ETHNICITY, RELIGION, POLITICS AND THE CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Aghogho Kelvin EMOGHENE
Delta State Institute of Continuing Education,
Ughelli, Nigeria
kemoghene@gmail.com

Ugo Chuks OKOLIE
Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, Edo State Study Centre
Benin City, Nigeria
ugookolie3@gmail.com

Abstract: *The concepts ethnicity, religion and politics are problematic even at the level of conceptualization. However, the interdependence of ethnicity, religion and politics as social dynamics in fostering the development of a nation has become imperative across the globe. Nigeria is multi-ethnic with cultural differences between its component ethnic groups has been crippled by series of political unrest, ethnic chauvinism, youth restiveness, corruption, religious bigotry and extremism, and other social vices that undermine national development. Therefore, it is against this backdrop that this study examines the effects of ethnicity, religion and politics on national development in Nigeria. A descriptive method was adopted and cross-sectional data were collected across the twenty five Local Government Areas in Delta State with the aid of a structured questionnaire. Non-probabilistic sampling techniques comprising of purposeful and convenience techniques were used to elicit information via questionnaire from 400 respondents. Data collected were analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The findings of the study showed that ethnicity, religion and politics negatively and significantly impacts national development in Nigeria. On the basis of these findings, the study recommends among others that the nation needs a purposeful leadership that has a vision of how to place its citizens at the centre of political project without recourse to ethnic chauvinism and sees acquisition of political power as not an end in itself but a means for serving the collective welfare of its people regardless of their ethnic origin.*
Keywords: *Ethnicity, Religion, Politics, National Development, Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria at the age 58 is still searching for a new political order. The full realization of this objective has been made impossible because of the dominance of the factors of ethnicism, religions and politics, these factors which has affected the survival of democratic rule and national development in Nigeria. Federalism is arguably the suitable framework for addressing ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism in a complex society like Nigeria. In such system, each region or state is allowed to control its resources and develop at its own pace. However, Nigeria who claims to run a federal system of government operates the opposite and does not recognize the identities, interest and needs of the people especially the minorities. The nation's constitution does not reflect the wishes of the people; most government policies are anti-people and does not engender national integration and cohesion (Ilesanmi, 2014). The Nigerian government remains distant from serving the interest of its people. Politics at the federal, state and local levels of the Nigerian

federation are dominated by the powerful mandarin who built vast patronage networks during the military days and who now use political office to expand these networks and their personal fortunes. Moreover, many of these so called 'godfathers' have been cultivating, prompting a local arm race in some regions even though several governors are under indictment for money laundering abroad and others are being investigated at home, the bonanza continues at public coffers for these power holders, while basic infrastructure in many parts of the country remains as dilapidated as it was under military rule (Kew, 2006 cited in Fagbadebo, 2007).

Politics today in Nigeria is a 'do or die' affair. The struggle for political power and control at the centre has over-heated the nation's polity and created unnecessary tension which has resulted to bigotry between and among regions. Political thugs are recruited and armed by these same politicians who at the end of the day loose grip of these thugs and these arms are used on defenseless citizens (Ilesanmi, 2014). The current democratic dispensation since inception has been besieged with unprecedented vice disturbance and social insecurity resulting in massive destruction of property and loss of lives. The religious and ethnic dimension to these upheavals makes them a serious threat to national security. The tension and uncertainties in the country today is not conducive for democratic process and national development. Nigeria in recent times has witnessed a lot of violence eruption and general insecurity in nearly all the states of the federation. Prominent among such is the Boko Haram which has been attributed to the political rivalry between the north and the south towards controlling the political power in the country. It must be realized that, the sudden and apparent emergence of the Boko Haram sect at this period in the history of the country is meant to destabilize the Jonathan's Administration as well as the equilibrium the country has been brought to by the government (Ogoloma, 2012). In addition, kidnapping and all forms of maladies, militia groups exist in all geopolitical zones. This has resulted in a lot of bloodsheds, senseless killings, destruction of property, social and economic dislocation and its attendant poverty, insecurity and unemployment (Ilesanmi, 2014).

This is why Ogbulafor (2000) argued that the number of people in Nigeria bitten by poverty is over 70%. It is only in Nigeria you find political leaders, military chiefs who are clueless, visionless and lack the necessary ingredients to stirring a good socio-economic and political environment, some of them and their cohorts have become sponsors to most crises and conflicts rather than seeing themselves as apostles of peace and national development. Worse still, in all political activities in Nigeria, the factor of ethnicity is reflected. It is particularly obvious in area like voting, distribution of political offices, employment and government general patronage of the citizens (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Also, when national development is mentioned, it is suicidal to ignore the contributions of religious adherents such as Christians, Muslims, African Traditional adherents and other secular ideologists (Awoniyi, 2015). Today, religion has been used, abused, abused and misused by political elites, and unfortunately the so-called clerics of Christianity and Islam, so much that it has continued to cause conflagrations all over the world. Nigerian experience is one among many of the countries witnessing Islamic extremists' senseless killings and maiming of innocent lives (Gbadegesin & Adeyemi-Adejolu, 2016). Therefore, a discussion of the effects of ethnicity, religion and politics on national development in Nigeria is or seems to be highly desirable. It even becomes necessary given

that today we still talk about under developed Nigeria as a result of the challenges posed by the indices of pluralism (ethnicity, religion and politics).

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

It is important to understand and have the conception of these operational terms ethnicity, religion, politics and national development for the purpose of clarity.

