POLITICS OF IDENTITY AND ITS CHALLENGES FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

Shuaib Olarewaju Moyosore
Olarewaju.shuaib@fulokoja.edu.ng
Department of Political Science, Federal University Lokoja

Abstract

The study attempts to analyze the challenges identity politics pose to democratic governance and Nigeria's attempt at national development. The paper contends that a better understanding of the interplays militating against the country's quest for democratic sustenance is discernable from manipulation of the country's diversity by the political elites through varied means. To this end, the conspiracy theory was adopted for this article. The research methodology consists of analysis and synthesis of secondary sources such as diverse literatures as well as primary source derived from discussions with some Nigerians. The analysis reveals that the actions and inactions of the leadership decipher the conspiratorial attempt of the political elites to gain vantage position or sustain their existing leadership positions. The paper recommends adherence to the rule of law, moral uprightness and selflessness as the cure for these challenges.

Keywords: democratic governance, identity politics, and conspiracy

Introduction

The euphoria of Nigeria's return to democratic rule in 1999 lies in the expectation that a democratic rule guarantees freedom and could also serve as the impetus for accelerated development. The enthusiasm is further reinforced by the hope about the 'dividends of democracy'. Despite being the longest in the nation's democratic history, its survival inspired optimism about Nigeria's democratic promise and raised the hope for a better and prosperous socio-economic wellbeing for Nigerians if the resources and diversity of the country are managed properly.

Available records showed that the first republic, amongst other reasons, collapsed because the polity was enmeshed in ethnic rivalry among the diverse ethnic groups. The collapse of the second and third republics could not be linked to ethnic politics. For instance, the acclaimed and undeclared winner of the June 12, 1993 Presidential elections defeated his opponent who was a northerner in some states in the north. But the relative long period of democratic rule since 1999 is now being threatened by ethnic politics/rivalry.

The ugly side of the 4th republic lies in the challenges surrounding the unresolved national question which has a pestering issue without an acceptable mechanism for resolving it and attain a sustainable polity by successive governments the country has had since independence. Suberu (2006) observed that it has continued to be a herculean task because successive governments in the country were unable to create an equitable accommodation, inclusion and integration of the diverse elements that make up the Nigerian state. This challenge is

compounded by Boko Haram (BH) insurgency, indigene–settler imbroglio in Plateau, Taraba and Osun states, Farmers-herders crises in Benue state and some other states, secessionist agitation in the south east, south west, ethnic revivalist and resource control movements in the Niger delta, Offa and Erin-ile communal clashes, vociferous call for power rotation among others. Thus democratic practice "remains a work in progress, contending with onerous task of nation building, striving to entrench strict adherence to the rule of law so as to institutionalize an accountable, transparent and popular leadership that will win peoples support and trust (Suberu, 2016, p. xix) across ethnic lines.

The complexities of the challenges confronting the country and the mounting expectations from the leadership have consequently reduced the country to social, political, and economic turmoil (Saliu et. al, 2018). This precarious situation does not only threaten democratic governance, it also serves as an impediment to sustainable development. The conclusion above is derived from the fact that the country, is at crossroads, has multiplicity of security pathologies, has self-centred leadership, operates a central level dominated federal practice with a distorted distribution of public offices, injustices in the sharing of accruable revenues (Nwolise, 2018), flaw and contestable election outcome, manipulation of diversity for fulfilling or protecting clandestine interests just to mention a few. The present perilous state of affair in Nigeria has compelled writers to describe the country as a failing state since it is difficult not to say "it is not a weak state" (Dunmoye,

Wukari International Studies Journal, Vol.6, No.2, 2022

2020, p. 40). Saleh's perusal of the challenges of identity politics emphasis the usefulness of identity politics in a democratic setting and its implications without demonstrating how it is manipulated to achieve predetermined goal. This informed why this article is anchored on the conspiracy theory for its analysis.

The introduction is followed by conceptual discourse. The third section deals with theoretical framework. This is followed by the implications of identity politics on democratic governance while recommendations occupy the fifth section.

