

## Ethnic Politics and Democratization in Nigeria; A Conscious Pursuit of Negative Political Culture

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**Abstract:** It is a truism that ethnicity and its existence in any society have its positive and negative sides. However, the trajectory of political democratization and development in Nigeria has appeared to be influenced by negative understanding and misrepresentation, thereby consciously creating negative political culture. The objective of this paper is to examine the place of ethnic politics in the Nigeria democratization process and formation of adverse political culture. The historical research design was adopted to elicit and analyze the relevant data because of the qualitative nature of the paper. The linkage theory was adopted to explain the natural relationship between ethnicity and political democratization in Nigeria. The paper relied on the findings that arose from the careful analysis and discussion of the complex nature of ethnic politics and democratization quagmire and suggests possible template to ensure that ethnic politics is not allowed to adversely affect Nigeria's democratization process. The paper recommends re-structuring and constitutional amendment to correct the imbalance in the political structure and power. The paper contributed to knowledge by demonstrating that ethnicity is indispensable in the life of human, but its positive sides can be harnessed in such a manner to facilitate political democratization and development in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity, Ethnic Politics, Democratization Process, Political Culture.

### INTRODUCTION

It is a truism that ethnicity and its existence in any society have its positive and negative sides. However, the trajectory of political democratization and development in Nigeria has appeared to be influenced by negative understanding and misrepresentation, thereby consciously creating negative political culture. In view of this, it is pertinent to conceptualize the word ethnicity and its origin/existence in Nigeria.

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation state with cultural differences between its component ethnic groups. From the north to the coast, the range in types of social system, dressing, diet and language far exceeds that to be found elsewhere in the world. According to Cox, (1970) ethnicity or ethnic group could be defined as a socio-cultural entity residing in the same state, country or economic area and regard themselves biologically the same, culturally, linguistically or socially distinct among themselves and in most cases view their relation. In view of this, Ethnicity is an identity based upon a presumption of shared history and common cultural inheritance. Ethnic identity is shaped by both ethnic affiliation and ethnic attribution. Ethnic affiliation refers to individuals own sense of group membership and the characteristics of the group is defined by outsiders. It is however pertinent to note that Ethnicity is ancient and ubiquitous and commentaries on ethnic differences which of course have been highly variable over time and place. The term has been used to signify nation, race, religion or people but the core

meaning is basically that of the collective distinctiveness.

However, the amalgamation of Southern and Northern Protectorate in 1914 by Lord Lugard resulted in establishing heterogeneity in Nigeria. Without consideration of the historical foundation/background and consent of the ethnic nation involve in the marriage of inconveniences before carrying out the integration policy. This was successfully carried out by Lord Lugard for administrative purpose and to effectively exploit our mineral resources for their own advantage. However, the amalgamation of 1914 created a significant reason for ethnic differences since Nigeria independence. This of course could be seen from the hostility that resulted from competition between the various groups of ethnic nations for wealth and power. Obviously, the end result of this clearly shows that many of these may never develop a proper concept of nation building because of the high level of ethnicity and this of course created a negative approach in terms of socio-political and economic development of Nigeria as well as sustainable development. In view of this, there is high level of interest in ethnic politics in Nigeria due to the existence of ethnic democratization since Nigeria's Independence. For instance, from the first Republic to the fourth Republic witness strife, intense political crises, regional and ethnic polarization, violence, repression, abuses of office, corruption and intolerance, most importantly is the insecurity of lives and property of the citizens in Nigeria such as

Boko Haram and Fulani Herdsmen insurgence/attacks, IPOB. In fact, the previous administration of Muhammedu Buhari's cabinet was absolutely based on ethnic affiliation. A critical analysis of the appointment indicated that the majority of the appointments were Fulani Muslim. Based on this, the ethnic groups in Nigeria are crying of political and socio-economic marginalization which of course necessitated the clamor/agitation for re-structuring of Nigeria, Resource control, constitutional review and independence of Biafra. It is on this background, this paper seeks to examine the ethnic politics and democratization in Nigeria. A conscious pursuit of negative political culture that will effectively resolve the problem of ethnicity that continued to reflect in all political activities of Nigeria such as voting, distribution of political offices, social amenities, employment and government general patronage of the citizens of Nigeria.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The heterogeneity in Nigeria was created by the colonial masters for their own advantage. This has caused the ethnic crises since independence based on the fact that the representatives of the various ethnic regions were very much interested in the struggle for power and wealth to occupy the mantle of leadership at the various ethnic regions and centre. This power/leadership tussle over control of the central government has been in existence between the three ethnic regions since the first Republic till date (fourth Republic). The creation of states by General Gowon Yakubu in 1975 was a measure to manage ethnic groups' crises. Also the establishment of National Youth Service Corp and Federal Character Principle were established to unite Nigerian but the problem of ethnicity persisted hence this paper seeks to examine the existence and place of ethnic politics in Nigeria with a view to recommending possible measures to effectively manage the ethnic politics and democratization process in Nigeria.