Ethnicity

Like any other terminology employed by social scientists, the concept of ethnicism is a term that does not lend itself to easy definition (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Though, there are general agreement on a few points which germane to understanding the phenomenon. It is agreed that though ethnicity is a derivative of the ethnic group, it only occurs in situations involving more than one ethnic group or identity and to fully understand the meaning of ethnicity, a related concept like ethnic group need to be defined. This is particularly important because of the systemic differences in the definition of ethnicity across societies. Osaghae (1994) affirms that ethnicity is problematic phenomenon whose character is conflictual rather than consensual. Having enumerated the features of ethnicity on which scholars agreed. Cohen (1974) defined ethnic group as an informal interest group whose members are distinct from the members of other ethnic groups within the larger society because they share kinship, religious and linguistics ties. Similarly, Thompson (2004) defines ethnic group as a community of people who believe that they possess a common identity based on issues of origin, kinship ties, historical experiences, traditions and cultures, and perhaps share a common language. This means that ethnic groups are social formations, which are distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries (Nnoli, 1978). It is this social formations that affect the performance and functioning of the Nigerian leaders as they may be influenced in their actions and decisions due to their ethnic inclinations and parochial mentality. The inter-ethnic struggle for social and economic dominance also inevitably leads to nepotism and its attendant consequences, mostly hostility in the form of inter-ethnic violence (Ogoloma, 2012).

Ethnicity according to Osaghae (1994), is a social formation predicated on culturally specific practices and unique symbols. What this means is that ethnicity is a situation in which individuals in a particular ethnic group consider themselves or are considered by others to have common affinity which distinct them from other groups in the society. Also, distinct cultural behaviours are usually developed; all groups can be identifiable through religion, politics, occupation or language (Ilesanmi, 2014). In political terms, ethnicity refers to the ethnic-identity based behaviour which seeks, in a competitive setting, to capture political power at the micro level and state, power at the macro level (Osimen, Balogun & Adenegan, 2013). Achebe (1981) sees ethnicity as discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth. Today, ethnicity has become a population subject of intellectual exploration to scholars in different fields both in developed and developing countries particularly of Africa, as it is often considered a prominent factor in the governance and development processes of many countries. Ajayi and Owumi (2013) affirm that it would not be easy to identify a country that is not affected by issues triggered by ethnicity but some countries' situations are particularly striking because of the lessons

they provide regarding the impact of ethnicity on national development. Jiboku and Jiboku (2018) also observe that the inter- ethnic relations in Nigeria has been one of conflict largely caused by ethnic chauvinism, which manifested in the form of ethnic nationalism. There is no doubt that this has implications for the survival of democracy and national development in Nigeria.

Religion

Religion as the oldest discipline in human society is the most difficult term or word to define. There is no clear consensus on the conception of religion by theologians and social scientists. This is not merely because scholars grapple with the element of subjectivity, but largely because of the inherent difficulty in understanding the 'inner essences' of religion (Egwu, 2001). Different people understand religion differently or have different perspectives according to their disciplines. For example, sociologists regard religion as being of social rather than political significance while anthropologists view religion as a component of the cultural aspect of life (Barrett, 2003). To the Theologians, religion is the essence and centre of civilization and the sublime aesthetic expression and root of all decision, actions and ultimate explanation of civilization with its invention and artifacts; its social, political and economic system, its past and future, promises and history (Muazam, 2006 cited in Cinjel & Chujor, 2017). Durkheim (1965) defined religion as a collective representation that made things sacred. Religion can be termed by reference to what is known as extent of purity and impurity (Shabi & Awe, 2001). Yesufu (2016) sees religion as the service and worship of God or gods. Mbati (1999) cited in Ilesanmi (2014) emphasized that religion is a strong element in the traditional backgrounds and exerts the greatest influence upon the thinking and feelings of the people concerned. Obilor (1998) avers that religion is a capacity or a power which enable man to observe the laws of his nature, the natural law and/or of the divine law. Durrant (1920) interprets religion as a barrier to human self-actualization. There is no doubt that religion can be seen in this light when it has been turned into an ideological tool or else, why did Karl Marx see it as the opium of the people. A palliative used by the leaders to hold the masses in check. In the hand of a villain, religion can be a cog in the wheel of progress and massaging of the ego and dehumanization of the people while in the hand of a saint it becomes an instrument for humanization (Ogugua & Ogugua, 2015).

It has been argued that one's religion is what makes one a complete whole, this assertion may not be correct because not all people practicing a religion would agreed that they depend on their religion to complete them as a whole. Basically, the two major religious practices in Nigeria are Islam and Christianity. While the Muslims believe in Allah, the Christians believe in one God, yet we have African Traditional religion. These differences in beliefs have given rise to the religious conflict we are experiencing worldwide (Ilesanmi, 2014). Today, based on the increasing rise of religious bigots and extremists, one may be tempted to suggest that religion is not relevant to societal development and hence should be extricated from human social life (Gbadegesin & Adeyemi- Adejolu, 2016). Religious extremism is commonly known in Nigeria as religious fundamentalism and fanaticism. Hornby (2000) Defined fanaticism as extreme beliefs or behaviour, especially in connection with religion or politics. Balogun (1988) defined religious fanaticism as violent and unreasoning religious enthusiasm as well as the inability

of religious adherents to harmonize between those theories and the practical aspects of religion.