2. Conceptual Discourse

For a better appreciation of this discourse, it is necessary to describe these concepts; democracy and identity politics, with a view to provide contextual meanings for them for a better appreciation of this discourse.

Democracy

It is one of the widely contested concepts in contemporary social sciences discourse. This conclusion is based on the fact that, it is manifestly vague and flexible, hence, its varied usage and contentious descriptions (Popoola, 2007). Democracy has become the most fashionable form of governance in all societies of the world today. It is now the most recognized moral and legitimate way through which a society can be administered (Ogundiya, 2010). The discussion is not about which political system is appropriate but rather when a society will become a democratic state. Thence, there is always a call for its practice where it is non-democracy. The priority where it is practiced is the call for its consolidation or sustenance. It is

not surprising that the concept of democracy has been described differently by scholars who one may say their environment and circumstance determine their perception of what it means and entails. Apart from the fact that it is also devoid of an acceptance definition, democracy also has variants. Stressing it further, Saleh (2008) inferred that the preponderance of modern city states and complex states had rendered the earlier Greek definition to be an abstract and impracticable in the modern democracies.

The foundation of liberal democratic theory can be traced to the works of Thomas Hobbes (1581-679), John Locke (1632-1704), French philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), John Stuart Mill (1806-1872), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) amongst others. They had writings on individual natural rights and freedom which the State is empowered to protect and safeguard against arbitrariness in the exercise of State power and authority. Its central idea is espoused under the individual liberty associated with and exercised in a free and stable democratic environment. This describes democracy in the modern day form.

Democratic order is viewed as the same as democratic rule/governance. Hence, the paper opined that all institutions, groups, organization, bodies and individuals recognized by law must act within the dictates of the law and as such the constitution must be used to check their excesses. For instance, the fundamental human rights which recognize the existence of individuals also placed some limits on those rights. Leveraging on this, the paper observes that a political system

with a dictum of democratic order should be a system where the law is abided with and applied to deal with any perceived infraction/contravention. So, democratic order is taken from the purview of "the capacity of the polity to nurture and sustain democratic values" (Ojo, 2006a, p. 8) in such a way that democratic ideals become the norms, customs and traditional way of life of the people.

In today's world, democracy, apart from political colouration, is now perceived in economic and social aspects of man's life. Its political dimension takes the form of system of governance where individual liberty and groups or minorities rights are guaranteed through majority rules. Democracy in its social form accommodates group differences and forbids discrimination in whatever degree. Taking into cognizance the implication of the wider gaps between the rich and the poor described its economic frame. These slogans; freedom from hunger, promotion of social security and availability of basic infrastructures ('dividends of democracy' in Nigerian parlance) constitute an expansion of its economic benefits.

David Held (1993) description of democracy falls into three categories. The Athenian democracy; the liberal democracy described as the government by the governed and the Marxian model fashioned from or along class analysis. Davies (2004) position was that apart from being recognized as the best form of government, representative democracy is meaningless without the sovereignty of the people. To this end, a democratic society should posses these four elements; equality, sovereignty to the people, respect for human life, rule

of law and liberty of individuals. In Larry Diamond's (1988) view, democracy should encapsulate free, fair and extensive competition among individuals and organized groups vying for governmental powers, respect for peoples civil and political rights. Though, some of these powers are now being delegated to elected representative either through direct or indirect elections while the people enjoy what is now tagged as 'fundamental rights'.

Vanhanen's (1997) definition is anchored on three (3) core themes namely; moral, economic and political. The gamut about democratic consolidation rests on protecting individual and minorities' rights. That is, the freedom or liberty of the citizens must only be incorporated into a written constitution but must be guaranteed (Plattner, 2010). This also provides fora limited government constrained by the rule of law. Thence, talking about democracy in today's world is not simply about rule by the people, but of liberal or constitutional democracy. In this connection therefore, democracy is taking to be a hybrid regime which, on one hand upholds people's sovereignty while promoting popular rule and also limits the day-to-day rule of the majority so as not to infringe upon the rights of individuals or minorities (Plattner, 2010). An infringement with this democratic ethos accounts for Nigeria's present predicament in relation to minorities' agitations. These problems have been captured by Alabi (2014), who reasoned that economic marginalization of minorities by the dominant ethnic groups can be described as internal imperialism and therefore called for increased access for the minorities in the

Wukari International Studies Journal, Vol.6, No.2, 2022

political space. The belief is that democracy should be able to address the issue based on its object of accommodation of diverse interests in the course of attaining a prosperous nation.