### The Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is basically to examine the place of ethnic politics in Nigeria democratization process and formation of adverse political culture, while the specific objectives are;

- I. To examine the positive and negative sides of ethnicity.
- II. To examine the relationship between ethnic political representation and democratization process in Nigeria.

### Research Questions

- I. What are the positive and negative sides of ethnic politics in Nigeria?
- II. Is there any relationship between ethnic political representation and democratization process in Nigeria?

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Conceptual Review

#### Ethnicity

Ethnicity could be seen as a social phenomenon associated with the identity of members of a competing communal group(s) seeking to protect and advance their interest in a political system. The relevant communal elements are language, culture, race, religion and common history.

The origin of ethnicity could be traced to 1939; Sir Bourdilion introduced the evolution of Nigeria Federation. It was divided into province and regional council among the three major ethnic groups in the country (Osadolor, 1998). These are the Northern region, Eastern region and Western region. This could be seen from the formation of political parties in the first Republic. The Action Group (AG) was basically for Western region and leader of the party was Chief Obafemi Awolowo. In the same vein, the Northern people congress was regional party for the Northerners and the NCNC led by Nnamdi Azikiwe was for the Eastern region but have a little spread to the west, Crawford, 1993). Similarly, the first military coup of 1960 was claimed to have motivated by ethnic region from the south. This ethnic assumption motivated the Northern military to stage another counter coup that brought the then General Gowon Yakubu as military head of state. In view of this, Chinua Achebe describes ethnicity as discrimination against a citizen because of his/her place of birth (Achebe, 1997). In the same development Nnoli, 2008 stipulated that ethnicity involves demands by one group on other competing groups(s).

According to Ukiwo, 2005 ethnicity needs not always have negative consequences, as it also encompasses the behavior of ethnic groups. He emphasized that ethnic groups are groups with ascribed membership, myths of common history, ancestry, language, race, religion, culture and territory, however, these groups are classified or categorized into common identity that actually differentiate them from others. Thus, ethnicity could be seen as a result of interplay between external categorization and self identification. Succinctly, Brubaker, Loveman & Stamatoy cited

in Ukiwo, 2005 argued that additional variable of ethnicity in Nigeria is elite ambivalence which endorses the external categorization, deprecates self-identification and procedures leadership illegitimacies. Alubo, 2004, Canci & Odokovo, 2016, Osaghae, 2003, Siogreen, 2015, Ukiwo, 2015, stated that ethnic policies is a critical issue for social strategy and deliberation. In view of this, Aydin & Latar 2015, Igwara 2001 noted that people truly embrace with their ethnic group first before associating with other ethnic groups in Nigeria. (Ukiwo, 2005).

Pertinently, this has been the political culture in Nigeria since independence. Obviously, charity begins at home. This means that ethnic policies started from home/region before proceeding to other regions and thereafter, proceed for national identification. In view of this, we can confidently argue that Nigerian politics from the first Republic till date is characterized with ethnic policies and thus,, formed part of their political culture in Nigeria.

### Democratization

Democratic system of government could be seen as the real panacea to all the problems a country is facing. Democratization as a term will indicate whether a government is successful in promoting and maintaining justice and rule of law or whether it failed in the process of democratization.