Politics

Politics is derived from the Greek word "polis" meaning city state. Implicitly is the idea of governance in the word "polis". The term politics has been defined differently by different authors and these definitions reflect the philosophical, social and political background of the authors. This has made it impossible to have a universally accepted definition of politics. Ejizu (1988) defined politics as a dynamic process whereby human and other human resources are managed, directed after due mobilization to ensure the enforcement of public policy and decision in the bid to regulate social order. Hornby (2000) sees politics as the science and art of government. It is the science dealing with terms, organization and administration of state or part of one and with the regulation of its relation with other state. For Onyekpe (2003) cited in Ogugua and Ogugua (2015) politics is about the control and exercise of power. Politics can also be view as the process of deciding who gets what, when and how. Dyke (1960) views politics as a struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues. In the Marxian sense, politics is a class struggle, that is, the struggle between antagonistic classes in the society for the control of the state- the state being an 'organ of class rule' (Oluwatusin & Daisi, 2018). In the words of Leshe (1970) cited in Ngele (2008), politics is a sphere of purposeful behaviour through which we seek to live better than we do now. Ake (1995) sees politics as mainly about the control of power; this is well known. What is not so well know is the extent to which the nature of the state, including its power, determines politics. Politics according to Ikelegbe (2005) is a persistent pattern of human relationships that involves to a significant extent control, influence or authority.

Despite the divergent conceptions of politics, there is a common ground in the centrality of the state and power to the political process. Thus, politics is concentrated as revolving round the state, its agencies, activities and overall impact on the society; and also an analysis of government and its responsibilities (Appadorai, 2003). It is instructive to note that the leadership problem in the Nigerian polity was a manifestation of the dysfunctional pattern of the years of military interregnum (Omo-Bare, 1996; Omodia, 2009; Ighodalo, 2012; Ijere, 2015). The leadership pattern in Nigeria lacks the necessary focus capable of instilling national development and promotes political stability. Rather, Nigerian leaders are preoccupied with their desires for the appropriation and privatization of the Nigeria state (Ake, 1995); Sklar, Onwudiwe & Kew, 2006). The fall of the First and Second Republic, for instance, was precipitated by the pervasive corruption and the attendant political violence that greeted electoral manipulations, in a bid to stick to power (Ayeni, 1988). Consequently, development performance was slowed down, and political instability continued to pervade the polity, as focus was shifted to combat the looming forces of insecurity and internal regime instability. In the Nigerian state today, the democratic process no doubt has been bedeviled with poor party politics as a result of lack of internal democracy, party indiscipline, lack of clear cut party ideologies, ethnicization of party politics, poor political leadership, excessive westernization of the concept 'democracy,' the politicization of the higher echelon of the military profession among others (Ntalaja, 2000). These factors, no doubt snowballed in the abortion of democratic

republics in Nigeria and have persistently threatened the survival of the Nigeria Fourth Republic.

National Development

Development means different things to different people. Development could be seen as a process of economic and social transformation that is based on complex cultural and environmental interactions (Ajaebu, 2012). Development is also equated with progress and modernity (Willis, 2005). According to Walter Rodney as cited in Ajaegbu (2012) development is the process that includes: physical development which include man made goods produced by use of technology, cultural development which comprises of the values, norms and traditions of society, and personal development which includes the psychological directions of individuals. According to Martinussen (1997), the various conceptions of development include economic growth, increased welfare and human development, modernization, elimination of dependency, dialectical transformation and capacity building. Similarly, Seers (1979) affirmed that the purpose of development in the society is to reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment. For Sen (1999), development involves reducing deprivation or broadening choice. Deprivation represents a multidimensional view of poverty that include hunger, illiteracy, illness and poor health, powerlessness, voicelessness, insecurity, humiliation and a lack of access to basic infrastructure.

The growth rate of a country's per capital income compared to those of other countries can be used to describe its level of national development (Lucas, 1988). This increase in per capital income must however be accompanied by an unprecedented shift of the society from a condition considered to be unacceptable to a more acceptable one in terms of poverty level, employment, creativity, efficiency, productivity and equality. National development is the ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people by providing security and social amenities which include quality education, portable water, transportation infrastructure, medical care, employment among others (Ajaegbu, 2012). In Nigeria, faulty development policies pursued since independence till day have left the people pauperized and decimated. These are manifested in increasing poverty, diseases, unemployment, poor medical care, poor housing facilities, lack of portable water, epileptic power supply, lack of access to power and resources by minority groups and their exclusion from policy making (Ighodalo, 2012). The challenges of national development in Nigeria include intolerance, misconceptions, inadequate grasp of religious matters, fanaticism, extremisim, violence, bloodshed, suicide, insecurity, injustice, corruption, immoral acts, ignorance and bad leadership and governance, which are inimical to the progress of a country. When these are added to several instances of youth misinformation, misorientation and other forms of misguided exposures and experiences, the challenges of national development in Nigeria assume such an awful proportion that seems to defy any kind of antidote (Oladosu, 2015).

The challenge of ethnicity in national development in Nigeria

Ethnicity is a politically neutral concept and does not pose any danger to democracy or national development but rather could positively engender national development where interactions and interrelationships are healthy. It is the politicization and manipulation of ethnicity that poses a problem (Adetiba & Rahim, 2012). Also, Iyanga

(2018) affirms that multi-ethnic states are often prone to conflictual and competitive relationships as different communities struggle to control political power and other economic resources of the state and this constitutes an impediment to political and socio-economic development. Therefore, ethnicity provides the platform whereby different individuals mobilize primarily to actualize economic goals. This explanation is relevant in the African context and Nigeria in particular where different groups cry about marginalization with regards to the distribution of national resources (Ebegbulem, 2011). The Nigerian state has been weak in acting as an impartial actor in protecting the interests of its diverse population as equal citizens; ensuring equitable distribution of national resources; promoting national integration and unity and actualizing national development goals. Its inability to act as an independent force standing above society and effectively mediating between competing interests in society creates a gap which is then bridged by the diverse ethnic groups and their organizations to mobilize for equal distribution of economic resources (Iyanga, 2018).

