Between ethnicity, nationality and development in Nigeria

Toyin Cotties Adetiba [1], Aminur Rahim [2*]

[1] *Department of Development Studies, Faculty of Management and Commerce, University of Fort Hare, Alice Campus, South Africa*

[2] *Department of Development Studies, Faculty of Management and Commerce, University of Fort Hare, Private Bag X1314, Alice 5700, South Africa*

Abstract

While it is possible for ethnicity through exclusivism to truncate socio-political and economic development in a multi-ethnic state, the recognition of every ethnic group that they belong to a nationality and not a particular ethnic group stems the negative impacts of ethnicity. This study examines the interplay between ethnicity, nationality and development in Nigeria. From the empirical evidences around the world, the study concludes that a political project that place emphasis on national integration and understanding as well as inclusion of every ethnic group in national governance is significantly a political tool to curtailing the negative impact of ethnicity in a multi-ethnic state; the product of which is socio-political and economic development.

Keywords: Ethnicity, Nationality, Exclusion, Development, Inclusion

* Corresponding author. *E-mail address:* arahim@ufh.ac.za

1. Introduction

The inability of every ethnic group to have access to socio-political goods has continued to impact negatively on the forces of national integration and cohesion in ethnically divided states particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. But there remains the question of why ethnicity is easily mobilized and manipulated in multi-ethnic political system. Why has ethnic manipulation by the political leaders successful? Does ethnicity in itself represent an obstacle to building a viable and stable political system or does strong ethnic identity serves as an obstacle to nationality or can it be used as an explanation for the building of states devoid of ethnic nationalism? To understand the above questions, an examination of the definitions of ethnicity by scholars and two schools of ethnicity (primordial and instrumentalist) is very important to this study.

1.1. Defining ethnicity

The question of ethnicity to social scientist has been one of the most popular subjects of study. The debate on ethnicity seems to have been fuelled by high visibility of mobilized and politicized ethnic group in most multi-ethnic states of Africa and Asian countries with cultural pluralism. Its popularity has made it an "unwieldy concept" (Green, 2006: 1) hence the reason for several connotations given to the subject, thus making it one of the most researched phenomena by scholars in political science, sociology, anthropology etc. Ethnicity for example is considered a social construct (King, 2002). Van Evra (cited in Hale, 2004) states that ethnic groups are formed and once formed they tend to strongly endure. Hence the question is whether ethnicity is a natural order of things or a social construct. Analysts have put their argument into two opposing perspectives primordialism and instrumentalism – to be discussed later – the result of which are arrays of literature on the subject. Thus, the conceptualization of ethnicity is a complex one.

To fully understand this concept there is need to consider the concept of the ethnic group. Cohen (cited in Salawu and Hassan, 2011) sees the ethnic group as an informal interest group whose members are distinct from the members of other ethnic groups within the larger society because they share kingship, religious and linguistics ties. Yinger, on the other hand defines the ethnic group as a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves and/or others, to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common origin and culture and who in addition participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients (cited in Lee et al. 2002).

In a shift from the above Hale (2004) sees the ethnic group as a set of people who perceive that they have things (social, political and economy) in common and that their similarities are captured by a label; the ethnic group name, as in Zulu and Xhosa in South Africa, Marmas and Chakmas in Bangladesh, Nahuas and Chortis in Honduras or Tuareg and Mozabite in Algeria. Hale's (2004) perception of the ethnic group goes beyond the socio-biological relatives of kingship, language, culture and ancestry. It captures the socio-political identity of the group. It is for this reason Calhoun (1993:231) sees it as a "bounded set of individuals, not necessarily characterized by any internal pattern of relationship much less one of kinship or descent" hence the construction of ethnic groups as nationalities (King, 2002).

Ethnic groups depend on the maintenance of boundaries; however the socio-cultural features that describe the boundary may change. What remain unchanged are the differences between the members of the ethnic group and those considered outsiders (non-members of the group). Vanhanen (2004) perceives the ethnic group as an extended kin group. Their members tend to support each other in conflict situations. Explaining why many types of interest conflicts tend to become canalized along ethnic cleavages in multi-ethnic states.

Notwithstanding this, the above definitions give us an insight into some important variables of the ethnic group, having a shared culture/language and the recognition as belonging to the same socio-political group. Thus ethnic group can also assert and maintain its socio-political and economic identity. Therefore, an ethnic group consists of those groups that share a common language and ancestry and are equally regarded as so by other ethnic group. Each ethnic group has its own constituted features which do not change and are consistently distributed within this group. Hence, the Yoruba of the West in Nigeria, the Zulus in South Africa, the Marathi in India, the Krahn in Liberia and the Akan in Ghana can all be classified as ethnic groups that share a common language/culture and ancestry and they are regarded as so by other ethnic groups. In a nutshell, an ethnic group can be defined on the basis of their distinct differences that the members of the group and other ethnic groups see as significant to their identity.

In a multi-ethnic state it is assumed that there will be clearly defined ethnic groups with "generally incompatible values" (Fearon and Laitin, 2000:849). These ethnic groups are constructed and poised to defend and maintain their boundaries to raise their self-esteem against those considered to be out of the group for whatever significant reason. The in group is often considered ethnic and often has its motivation rooted in achieving their socio-political and economic goals. "Ethnicity thus serves to structure such actions, by providing people with social radar that they use to efficiently identify or impose social possibilities and potential constraints in a world of immense uncertainty and complexity" (Hale, 2004:482).

The term ethnicity indicates that groups and identities have different mutual contacts. The implication of this is that groups do not live in isolation. What brings about ethnic conflict is the nature of their socio-political and economic interactions. Ethnic feelings are the interaction of various ethnic groups. Ethnicity is considered a phenomenon that mediates between diverse human relations and between different values and norms expressed and utilized differently at both the individual and collective levels and can influence the life processes of ethnic groups either positively or negatively (Seol, 2008). Perhaps, this is the reason why ethnicity has been considered an aspect of the social relationship between agents – social, political and economic – who see themselves as being traditionally unique – in culture, language, beliefs etc. – and different from members of other ethnic groups with whom they have regular socio-political and economic relations. This informs us about why ethnicity has been described as a frame within which certain socio-political and economic disputes are conducted. Participation in such disputes can at the end of the day reproduce ethnic understanding and cooperation. For example ethnicity can be mobilized in pursuit of perceived ethnic interests such as a demand for justice, equity in the distribution of socio-economic and political goods and equal representation in governance.

