

Elitism and Nationalism: The Role of Political Elite on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study examines the nexus between political elites and nationalism as well as the role of political elites on nation-building and development in Nigeria. The study utilizes secondary data for overall understanding of the subject matter. Literature were gathered from works of scholars on issues under investigation. The research findings indicates that there is nexus between nationalist feelings and political modernization; nationalist feelings and nation-building; nationalist feelings and development in Nigeria and Africa at large. Nigeria and African continent indeed lacks patriotic political elites that can promote positive changes in political, economic, social and cultural institutions that would guarantee nation-building and development. That the political elites continue to associates primordial politics of ethnicity, religion, regionalism and corruption in governance, political and democratization process of Nigeria. These primitive beliefs and values undermines nation-building and development in Nigeria and most of the African countries. That primordial politics which is the result of lack of nationalist feelings contributed greatly to the collapse of first and second republic as well as current political violence, ethno-religious conflicts and underdevelopment in Nigerian. The study exposed how political elite used primordial politics in achieving their political interests, manipulating their followers and democratization process. The study therefore, recommends that Nigeria's political modernization, nation-building and development requires patriotic political elites which would promote common feelings, love, integration and unity among the citizens. This invariably can be achieving through political will among leaders, nationalist feelings, social reorientation or vigorous enlightenment campaign on nationhood, good governance, socio-cultural cohesion and tolerance, spirit of true federalism, addressing economic predicaments and zero-tolerance for corruption. This would go a long way in promoting nationalism and facilitating nation-building and development in Nigeria and Africa at large.*

Keywords: development, nation-building, nationalism, political elite, political modernization

INTRODUCTION

Nationalism and Political Modernization are the most significant concepts in modern times. Nationalism in modern days is indispensable key to political modernization, nation-building and development. However, the role of political elites in promoting nationalism and nation-

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building cannot be overemphasised. No nation can achieve political modernization and development without nationalism. Nation-building, national development and nationalism are synonymous with one another. Nation-building entails regional, political, social and economic activities that are directed towards national development. National development is quantitative and qualitative dynamic improvement in political, economic, social and cultural activities of a country. political modernization entails positive and dynamic changes in political, economic, social and cultural institutions. Nationalism is nationalist or patriotic feelings on political, economic and socio-cultural activities of a nation. Therefore, Nationalist feeling is a key to political modernization, nation building and development. As rightly observed by Grazia, (2012) cited in Mahajan, (2015) that nationalism combines love and patriotic feeling of country and suspiciousness of foreigners. Therefore, nationalism promote patriotism, unity, love and solidarity. These are the indispensable prerequisites of political modernization and national development. Country like Nigeria with socio-cultural diversity cannot achieve national integration and development without common feeling, love and togetherness. Unfortunately, ethnicity and tribalism continue to undermine nation-building and development in the country. According to R.E. Ward, political modernization is a modern society which characterized by its far-reaching ability to control or influence the physical and social circumstances of its environment and by a value system which is fundamentally optimistic about the desirability and consequences of this ability. This definition shows that value system is important in any political modernization and development. Unfortunately, the value system in Nigeria is characterized by unpatriotic political class who descend political chauvinism and tribalism in to the Nigerian politics which continue undermine national integration and development. The role of political elites in promoting national integration, nation-building, nationalism and development cannot be overemphasized. Mahajan, (2015) argued that political class or elites have important role to play in modernization of a country. The root cause and genesis of development crisis, ethno-religious crisis and political violence in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period could be attributed to unpatriotic political elites in the country. Nkwede and Uwabunkonye (2012) cited in Nkwede, at al (2018) argued that politics and power relation in Nigeria are always determined by few individuals among the Nigeria elites who belong to various regions, ethnic enclaves and sections. And that politics and power relation always directed towards overshadowing of the masses from the political economy of the nation. Therefore, influence of governing/political elites on Nigerian government and politics is incontrovertible. Political elites are those who wield political, economic, social and ethno-religious influence in the country. They have all the necessary resources to promote nationalist feelings and unity among the citizens of Nigeria.

Nigeria as a nation is characterized with primitive beliefs and values of ethnicity, nepotism, favouritism, regionalism and corruption which are integrated into political, administrative and democratization process which perpetuated ethno-religious conflicts, political violence and electoral violence in Nigeria. These continue to impeded nationalist feelings, nation-building, national integration and development. Unfortunately, Nigeria lacks patriotic political elites that would have nationalist feelings which would motivate nation-building and development in the country. Political elites believed in primordial politics and corruption in political and democratic process of Nigeria. This kills political and democratic development in the country.