Since Nigeria attained independence, several problems experienced in the state include those concerned with state creation; revenue allocation; lack of trust among constituent units; election rigging, restiveness/militancy, Boko Haram insurgency, ethno-religious violence, inter-ethnic violence, inability of some ethnic groups to attain certain political offices and political instability (Jiboku & Jiboku, 2018), these constitute an impediment to national development. Moreso, multi-party democracy which has been adopted in Nigeria at different periods in its history instead of alleviating its ethnic problems, have further fuelled the political challenges of the state. The country's democratic experiments has thus far, not translated into its political development and improved standard of living for the citizenry (Vande, 2012). Ethnicity has been found to be the most powerful force shaping the political and social relations in Nigeria. It brings about conflict and distrust among the three main ethnic groups in Nigeria the Yoruba, Hausa/Fulani and Igbo and has led to equation of the Nigerian nation by the ethnic groups as a national cake to be share among them (Iyanga, 2018). Ethnicity has had a lot of negative consequences for the nation's movement towards democratization to the extent that it remains an enduring threat to institutionalization of democracy and national development in Nigeria. Among its resultant negative consequences as observed by Babangida, 2002 cited in Salawu and Hassan(2011), are wastage of enormous human and material resources in ethnically inspired violence, encounters, clashes and even battles, heightening of fragility of the economy and political process, threat to security of life and property and disinvestments of local and foreign components with continuous capital flight and loss of confidence in the economy, and increasing gaps in social relations among ethnic nationalities.

The challenges of religion in national development in Nigeria

Religion is fundamental to humans' life and living, thinking pattern, attitudes and relationships. Religion is considered critical for any meaningful, total and sustainable national development in any human society (Obiefuna & Uzoigwe, 2012). Moreso, Kant (1960) asserts that it is only religious community (a social force) that can supply a support structure for morality; the moral law, which is the key to attaining the highest good. In an atmosphere where sound morality prevails, there is no doubt that peace, unity and stable political dispensation which in turn will positively, affect national development shall not

be lacking. If religion is the basis of sound morality, it must attack the materialism of our culture and the misdistribution of the nation's wealth and services that are being managed by the corrupt elements of the society (Gbadegesin & Adeyemi-Adejolu, 2016). However, religion in Nigeria functions as a means for the perpetration of violence, fuelling ethnic consciences and solidarity, acquisition of power and socio- economic gains, massive killings and the wanton destruction of lives and vandalizing of property of those considered infidels or who pay allegiance to other religions. This is traced to the acrimony between the two dominant religious-Islam and Christianity which had often resulted in the struggle for power and supremacy, bitter feud and wanton destruction of lives and properties (Ngele, 2008).

Some religious activities have deterred the spare of political and national development in Nigeria. This supports the assertion of Ajaegbu (2012) who posits that religious terrorism in Nigeria posses a significant threat to national development as it is evident in Northern Nigeria where economic and social activities in some of the highly volatile states (Yobe and Borno) have almost been grounded by the stream of killings, destruction of basic means of livelihood of the people and truncating of foreign and local investments; thereby becoming a cock on the wheel of development of the states and Nigeria at large. The emergence of Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria has affected negatively the political, economic, social and environmental situation of the region and Nigerian economy at large. Since 2011, there were many cases of terrorist attacks which include but not limited to the bombing of UN office in Abuja, Edet House of Force Headquarters in Abuja, Madala attacks, Gwagwalada Park bombing, abduction of the Chibok gils, among so many numerous attacks especially in the North-Eastern Nigeria (Iwuoha, 2014). Religion therefore is a source not only of intolerance, human rights violations and extremist violence but also of non-violent conflict transformation, the defence of human rights, integrity in government and reconciliations and stability in divided societies (Appleby, 1996).

The challenges of politics in national development in Nigeria

Politics no matter how good, will not deliver better and improved public goods in a polity with weak institutions, neo-patrimonial networks, client-patron politics and near absence of political will (Ijere, 2015). This supports the assertion of Achebe (1981) who posits that Nigeria did not have a strong institution that could enable the political system to face challenge of governance in a systematic way. The success of democratic experiment in a country can be attributed to a political party that has a strong mass support and leaders that have interest of the nation at heart. Nigeria had political parties built along religious and leaders that were naïve and selfish. The client-patron commonly known in Nigeria as 'godfather' politics have take the primacy over the formal aspects of politics such as the rule of law, well functioning political parties and a credible electoral system (Oluwatusin & Daisi, 2018). Party politics in Nigeria impede national development and promote political instability. The Nigerian government remains distant from serving the interest of its people. It is instructive to note that the leadership problem in the Nigerian polity was a manifestation of the dysfunctional pattern of the years of military interregnum. The electoral violence has been a culture par excellence from the post- independence era to the present day new democratic experience, which commenced with president Obasanjo's administration till the present administration of Muhammadu Buhari. Apart from using

violence, there is also an absence of existence of free and fair electoral body. All the electoral umpire set up by the leadership of this nation had not been able to conduct a free and fair election. Two forces could be said to be responsible for this ineptitude. Firstly, the appointment of electoral commission chairman had been the prerogative of the president. This therefore leads credence to the charade Nigeria has had all this years, as he (the president) who pays the piper (NEC/FEDECO/NECON/INEC chairman) detects the tune. Secondly, ethnicity factor is another cog in the wheel of progress in terms of the nation achieving a free and fair election where the electorates exercise their constitutional right through the ballot (Ngele, 2008). These arguments are forceable today in Nigeria polity.