By implication ethnicity does not constitute any threat to the socio-political and economic development of a state. It is the negative employment of ethnicity – negative attitudes towards those regarded as outsiders – that constitute the threat to socio-political and economic development. Hence the positive aspects of ethnicity often become insignificant in multi-ethnic states. The interaction of ethnic groups may either negatively or positively affect the socio-political and economic positions of other groups. In essence, ethnicity becomes problematic when the various ethnic groups turn the table against each other in an attempt to have access to political power, thus degenerating from a form of political support into a basis for political conflict.

With a view to explaining the phenomenon of ethnicity, one question that readily comes to mind here is why ethnic groups have maintained their identity and why ethnicity has become the basis for mobilization and manipulation particularly in multi-ethnic states. One reason that can be given is that ethnic groups have continued to grow stronger because of their socio-political and economic needs and the demand for such has given room for ethnic mobilization and manipulation by the political elites. Ethnicity according to Egwu (2007) is thus, an abstraction of the ethnic group because it has no independent existence of its own, being always driven by the political class interest or the quest for power. Hence, ethnicity is seen as a significant obstacle to socio-political and economic development policies in a multi-ethnic state (Thorne, 2007). Put in another word it emerges as a result of the on-going socio-political contestation.

Seol (2008) maintains that ethnic manifestations should be understood in the context of individual and collective socio-political experiences in a given society. In essence, the high visibility of ethnicity is a direct result of cultural and socio-economic conditions in existence over generations. By exploring the presence, extent and context of a group's behavior one can predict or have an insight into what an ethnic group is up to. The prediction by scholars that ethnicity and ethnic attachments will lose their significance in the process of industrialization and civilization (Seol, 2008) seems to have lost its position. This is because there has not been a shift from ethnic attachment. What this means is that ethnic groups today are affirming themselves more and more which has made ethnicity more significant because of the instrumental use of the phenomenon by the political class. The political class refers to a relatively small group of people that is aware and active in politics and from whom the national leadership is drawn. However this class in Nigeria has, in a sense, cultivated alliances whose primary interest is their socio-political gains through the manipulation of ethnicity. Thus ethnicity can be seen as a process by which an appeal is made to the socio-political and economic differences in the ethnic groups through which the groups are manipulated. It is a psychological process that the political elites manipulate for their own political interests, making the people ethnically conscious.

From the above, ethnicity can be viewed as social organization. King (2002) posits that ethnic identity may be narrowed or broadened in boundary terms and in relation to the specific socio-political and economic needs of the group; hence the assertion that ethnicity refers both to aspect of gain and loss in interaction (Ericksen, 1993). What this implies is that ethnicity has both a political and organizational aspect, making it a significant phenomenon in societies where it is politically mobilized and manipulated. Calhoun (1993) comments that ethnicity has been described as the product of manipulation or at least a recurrent innovation. It is a creation of political leaders who often utilize and depends on the strength of people's ethnic differences to gain socio-political and economic advantage for their groups as well as pursuing their

own socio-economic well-being. Ethnic mobilization is made possible as a result of groups' competition for scarce socio-political and economic resources engendered by the process of modernization.

Ethnicity has also been defined as a social construct. The meaning of this is that ethnicity is considered a by-product of uneven access to socio-economic resources orchestrated by the reorganization of the hitherto autonomous pre-colonial societies into artificial state structure , hence the explanation of ethnicity in relation to "external stimuli" (King, 2002:356). The result of this is the spate of political instability in post-colonial Nigeria. This instability is made possible as a result of shifts in ethnicity after independence. In essence the ethnic groups which had, prior to colonialism, maintained a cordial relationship, develop a new identity in which ethnicity was central and national interest secondary.

In a shift from the above school of thought, Duran (cited in Seol, 2008) observes that in modern society ethnicity may be regarded as a rational group response to socio political pressure and a basis for concerted group action. This is clearly and significantly demonstrated in contemporary African states. What one can deduce from this assertion is that ethnicity is a function of the structure of the socio-political and economic situation of the society. Thus ethnicity can best be understood as a deliberate strategic choice by groups and individuals as a means of obtaining socio-political and economic status or rights. This points to the fact that ethnicity may not be regarded as acquired by belonging to a particular ethnic group which shares the same origin but should be seen as a means of expression in specific socio-political and economic spheres. Ethnicity is a tactic which groups or individual believe can propel and earn them their desired socio-political status, hence its political utilization.

One new dimension that has been added to the phenomenon is the interpretation that ethnicity can be a "chameleon strategy" (Pieterse, 1993:8). What this means is that the minds of members of a particular ethnic group operate in such a way that they can choose to be members of their ethnic group when they want to or members of the larger community (the state) when they feel it is politically or economically profitable. This explains why ethnicity has been classified by Green (2006) as a mid-level identity, representing a group, perhaps small enough to mobilize and manipulate but also large enough to lead to strong political development if otherwise mobilized and manipulated positively. Ethnicity thus is the product of competition for socio-political and economic resources.

From the above conceptualization of ethnicity one can conclude that ethnicity is more or less a "mediating reference point" (Seol, 2008:351) through which ethnic groups in multi-ethnic states with diverse human relations and values as it is in Nigeria promote their group interests. However, the extent of the utilization of ethnicity may be different between individuals and groups in the expression and utility of ethnicity; because of variation and the perception of their socio-political and economic positions. For example in South Africa, Kenya, Honduras, Nigeria, Jamaica, India etc. where there are diverse ethnic groups, ethnicity may serve as a common mediating reference point which may likely affect their socio-political and economic relations.