The foregoing attest to the fact that sustaining democracy is a function of several factors and that each of the factors has complementary significance for ensuring prospect of democratic culture.

Identity Politics

It is a distinctiveness of an individual or group from the rest of the individual or group in a given society. It has a variety of dimensions; ethnic, political, economic as well as religious dimension. It becomes popularized when an individual or a group feels he or the group is marginalized, cheated, suppressed or subjugated within a given boundary. It is observed that relative deprivation can be dealt with if people present their claims as a group (Odu and Orungbami, 2019). Unsurprisingly, Cohen described identity politics as a political grouping with a strong appeal for recognition and used as a weapon in the struggle over new strategic position in a modern world (Azeez, 2004a). In an attempt to be free or strive for public recognition of their group identity, recourse to ethnic or religious identity becomes significant so as to get sympathy, support and accommodation from other groups seeing as oppressor or domineering group.

In a related tone, Osaghae (1992), argued that ethnicity is a political behaviour usually exhibited among ethnic groups to further individual and groups interests while competing with others for State resources, attention and/or

benefits (Azeez, 2004a). This indicates a political economy dimension. This has to be so because as these groups cohabit in the same state or economic area, "they consider themselves biologically, culturally, linguistically or socially distinct from each other and most often view their relation in actual or potentially antagonistic terms" (Cox, 1970). While it may be appropriate to state that the acrimony is part of what democracy allows and caters for, the dimension it is taken presently shows a threat to democratic consolidation and continued existence of Nigeria's corporate life. Identity linkage to politics relates to its uses to actualize who gets what, when and how and to guarantee a favourable authoritative allocation of the state's resources one's group

Its expression in the form of anger could be a response to marginalization, neglect, lopsided in appointment, provision of basic or public infrastructures and et cetera.

3. Theoretical Framework

The tradition in the social science research is to carry out investigation under the auspices of a particular framework. Theoretical framework helps to" narrow the range of facts to be studied" (Abegunde, 2010, p. 175) and situate it within a confine for dissecting and allows readers to have a better grasp of the issue under review/discussion. In view of the above, this paper is anchored on the Conspiracy theory of analysis.

The basic assumptions of the theory are similar to that of the frustration and aggression theory. The theory sees occurrence of events, be it political, social or historical as secret and often a deceptive plot by some powerful elites to

advance their alliances or interests. The political elites in this category fall into the group, Ichima (2017), refer to as political entreprenuers. Their actions may be presented as an overt activity or a natural occurrence. Mintz (1980) has equally observed that political and economic leaders have always been the cause of most death and misery befallen mankind.

These self centred gladiators or leaders conspired with other demagogues to identifying issues that impede human development or hinders the country's economic and political fortunes and thereafter blame the elected and appointed officials as the brain behind the problems. To this end, economic, political, social and religious challenges are presented as the consequence(s) of the handiwork of the managers of the state. Consequently, they try to mobilize the populace against the existing leadership. Whereas, the ruling leadership and their collaborators (conspirators) usually employ human and material resources in defense of the State to advance elongation for the incumbents they (the conspirators) are pleased with. This synthetically, shows that "Nigerian political elites seek and retain political power as a means and condition to further their relevance in governance" (Abegunde, 2008, p. 121). In the light of the above, it is not ou of fact to state that political elites do exploit our diversity to attain and retain selfish and group/sectional benefits. In a similar vein, Odu and Orungbami (2019) aver that political class use religion and ethnicity to advance their self advancing political interests.