The return of multi-party democracy raised hope as to the arrival of the solution of Nigeria's crises of governance- good governance, the rule of law, freedom as well as institutional, infrastructural and national development. However, since 1999 till date, the rule of law remains jeopardize, institutional weakness is still a concern and good governance is still far from reach with impunity and corruption a challenge, and a good number of Nigerians still living below the poverty line. Successive policy focus of the successive democratic regimes; Obasanjo's National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), Yaradua's Seven Point Agenda, Jonathan's Transformation Agenda and Buhari's Fight Against Corruption, Insecurity and Poverty Agenda have delivered little in terms of improving infrastructural development, reducing poverty and unemployment and improving Nigeria's potential of economic growth (Ijere, 2015). Nigeria's enormous human and material resources in an enabling environment that democratic institutions and the rule of law provide, would have yielded more dividends for the country and her citizenry in the last twenty years save for the 'politics of the belly'. It is instructive to note that politics is central to the design and maintenance of institutions and strong institutions essentially explains state formation and state capacity which are important factors in dictating development and poverty reduction in developmental states (Leftwich, 1996). Nigeria today still lacks the necessary focus capable of instilling national development and promotes political stability due to leadership problem in Nigerian polity and weak institutions as well as the pervasive corruption and the attendant political violence that greeted electoral manipulations in a bid to stick to power. In addition, Omodia (2010), Igbodalo (2012); Ogugua and Ogugua (2015) alludes to lack of political will and indecisive pressure and assistance from the global community, corruption, political unrest and spate of insecurity, cross-carpeting by politicians, electoral rigging, politics of intolerance, mobilization of religious sentiments, political assassination and youth restiveness, failure to play by the rules of the game of party politics, impunity, weak measures against accountability, ethnicity of party politics, lack of internal party democracy, lack of clear cut party ideologies, high premium on political power and the attendant intense struggle for political power and marginalized national development for the promotion of the personal interest of the political leaders as the major challenges of national development in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

While there are several theories which might prove appropriate for a discourse of this nature, the classical model theory and the deprivation theory present us with a heuristic tool for interrogating the central issues of this study. The classical model theory

propounded in 1975 by Clifford Gerrtz offers an explanation for the difficulties in nation-building in the new states and on the other hand, how the problem can be overcome. Following Geertz distinguishes between 'primordial ties' which are affinities based on the given of life which seem to flow more than natural or rational choice (blood and kinship ties, tribe, region, religion) and 'Civil ties' which are affinities based on socio-economic grouping (Class, status, part, professional group). Primordial ties by their nature (and especially because being territorial defined, they can be based for asserting the right to national self-determination) tend to be highly resistant to civil order. Civil ties, on the other hand, are usually cross-cutting cleavages with crises- crossing memberships and are therefore, more amenable to civil order. If the nation- state is to survive which presupposes the resolution or a process by which primordial ties will be supplanted by civil ties and ultimately subjected to civil order (Osimen *et al.,* 2013). Applied to Nigeria, the crises for national identity and ethnicity are explained by the prevalence of primordial sentiments. Contrary to the expectations of adherents of the detribalization thesis, increasing modernization has heightened the important of these sentiments. This is the paradox of African development which exacerbates the crises of national identity. In the words of Crawford Young, 1979 cited in Osimen *et al.* (2013), in dialectic symbiosis with the apparent triumph of the nation-state model has been the emergence, reinforcement or diversification of social and political expressions of cultural pluralism (group identities founded upon affinities of ethnicity, religion, language, race and region).

Also, the deprivation theory was propounded in 1969 by Ted Gurr and a lot of analysts on the relationship between religion and violence conflicts in Nigeria has opinioned that religion also become an instrument to protest forms of deprivation, exclusion, alienation, poverty and marginalization, failed development, public corruption, and has been used for a variety of purpose by the powerful elites to advance interests that are necessarily religious. In Nigeria, Muslims believe the required Islamic sharia in all its ratification as a right, in order to practice the dictate of their faith well and fully. On the other hand, the Christians push for a secular constitution amounting to deprivation of their religious right and Christians opine that the adaptation of sharia law within any legal instrument is also tantamount to a violation of their right as non-Muslims (Usman, 1987). Forx (2004) symbolizes the letter position aptly to aggravate the situation is the active involvement of the government in religious affairs. This thus goes contrary to the Nigerian constitution. The contestation between the secular and the religious alternatives is a situation which the state is caught in the middle, generates so much acrimony that can lead to in violence as feed into it. The relationship between state, religion and the management of that relationship is one of the few areas which Nigerian Christians and Muslims actually, believe they have a score to settle (Cinjel & Chujor, 2017). If there must be development in Africa generally and in Nigeria in particular, finding common ground between Muslims and Christians is not simply a matter for polite ecumenical dialogue between selected religious leaders, this because if Muslims and Christians are not at peace as we are presently witnessing there cannot be any meaningful development. Therefore, development in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular is at stake if these two major world religious refuse to cooperate with one another. The above theories are to help understand better the effects of ethnicity, religion and politics on national development.

In line with the literature review, the following objectives and hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- To examine the effect of ethnicity on national development in Nigeria.
- To evaluate the effect of religion on national development in Nigeria.
- To examine the effect of politics on national development in Nigeria.

Hypotheses of the Study:

- H_1: Ethnicity does not have a significant effect on national development in Nigeria.
- H_2: Religions does not have a significant effect on national development in Nigeria.
- H_3: Politics does not have a significant effect on national development in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study assessed the effects of ethnicity, religion and politics on national development in Nigeria. The study adopted cross-sectional research design, hence the choice of data collection across the twenty five (25) Local Government Areas in the state. Non-probabilistic sampling techniques comprising of the purposeful and convenience techniques were used in reaching respondents. The target population was the electorates in the state. According to Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC), the total number of voting population in Delta State was 2470264 in the fourth quarter of 2018 (INEC, 2018). The selection of the sample numbering 400 was determined from the population of 2470264 using the Taro Yamane's formula as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where   N = The population size,

n= Sample size

e = Sampling error

$$n = \frac{2470264}{1 + 2470264 \ (0.05)^2}$$

n = 399.93

n = 400 Appr.