The implication of the above is that each ethnic group may tend to emphasize their ethnic identity and utilize it more effectively for their own socio-political and economic interests. However this mediating reference point may eventually become a tool in the hand of different ethnic/political leaders who capitalize on these socio-biological bonds and utilize it for their own political and material advantage. Individuals

always act in a manner that maximizes their socio-political and economic benefits. They can decide to act in the interest of their group or otherwise depending on what benefits them most. This explains the relevance of national cohesion in a multi-ethnic society to prevent ethnic conflicts, creating a relationship between ethnicity and nationality.

2. Nationality and ethnicity

In the discussion of ethnicity, the subjects' ethnicity and nationality rarely connect. This is because ethnicity belongs to the framework of multiculturalism while nationality relates to constitutional politics (McCronne, 2002); hence, the fundamental question of whether nationality and ethnicity are the same. According to The South African Concise Oxford dictionary 2002 edition, nationality refers to a situation where one owns his/her allegiance absolutely to a particular nation or an ethnic group that forms a political nation. It is a collection of people sharing national identity, usually based on ethnic and cultural ties. The instrumentalist approach to constructing a nation is the pragmatic and situational aspect of large communities. Thus, it approaches the political understanding of the nation. Nationality pertains to the state of origin or a relationship between a person/groups and their state. It is the aspect of identity that derives from one's membership of a nation. It is a socio-political ideology that asserts collective and solidary goals in a political community. Nationality, one can say here, is psychological and therefore supplies the well-spring for sentiments such as patriotism and self-sacrifice.

According to Kedourie, humanity is naturally divided into ethnic/nations groups, and are known by certain and distinct socio-political features which can be established, and that the only appropriate and genuine type of political system is a national self-government (cited in Calhoun, 1993). To understand the concept of nationality it will be better to briefly look at the concept of nation. A nation is a self-identified cultural group that regards itself as distinctive from others in some fundamental and significant way (Encyclopedial.com, 2008). Members of a nation see themselves as having a common history that binds them to one another and to a given territory.

In the words of Bacova (1998), the primordialists believe that the nation is primarily the ethno-nation; a community which unites individuals through the same blood and common fate. This sense of mutual attachment feels natural even if the objective bases of the group are invented. It should, however, be stressed that there is no particular attribute that a group must have in order to qualify as a nation but essentially, language, history and ethnicity are the three common bases of national identity.

The subjectivity of the origin of national identity notwithstanding, they possess a significant status that shapes how individuals see and regard themselves and are treated by others. One fact that needs to be stated here is that almost all states are, to some extent, ethnically divided and most of these states include sub-groups that could evolve from sub-group state into nationalities. Socio-political relations are therefore influenced all over the world based on the fact that nationality has become a universal component of identity. The way that state boundaries were historically constructed particularly in Africa has made nationality a

politically salient issue and the possibility of violence is thus heightened; which explains why there are instances of conflict that plague multi-ethnic states.

Scholars have come to agree that nationality and ethnicity are different but difficult to dissociate one from another. It is equally difficult to explain nationality as the continuation of ethnicity or a reflection of common history, culture or language. In essence, nationality should not be seen as the continuation of ethnicity. Nationality and ethnicity have been made so significant because of modernization in terms of socio-cultural changes, especially nation building and integration of different ethnic groups. Ethnicity is diffused to give way for common national citizenship. Nationality tends to promote a wider range of integration of all ethnic nationalities in a nation-state regardless of their ethnic group. This however does not take away the fact that a nation has a founding moment which can be located in the primordial times which explains why ethnic nationalities believe much in their identity. Ethnicity can thus be regarded as the basis for nationality; a shared facsimile of basic differences between ethnic groups and they either gain or lose in socio-political interaction (Eriksen, 1991). What then are the differences between nationality and ethnicity? Are the two the same?

Ethnicity from our discussion so far is associated with a plural society. The term plural society usually designates multi-ethnic states and culturally varied populations. Examples of plural societies include Indonesia, South Africa, Mexico, India, Jamaica, Nigeria and so forth. The groups that make up the plural society, though compelled to participate in a uniform political system are distinctive in other matters and ethnically tend to be articulated as group competition. Thus nationality is positively inclusive, whereas ethnicity is exclusive. One needs to state here that it is still possible for nationality to be exclusive to some extent. For example, a member of ethnic group X may be preferred above a member of ethnic group Y in the sharing of political office but the fact still remains that individuals from X and Y ethnic groups still see themselves as belonging to the same nation. What varies here is not the degree of inclusiveness or exclusiveness but the bases of inclusion and exclusion (Zenker, 2011). On the other hand, ethnicity is negatively exclusive. For example a member of XY ethnic group residing in AB ethnic group may not be allowed to participate in the political processes in the person's host ethnic group or vice versa. That is, the in-group on the basis of ethnicity excludes the out-group from political processes. The argument here is that nationality serves as a bridge between the gap of ethnicity in a plural society with reference to the people and not to a particular ethnic group.

One significant and noticeable difference between nationality and ethnicity is in the area of propagation and its submission to public discussion and scrutiny of ideas. The ideology behind the notion of nationality is constantly repeated and promoted but primordial loyalties and affiliations exist and function without any form of subjection of intention and socio-political ideas to public scrutiny.

From the above one can say that nationality confers on groups and individual the status of belonging to a prestigious and higher socio-political entity which in turn arouses the loyalty of people to and pride in one's national identity. Thus, the significant mark of nationality and by definition is its emphasis on political loyalty to the state which is preferred above ethnic loyalty. Nationality however has been adjudged to be an essentialist characteristic. It is either you are part of the nationalistic project or not. The implication of this is

that minority nationalities within states are often susceptible to socio-political and economic ostracism (Encyclopedial.com, 2008). Each nation implicitly provides a rationale for the exclusion of those who are not full members of the national community.