Conceptual Clarifications

Nationalism

According to Mahajan (2015) nationalism is sentimental political concept directly related to struggle for power, which respects the individuality of states, recognises variations in law and government and segregate group from group on the basis of common core of ideals and beliefs. The common features of nationalism is this definition are sentimental political concept, respect of individuality of states and common ideals and beliefs. However, related to this Kohn cited in Mahajan, (2015) sees nationalism as a state of mind, permeating the larger majority of people and claiming to permeate all its members. It recognises the nation-state, nation-hood, national identity, nationality as the ideal form of political organisation that can lead to development. These form of state of mind, act of consciousness and nation-hood must first assimilated by political class/ruling elites then transmitted from one generation to another. This would really help in nation-building. Nationalism is a condition of mind which characterised with feeling and love which is the product of political, economic, social and intellectual development. Greenfield (1992) suggests that the idea which lies at the core idea of nationalism is the idea of the nation. Smith (1986) defines nation as: Population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members. Nationalism is a collective sentiment or identity, bounding and binding together those individuals who share a sense of large-scale political solidarity aimed at creating, legitimating, or challenging states. It expresses the political identification of citizens with their state, and the policies of governments to reinforce such identification. It is based on the existence of a shared national identity, relying on the presence of historical, cultural, language or religious bonds.

Political Modernization

Political modernization as a concept is refer to as political progress towards liberal democracy, involving accountable government, and opportunities for participation through the exercise of freedom of association and expression (Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics, 2003:415). Johari (2011:162) sees political modernization as a comprehensive phenomenon which brings about radical changes in the field of economic development, mainly in the direction of industrialization and material advancement, changes in the nature and content of the political system and also changes in the social and psychological spheres of life. Welch, cited in Mahajan (2015:195) describes political modernization as process based upon the rational utilization of resources and aimed at the establishment of rational society. Mahajan further argued that political modernization is a process which means a change in all fields, whether social, cultural, psychological, economic or political. Therefore, political modernization entails positive and dynamic changes in political, economic, social and cultural institutions like in modern or western societies.

Political Elite

Conceptually, elites in its general sense, denotes groups of persons who in any society hold positions of eminence or high positions. Those with large elective or appointive office, or indeed whether through influence exercised without office are designated the “political elites”. In politics, the concept, elite, denotes specifically those who exercise preponderant political

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influence in a geo-political entity. Political elites are differently designated as the power elites, the ruling class, political entrepreneurs, the establishment and the governing minority. Elites are divided into two: a governing elite and non-governing elites. In all societies.... two classes of people appear – a class that rules (elites) and a class that is ruled (followers). The first class is political elites, always the less numerals, performs all political functions, monopolise power, and enjoys the advantages of that power brings. Whereas the second, the more numerous class is directed and controlled by the first, in a manner that is now more or less legal, more or less arbitrary and violent (Gaetano Mosca, 1841) cited in (Adrain, 1975). The idea of elite is derived from the view that all societies are divided into two classes. The first class is made up of political elites or the few who govern, while the latter class is made up of the many who are governed. Elites exist in every sector of the society. There are political elites, economic elites, traditional elites, and religious elites, military and educational elites. However, political elites are those that occupied political and administrative positions, they control government machinery, power and resources and they take politics as their major preoccupation. Finally, political elite is a group of people, corporations, political parties and/or any other kind of civil society organization who manage and organize government and all the manifestations of political power: “elites may defined as persons who, by virtue of their strategic locations in large or otherwise pivotal organizations and movements, are able to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially” (Higley, 2008). Therefore, these definitions shows that political elites have all the necessary qualities to promote nationalist feelings and common unity, nation-building, good governance and national development. As rightly observed by Pareto, (1991) that political elites which consisted in a small and selected political group of people with superior personal qualities that governed the “*mass of society*”.

Nation-Building

The Native Nations Initiative (NNI, 2002) describes nation-building as the efforts of native nations to increase their capacities for self-rule, for self-determined, sustainable communities and for economic development. It involves building institutions of self-government that are culturally appropriate to the nation and effective in addressing the nation’s challenges. Nation-building involves developing the nation's capacity to make timely, strategically informed decisions about its affairs as well as implement the decisions that drive comprehensive efforts to rebuild societies that work. It is an all-encompassing concept that involves the stabilization of post-conflict societies, peacebuilding, militarization or otherwise of democratization processes, modernization, the rights of the citizens, the satisfaction of their basic needs, the healthy competition for resources and power, respect for the identities and needs of others nationally and internationally, educational and socio-political development, interdependency and multi-functionality of political structures and systems, and civil society participation. This nation-building approach recognizes that native nations today confront the classic problems of human societies that include building effective, sovereign governments, developing vigorous economies that fit their circumstances and cultures, solving difficult social problems, achieving their own objectives in interaction with other governments, managing their environment and natural resources and balancing change and cultural continuity. Nation-building refers to the set of actions undertaken by national and/ or international actors to established reform and strengthen state institutions where these have seriously been eroded or are missing. The key goals of nation-building include provision of security, establishment of the rule of law,