Consequently, a sample size of 400 was used. Electorates in each of the Local Government Areas were randomly selected to ensure fair representative from each Local Government Area that make up the sample size. Collected data was analysed using correlation and regression analysis.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This study examined the effects of ethnicity, religion and politics on national development in Nigeria. To achieve this, four hundred (400) questionnaire were distributed across the twenty five (25) Local Government Areas in Delta State. Out of the 400 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 347 were retrieved, giving us a response rate of 86.75% as shown in the table below.

Table 1 Distribution of Questionnaire and Response Rate

S/N	Local Government Areas	Questionnaire Distribution	Questionnaire Retrieved	Percentage (%)
1	Aniocha North	16	14	3.5
2	Aniocha South	16	14	3.5
3	Bomadi	16	13	3.3
4	Burutu	16	14	3.5
5	Ethiope East	16	14	3.5
6	Ethiope West	16	13	3.3
7	Ika North East	16	14	3.5
8	Ika South	16	14	3.5
9	Isoko North	16	13	3.3
10	Isoko South	16	14	3.5
11	Ndokwa East	16	14	3.3
12	Ndokwa West	16	13	3.8
13	Okpe	16	13	3.3
14	Oshimili North	16	13	3.3
15	Oshimili South	16	14	3.5
16	Patani	16	13	3.3
17	Sapele	16	14	3.5
18	Udu	16	14	3.5
19	Ughelli North	16	15	3.5
20	Ughelli South	16	13	3.3
21	Ukwuani	16	13	3.3
22	Uvwie	16	14	3.5
23	Warri North	16	14	3.5
24	Warri South	16	15	3.8
25	Warri South-West	17	15	3.8
	Total	400	347	86.75

Source: Researchers' fieldwork, 2018.

Table 2 Moderated Regression Analysis Showing the Effects of the Independent Variables on the Dependent Variable

Dependent variable	Independent variables	F	R	R^2	Adj- R^2	Beta	T-Value
National Development	Ethnicity	154.233	.358	.109	.098	-.314	-4.66.3
National Development	Religion	183.064	.514	.088	.082	-.307	-4.310
National Development	Politics	196.137	.563	.043	.037	-.283	-2.985

Source: Field Survey, 2018

In relation to the first hypothesis which states that ethnicity does not have a significant effect on national development in Nigeria, the result showed that the correlation coefficient (0.358) indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between the predictor (ethnicity) and the response variable (national development). The R-squared statistic as explained by the fitted model implies that 10.9% of the total variation in measure of national development is explained by the variations in ethnicity. The ANOVA results for ethnicity as predictor of national development is statistically significant with F-value of 154.233 and p-value of 0.000. When coefficient of determination was adjusted for the degree of freedom it yielded .098 or approximately 9.8%. This indicated that ethnicity

account approximately 9.8% of systematic (change) in national development in Nigeria after adjustment to degree of freedom. The *Beta* coefficient of -.314 indicated that one percent increase in ethnicity result in 31.4(%) percent decrease in national development in Nigeria. The t-statistics of -.4.663 at p-value (sig) of 0.000 obtained in the model for ethnicity which is less than 5% level of significant also indicated that there is significant relationship between ethnicity and national development in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

In relation to the second hypothesis which states that religion does not have a significant effect on national development in Nigeria, the results revealed the correlation coefficient (0.514 indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between religion and national development in Nigeria. The R-squared statistics as explained by the fitted model implies that about 8.8% of the total variation in measure of national development in Nigeria is explained by the variations in religion. The ANOVA results for religion as predictor of national development in Nigeria is statistically significant with F-value of 183.064 and p-value of 0.000. When coefficient of determination was adjusted for the degree of freedom it yielded .082 or approximately 8.2%. This indicated that religion accounted approximately 8.2% of systematic (change) in national development in Nigeria after adjustment to degree of freedom. The *Beta* coefficient of -.307 indicated that one percent increase in religion result in 30.7(%) percent decrease in national development in Nigeria. The t-statistics of -.4.310 at p-value (sig) of 0.000 obtained in the model for religion which is less that 5% level of significant also indicated that there is significant relationship between religion and national development in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

In relation to the third hypothesis which states that politics does not have a significant effect on national development in Nigeria, the results showed that the correlation coefficient (0.563) indicates a positive and statistically significant relationship between the predictor (politics) and the response variable (national development). The R-squared statistics as explained by the fitted model implies that about 4.3% of the total variation in measure of national development in Nigeria is explained by the variations in politics. The ANOVA results for politics as predictor of national development in Nigeria is statistically significant with F-value of 196.137 and p-value of 0.000. When coefficient of determination was adjusted for the degree of freedom it yielded .037 or approximately 3.7%. This indicated that politics account approximately 3.7% of systematic (change) in national development in Nigeria after adjustment to degree of freedom. The *Beta* coefficient of -.283 indicated that one percent increase in politics result in 28.3%) percent decrease in national development in Nigeria. The t-statistics of -.2.985 at p-value (sig) of 0.000 obtained in the model for politics which is less than 5% level of significant also indicated that there is significant relationship between politics and national development in Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

With respect to the first objective of this study, it was found that ethnicity has a significant and negative effect on national development in Nigeria. The findings is in agreement with Ebegbulem (2011); Salawu and Hassan (2011); Vande (2012); Iyanga's (2018); Jiboku and Jiboku (2018) that ethnicity has a strong negative effect on national

development in Nigeria. This is because multi-ethnic states are often prone to conflictual and competitive relationships as different communities struggle to control political power and other economic resources of the state.