As stated above, nationality should not be seen as the continuation of ethnicity rather the two should be seen as distinctively different. This is because ethnicity, if sufficiently powered, can provide individuals with most of their status, and their entire cultural identity can be couched in an ethnic idiom. More so, nationality creates the thought of patriotism. On the other hand, ethnicity creates a thought of ethnicism promoted by the political elites in order to gain political power. People can share the same nationality but different ethnic groups. It is the modern state that defines nationality; the pre-existing ethnic relations are therefore revised to encourage national cohesion rooted in socio-political power relations and not ethnic solidarities.

Nationality places demands on the fact that there should be relative internal homogeneity rather than a continuity of ethnic variations. It should therefore be seen as a triumph over ethnicity and hence, links every individual directly to the center. Ethnicity invokes ethnic identity which is constituted and maintained in a social process that involves diverse intentions; ethnicity is divisive while nationality attempts to suppress the divisive elements of ethnicity. One can therefore conclude that the difference between nationality and ethnicity as they have been explained here for scholarly convenience is their relationship to the state.

3. Ethnicity through the eyes of the primordialists and instrumentalists

In the social sciences, there is a large body of literature related to ethnic groups, ethnicity and ethnic conflict. Most of these studies fall into two major forms of ethnic identity – the pimordialist and the instrumentalist. We shall explore these theories in relation to ethnicity and place them in the context of socio-political development.

3.1. Primordialism

This is a view of the essentialist that ethnic groups be taken as givens in social existence (Pieterse, 1993, Young, 1986). That is, ethnicity is seen as immediate contiguity and kin connections but also as being born into a particular community, culture, language and sharing the same social practices. Perhaps this is the reason why Fearon and Laitin (2000) see ethnic identity from the point of ancestry rules of group membership typified by cultural traits and common historical mythologies. The community is believed to be individuals united through common ancestry or fate. Smaje (cited Seol, 2008) believes primordialism regards ethnicity as a principle of social structuring, powerful and immutable characteristics of the human condition evincing meanings which transcend the immediate social context. In essence, the behavior of an ethnic group as expressed can be understood as an end in itself, a result of a prior affective arousal or emotional need (Seol, 2008). Primordialism appeals to emotional and instinctive constraints as ultimate distinctive explanations for group mobilization.

However it's been argued that ethnic groups are rational interest groups lacking primordial significance and those ethnic groups assert and maintain their identity because of socio-political and economic reasons rather than psychological primordial attachment, hence the categorization of ethnicity as an element of socio-political and economic action. The ethnic group can be mobilized for political action by individuals who see ethnicity as an important instrument in accomplishing their socio-political goals. Ethnic groups are therefore 'purposeful groups; their common purpose is that they are arbitrarily created and sustained for pragmatic utility' (Seol, 2008: 347).

One question that rightly comes to mind here is why people still follow ethnic leaders whose interest seems to serve the interests of the elites and not the masses. Horowitz (1985) postulates that ethnic groups can be regarded as supra families. The essence of ethnicity is its promotion of unity and solidarity which undeniably overcomes the primordial community. It is this unity and solidarity that has made the people support their leader. For example the saying by the Yoruba (an ethnic group in the western part of Nigeria) that, "omo wa ni e je o see" – he is our son we must support him – is a primordialistic statement; showing that it does not matter what the person does, as long as he/she is part of us, we will support him; resulting in the activation of solidarity when the group (community) is being deprived of its socio-political goods. One feature of ethnicity that is been invoked here is the emotional aspect which the primordialist considered as given and undeniable.

This explains the argument that modern society is far more than a politically regulated, contractual and impersonal association of individuals and groups. Rather it is held together by an affinity of personal attachment and moral obligation to the group. The level of this attachment/commitment to the group may however be different. That is, it may be "high in some and it may be moderate or low in some" (Seol, 2008:336). Young (1986) asserts that primordialism seeks to identify and define the cultural psychological dimensions of ethnicity. Primordialism calls for emotional attachment and ethnic solidarity from members of the ethnic group and invariably provides for a basis for their ethnic consciousness. The ideal of primordialism is characterized by absolute loyalty and solidarity to one's ethnic group and its goals. However, this differs from individual to individual and from one community to another and from one period to another.

The above however justifies the fact that primordial sentiments cannot be ruled out in national political development. For example primordial attachment has been found to be one of the preferred bases for fragmentation of hitherto autonomous political units in the independent states of Nepal, Sri Lanka and Nigeria when they were reorganized into their present political units. This brings to our notice that primordial attachment plays a significant role in socio-political and economic development of ethnically divided states by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to primordial ties; which in other words means that people have the ability to construct and deconstruct the social political and economic realities around them; hence, the comfort and sense of belonging that stems from ethnic group identity.

Primordial identity here is made up of what one is born with or acquired and considered significantly different from all other identities which are considered secondary. What this portends is that, since culture is more or less a human formation and can be learnt it may not be a significant factor when considering

ethnicity as a social relation. Rather it can be orchestrated to that level if and when it is activated by the socio-political interests of the group.

However, primordialism has been criticized on the basis that primordialist "have neglected people's creative abilities or efforts for the establishment of a better world" (Seol, 2008:339-340). This has made primordialism to be regarded as significant only in times of conflict and not so significant at other times. Primordialism can be useful in explaining the emotional basis of ethnicity and the tenacity of ethnic solidarity, and how ethnic affiliation can be instrumental to individual group identification.

One significant criticism of primordialism is the fact that it makes ethnic group/ individuals passive and captive to primordial sentiments, it makes them emotionally caged, so they are unable to respond proactively to socio-political challenges confronting them either internal or external. Primordialists appeal to emotional and instinctive constraints as ultimate explanations for national mobilization (Conversie, 2006). This explains why individuals as well as groups dogmatically follow their ethnic leaders even when the actions and inactions of such leaders are meant to boost their socio-political status at the expense of group's socio-political and economic growth.