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effective delivery of basic goods and services through functional state institutions, and generation of political legitimacy for the new) set of state institutions being built (Brinkerhoff, 2017) cited in (Ngwu & Nwokedi, 2018). Nation-building entails process of constructing a shared sense of identity and common destiny, usually in order to overcome ethnic, sectarian or communal differences and to counter alternative sources of identity and loyalty (Ngwu & Nwokedi, 2018). The important features in the foregoing definitions are reform, overcoming ethnic and sectarian differences, sovereign government, functional state institutions and delivery of basic needs and services. These are the essential features of any meaningful development. Nation-building entails process of constructing a shared sense of identity and common destiny, usually in order to overcome ethnic, sectarian or communal differences and to counter alternative sources of identity and loyalty (Ngwu & Nwokedi, 2018). The important features in the foregoing definitions are reform, overcoming ethnic and sectarian differences, sovereign government, functional state institutions and delivery of basic needs and services. These are the essential features of any meaningful development.

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Development

Todaro & Smith (2004) conceived development as the multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, unemployment and the eradication of poverty. Habu (2019, p 36) sees development as process of change in the productive activities of a society, which could lead to qualitative and quantitative improvement in the political, economic and socio-cultural aspects of the people. In other words, development is a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional concept; it goes beyond a mere increase in macro-economic variables or indicators. It involves the re-organization and re-orientation of the economy towards improved standard of living, social justice and greater participation in activities that would transform the socio-economic well-being of the society. These definitions shows the synergy between development and political modernization. The political modernization is positive and dynamic changes in political, economic, social and cultural institutions. There would be no any meaningful development without nationalism. However, nationalism entails common feelings, unity and love. Therefore, there would be no political modernization and development without nationalism or nationhood which signifies unity, love and togetherness. Nigeria as a nation cannot achieve political modernization and national development without nation-building and nationalism or patriotism in the country.

Primordialism and Political Elite: The Adverse Effects of Primordial Politics on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria

Primordial or prebendal politics is a primitive political belief in ethnic, religion and regional identity attached to political and democratic process by political elites in order to achieve their

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selfishness interests and sustain their relevance in power. This distorted nationalism, nation-building and development in Nigeria. The origin of primordialism in Nigerian politics can be traced to British colonial policy of indirect rule which is more appropriately defined as divided and rule tactics. The major aim of the policy was to legitimize British imperial control through the use of indigenous structures of authority. By implications this policy serves not only to preserve but to emphasize the differences between the various parts of the country. The second is so-called amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria in 1914, did not go far as to unified administrative structure. These territories were still administered separately by the British. The various groups were kept apart through the establishment of relatively autonomous and exclusively governed regional governments which reflected the sectional and geo-political divisions of the country. Thirdly, the Richards constitution in 1946 which constitutionally divided the country into three autonomous regions with regional assemblies in North, West and East. The 1954 constitution strengthened the power of the three regions in a clearly federalist direction. By this provision, Nigeria was formally divided into three regions and each region is predominately by unique ethnic and religious identity. These creates and sustain primordialism in the Nigerian political and democratic process instead of national consciousness and identity. Most observers of Nigerian politics, development and nation-building have agreed on the central role of primordialism in Nigeria's political, administrative and democratic process. This prevalence is evident in the electoral process, struggle for power, political parties and behaviour of the Nigerian electorate. The Nigerian political process is determined and controlled by primordial sentiments. This of course destroyed the process of political modernization, patriotism, nation building and development in Nigeria. The Nigerian political elites manipulate primordial politics to secure political power, win election and gain support from their respective communities. These are some of the major reasons for incorporating primordial politics in the Nigerian political process.

Primordialism means the use and manipulation of primordial sentiments of ethnicity, religion, regionalism or sectionalism for political purposes. It is important to note that primordial identities are objective realities in Nigeria, to the extent that people identify themselves as Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Muslim, Christian, or from North, West, East, Middle Belt, South - South. This succeeded in destroying nationalist feeling among political class and citizens of Nigeria. The political elites manipulate primordial sentiments instead nationalist sentiments to promote their class interests because of a number of reasons that favour them. These include: there is low level of literacy and political culture in the society. There is low level of class consciousness particularly among the peasants and workers. There is Massive poverty and unemployment of the masses of the people. There is disorganised nature of the progressive forces and civil society groups in the country. For these reasons, primordialism and bourgeois role have been institutionalized in Nigerian politics.