The democratization system in Nigeria has experienced the practice of constitutionally elected and military policies since the independence in 1960. In view of this, Nwabueze, (1993) stated that Nigeria has passed through five phases. The phases are as follows;

- 1) Era of colonial autocracy and absolutism, that is the period of formal colonialism till October 1, 1960 Nigeria gained independence.
- 2) Emergence of constitutional democracy, 1960-1966. This period is the first Republic which of course was characterized with a lot of violence and crisis that necessitated the military incursion.
- 3) The Return of military autocracy and absolutism, 1966-1979. This is the first military coup in Nigeria assumed by the Northerners to have been organized by the Southerners such as major Kaduna Nzuogwu and host of others that brought Aguiyi Ironsi as head of state. Based on this assumption/believe and possible fear of domination, the Northerners organized another

counter coup after six months that brought in General Gowon Yakubu as the military head of state.

- 4) Restoration of constitutional democracy, 1979-1983. This period is known as the third Republic. Election was conducted by FEDECO among the registered political parties. The political parties included
  - i. NPN (National Party of Nigeria)
  - ii. UPN(Unity Party of Nigeria)
  - iii. NPP(Nigerian Peoples Party)
  - iv. PRP(Peoples Redemption Party)
  - v. GNPP(Great Nigeria Peoples Party)
- 5) The second military incursion in Nigerian politics, 1983-1989. This military coup d'état overthrew the presidential government of Alhaji Shehu Sahgari and brought in General Muhammed Buhari as head of state on December 31, 1983. The coup was announced by Brigadier Sanni Abacha and stated some reasons to justify the need for the coup d'état. Such as harsh economic conditions, mismanagement of the economy, unemployment, high inflation, scarcity of goods and food, inability to pay salaries, high level of corruption, indiscipline, incompetence and irresponsibility of the ruling politicians, massive rigging and high level of violence that characterized the 1983 elections. The regime changed the denominations of the national currency to frustrate the corrupt officers and politicians that looted money from government. However, the regime was known for draconian, activists and of course regarded as repressive. Ikelegbe, (2013). In view of this, Buhari/Idiagbon regime was equally overthrown in August 1985 by Major General Ibrahim Babangida through palace coup. The regime introduced a Structural Adjustment programme to solve the economic problems in the country. Similarly, the Babangida regime started the process of transition to civil rule by 1990 and later extended to 1992. It is the most prolonged transition programme in Nigeria. It is sluggish, tortuous and reluctant movement devoid of consistency. The time sequence was so far between and time intervals between elections were considerably large.

The transition programme was severally amended and rescheduled forward to the extent that the programme became dilatory and ad hoc or fire fighting in orientation (Olagunju, 1993).

However, the election was conducted between the two registered political parties by government.

National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the most free and fair election ever conducted in Nigeria. The M.K.O. Abiola of NRC won the election but was annulled by Babangida on June 12, 1993.

This caused a lot of protest in the country and when the heat became too high and unbearable for General Babangida, he stepped outside. Succinctly, the Interim National Government (ING) was set up to take over the mantle of leadership from Babangida Ernest Shonekan was appointed as the head of transition committee (Interim National Government). However the Interim National Government (ING) lasted for 82 days as a result of the fact that the winner of the June 12, 1993, M.K.O. Abiola challenged the appointment of Interim National Government in Lagos High Court. Fortunately and unfortunately the high court verdict was in favor of M.K.O. Abiola but that created opportunity for General Sanni Abacha to organize another palace coup d'état to become the head of States. General Sanni Abacha discovered that all the extant democratic structures of Interim National Government. Abacha's regime was a dictatorship government, autocracy and of course characterized by violations of human rights, hostage taking, forced exile and physical elimination of any opponents to his Government. Nigeria's activists and political elites continued to fight to return the country to democratically elected president and fortunately for Nigerians, General Sanni Abacha died on June 8, 1998.

In view of this, General Abdulsalmi Abubakar took over the mantle of leadership and immediately set up the shortest transition programme in Nigeria. The election was organized and won by General Olusegun Obasanjo of People's Democratic Party (PDP). General Abdulsalmi Abubakar handed over power to General Olusegun Obasanjo on May 29, 1999. This ushered in the beginning of the fourth Republic.