Ballard (cited in Seol, 2008) postulates that a good deal of ethnic conflicts are not about culture; rather, they are about access to material resources as well as political and economic inequalities among ethnic groups. Therefore, one can conclude here that the primordialists do not take cognizance of the importance of social structure hence, their insensitivity in eradicating socio-political and economic inequalities. Notwithstanding this, scholars have come to agree that primordialism is a significant phenomenon in explaining the emotional basis of ethnicity and the importance of ethnic solidarity; and how ethnic sentiments can actually become a very persuasive and significant element of group as well as individual identity.

3.2. Instrumentalism

Unlike primordialism, instrumentalism sees ethnicity as a dependable variable, controlled according to its strategic utility for achieving more secular goods (Conversie, 2006). It hinges on the affiliations of individuals to the community which are economically and politically beneficial to them. That is to say they are based on rational awareness and not closeness as in the case of primordialism, but the need for socio-political and economic protection or common interest. Young (1986) opines that the instrumentalist perspective saw ethnicity as a vehicle for socio-political and economic competition, hence as political contingent, situational and circumstantial. Keyes, (cited in Young 1986) posits that ethnicity is salient only in so far as it serves to orient people in pursuit of other interest vis-à-vis other people who are seen as holding contractive ethnic identities. A contractive ethnic identity is shaped by the unequal distribution of political power and resources; where political and economic powers have been constructed around the dominant ethnic groups. Considering this, one can state that the ultimate objective of ethnicity to the instrumentalists is driven by the interest of the groups which may be political or economic.

The instrumentalist approach attributes that ethnicity is circumstantially construct in a given society. If this is the case, it means that ethnicity is highly susceptible to manipulation; or better regarded as a social phenomenon constructed for mobilization. Balcha (2008) believes that ethnicity is constructed by particular groups of people driven by competition for socio-political and economic objectives. In essence, it is a socio-political and economic construct meant for specific interest. It is an adjustable political instrument to serve a particular objective and a more "convenient basis for mobilization" (Seol, 2008:345).

The instrumentalist approach can be regarded as a rational reaction to the demands of a situation or to the social pressure within the community or from another community. According to King (2002) ethnicity is a social construct. Thus ethnicity can undergo changes which explain why ethnic communities may not be static. They change from time to time, and are defined and structured to meet their community socio-political and economic interests, hence the description of ethnicity as a strategic instrument of a particular community for enforcing its goals and interests (Bacova, 1998). To the instrumentalist, the construction of ethnicity is for a purpose (social, political and economic).

According to Conversie (2006), radical instrumentalists believe that the nation does not correspond to any objective reality. They see sharp differences between political elites and their followers; where the latter are easily manipulated by the political elites. They are seen as ambitious social engineers who in an attempt to gain political control of the state stir up the emotions of the masses. Hale (2004), in his contribution posits that, without an underlying psychological theory, instrumentalists explain the political phenomenon as manipulation by the elite. This begs the question of why such manipulation succeeds. In essence, the psychological understanding of the people plays an important role in ethnicity. This, in other words, means that ethnic manipulation is a variable of the psychological understanding of the people. What this suggests is that the instrumentalists singled out the "manufacturers" (Conversie, 2006:17) of nations among those groups that have most to gain from it.

Explaining instrumentalism from the point of modernization theory, the instrumentalists believe that as long as people continue to interact as a result of modernization, ethnicity may likely fade away. Perhaps this is what informs King (2002) to see the ethnic group as a social organization. Thus through the process of modernization ethnicity is manipulated by the political elites, hence the process of ethnic politics. This is corroborated by Horowitz (1985) that ethnicity is multidimensional and therefore manipulable. Ethnicity thus is the product of competition for political and economic resources. The dynamics of ethnicity as they affect political development is perhaps due to the socio-political and economic differentiation in multi-ethnic states. That a community is seen as a means of achieving individual or group socio-political goals by the instrumentalist, means that the state is a modern organization, an invention, it is artificial, there is no blood relation and the fact that the state needs the support of its members makes it an invention, hence its susceptibility to manipulation.

Though the theory of instrumentalism emphasizes the group/individual struggle for economic and political value, the instrumentalist has been criticized for his narrow definition of ethnic interest as emphasizing socio-political and economic values. The assumption therefore is that ethnic groups, in as much

as they are still internally stratified, will still struggle over their socio-political status within such communities.

The instrumentalist has also been criticized for neglecting people's struggle over what Seol (2008:348) refers to as "ideal interest". Apart from socio-political and economic interest, people still struggle over the maintenance of their cultures and identities, their socio-political and economic differences notwithstanding. What this suggests is that there are ethnic manifestations that are primarily cultural and sometimes religious. For example, the conflict between the Zulus and the Ndebele in South Africa as well as among ethnic groups in Bangladesh has centered on the recognition of their socio-cultural status. Thus, the explanation of ethnicity centered on politics and the economy is perceived to have underrated the psychological and emotional power of ethnic bindings.

The instrumentalist has also failed to recognize or believe that the leaders in the mobilized groups may also be interested in preserving and maintaining their cultural heritage instead of trading it for socio-political and economic gain. This explains why a particular ethnic group may decide to support a leader they believe will support, preserve and promote their cultural heritage. For example black South Africans will always support a party/leader that will promote and preserve the culture of black South Africans.

One salient point that needs to be pointed out here is that the instrumentalist theory has not explained why ethnicity has become more of a basis for mobilization than any other phenomenon. Perhaps it is a result of the dynamism of ethnicity where people in every ethnic group can be seen as social actors with multiple kinds of social identity, (for example religion and social status). Without any point of contradiction this can coincide with the demands of every group, which has made the theory significantly more important for explaining socio-political struggles between ethnic groups.