It was unlikely that the 1951 constitutional framework would encourage greater interaction between the North and South rather it encouraged ethnicity and regionalism in Nigeria's political system as the political parties became increasingly regionally based, which further encouraged a solidification of the North-South dichotomy during the decolonization process from 1952-1960, and intensification of rivalries and mutual distrust aggravated by political class. National cohesion and feelings continues to be elusive. Friction and tension among the

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ethnic, religious and regional groups are recurrent phenomenon which undermined national unity and stability. National unity is essential key to national integration and development. Hence, Nigeria remains a fragile polity with deep seated but latent inter-ethnic suspicions and religious cleavages.

Weak nationalism is commonly blamed for a host of problems in Nigeria, including protracted civil war, chronic political instability, and economic underdevelopment. The general assumption, then, is that attachment to the state defined national identity or territorial nationalism. The expectation that political, economic, and social modernization would inevitably lead to national integration and development and this was a great result of nationalist leaders or political elites. For classic modernization theorists then, the process of modernization would not only promote greater national identification, but would concurrently reduce identification with sub-national, parochial groups. Thus, as pointed out by Connor (1972), the ultimate goal of state-based national unity would require just as much nation-destroying (of ethnic nations) as nation- building (of state-based nations). Coleman (1954) defines the emergent African nation not as a multi-ethnic society, but rather as a post-tribal, post-feudal terminal community which has emerged from the shattering forces of disintegration that characterize modernity" (Coleman, 1954, p. 405). In short, classic modernization theory predicts that modernization will increase national identification at the expense of ethnic group identification. (Robinson, 2013). Consequently, a major challenge on the path of national integration, nationhood and development in Nigeria has been a regenerative breed of selfish and greedy political gladiators who seize power either through the barrel of the gun or through stolen electoral mandates. As they competed for power, prestige and associated benefits, the political elite in a bid to secure the support of members of their own ethnic groups accentuate ethnic differences and demonize members of other ethnic groups.

Nation-building entails regional, political, social and economic activities that are directed towards national development. That nation-building as described by the United Nations (UN) entails essential steps such as: Security which guarantees citizens a safe environment; • Political reform that involves building a civil society, developing strong local and provincial governments, and ensuring freedom of the press and other civil liberties; • Economic reconstruction implying the restoration of economic infrastructure by establishing lines of credit for business, restarting industry, creating jobs especially in the agricultural sector, which accounts for most of the Gross Domestic Product (GDPs) of developing countries; and • Strengthening legal institutions by ensuring functional and independent judiciaries. Rokkan, (1975) nation-building model envisages 4 distinct phases of nation-building through which there is firstly an economic and cultural unification at the elite level followed by the second phase where the masses are integrated into the system through conscriptions into the army, enrolments in compulsory schools and backed by the role of the media as a mid-point between the periphery populations and the central elites within the larger political system. In the third phase, the subject masses get involved in the workings of the political system thereby leading to the fourth stage which requires an expansion of the administrative apparatus of the state to enable the establishment of public welfare services and nationwide policies designed to equalize the economic conditions. (Umoh & Adeyi, 2019).

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There is no doubt that political elites have greater role in developing the spirit of oneness, love and common consciousness which would facilitate political modernization and nation-building. Therefore, there is need to install the spirit of nationalism among the citizens of Nigeria. This can be achieved by a number of some essential factors. As rightly observed by Mahajan (2015) nationalism can be promoted through: 1) Common territory or geographical unity 2) Common historical background common sorrows and sufferings 3) Common interests of people whether economic, political, social or cultural help in uniting them together 4) Common race 5) Common language 6) Common culture 7) Common subjection and suffering by slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism 8) Common political aspiration of democracy and good governance 9) Common government 10) common symbol 11) Common feeling.

In Nigeria nationalist feelings and unity among the ruling and political elites would inevitably create and promote love for the country, sacrifice, national culture, spirit of togetherness, liberation, self-discipline, cultural and economic creativity, spirit of patriotism in the minds of the people, legitimate pride, self-respect and unity of people which would promote political modernization and development in Nigeria. Nationalist feelings and unity are necessary requirements for any meaningful and sustainable development and nation-building. But unfortunately, the political elites of the dominant ethnic groups (Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba) are hardly united, rather they are factionalised by greed, hegemonistic desire or interest and primordial sentiments that have culminated in ethnopolitics, religious intolerance and by extension political instability which undermined political modernization and development in Nigeria. The political elites of Hausa-Fulani of Northern Nigeria threw up and sustained a sort of hegemony that has been continuously aggressively resisted by the political elites of the dominated groups. Expectedly, the basis of this dominance could be substantially located in the military and with prolonged military rule in the country; the northern political elites became the dominant factor for over thirty years of the country's independence existence. The controversial annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election believed to have been won by a southerner, the unmistakable persecution of the southern political elites (most especially the Yoruba ethnic group) by the Abacha junta. All these taking place in an atmosphere of global disdain for military rule as one of the challenges of political modernization and development. And expectedly, extremely heated up the polity that the disintegration of the country then was very imminent and to avoid this the northern political elites, for the first time, deliberately relinquished power to their southern political elite's counterparts a development which brought about the Obasanjo presidency on May 29, 1999 (Kamilu & Alabi, 2017).