It is pertinent to note that the fourth Republic will be twenty – five (25) years of constitutional democracy without the incursion of the military. This is enough indication that democracy has come to stay in Nigeria for the socio-economic development and stability of the country

However, Obasanjo completed the tenure of eight (8) years as Executive President of Nigeria. Thereafter, Umaru Yara dua took over from

Obasanjo under the People's Democratic Party (PDP) but could not complete the tenure because of the illness that took his life. The demise of Yar adua brought in the vice – president. Goodluck Jonathan handed over to General Muhammedu Buhari from 2015 – 2023 and handed over to Senator Ahmed Bola Tinubu in 2023 till date. Tinubu's administration removed subsidy from the inaugural speech. This of course brought hardship, hunger due to hike in fuel and high cost of food price, killing and kidnapping in the country. The hardship and hunger led to the bad governance protest on August 1 to August 10, 2024.

### Political Culture

Political culture could be defined as a set of attitudes and practice of people that shapes their political behavior. It includes moral judgment, political myths, beliefs and ideas about what constitute a good society. According to parekh (2005) cited in Ebimngbo and Okoye (2015) sees culture as a historically inherited system of meaning and significant in terms of which a group of people understand and structure their individual and collective lives. In view of this, Gabriel, (1995) defined political culture as the special ways/attitude of orientation in line with political action in such that all political system is involved. Similarly, Lucian, cited in Brill (1996) stated that political culture is the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiment, which gave order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in political system.

However, Nigeria political culture is characterized with ethnicity, crises, God fatherism, sentiment and of course, winner takes it all syndrome. It is obvious from the first republic to the fourth republic that Nigerian political attitude were completely engrossed with rigging of election, political thuggery, ethnic politics and of course corruption. Ethnic politics, corruption and bad leadership are inherent in Nigeria politics which of course is basically a bane to socio-economic and national development. Also, a factor to political instability in the country Achebe (1997) staed that the problem of Nigeria is basically leadership failure. In the same view, Garner (1976) stipulated that no society can function well with fools, rascals or non leadership/power tussle among the ethnic nationalities that have eaten deep in our political system. Similarly, Samuel J(2006) noted that integrity without knowledge is weak and useless and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and affect the socio-economic development of the



country. It is based on this, Olanrewaju (2015) affirmed that political culture of Nigeria is still primitive and undeveloped.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### The Linkage Theory

This paper adopted the linkage theory to explain the ethnic politics and democratization process in Nigeria. However, Linkage theory or policy started as a foreign policy when the United States introduced it and was basically championed by Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger in 1970s détente during the cold war. The purpose of the policy was basically to persuade the Soviet Union to cooperate in restraining revolutions in the Third World in return for concessions in nuclear and economic fields. Linkage as a term has been used differently with reference to both domestic and international policy making. Thus, there was a debate over the actual meaning of the term. Based on this, Historian and academics see the meaning in different perspectives. They stated that Linkage means Leverage-the linking of one event to another in order to maintain bargaining power or pressure on the opposing party involved.

Similarly, Marvin Kalb and Bernard Kalb described linkage as an up-to-date application of Henry Kissinger's theories on balance of power. Linkage theory could also be seen as the way one negotiation influences or determines the process or outcome of another can effectively explain the relationship between a negotiation and its relevant environment. In view of this, this paper adopted the theory to examine the linkage between military in politics and constitutionally elected and the place of ethnic politics in democratization process in Nigeria that resulted in negative political culture due to misunderstanding and misrepresentation. However, it is pertinent to note that ethnic politics in Nigeria was as a result of the colonial creation through the amalgamation of northern and southern protectorate. It is also observed from the application of the linkage theory that the ethnic politics and identity is from birth and inherent in human nature and of course passed on from generation to generation because of the common blood shared within the various ethnic groups. Similarly, the primordialists theory believed that ethnic politics/conflict fundamentally springs from differences among the ethnic groups. (Vanhanen, 1999, Esteban Mayoral & Ray 2012). Ethnic identity is fixed across time due to common blood shared within each ethnic group. According to the primordialist, hospitality and cooperation exist

among the advantage ethnic groups (in group) while hostility and conflict against the out-groups. (Harowitz, 1985, Smith 1996, Hammond & Axelrod 2008). Primordialist emphasized that ethnic politics are ancestral deep and irreconcilable arising from ancient hatreds between ethnic groups, competition and mutual fear of domination (Geertz, 1963). This has been in existence since the first republic till date, most especially the first and second coup d'état of 1966 and the Nigeria civil war of 1967 – 1970. In view of this, the primordialist noted that any heterogeneous state with a large number of ethnic groups will unavoidably experience ethnic politics and conflict, (Vanhanen, 1999). The insecurity in the country today could be traced to ethnicity. The Boko Haram insurgency and Fulani Herds men killing and kidnapping of school children and various individuals.