Based on the foregoing, one can conclude that struggle

for power in most developing countries, including Nigeria, is a function of the perception of the state as a means of production and exercising economic power as well as the retention of such power (Ezeani, 2020). In this connection, therefore, politicians place high premium on political power and sees all means as legitimate as long as it guarantees electoral successes. In view of its impotence, as in the case of Nigeria, resort to ethnic dimension for its advantages becomes a means for ascension to or retention of political power. And where it has not yielded the desired outcome, resort to violence takes the centre stage. Thence, competition for political power becomes warfare, employing deceit, fabrication of issues, propane, inducement and even violence to obtain and or retain power. In an attempt to further personal interests, deployment of military and Para-military forces becomes imperative to attain and sustain "personal and group political and administrative purposes" (Nnoli, 2006) camouflaging such as national security or interest (cited in Ezeani, 2020).

4. Implications Identity politics pose to Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria

The diversity of interests and opinions make conflict inevitable and a permanent feature in human social relations. The causes of conflict between and among individual and groups could stem from the need to satisfy or fulfil economic, political, social and religious motives. The deployment of identity sentiment by the Nigerian political elites in the pursuit of political advantages is viewed from selfish attempt by individuals and groups for recognition and to increase their

share of the available resources.

Nigeria's experience with respect to identity politics has taken different dimensions. With specific reference to Abegunde (2008), it has three interrelated dimensions. The crisis stage occurs when there is divergent needs and opinion on how state resources are to be allocated among the various interests. The conflict form has to do with the disagreement, conflicting interests and claims become irreconcilable among the competing groups. And, the inability to manage these competing interests leads to violence stage and the last resort for attention. The violence stage has taken the centre stage in the fourth republic and continued to pose as a serious challenge to Nigeria's quest for democratic sustenance and sustainable development

The manifestation of identity politics became visible during the colonial period such that political parties formed during this period were regional based parties and drew supporters from their regions. While the Northern People's Congress (NPC) held sway in the north, Action Group (AG) controls the Western and Eastern had National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). The tempo continued after independence but had some form of fragile alliances between and among these parties. Alliance became inevitable when none of the parties could satisfy constitutional requirements so to able to form government. The alliance between NPC and NCNC culminated in the formation of government by NPC in 1960. The NPC also formed coalition with Chief Ladoke Akintola led party in the west so as to dislodge and weaken AG

supremacy in the western region. Despite this, disintegration continued to stare Nigeria on the face. This has been succinctly captured by Fashagba (2021) who summarily concludes that the fragile alliances by these parties could not help to "mitigate the negative effect of the dis-integrative party practice. Instead of unity in diversity, the ethnicization of party formation and membership has often further fragmentation, sectionalization and polarization among the groups" (p. 10).

The rivalry among the ethnic groups was responsible for the cancellation of the 1962 population census while the Prime Minister ordered for another census in 1963. The census figures of that population recount were released in Fecruary, 1964 and the population of the country was put at 55,653,821. Northern Region had 29,777,986; Eastern Region 12,388,646; Western Region 10,278,500; Mid-Western Region 2,533,337; and Lagos 675,352 (Gberevbie and Oni, 2021). The Nigerian civil war which lasted for 30 months (July, 1967-January, 1970) claimed 500,000 to 2million lives (Ogbanje, 2020), occurred during military rule was occasioned by inter-ethnic rivalry which had infected the members of the armed forces.

Although, there was no alliance for formation of government since the country adopted a presidential system in the aborted 2nd Republic, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) had to go into alliance on some national issues, there still exist 'a game of suspicion' between the Hausa/Fulani and the Igbos. Government formation of two political parties in the aborted third republic accounted for the absence of ethnic-based political parties and

Wukari International Studies Journal, Vol.6, No.2, 2022

raised the possibility of having political parties with national outlook in membership and operation. That high hope is heightened in the (current) fourth Republic. Though, there exist some parties with regional based parties but their sustainability in relation to electoral success has been dampened. Some of these parties were; Action Congress which later became Action Congress of Nigeria in the south west, All Progressive Grand Alliance in the south east.