One basic and significant difference between instrumentalism and primordialism is the basis of individual or group attachment to their community. To the instrumentalist it is on account of what, how and when the attachment to their community/ethnic group is beneficial to them or brings them practical advantages which may be political, social or economic. In a nut shell, individuals understand their closeness to their community/ethnic group as an instrument for achieving their goals. Whereas to the primordialist, even though there may be elements of gain or loss in their relationship to their community, the fact is, they are psychologically and emotionally attached to their community. As explained earlier, the political and economic benefits may be perpetually beneficial to the political class. The primordialists still believe so much in their sociobiological attachment to their community. Therefore both primordial and instrumental approaches are examples of an unnecessary polarization of inherently complimentary aspects of human life (Bacova, 1998).

4. Towards a theory of social and ethnic development

In the forgoing discussion we eluded to the contribution of strengths and weaknesses of the primordial and instrumental to the notion of ethnic development. It is apparent that both theories failed to provide any

direction towards inclusive development. However this inclusive development cannot be discussed solitarily without first looking at political and economic institutions through which the notion of inclusive development is explained. In the process a soft theory based on empirical evidence and good practices around the world is developed.

Institutions are seen as durable systems of established social rules and conventions that structure repeated human interaction through which a society (state) undertakes certain functions which may be political, economic or social (Hoggson, 2001, North, 1989). In essence, an institution is a regulatory agent that specifies and motivates how groups and individuals in a society (state) perform certain or specific socio-political and economic functions. In a multi-ethnic state, institutions no doubt would have a profound influence (negative or positive) on the pattern of socio-political and economic performance. Political and economic institutions are two variables that significantly rely on each other, giving us an insight into the fact that economic development may best be promoted by political institutions and vice versa.

Diamond (2012) observes that while economic institutions are critical for determining the prosperity of a state, it is the politics and political institutions that determine what economic institution a country has. By political institution we mean an organization which creates, enforces and applies laws that mediate/manage conflict, make policies on the economy and the social (regulatory and welfare agencies) system. Examples of political institutions include political parties, the courts etc. The term may also refer to the recognized rules and principles within which the above organizations operate including such concepts as the right to vote and to be voted for (Diamond, 2012). Political institutions affect economic institutions by providing the political framework that creates rules that either facilitate or militate against the growth of the economic institutions. Thus, inclusive political institutions will lead to progressive economic institutions. Political inclusivity is essential to the growth and well-being of the state, particularly multi-ethnic states.

On the other hand, economic institutions can be viewed as those institutions that perform economic functions in relation to establishing and protecting the economic rights of groups and individuals and as well permit cooperation in a state. Inclusive economic institutions are those that allow and encourage the participation of groups and individuals in economic activities and allow individuals to make the choices they wish, observes Diamond (2012). Inclusive economic institutions arise from political institutions that share political power, particularly in a multi-ethnic state instead of allowing power to be vested in individuals. In other words, political power rests on the broad participation of citizens in the decision making process. This would deprive the political class of their exclusive control of socio-political and economic power. Significantly, economic growth can be promoted by political institutions, the reason why Flachaire et al. (2011) assert that political institutions are a deep cause of development.

The above shows that good and workable political and economic institutions are unequivocally needed for the sustainability of a political system. In the words of Diamond (2012), "good institutions" refers to laws and practices that serve as a motivational factor for citizens (groups and individuals) to work hard, and become economically productive, and thereby enrich themselves as well as the state. Hence, good economic and political institutions will likely increase the possibility of resolving re-distributional conflicts in a state.

A close observation of the above submission shows that for political and economic institutions to function in a multi-ethnic state there has to be an inclusive development that will serve as an antidote to social-political exclusion, ethnic inequality and the hegemonic dominance of the political class. Inclusive development refers to the perception that every individual and group in a state (multi-ethnic) has equal socio-political and economic rights to be part of the society which invariably enhances governance and promotes effective institutions, sound socio-economic policies, and respect for values of every ethnic group. It is imperative for multi-ethnic states to involve every ethnic group in decision making process for political sustainability as well as effective ethnic development.

The empirical evidence from around the world and particularly Latin America indicates that inclusive development is obtainable in multi-ethnic states. Essentially, for groups to gain prominence, strength, as well as influence on national policies, Vega (2004) identified three important legal and constitutional developments that need to take place. First is a constitutional reform that will recognize their society as multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, thus recognizing the rights of every ethnic group. The second and third legal documents relate to and call for diversity by defending the rights of every individual as well as group to participate in governance. For example, in an attempt to curb the attempt at excluding culturally/ethnically defined groups, the Colombian constitution of 1991, chapter 1 Article 13 states that "the state will promote the conditions necessary in order that equality may be real and effective, and will adopt measures in favor of groups which are discriminated against or marginalized"(Colombia 1991 constitution). The constitution recognizes ethnic and cultural diversity as a fundamental principle of the state through which exclusive socio-political policies can be diffused; knowing fully well that socio-political exclusion of groups may lead to the inability of the groups affected to access socio-political and economic goods. The result of which will be conflict.

The inclusionary policies in the Latin American states of Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, Honduras, Paraguay, Mexico etc. seek to address the shared features of exclusion by breaking the intergenerational transmission of disadvantage; thus, giving them better access to opportunity in governance. One means through which this was achieved was through constitutional laws that recognize the multi-cultural diversities of the people and legal recognition of autonomous territories. Thus exclusiveness was put under check; and, as well, enhances groups' consciousness of developmental opportunities and socio-political and economic integration.

Buvinic (2004) explains that the common understanding of the features of exclusion which include those shared across excluded groups, and a comprehensive way of thinking about social policy and anti-exclusionism interventions will boost effective policy interaction, and by establishing a national civil and social rights framework, socio-political and economic discrimination and the causes of exclusion would be curtailed. Therefore there is a need for the adoption of inclusionary socio-political policies in Nigeria.

This approach to development no doubt requires the shifting of socio-political and economic project targets from individuals to groups and the disaggregation of the unit of analysis that defines the interaction between individuals and groups, opines Bunivic (2004). This approach, one can say, also requires a comprehensive socio-political and economic intervention to diffuse the multiple aspect of exclusion, such as discriminatory social practices, attitudes and beliefs. The argument here is that some states has been able to

stem social exclusion through the promotion of solidarity, social cohesion and a socio-political culture that accepts diversity by expanding and strengthening the leadership capacities of the excluded groups.