On the other hand, the instrumentalists believed that ethnic politics and conflict cannot emerge through direct form of differences but rather, 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 other ethnics. (Posen, 1993, Collier & Hoeffler, 1998, Chandra, 2004, Ruane & Todd, 2004). Above all, the paper observed that ethnic politics in Nigeria is basically caused by over politicization and manipulation of a particular ethnic region at the detriment of other ethnic groups/regions.

## EMPIRICAL REVIEW

### Ethnicity and Democratization Process in Nigeria

Ethnicity could be seen as a set of people that has its foundation in the combined remembrance of past experience and common aspiration. (Azeez, 2004; 329). Ethnicity has pervaded every facet of the Nigerian life and more fundamentally determines who get what, when and how (Lasswell, 1960). It is a truism that ethnicity has eaten deep into Nigerian politics. Although, ethnicity has been in existence before the colonization of Nigeria. The various society/ethnic regions in Nigeria were existing and operating on their own without any hindrance before the colonialists decided to amalgamate the southern protectorate and the northern protectorate without a proper consideration of the origin/historical background of the affected regions before the marriage of inconveniences. However, the colonial masters could not change the original sense of

people hood, its foundation and common aspiration and even after the amalgamation, these people (regions) did not abandon their usual way of life, attitude, beliefs, language, tradition and of course common aspirations that effectively tie them together. In view of this, they maintained their original foundation. This promotes ethnicity, struggle for power and wealth to survive the unexpected amalgamation of 1914. This of course supported the definition of Lasswell (1960) that stated that ethnicity has pervaded every facet of the Nigeria life and more fundamentally determines who gets what, when and how? In view of this, this paper seeks to examine the place of ethnic politics in Nigeria democratization process and formation of adverse political culture.

It is pertinent to note that ethnic politics started with the identification of a particular society/region staying together in the same state, country or economic area, considered themselves biologically, culturally, linguistically or socially distinct from each other and most often view their relation. Cox, (1970; 317) similarly Salawu & Hassan (2011) posited that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation state with cultural differences between its component ethnic groups. From the north to the coast, they have a particular social system, dressing, diet and languages far exceeds that to be found elsewhere in the world. This diversity created two major problems due to larger ethnic groups and of course the hospitality derives from competition between people of various ethnic groups for wealth and power. This ethnic regional competition/struggle for socio – economic and political powers could be traced back to pre – independence till date (Post – Independence). For instance, Chief Anthony Enaharo moved a motion at the Federal House of Representative, Lagos for the need to be self – independent in 1957 but because of the fear of possible domination, the Northerners moved a counter motion and subsequently moved for adjournment. This of course generated crisis between south and the north that caused the Kano riot of 1954. Succinctly, the first military coup d'état organized by Agwuiyi Ironsi, Major Kaduna Nzuogwu and the host of others was assumed by the Northerners to have been organized by the Ibo boys, of southerners to take over the mantle of leadership. In view of this and mostly for the fear of regional domination organized a counter coup that brought in Gowon Yakubu as the head of state after six months of the first coup. Comparatively, this ethnic politics in Nigerian democratization process

for the First Republic to the Fourth Republic has been characterized with political power competition and struggle to occupy the leadership positions at the centre created political violence, thuggery, kidnapping, snatching of ballot boxes, rigging of elections and all manners of manipulations to win elections that eventually formed the political culture is clearly observed in the Buhari's administration. Majority of appointment made by Buhari is basically Fulani – Moslem that necessitated the ethnic minority groups to cry for political and infrastructural marginalization and currently agitating for restructuring of the country and constitutional amendment. This is a clear indication that ethnic politics is high in the Northern region.

### **Positive and Negative Side of Ethnic Politics in Nigeria Democratization Process.**

#### **Positive Perspective**

The ethnic politics and democratization process in Nigeria has a positive and negative side. The positive sides may include.