Secondly, the results showed that religion do have a significant and negative effect on national development in Nigeria. This supports Ngele (2008) and Ajaegbu (2012), that religion in Nigeria functions as a means for the perpetration of violence, fuelling ethnic consciousness and solidarity, acquisition of political power and socio-economic gains, massive killings and the wanton destruction of lives and vandalizing of property of those considered infidels or who pay allegiance to other religions. Also, religious terrorism in Nigeria posses a significant threat to national development as it is evident in Northern Nigeria where economic and social activities in some of the highly volatile states (Yobe and Borno) have almost been grounded by the stream of killings, destruction of basic means of livelihood of the people and truncating of foreign and local investment.

Thirdly, the results showed that politics do have a significant and negative effect on national development in Nigeria. This findings is in agreement with Ngele (2008); Omodia (2010); Ighodolo (2012); Ijere (2015) that politics has a strong negative effective on national development in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study advanced the argument that ethnicity, religion and politics, as operated in Nigeria has retarded the integration of the country and has continued to impede the attainment of national unity and development, as centrifugal tensions, resource control and self-determination, ethnicity based identity politics and religious cleavages have enveloped national development process of national development in Nigeria has faced challenges from ethnicity, religion and politics. These social dynamics have weakened and hampered the development of institutions necessary for nation building. The study has revealed through its perceived findings that ethnicity, religion and politics have a negative effect on national development in Nigeria. This is sequel to the growth of ethnic chauvinism, ethnic politics, political disorientation, ethnic consciousness, ethnic sentiment, religious bigotry and religious fanaticism in Nigeria. Therefore, if there must be national development in our country, Nigeria must develop a supra-national consciousness and Nigerians must shift their loyalties from their ethnic and regional cum religious groups to a new Nigerian nation. This does not in any way imply a strategy that denies the socio-cultural or ethnic roots of Nigerians, but taking advantage of our multiculturalism, multi-religiosity and multiple identities, all Nigerian must contribute to create one nation which all nationalities (majorities, minorities and sub-minorities alike), can identify with Obasanjo, 2006). Based on the theoretical and empirical findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

If we must exist as a nation, due regard must be given to the plurality of our ethnic nationalities in which case, principles of true federalism must be adhered to. Political power has to be shared satisfactorily among the component ethno-cultural communities and resources for development distributed equitably. The nation needs a purposeful leadership that has a vision of how to place its citizens at the centre of political project without recourse to ethnic chauvinism and sees acquisition of political power as not an end in itself but a means for serving the collective welfare of its people regardless of their ethnic origin.

The leaders of the various religious groups and their membership are urged to embrace dialogue, tolerance and respect for each other and also embrace the tenets of their religion which advocates peaceful co-existence, love and brotherhood of all mankind. The content and dictates of Nigerian constitution should be strictly applied, practiced and utilized as provide. This will go a long way to strengthen and empower the potency of government in the act of governance in Nigeria.

Nigerian should learn how to put the interests of the country first before their parochial, tribal, ethnic or religious interests because the country is for all of us. The leadership of Nigeria headed by Muhammadu Buhari should as a matter of fairness keep to their electoral promise by putting in place electoral reforms that would enable Nigerians have free and fair election that had eluded the country for decades.

References

1. Achebe, C. (1981). *The trouble with Nigeria.* Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
2. Adetiba, T.C., & Rahim, A. (2012). Between ethnicity, nationality and development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability,* 1(3), 656-674.
3. Ajaegbu, O.O. (2012). Religion and national development in Nigeria. *American Academic & Scholarly Research Journal,* 4(4), 1-6.
4. Ajayi, J.O., & Owumi, B. (2013). Ethnic pluralism and internal cohesion in Nigeria. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability,* 2(2), 926-940.
5. Ake, C. (1995). *Socio-political approaches and policies for sustainable development in Africa.* Abuja: African Development Bank.
6. Appadorai, A. (2003). *The substance of politics.* New York: Oxford University Press.
7. Awoniyi, S. (2015). Religious ethnics and development: The Nigerian experience. *Studies in Sociology of Science,* 6(3), 1-7.
8. Ayeni, V. (1988). Of presidentialism and third world political process: Introduction. In V. Ayeni and K. Soremekun (eds.) *Nigeria's second republic.* Lagos: Daily Times publications.
9. Balogun, K.A. (1988). *Religious fanaticism in Nigeria: Problems and solutions.* Ilorin: University of Ilorin Press.
10. Barret, R.S. (2003). Issues and perspectives on religion. In J.K. Olupana and T. Falola (eds.) *Religion and society in Nigeria.* Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
11. Cinjel, N.D., & Chujor, F.O. (2017). Secularism, religion and the rising challenges of national cohesion in Nigeria, 2000-2015. *International Journal of Religious and cultural practice,* 3(1), 1-11.
12. Cohen, A. (1974). *Urban ethnicity.* London: Taristock Publications Ltd.
13. Durkheim, E. (1965). *The elementary forms of religious life.* New York: Free press.
14. Ebegbulem, J.C. (2011). Ethnic politics and conflicts in Nigeria: Theoretical perspective. *Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* 14(3), 76-91.
15. Egwu, S. (2001). The political economy of ethnic and religious conflicts in Nigeria. In F. Okoye (ed.). *Ethnic and religious rights in Nigeria.* Kaduna: Human Right Monitor.
16. Ejizu, C.I. (1988). Ethnics of politics in Nigeria: The Christian perspective. *Bulleting of Ecumenical Theology*, 2(1), 8-17.
17. Fagbadebo, O. (2007). Corruption, governance and political instability in Nigeria. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations, 1(2), 28-37.*
18. Fox, J. (2004). The rise of religious nationalism and conflict: Ethnic conflict and revolutionary wars, 1945-2001. *Journal of Peace Research,* 41(6), 715-731.
19. Gbadegesin, E.O., & Adeyemi-Adejolu, E.A. (2016) Religion and challenges of development in Nigeria in 21ˢᵗ century. *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion,* 24, 23-31.
20. Geertz, C. (1975). *After the revolution: The fate of nationalism in the new states.* London: Hutchinson publishers.