It is observed that the mode of operation has taken new dimension. On one hand was forming a working relationship (by the elites) with the intent to forge a common ground for electoral success. The elites on the other divide would call on their people to vote for a particular candidate and party so that their ethnic group(s) can belong to the mainstream (ruling) party. A case in point was the call by the (then) Governor of Imo state, Chief Rochas Okorocha, calling on the Igbos to team up with his party, the All Peoples Congress (APC). The Governors of Ebonyi and Cross River states that dumped the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) recently, also created an impression that they want their people to belong to the ruling party so as not to be sidelined. On the other, is the claim that their group (ethnic or religious) is being marginalized and would therefore call on their people to vote candidate or party that would consider their group for appointment and provision of public services or infrastructures.

The National President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Bishop Wale Oke with reference to a statement signed by the PFN Director of Media Affairs, Simbo

Olorunfemi called for a Christian president for the country by 2023. The statement reads “we do not think it is right to have another muslim president. Come 2023” (Edokwe, 2021). While on the ethnic front, Ibos are of the view that it is their turn to produce the President. Even, among the other ethnic or religious groups, whosoever refuses to align with ethnic or religious consideration for selecting leaders are seeing to be working against their group interest and called traitors.

The agitation of the various groups are valid, if taken from the fact that State, from Plato, Aristotle, Rawls, is established to advance justice by ensuring fair allocation of state's resources among the diverse groups. A negation of this idea, breeds instability and revolutions (George-Genyi, 2020)

Some of the consequences of identity politics had led to religious conflicts snowballing to ethnic crises and vice versa. Though, some of these misunderstanding had economic connections, it metamorphoses into ethnic or religious matter when the actors involved are of different ethnic or religious divides. For instance, herders-farmers crises involved people of different ethnic and religious affiliations. The economic undertone is usually underplayed while identity politics occupies the central theme/stage. Hence, it becomes, Fulani-Tiv, Fulani-Jukun crises and each (tribe) is seeing as trying to eliminate the other. The indigene-settler imbroglio in Plateau state is a clash along land and control of state resources but it has taken an ethnic and religious dimensions/colouration and is seeing as a conflicts between the Hausas, the settler and the Biroms, the indigenes. In a similar analogue, the conflicts

Wukari International Studies Journal, Vol.6, No.2, 2022

between the Tivs and Jukun in Taraba state has only ethnic dimension between the two gladiators are predominantly Christians.

Farmers-Herders' crises in Benue, Tiv-Jukun crises in Taraba, Indigene-Settler conflicts in Plateau, religious crisis, inter and intra-tribal crisis, secessionist agitations, Fulani/Yoruba violent clashes in Yoruba speaking areas, Yoruba-Hausa in Shagamu, Ogun state, most especially, Ibarapa local government area of Oyo state, skirmishes of breach of peace in some parts of Southern Kaduna, among others.

But experiences on some occasions in this current democratic dispensation have shown that these groups by their activities have shown destructive roles. A perusal of their activities show that many at times, they project, promote and defend sectional or primordial interest rather than national interest. It is either the Afenifere castigating the Northern Elders Forum, or the Northern Youths Forum cascades MASSOB or IPOB of wanting to make the state ungovernable for a northerner who is the country's President. Sometimes, the Niger-Delta Force or Ijaw Youths Congress accused the other parts of marginalizing the Niger delta area. Similarly, the role of some 'unnamed or unidentified' groups in the crisis in Benue, Taraba, Kaduna, Plateau, and other parts of the country, cannot be underplayed. It may not be incorrect to conclude that these unwholesome activities, apart from causing dislocation of priorities and distort the economy, could also provide a veritable ground for civil unrest, long-life acrimony and above

all disintegration.

Speaking in a similar vein, Lawal (2003), states that "ethnicity and religious identity have plagued all efforts at national cohesion and maintenance of political stability" (p. 133). Similar, conclusion drawn by Oshewolo (2016), was that these unwholesome activities "have produced a number of fatal consequences" (p, 291). Another observer description is that the effects of these avoidable crises or imbroglio have been felt in every facet of the society; such as destruction of lives and property while expressing political grievances (Abegunde, 2016). Attention should be paid to the insufficiency of basic infrastructures, coupled with the incessant outcry by the government about insufficient resources to be able to provide these essential services, whereas, the few available are destroyed.