Ethnic politics is a social phenomenon associated with the identity of members of a competing communal group(s) seeking to protect and advance their interest in a political system. This identification as members of a competing group(s) seeking to protect and advance their interest in a political system. This identification as members of ethnic group with the same cultural background, tradition, religion, race, common history and language facilitate the unity as one entity to compete with other ethnic nationality in terms of socio-economic and political participation that will effectively influence socio – economic and national development for the stability of the country, According to Ikelegbe, (2013) cultural ethnic organizations accelerated nationality movement in Nigeria such as Ibibio, Omo Oduduwa and others. The nationalist used ethnic groups to mobilize people and disseminate information to their people.

The regional political parties were formed to contest regional elections based on the Macpherson's constitution of 1951. These political parties included Action Group (AG) founded by Obafemi Awolowo and leader of the party is basically for the western region. Northern People's Congress (NPC) is from the Northern region and the leader of the party is the Saduna of Sokoto. The National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC) is for the Eastern Part of Nigeria but have some spread outside the eastern region. The leader

of the party is Nnamdi Azikwe. However these political parties were great instruments in the success of the Nationalist movement in Nigeria.

Ethnic politics created the opportunity for the creation of state by Gowon Yakubu in 1973 after the civil war that lasted for thirty (30) months, The national youth service corp programme compulsory for all university and polytechnic graduate was introduced by Gowon in 1975 as a measure to eradicate ethnicity.

### **Negative Perspective**

The negative perspectives of ethnicity in Nigerian democratization process may include.

One of the negative sides of ethnic politics in Nigeria democratization process is marginalization of minority group(s). The distribution of social amenities and other government patronage will elude them based on the fact that the advantaged ethnic group will be interested in its own particular area. The negative side of ethnic politics discourages socio-economic and political development in the country. Too much competition and struggle for power and wealth create instability in government and under – development in the country.

In view of this, Osaghae, (2001) noted that ethnicity created a strong platform to recruit and mobilize for ethnic identity and difference to benefit some advantages in situation of competition, conflict or cooperation. This was affirmed by Ukiwo (2005) when he identified two issues that are centrally discussed on the concept of ethnicity. (1) Ethnicity is neither natural nor accidental but a product of the conscious effort of social actors. (2) Ethnicity is beyond its conflictive or competitive manifestations to its comparative impacts. He however concluded that ethnicity/ethnic politics needs not always have negative consequences.

Ethnic politics creates negative political culture. It is an opportunity for a particular ethnic nation to dominate the political system and based on this, they will employ all sorts of manipulation during and after the election to stay-put in power.

For instance, the Northern part of Nigeria capitalized on the advantage to permanently stay-put in power since the First Republic till date. Based on this, Diamond (1983) & Suberu (2001) stated that federal government was dominated by the Northern region which was by far largest region. In view of this, Ukiwo (2005) felt so sorry

with the dominant region based on the imbalance in structures which of course necessitated a range of constitutional changes to promote national unity and political instability immediately after the Nigeria Civil War. Similarly, the agitation by the minority group for re-structuring and constitutional amendment is currently at the centre stage. The Nigeria Civil war was as a result of negative ethnic politics. Adeniji (1999).

The negative perspective of ethnic politics is that it promotes and encourages corruption based on the fact that they are the majority in power and can always suppress or cover up for their ethnic nation whenever they are affected. For instance, the previous government spent about 523.3 million naira to feed the school children during the lockdown of schools and all Government institutions. Kunle (2020), no investigation on the corrupt practice and nothing happened to the affected officers because they enjoy the support of the government.

All these factors contribute greatly to the failure of the socio-economic and political development as well as the democratization process in Nigeria.

### **Ethnic Political Representation and Development in Nigeria**

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation state with cultural differences between its component ethnic groups. Based on this, political representation at the federal, state and local government must cut across all the ethnic nation/groups in the country for effective representation and national development. In view of this, the country have created 36 states with Abuja as a federal capital and 774 local government councils as well as delineation of constituencies at the national assembly and wards at the local government in line with their various historical background for effective political participation and representation. This is embedded in the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended. The need and foundation for ethnic representation was arranged by Lord Lugard's first constitutional arrangement to set up Nigeria Council, a legislative council of 36 members that function as advisory council. Although, 6 Nigerian Chiefs were nominated to represent different ethnic group/sections of the country.