The unprogressively dimensions of this inter-elite struggle and agitations lies strictly in their ethno-religious confines. For political elites, ethnicity and religion or regional must be used to advance their narrow and restricted interest and this manifested in ethnic, religious and regional conflicts across the country which undermined political modernization in Nigeria. However, plurality and diversity are not necessarily the cause of ethno-religious violence in Nigeria. But the unpatriotic political elites manipulate ethnic and religion to advance their sectional interest which are fundamentally opposed to the wishes and aspirations of the suffering masses. Without doubt, in an atmosphere of deprivation, unemployment, poverty, and ethno-religious jingoists. Without iota of doubt, this has been undermining the political modernization and development in Nigeria. Johari, (2011) political modernization is a multi-faceted process which

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comprised of several levels: 1) Psychological level, it involves a change in the norms, values, attitudes and orientation of the people. Nigerian political elites lack the spirit of nationalist feelings and sustained primordial politics in political and democratic process. Therefore, the Nigerian political elites must possess spirit of patriotism and self-discipline that would eliminate primitive values and beliefs in politics like ethnicity, regionalism, favouritism, nepotism and egocentrism. This would modernise political and democratic process and facilitate development in Nigeria. There is no doubt that ethnicity, regionalism, nepotism, corruption and egocentrism had contributed greatly to the collapse of first and second republic, Nigerian civil war, military interventions and subsequent electoral and political violence in the country. 2) Intellectual level, it involves a tremendous expansion of man's knowledge about his environment and diffusion of his knowledge throughout society through increased literacy and mass communication. Nigeria is characterized with high level of illiteracy, low level of political culture and consciousness which of course undermined political and democratic development in the country. Increased literacy, political consciousness and culture can be enhanced through extensive mass communication and political mobilization which would facilitate political modernization and development. 3) Demographic level, it implies improvement in standards of living and progress. The present day political and socio-economic predicaments, political conflict, civil unrest, kidnappings, crimes, poverty, unemployment, inequality, infrastructural decay and falling standard of living facing the citizens of Nigeria are caused and worsened by unpatriotic and self-centred political class. Nigerian citizens lack employment, good income, and high standard of living, good schools, quality health care facilities, feeder roads, affordable housing, portable water and electricity supply. It is the ruling class who run Nigeria's affairs that have kept the common man squalid, wretched and in hell, despite the nation's enormous resources. The political elites must imbibe the spirit of nationalist feelings which would guarantee good governance and improve standard of living of the citizens. 4) Social level, it has the tendency to replace the focus of individual's loyalty to state and respect for the society. The Nigerian citizens are more loyal to their respective ethnic and religious groups than state. 5) Economic level, it involves the improvement of economic activity such as industry, commerce, finance and agricultural development to achieve economic growth. According to Greenfield (1991) such "a specific sentiment of solidarity may be linked to memories of a common political destiny." But such boundedness is not one that is historically given; instead such cohesion must be and has been actively constructed by both political class and civil society. It may then be solidified as a fundamental political belief, inspiring and inspired by engagement with state authority. For nationalism as a particular collective sentiment and related discourse to become a historical force, it must so refer to a state as an existing structure or potential object of engagement.

Political modernization is political transformation which occurred in the European countries in modern day and recurred in other countries. It can also take place in Nigeria and the key element to that is modern nationalism. As rightly observed by Pye, (1966) cited in Johari, (2011) political transformation comprised: 1) General attitude towards equality that allows equality of opportunity to participate in politics and compete for government office. 2) Capacity of a political system to formulate policies and have them carried out. 3) Differentiation and specialisation of political functions, though not at the expense of their overall integration. 4) Secularisation of the political process- the separation of politics from

religious and other primitive influences. This has to do with free from primordial politics and modernity in political, economic and social activities of Nigeria. Development has been viewed as multi-dimensional, referring to positive and dynamic changes which affect the social, political, economic and cultural spheres of society. As rightly, observed by (Azeez, 2005) cited in Kamilu & Alabi, (2017) development encompassed higher levels of urbanization, widespread literacy, relatively high per capital income, geographical and social mobility, a high degree of commercialization and industrialization, an extensive mass communication network and wide spread participation in modern social and economic process. This shows the synergy between political modernization with nationalism and development. However, there will be no any meaningful development in a country like Nigeria without effective application of modernity in political, economic, social and cultural activities. These are also the important elements of both national development, political modernization and nation-building.