All these have therefore transformed into political violence given the dimensions it has taken and having satisfied Hibbs (1973, p. 7), three conditions: (a) it should be anti-system (b) it should be actual and not a mere threat to the status quo and (c) it should involve mass political action, such as rebellion, revolution, internal war, terrorism et cetera (Azeez, 2004b). Verily, these political agitations have turned to insecurity and have continued to impede governance and democratic order.

Although, the Nigerian federation has continued to survive these challenges, the dismantling of the democratic structures and or collapse of the union is imminent if nothing concrete is done to curtail these ugly incidences. In other

words, the fragile status of the Nigerian state may lead to failed state if measures are not put in place to checkmate disruptive tendencies afflicting the nation.

Identity politics also manifests in hate speech- it is always heighten preparatory to elections and used as a weapon for winning sympathy. During election campaigns, candidates/parties tried to defame the character and personality of other parties and candidates with a view to gain an advantage. Hate speech has been defined by Danielle (2013) as "expressions which are capable of instilling or inciting hatred of, or prejudice towards, a person or group of people on a specified ground including race, nationality, ethnicity, country of origin, ethno-religious identity, religion, sexuality, gender identity or gender" (cited in Adebiyi and Aliu, 2020, p. 150-151). For details of some cases of hate speeches (see, Adebiyi and Aliu, 2020, p. 158-162). Its effects are numerous. It is beating the bands of marginalisation along ethnic, regional and religious lines and this portends a signal of disintegration (International Crises Group, 2014 cited in Adebiyi and Aliu, 2020). In other words, it is responsible for the escalation of strained social relations, misunderstanding and conflicts along ethnic, religious or sectional lines.

The escalation of Herders and farmers crises will be linked to politics of identity as what determines individual analysis or diagnoses of the crises is based on neutrality or sentimental incarnations. Some people believed that the so-called Fulani herders were enjoying presidency support because President Muhammadu Buhari is a Fulani man. An

observant analyst is cautioned by taking a look at the past that the crises have been with Nigeria even before a Fulani man became the president. It is a menace, the north central and other parts of the country has been battling with before now and but tempo has only increased in all other geo-political zones in the country except the northwest and some parts of the north East states.

A report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) showed that over 1300 lives were lost in Benue, Adamawa, Nasarawa, Plateau and Taraba states between January and June, 2018 and $13.7 billion was equally lost in revenue annually because of herders-crop producers' crises (Agubamah, 2019). That amount was a colossal lost given the dire need for resources to be able to provide basic social services for the ever growing population.

Citizen loyalty to the state is a demonstration of allegiance and adherence to national cause. Any negation of such attachment is a negation of the principles of integration. Thus, when identity crisis prevails, the fortune of the state is affected. So, attempt at consolidation of democratic order becomes an effort in futility. The consequence of a state's failure to discharge its social responsibility manifest in profound problem as the country is witnessing presently. It is opined that the people would have no other option than to opt for resistance to authority when the state fails to protect life and properties, could not guarantee justice and act against public interests. In fact, a socially irresponsible and irresponsive leadership is preparing grounds for social disobedience,

Wukari International Studies Journal, Vol.6, No.2, 2022

instability, uprising and ultimately, a revolution (Saleh, 2018).

The consequence of ethnic cleansing/genocide in Rwanda and Burundi should be fresh in our memories. The Tiv-Jukun, Hausa-Birom, herders-farmers in Benue state is just a few of these cases. The fatal consequences would linger on for a long time in Nigeria's history. Crises arising from religious, ethnic or sectional intolerance constitute security threat with devastating effect on social, political, economic and psychological wellbeing of individuals and groups and have the ultimate consequence on democratic order and national integration.

The cause of ethnic violence does not lies in the country's diversity but situated within the precinct of the competition for scarce value often exacerbated by the tendencies of animosity or acrimony among these ethnic configurations (Egwu, 2001). It is also seeing as a manifestation of the failure of the country's governmental institutions and processes to effectively nurture the political and socio-economic conditions and security that can prevent the escalation of inter-group conflicts into deadly, destructive and destabilizing violence (Saleh, 2018).