We have 109 senatorial districts and 360 constituencies ably represented by senators and House of Representatives respectively. The purpose of this arrangement is for national unity

and effective participation of all ethnic groups for national development. Each of the ethnic representatives is the voice of their various ethnic regions. However, one of the oversight functions of senators and House of Representatives is to make laws and attract meaningful development to their various constituency. In light of this, the various ethnic groups/regions and Nigerian as a whole failed to understand the game of politics and the need to join hands as an opposition party with the winning party to build the country for national development. In most cases they adopted the old political culture inherited from the first republic based on the fact that is the same old bridge with the same school of thought that will continue to decamp from one political parties to the other. The do or die attitude is a very negative political approach that resulted in a negative political culture in the Nigeria democratization process. In view of this, Alubo 2004, Canci & Odukova 2016, Ukiwo 2005) stated that Nigeria is deeply a divided state in which political issue are vigorously contested along the ethnic lines, religious and regional divisions. In fact, it is a real matter for social calculation and negotiation. Pertinently, people identifies first with their ethnic group before identifying with other ethnic region. Aydin & Lafer, 2015 & Igwara 2001. Ethnicity/ethnic politics influences political development in Nigeria based on the fact that several political activities take place at the grass root for socio-economic and national development. This created a nexus, between ethnic political representation and development. Thus, development is the totality of improvement of the individual based on his/her economic, political, psychological, social and cultural relations among others. Ajaebili (2003). However, it is the responsibility of ethnic political representatives to attract development that will bring sustainability and positive change in the quality of life of the citizens among ethnic nationalities and national development.

## CONCLUSION

The Nigerian multi –ethnic nation state with cultural differences between its component ethnic groups was created by Lord Lugard through the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate in 1914. The ultimate purpose of the amalgamation was basically for administrative convenience and effectively cart away with our mineral resources. At independence of Nigeria in 1960, there was absolute need of who is who among the ethnic nationality to occupy the mantle

of leadership. This of course created the hostility that resulted from the competition and struggle for power and wealth among the ethnic groups in Nigeria.

In view of this, the ethnic policies and democratization in Nigeria created negative political culture because of the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the political elites in various ethnic groups. It is however pertinent to note that Nigerian ethnic politics and democratization since the first Republic to fourth Republic was characterized with crises, violence, corruption, rigging of election. Sentiment and manipulation of stay-put in power. All these were adopted as political culture in Nigeria because of the fear of plausible domination of power. The Ethnic politics and democratization in Nigeria was a mixture of military in politics and constitutionally elected. Thus, the military under the assumption of interventionist policy to curb crises, disturbances, breakdown of law and order, insecurity, ethnicism, regionalism, conflicts and violence during and after elections ruled Nigeria for 29 years (1966 – 1979) (1983 – 1999) without achieving the objectives, most importantly, elimination of ethnicity regional politics. The first military coup d'etat of January 1966 and the counter coup d'etat July, that eliminated General Aguiyi – Ironsi were grossly based on ethnic agenda of fear of plausible domination of socio – economic and political power.

The constitutionally elected leaders developed a high level of negative political culture based on ethnic foundation and coupled with the fact that the same group of people with the same school of thought kept on re-circling themselves form one party to another. The negative political cultures from the first republic were upgraded to the present administration. In view of this, the paper observed that the former administration practice absolute ethnicity based on the fact that majority of the appointed are Fulani – Moslem. However the paper examined some of the negative and positive perspectives of ethnic politics and democratization process in Nigeria and observed that ethnicity exists and more pronounced in the Northern part of Nigeria. In the same vein, observed that the negative political culture were basically because of misunderstanding and misrepresentation of ethnic politics.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper recommends as follows;



1. There should be re-structuring and constitutional amendment on the country to correct the imbalance in political structure and power.
2. There should be effective principle of rotation of the presidency to cut across the major ethnic groups, such as South – West, South – East, South – South, North – East, North – West and North – Central. All these regions are known as the six geo – political zones in the country.
3. The federal government should adopt a proper democratic system and orientation exercise of all the ethnic groups that will effectively remove the fear of plausible domination of various ethnic groups/region and adopt the positive political culture devoid of insecurity, ethnic crises, political violence and of course insurgencies like Boko Haram, Fulani – Herds men and others.

### CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

The paper contributed to knowledge by demonstrating and affirmed that ethnicity is indispensable in the human, but its positive sides can be harnessed in such a manner to facilitate political democratization and development in Nigeria.

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