21. Hornby, S. (2000). *Oxford advanced learners dictionary.* New York: Oxford University Press.
22. Ighodolo, A. (2012). Election crisis, liberal democracy and national security in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences,* 10(11), 163-174.
23. Ijere, T.C. (2015). Democracy and development in Nigeria: An appraisal of the People Democratic Party (PDP) sixteen years. *International Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Studies,* 2(9), 1-7.
24. Ilesanmi, A.G. (2014). Ethno-religious crisis and socio-economic development in Nigeria: Issues, challenges and the way forward. *Journal of Policy and Development Studies,* 9(1), 139-148.
25. Iwuoha, C.M.A. (2014). The role of religion in Nigerian sustainable development. *International Journal of Theology and Reformed Tradition,* 6, 163-176.
26. Iyanga, V. (2018). Challenges of nation building in plural societies: The case of the Nigerian nation state. In S.O. Oloruntoba and V. Gumede (eds.). *State and development in post-independent Africa.* Texas: Pan University Press.
27. Jiboku, J.O., & Jiboku, P.A. (2018). Ethnicity and multi-party democracy: The Nigerian experience. *J. Soc. Sci.* 55(1-3), 12-24.
28. Kant, I. (1960). *Religion within the limits of reason alone.* New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
29. Leftwich , A. (1996). *Democracy and development: Theory and practice.* London: Polity press.
30. Lucas, Jr. R.E. (1988). On the mechanics of economic development. *Journal of Monetary Economics, 22, 3-42.*
31. Martinussen, J. (1997). *Society, state and market: A guide to competing theories of development.* London: Zed Books ltd.
32. Ngele, O.K. (2008). Religion, politics and ethnicity: Challenges of pluralism in Nigerian development. *Bassey Andah Journal,* 1, 177-190.
33. Nnoli, O. (1978). *Ethnic politics in Nigeria.* Enugu: Fourth Dimension publishing Co. ltd.
34. Ntalaja, G.N. (2000). *Democracy and development in Africa.* Abuja: African centre for Democratic Governance.
35. Obasanjo, O. (2006). *The challenge of democracy and development in Africa.* Italy: Elvetica Edizioni.
36. Obiefuna, B., & Uzoigwe, A. (2012). Studying religion for sustainable development in Nigeria. *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities,* 13(1), 132-159.
37. Ogbulafor, V. (2000). *How to pull out poverty.* Nigeria: The Guardian, Thursday April, 13.
38. Ogoloma, F.I. (2012). Secularism in Nigeria: An assessment. *AFRREV IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities,*1(3), 63-74.
39. Ogugua, P.I., & Ogugua, I.C. (2015). Religion and politics in Nigerian society: Problems and prospects (a philosophic probe). *Open Journal of Philosophy,* 5, 193-204.
40. Oladosu, A. G.A.S. (2015). Nigeria, national development and the relevance of the Shariah. *Journal of Islam in Nigeria,* 1(1), 141-155.
41. Oluwatusin, A., & Daisi, S.A. (2018). Impact of party politics on decision making in Government: The Nigerian Experience. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 23 (4), 90-98.
42. Omo-Bare, I. (1996). *Nigeria paralysis: Economic and political development in an ethnically-differentiated society.* Chicago: Chicago science Association.
43. Omodia, S.M. (2009). Political parties and party politics in the Nigerian Fourth Republic. *Trakia Journal of Sciences,* 8(3), 65-69.
44. Osaghae, E. (1994). *Ethnicity and its management in Africa: The democratization link*. Lagos: Malt-House Press Ltd.
45. Osimen, G.U., Balogun, A., & Adenegan, T.S. (2013). Ethnicity and identity crisis: Challenge to national integration in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science,* 16(4), 79-86.
46. Salawu, B., Hassan, A.O. (2011). Ethnic politics and its implications for the survival of democracy in Nigeria. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research,* 3(2), 28-33.
47. Seers, D. (1979). The meaning of development. *International Development Review,* 11(4), 63-78.
48. Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. London: Oxford University Press.
49. Shabi, O., & Awe, K. (2001). *Understanding society and social relations.* Lagos: Concept Publications.
50. Sklar, R.L., Onwudiwe, E. & Kew, D. (2006). Nigeria: Completing Obasanjo's legacy. *Journal of Democracy,* 17(3), 100-115.

51. Thompson, A. (2004). *An introduction to African politics.* London: Routledage.
52. Usman, B.Y. (1987). *The manipulation of religion in Nigeria.* Kaduna: Vanguard Press.
53. *Vande, P.T. (2012).* Ethnicity and the politics of state creation in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal,* 8(16), 33-51.
54. Willis, K. (2005). *Theories and practice of development.* Oxon: Routledge publishers.
55. Yesufu, M.L. (2016). The impact of religion on secular state: The Nigerian experience. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae,* 43(1), 36-46.