Ethnicity no doubt is a consequence of the mobilization and politicization of ethnic group identity (Egwu, 2007). The prospects of a multi-ethnic nation's development is engendered by a relationship between its ethnic groups devoid of friction over the allocation of socio-economic resources; and the creation of an enabling environment for socio-political and economically productive activity. Put in another word the socio-political and economic development of a country is brought about by the people. In his contribution Nyerere (1967) opines that the socio-political system must encourage the development of every group which relies upon itself for its own development and which knows the advantage of cooperation. In essence, an atmosphere of peace and political stability is uncompromisingly inevitable for development in a multi-ethnic state. When there are no socio-political distractions such as oppressive conditions, exclusion and inequality among the ethnic groups; what occurs is all-round development.

No doubt ethnic conflict is a significant feature of inter-ethnic competition for socio-political and economic resources in a multi-ethnic state but the question is why this conflict? Obviously there is an indication that there is socio-political and economic exclusion of individuals and groups, which is seen as the bane of development and a reflection of socio-cultural (ethnic) structural imbalance in the society, as well as the inability of the political class to mediate between differing ethnic groups. Ethnicity, no doubt, is more pronounced in competitive situations where available socio-political and economic resources are scarce in relation to the interests which grow around them, argued Nnoli (cited in Egwu, 2007). Considering the elements of ethnicity which include exclusiveness, significantly manifested in inter-group competition for socio-political and economic resources and the consciousness of being primordially one in relation to other, some ethnic groups unarguably will be in a disadvantaged position.

Given the plight of the disadvantaged position of some individuals and groups particularly the minorities in a multi-ethnic state, ethnicity is likely to be given a priority. However, it can be stemmed with the inclusion of every ethnic group in governance. This system will breed good governance where the socio-political and economic resources are distributed fairly among ethnic groups and where the rewards system will no longer be in the favor of only those who are in control of the state but also those who produce the resources. Good governance, here, is a universally accepted socio-political instrument that every nation can use to stem the challenges of political instability.

For real development to take place in a multi-ethnic political system there is need to create an atmosphere of peace and stability which will boost confidence and faith in every individual and group in the government, resulting in the adoption and implementation of inclusive socio-political system, as has been done in some Latin America states. What this means is that the political mobilization of ethnicity is a threat to national cohesion and the emergence of corporate identity in a multi-ethnic state. Therefore, an inclusive socio-political and developmental system is required.

Social inclusion can be viewed from the inclusion of the views of every group in the national economic and political debate and decision making as well as political representation of every group. Bolivia and Ecuador are examples of countries where political responsibilities are bestowed on every group. Central to the issue

of social inclusion Vega (2004) observes that the system requires a mentality within government which should materialize in more inclusive policies (social, political and economic) and also a greater consciousness within excluded groups regarding their responsibilities and duties. Thus, inclusive policies/governance calls for the groups' involvement to correct imbalances in access to political and economic goods in a multi-ethnic state.

Inclusiveness must be seen as an instrument of conflict management in a multi-ethnic state. Socio-political inclusion is a universally accepted solution to inequality and to discontent over exclusive socio-political policies in a multi-ethnic state. It is an attempt by government to respond to the view that existing socio-political inequalities cannot handle the demands to stem ethnicity in a multi-ethnic state.

The concept of socio-political and economic inclusion and exclusion emphasize how the benefits of development and political participation are inequitably or equitably distributed in a multi-ethnic state. Socio-political exclusion can be viewed as the inability of an individual or group to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of the country in which he/she lives. It is the denial of equal access to socio-political and economic opportunities imposed by certain groups (political class) in the society on others (Buvinic, 2004). Geddes (cited in Kaldur et al., n.d.) defines it as isolated from the mainstream of political life and from decisions about one's own life taken by others.

Socio-political exclusion impacts negatively on culturally/ethnically defined groups while inclusiveness promotes socio-political integration. Inclusive socio-political policies give room for productive political resources. They create an enabling environment for every ethnic group to participate in governance; it is also a positive development towards recognizing the socio-political rights of every ethnic group. The end product of this is development and stability. Thus, stability and sustainability of the political system in Nigeria, requires input from every ethnic group. The recognition of every ethnic group via their input to the political system will bring about healthy socio-political integration and a healthy political system.

Ethnicity can be harmonious and cooperative. Often it is the unacknowledged dimension of ethnicity that produces the key to its management (Osaghae, 2007). It is important to state here that the recognition of the position of each ethnic group in a Nigeria is very significant. This is because the knowledge based on the position of one ethnic group is unfinished, therefore the only and the best way to know and acknowledge the position of others is through an inclusive system which brings out the truth about the stand of every ethnic group in the polity.

The notion of ethnicity has long been used to indicate various axes of ethnic differentiation that eventually contribute to socio-political and economic inequality in multi-ethnic states. What this translates to is a political project that involves the search for a cohesive system of every ethnic group leading to national integration and understanding. This will eventually produce positive results and an inevitable socio-political transformation. Individuals and groups that are excluded from the mainstream of national life appear as victims of poor socio-political and economic policies.

5. Conclusion

Considering the relationship between socio-political and economic development which are dependable variables, political stability is a catalyst to the sustainability of other variables. Because ethnicity can be abused, through the ages ethnic elites have been using ethnic symbolism to attain and retain political power. No doubt, the challenges of ethnicity are unprecedented, considering its negative effect on groups that have long been excluded or marginalized. This raises the question of what the psychological needs of the people are that constitute each ethnic group, in an attempt to ensure the prevalence of national cohesion over ethnic affiliation. Without mincing words, the socio-political and economic inclusion of every group in governance which will eventually translate to the socio-political and economic development of each group seems to be the answer.