Ethnicity and Nationalism: The Adverse Effects of Elites Ethnopolitics on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria

Ethnicity is a product of lack of nationalist feelings and sentiments among the political elites of Nigeria. Ethnicity is considered to be shared characteristics such as culture, language, religion, and traditions, which contribute to a person or group's identity. Ethnicity has been described as residing in: the belief by members of a social group that they are culturally distinctive and different to outsiders; their willingness to find symbolic markers of that difference (food habits, religion, forms of dress, language) and to emphasise their significance; and their willingness to organise relationships with outsiders so that a kind of 'group boundary' is preserved and reproduced Eade, (1996) cited in (NOUN, 2017) This shows that ethnicity is not necessarily genetic.

Smith (1986) identifies six criteria for the formation of the ethnic group. They are: 1. Ethnic group must have a name in order to developed collective identity. 2. The people in the ethnic group must believe in a common ancestry. 3. Members of the ethnic group must share myths (common historical memories). 4. An ethnic group must feel an attachment to a specific territory. 5. Ethnic group must share same culture that is based on language, religion, traditions, customs, laws, architecture, institutions etc. 6. Ethnic group must be aware of their ethnicity. In other words, they must have a sense of their common ethnics.

Given the summary of all these points, Smith (1986) sees ethnic community as: A named human population with a myth of common ancestry, shared memories and cultural elements, a link with an historic territory or homeland and a measure of solidarity. Smith (1986) stresses the importance of ethnicity by arguing that ethnicity is anything but primordial for the cohesion and self-awareness of that community's membership. According to Salawu (2010, p.348) the primary reason for the increasing ethnic conflict in Nigeria has to do with the accusation and allegation of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization of the state or political class against its people. The increasing marginalization and political class instigation resulted to the emergence of the Odua People's Congress (OPC), a socio-cultural militant group of Yoruba people. Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), a socio-cultural group of Igbo people. The movement for the Emancipation of the people of Niger-Delta (MEND), a socio-cultural group of south-

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south people. These groups were emanated from respective ethnic groups and champion the cause of ethnic interest at expense of national interest. They have primitive and primordial belief which destroyed nation-building and development. There is no doubt the political class in Nigeria created these groups and encourages oppression, domination, marginalization and discrimination in order to sustain political power and achieve their selfish interest. Ethnicity as primitive political belief promotes ethno-religious conflicts, constitutional review, political restructuring, and devolution of power, fiscal and true federalism with revenue sharing, resource control and sharing formula, public service reforms, and rotational presidency and above all split of the country. Right from First Republic to date ethnicity had succeeded in destroying nationalist feeling, nation-building and development in Nigeria.

Nigeria's years of civil/democratic rule has been dotted with incessant ethno-nationalist agitation which have often threatened the peace, tranquillity, stability and development of the Nigerian nationhood and orderly conduct of public and private activities in the country. As rightly observed by (Mazrui, 1982) cited in (Ngwu & Nwokedi, 2019) a basic dialectic to understand in Africa is that while the greatest friend of African nationalism is race-consciousness, the greatest enemy of African nationhood is ethnic-consciousness. Therefore, ethnic-consciousness is one of the major challenges of nationhood in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. And for Africa and Nigeria indeed to achieve nationalism and political modernization black race-consciousness must be promoted. Unfortunately, Nigeria's national identity crisis is commonly referred to as the "national question" that is, the problem of "becoming national" in an ethnically, religiously and regionally fragmented state. As rightly observed by (Kamilu & Alabi, 2017) that corruption, nepotism, ethnic politics and regionalism became serious issues in the country's evolutionary and development process. In fact, from all indications it was apparent that the then political elites were not in any way ready for the challenges of national leadership and nation-building, and colonial heritage of divide-and-rule policy which has been transformed into regional politics in post-independence era created a strong basis for primordial politics obstacle to nation-building and development in Nigeria. Instead the Nigerian political elites to extensively engage themselves in promoting nationalist feelings among the citizens, they involved extensively in promoting ethnicity which would not help the country in achieving nation-building and development.