Added to this were the problems of resource control, federal character, inequity, delayed judicial delivery system, corruption, arbitrariness often breed resentment which is the basis of the constant inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflagrations that have always tended to overheat the polity with strong divisive and disruptive tendencies on the corporate existence of the country and of democratic consolidation.

5. Conclusion

Manifestation of ethnic politics in Nigeria takes different stages or forms. The first being when there are divergent needs and opinions on how resources available should be allocated to the individuals or groups; two, when peaceful resolution of the allocation of resources breaks among the elites and; when the aggrieved groups employ the use of physical force or heating-up the polity. This is realizable if the leadership at all levels or political elites subsume their selfish or primordial interests to promotion of Nigeria's peace, unity and development. The crux of this point is that bad governance oils or encourages recourse to manipulating and exploiting identity sentiments to ascending and retention of power and relevance.

Consolidating democracy and ensuring the unity of Nigeria, without mincing words, rests on how citizens, political elites or leaders and the various groups or interests relate to each other in relation to how its resources are to be managed with a view to bring about responsiveness and accountability leadership and a conducive atmosphere for actualizing the much anticipated 'dividends of democracy' and ultimately national development.

The existence of a friendly, profitable and prosperous relationship between and among the diverse groups in the country is a stepping stone towards the realization of other essentials goals of the state. This is what Nigeria needs in this critical moment of her existence. Manipulation of diversity for

Wukari International Studies Journal, Vol.6, No.2, 2022

sectional or personal interests should be jettisoned. The issue of marginalization requires adequate attention as this will help to address some security challenges confronting the country.

The recommendation of this paper is that there should be synergy in the workings among all the stakeholders (both formal and informal structures of the state including the citizens) in the task of building a virile and prosperous Nigeria. This is because the task of building a nation-state and ensuring sustainable development is onerous and requires collaboration, accommodation, understanding and commitment to the set ideals. This is a modest contribution to the debates. This cannot stop further discussion on the way forward so as to avert recourse to military rule and disintegration.

References

Abegunde, O. (2016). Democracy and ethnic militancy in Nigeria. In F. Omotoso &

M. Kehinde (Eds.). Democratic Governance and Political Participation in Nigeria 1999-2014. Denver-Bamenda: Spears Media. Pp. 341-358.

Abegunde, O. (2010). "The challenges of public administration in the crisis ridden

Niger Delta of Nigeria. In A. A. Agagu, & Omotoso, F. (Eds.). Selected themes in public administration. Centre for Policy, Research and Development. Pp. 172-181

Abegunde, O. (2008). Political violence and problems of

democratic consolidation in
Nigeria. In Agagu, A. A; Omotoso, F. and Abegunde, O (Eds.). Peace and Conflict Studies in Nigeria. Ado Ekiti-Nigeria: University of Ado Ekiti. Pp. 121-131.

Adebiyi, O. M and Aliu, F. O (2020). Hate speech and national integration: The Nigeria's 2015
general elections in perspective. In Saliu, H. A, Aremu, A. F, Muhammad, A. R and Durojaiye, J. O. (Eds.). State, Governance, and Insecurity in Nigeria: Issues, Perspectives and Challenges. Pp. 148-169.

Agubamah, E. (2019). External factors and crop producers-herders' crisis in Nigeria. Journal of
Political Inquiry. 4 (1), 152-160.

Alabi, D. O. (2004) "The national question and Nigeria's fourth republic: issues and challenges".
Political Science Review. 3(2), 68-87.

Azeez, A. (2004a) *The dynamics of ethnic politics and democratic consolidation in*
Nigeria: A prognosis. In Oni, D, Gupta, S, Omonyi, T, Adegbija, E and Awonusi, S (Eds.) Nigeria Globalization: Discourses on Identity and Social Conflict. Lagos:
Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC). Pp. 326-342.

Cox, O. C (1970). Caste, Class and Race: A Study in Social Dynamics. New York and
London: Reader Paper-backs.

Davies, A. E. (2004). "The role of the legislature in

fostering an efficient system of
public finance". In Taiwo, I. O. and Fajengbesi (Ed.), Fiscal federalism and democratic governance in Nigeria, Ibadan, NCEMA/ACBF.

