1), 55–73.*

Williams, D. 2015. 'How Useful are the Main Existing Theories of Ethnic Conflict?' Academic *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies 4 (1), 147–152.*