Religious Politics and Nationalism: The Adverse Effects of Elites Religionopolitics on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria

Smith and Hackett (2012) define religion as 'a belief in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one that is home to spiritual beings with effective powers over the physical world'. According to Karl Max, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature... a protest against real suffering... it is the opium of the people... the illusory sun which revolves around man for as long as he does not evolve around himself." Durkheim (2001), "Religion usually has to do with man's relationship to the unseen world, to the world of spirits, demons, and gods. A second element common to all religions is the term salvation. As observed by Marx "religion is an opium to masses" religion is used and manipulated by political elites to deceive and exploit masses. Religion in an instrument of manipulation and domination. As rightly observed by (Kamilu & Alabi, 2017) the religious violence across the country and mostly in the northern part of the country is as a result of politicisation of religion by unpatriotic

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political elite who manipulate this highly emotive phenomenon for their own aggrandizement and annexationist political goals. While religion should be a personal issue between an individual and his creator, making it a state issue, using state resources to execute religious matters, attempting to impose a religion on state and using it as a campaign issue in an election all negate what a religion stands for: relating to the creator, loving one's neighbours and promoting peaceful co-existing in the community. Nigeria is a heterogeneous and multi-religious society and its secularity must be promoted at all cost; and the less the political elites/government involves itself in religious issues the better for the country's national development, nation-building, nationalism, political modernization and peaceful co-existence. Religion has indeed become a political issue in Nigeria (especially Christianity and Islam).

It was deeply involved in governance, national question, political and democratic process. Public holidays are declared during Christian and Islamic festivals. Government is involved in the sponsoring of pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Saudi Arabia with creation of two commission. Worshipping centres, pastors, reverend fathers, Apostles, sheiks, mallams, and imams were deeply incorporated into the governance, political and democratization process of Nigeria. This promoted primordial politics which undermined nation-building and development. Undoubtedly, the politicians and political elites are ill-equipped to handle religious matters. They basically concerned with the quest of for power, its uses and selfish gains from it. In their dubious search for legitimacy and acceptance which they could not get by meeting the basic needs of people they resort to sentimental religious issues. This is at best diversionary and immoral. Politics is about governing in the interest of the people – by providing sound education, health, employment, housing facility, electricity, potable water and feeder roads. These are essential that would promote nation-building and development and in turn facilitate national unity and integration in Nigeria. Instead the Nigerian political elites to extensively engage themselves in promoting nationalist feelings among the citizens, they involved extensively in promoting religious politics which would not help the country in achieving nation-building and development.

Regionalism and Nationalism: The Adverse Effects of Elites Region politics on Nation-Building and Development in Nigeria

Regionalism and regional politics had continued to undermined nationalist feelings, nation-building, political modernization and development in Nigeria. It has been incorporated into the Nigerian politics not for the sake of development but for the sake of primordial belief. As rightly observed by (Abutudu, 2018) cited in (Ngwu & Nwokedi, 2019) that regional struggle is reflected in the agitations, by different regional groups, for what they consider important to them as members of the Nigerian state. For instance, the debate over the greater control of Nigeria's oil wealth by the ethnic groups in the Niger Delta has been advance most forcefully by those from the south-south region while the issue of rotational presidency and true federalism have been the demands of the south-east and south-west regions respectively even as some groups of the north remain reluctant in supporting any of these demands. This has categorically violated the process of achieving nationalist feelings, nation-building and development. The three regions were not made to think as one and to embrace the same identity of nationalism in the colonial period and considerable mistrust became rife among them. Indeed, the creation of the Mid-Western region in the West without simultaneously doing so in the North and East was a deliberate move by the

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Northern and Eastern political elites to weaken the aspirations of the Yoruba by the Igbo and the Hausa-Fulani political elites. Without doubt, one missing element in the country during this period was national unity, national feelings and the emergence of the concept of the Nigerian man was a fleeting mirage, especially in the face of constant assault by the political elites of ethnicity, minority repression, corruption, election rigging, regionalism and widespread abuse of power (Kamilu & Alabi, 2017). There is no doubt the political elites continue to perpetuated and exacerbated ethnopoltics, religionopolitics and regionopolitics in the Nigeria's process of nation-building, political modernity and national development. It was unlikely that the 1951 constitutional framework would encourage greater interaction between the North and South rather it encouraged ethnicity and regionalism in Nigeria's political system as the political parties became increasingly regionally based, which further encouraged a solidification of the North-South dichotomy during the decolonization process from 1952-1960, and intensification of rivalries and mutual distrust. This was an evidence of the structural weakness and manifest deficiencies of the new constitution which was unable to address the problem of national feelings and consciousness in an evolving nation-state like Nigeria. This perpetuated regionalism in the political and democratic process which undermined national development and nation-building in Nigeria. National cohesion continues to be elusive. Friction and tension among the ethnic and regional groups are recurrent phenomenon. The country is also permanently assailed by curious and depressing primordial and regional crises triggered by unpatriotic political elites. Instead the Nigerian political elites to extensively engage themselves in promoting nationalist feelings among the citizens, they involved extensively in promoting regional politics which would not help the country in achieving nation-building and development.