Dunmoye, A. R (2020). Nexus of state, governesses, and security in contemporary
Nigeria. In Saliu, H. A, Aremu, A. F, Muhammad, A. R and Durojaiye, J. O.(Eds.). State, Governance, and Insecurity in Nigeria: Issues, Perspectives and Challenges. Pp. 32-55.

Edokwe, B. (2021). 2023: Our next President should be a Christian.
https://barristerng.com/2023-our-next-president-should-be-a-christian-pfn-declares/

Ezeani, E. O (2020). State, governance, and insecurity in Nigeria. In Saliu, H. A,
Aremu, A. F, Muhammad, A. R and Durojaiye, J. O (Eds.). State, Governance, and Insecurity in Nigeria: Issues, Perspectives and Challenges. Pp. 14-31.

Fashagba, J. Y (2021). "Nigeria: Understanding the Contour of the Political Terrain".
In Ajayi, R and Fashagba, J. Y (Eds.) Nigerian Politics. Advances in Africa Economic, Social and Political Development. Switzerland AG: Springer Nature. Pp.1-24.

Gberevbie, D. S and Oni, S. (2021). Postcolonial Nigeria: power and politics in the
First Republic, 1960–1966. In Ajayi, R and Fashagba,

J. Y (Eds.) Nigerian Politics. Advances in African Economic, Social and Political Development. Switzerland AG: Springer Nature. Pp. 55-76.

George-Genyi, M. E. and Vande, P. T . (2020). Introduction. In George-Genyi, M. E. and Vande, P. T (Eds.). Distributive Justice and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and the way Forward. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers. Pp. 3 - 18.

Ichima, S. (2017). Political entreprenuers: The bane of democracy in Nigeria. Journal of International Politics. 4 (1&2), 289-297.

Lawal, E. E. (2003) "Ethnic-religious conflicts and political instability in Nigeria". Ilorin Journal of Business and Social Science. 8 (1&2),128-135.

National Telescope (2021). Despite Buhari's claims, World Bank says 7 million Nigerians became poor in 2020.**https://nationaltelescope com/despite-buharis-claims-world-bank-says-7-million-nigerians-became-poor-in-2020/**

Niworu, S. M. (2009). The politics of tenure elongation: A renunciation of democratic values and nation building. Lapai International Journal of Management and Social Sciences. 2(1), 835-93.

Odu, O. I and Orungbami, O. (2019). The politics of religion and national development: a critical

analysis. Journal of Political Studies, 3(1), January-June, 172-189.

Ogbanje, J. I. (2020). The praxis of democratic consolidation: A Nigerian experience in the fourth republic. In George-Genyi, M. E. and Vande, P. T (Eds.). Distributive Justice and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and the way Forward. Makurdi: Aboki Publishers. Pp.54-72.

Ogundiya, I. S. (2010) Democracy and good governance: Nigeria's dilemma". African Journal of Political Science and International Relations. 4(6), 201-208.

Ojo, E. O (2006a) "Imperatives of sustaining democratic values" in Emmanuel O. Ojo (Ed.) Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria. Ibadan: John Archers. Pp. 1- 24.

Oshewolo, S. (2016) "Religion in democratic Nigeria: A Janus-faced phenomenon". In F. Omotoso and M. Kehinde (Eds.) Democratic Governance and Political Participation in Nigeria 1999-2014. Denver-Bamenda: Spears Media. Pp. 283-292.

Plattner, M. F. (2010) Populism, pluralism, and liberal democracy, Journal of Democracy. Volume 21, Number 1, January. Pp. 81-95.

Popoola, A. A. (2007). Sustaining democracy and democratic development in a plural state: Nigeria. Commissioned paper Presented at the Annual General Conference of the Nigerian Bar Association

(NBA) in Ilorin, Kwara state, 26-30th August.

Saleh, B. (2018). An assessment of the challenges of identity politics on democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Journal of Research and development in Arts and Social Science. 2, l00-120.

Suberu, R (2016) “Foreword” in F. Omotoso and M. Kehinde (Eds.) Democratic Governance and Political Participation in Nigeria (1999-2014). Denver-Bamenda: Spears Media.