Pervasive Corruption: Endangered Political Modernization and Nation-Building

Corruption within the Nigerian political and socio-economic landscape is endemic and continues to hinder the performance of the key sectors of the economy. It resonates in the failure to adequately deliver on governance policies cognizant of the diverse groups and interests that make up the polity. Corruption has become one of the primordial politics or primitive beliefs of looting public treasury, illegal diversion of government resources, abuse of power and authority, adulteration of contacts, money laundry and bribery which hindered nation-building and development. Primordial politics of corruption led to poor execution of government capital and development projects, budget deficit, foreign debt crisis, poverty, unemployment, lawlessness, immorality and bad governance in Nigeria. It has become a habit of political elites to get into the government and politics in order to loot and make excess money. However, nepotism, favouritism and primordialism are the result of corrupt tendencies in Nigeria. Corruption is highly motivated by political elite's greediness, selfishness and private personal interest of excess accumulation of wealth. Corruption by annexationist political elites is indeed a fundamental problem that has for long been confronting nation-building and development in Nigeria. Corruption resonates in the failure to adequately deliver on governance policies cognizant of the diverse groups and interests that make up the polity. Agitations and protests by the minority groups are for development or protests against the drive of the political class for personal gain, the lack of a genuine commitment to serve the people and the failure of their representatives in the central and state legislatures to deliver on their promises to them. (Umoh & Adeyi, 2019). Corruption is unpatriotic and primitive method of accumulating wealth in Nigeria. Invariably, corruption is one of the factors which continue to

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undermine political modernization and development in Nigeria. It had impeded the social, cultural, economic and political development of Nigeria through abuse of power and authority, illegal diversion of public funds, looting of public treasury, and deviation from normal and legal administrative procedures, embezzlement, and adulteration of contracts, bribery, and money laundry. As rightly observed by Chinua Achebe, (1983) cited in Babalola, (2020) that as much as 60% of Nigeria's wealth was regularly consumed by corruption and this was enough to paralysed development, nation-building and nationalism in Nigeria. This can be supported by the below table presentation.

Table 1: Nigeria's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 1998 - 2014

Year	No of Countries Surveyed	Country Rank	CPI Score (out of 10)
1998	85	81	1.9
1999	99	98	1.6
2000	90	90	1.2
2001	91	90	1.0
2002	102	101	1.6
2003	133	132	1.4
2004	145	144	1.6
2005	158	152	1.9
2006	163	142	2.2
2007	179	147	2.2
2008	180	121	2.7
2009	180	130	2.5
2010	178	134	2.4
2011	183	143	2.4
2012	176	139	2.7
2013	177	144	2.5
2014	175	136	2.7

Source: Transparency International Corruption Perception Index cited in Babalola, 2020

This table shows the nature and character of Nigeria as the most corrupt practice in the world. Corruption has become the primordial politics in political, economic, social and cultural institutions of Nigeria. Corruption has become order of the day in administrative and democratization process which impeded the process of nation-building and national development. Instead the Nigerian political elites to extensively engage themselves in promoting nationalist feelings among the citizens, they involved extensively in promoting corrupt practices which would not help the country in achieving nation-building and development.

Recommendations

Nation-building in Nigeria must incorporate the actions, activities and commitment of reoriented and responsible citizens must be maintained. Civil society integration and citizen reorientation encompassing law, order, patriotism, loyalty and commitment to governance

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processes play a key role in ensuring the success of government efforts and the delivery of social services and governance dividends.

Political elites must unanimously engage in promoting common feelings, unity, love and togetherness in governance, political and democratic process of Nigeria. This would go a long way in eliminating primordial politics and promote nation-building and sustainable development.

A strong commitment should be made to end primordialism in Nigerian politics through building patriotic leaders with a national outlook or consciousness, establishment of a just and egalitarian social order, establishment of a free democratic society which enables active participation in the country's political processes and of course the need of greater national consciousness by leaders or political elites and followers alike.

Application of a true federalism, a true federalism in Nigeria would foster relative political and economic autonomy, substantial cultural and ethno-religious affinities; promote a patriotic and committed ruling class that possess the capability and drive to adequately manage the contradictions and national question arising from the management of a diverse and spread common unity and feelings that would facilitate nation-building and development in Nigeria. Nigeria fragile state had a great role to play in the resolution of contradictions of primordialism, the role of the various civil society organizations and cultural organizations is no less important in bringing about socio-political harmony and unity in the country; and public enlightenment, increasing level of awareness and political consciousness of nationalist feelings and unity which would guarantee and sustain nation-building and political development in Nigeria. Ethnic differences and sectional interest should not be seen as something that cannot be handled rather, efforts should be made to transcend them, and to harness and incorporate their virtues in the march to stable and integrated nationhood. Nigerians should be made to stress more of those things that unite than those things that separate them. They should see the Nigerian nation as the rope that ties up their common destiny.

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