Ethnicity no doubt is a complex socio-political phenomenon, therefore socio-political and economic exclusion is not only ethically dangerous to socio-political development but also economically unproductive. It deprives groups and individuals of the opportunity of necessary development that can benefit the society. Therefore it is necessary to develop an integrative socio-political framework that will explicitly recognize the participatory role of every ethnic group; a system that is not ethnocentric and exclusionary; a system that recognizes that differences are important to development and that will encompass notions of equality, and acknowledgement of differential socio-political and economic power of every ethnic group. Hence, socio-political inclusion should be seen as central to political stability and socio-economic sustainability.

Acknowledgements

References

Bacova, V. (1998), "The Construction of National Identity-On Primordialism and Instrumentalism", *Human Affairs*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 29-43.

Balcha, B.G. (2008), "Ethnicity and Restructuring of the State of Ethiopia", Research working Paper No. 6, DIIPER and Department of History, International and Social Studies, Aalborg University, Denmark.

Buvinic, M. (2004), "Introduction: Social Inclusion in Latin America", in Buvinic, M., Mazza, J. and Deutsch, R. (Eds.), *Social Inclusion and Economic Development in Latin America,* Inter-American Development Bank, pp.3-33.

Calhoun, C. (1993), "Nationalism and Ethnicity", *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 19, pp. 211-239.

Constitution of the Republic of Colombia 1991. http://confinder.richmond.edu/admin/docs/colon (accessed on 10 July 2012).

Conversie, D. (2006), "Mapping the Field: Theories of Nationalism and the Ethnosymbolic Approach", in Leoussi, A.S., Grosby, S. (Eds.), *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the formation of Nations,* Edinburg University Press, Edinburg, pp.15-30.

Dekker, H., Malova, D. and Hoogendoorn, S. (2003), "Nationalism and Its Explanations", *Political Psychology*, Vol.24 No. 2, pp. 345-376.

Diamond, J. (2012), "What Makes Countries Rich or Poor?" [Review of the book *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* by Daron Acemoglu and James, A. Robinson] available at http:www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012 (accessed on 18 July 2012).

Egwu, S. (2007), "Power Sharing, Political Stability and Ethnicity in Africa", in Bassey, C.O. and Oshita O.O. (Eds.), *Conflict Resolution, Identity Crisis and Development in Africa,* Malthouse Press Ltd, Lagos, pp. 97-111.

Ericksen, T.H. (1991), "Ethnicity versus Nationalism", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 263-278.

Ericksen, T.H. (1993), *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspective*, Pluto Press, London.

Fearon, J.D. and Laitin, D.D. (2000), "Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity", *International Organization*, Vol. 54 No. 4, pp. 845-877.

Flachaire, E., Garcia-Penalosa, C. and Konte, M. (2011), "Political versus Economic Institutions in Growth Process", Aix-Marseille University, France, available at hal.inria.fr/docs/00/58/60/38/PDF/DTGREQAM 2011_20.pdf (accessed 17 June 2012).

Green, E.D. (2006), "Redefining Ethnicity", paper presented at the 47th Annual International Studies Association Convention, March, San Diego, CA, available at http:personal.Ise.ac.uk/green/ISA.pdf (accessed 30 May 2011).

Hale, H. E. (2004), "Explaining Ethnicity", *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 458-485.

Hodgson, G.M. (2001), *How Economics Forgot History*, Routledge, London.

Horowitz, D.L. (1985), *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (2008) "Nationalism and Nationality" available at http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/IG2-304530 (accessed 23 April 2011).

Kaldur, K., Faugen, K. and Sarin, T. (n.d.), "Political Inclusion and Participation", Paper presented at the 7th Framework Programme, Collaborative Small or Medium-Scale Focused Research Project. Oslo, Norway, available at www.ibs.ee/et/publikatsioonid/item/download/73 (accessed 27 March 2012).

King, L.D. (2002), "Nations without Nationalism: Ethno-Political Theory and the Demise of Nation-State", *Journal of Developing Societies*, Vol.18, pp. 354-364.

Lee, C., Lindstrom, R., Will, H. M. and Turan, K. (2002), "Ethnicity and Repression: The Ethnic Composition of Countries and Human Rights Violations", in Sabine, C.C. and Steven, C.P. (Eds.), The Systemic Study of Human Rights, http://www.mailer.fsu.edu/~whmoore/garnet-whoore/research/leetal.pdf (accessed 20 June 2012).

McCronne, D. (2002), "Who do you say you are? Making sense of national identities in Modern Britain", *Journal of Etnicities*, Vol. 2 No. 3, pp. 301-320.

North, D.C. (1989), "Institutions and Economic Growth: An Historical Introduction", *World Development*, Vol.17 No. 9, pp. 1319-1332.

Nyerere J. K, (1967), "Education for Self-reliance", Government Printer, Dar es Salaam: Tanzania.

Orlando, P. (1975), "Context and Choice in Ethnic Allegiance: A Theoretical Framework and Caribbean Case Study" in Glazer, N. and Moynihan, D. P. (Eds.), *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. pp. 305-349.

Osaghae, E.E. (2007), "Federalism and the management of ethnicity in Nigeria: 1999 Constitution in focus", in Bassey, C.O. and Oshita O.O. (Eds.), *Conflict Resolution, Identity Crisis and Development in Africa*, Malthouse Press Ltd, Lagos, pp.171-191.

Pieterse, J.N. (1993), "Varieties of Ethnic Politics and Ethnicity Discourse", working paper series No 154, presented at conference on Ethnicity, Identity and Nationalism in South Africa: Comparative Perspectives, Rhodes University Grahamstown, South Africa, April, available at repub.eur.nl/res/pub/18856/wp154/pdf (accessed 20 March 2012).

Salawu, B. and Hassan A.O. (2011), "Ethnic politics and its implications for the survival of democracy in Nigeria", *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 28-33.

Seol, B.S. (2008), "A Critical Review of Approaches to Ethnicity", *International Area Review,* Vol. 11 No. 12, pp. 333-364.

The South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2002), Oxford University Press, Cape Town.

Thorne, E.T. (2007), "Ethnic and Racial Political Organization in Latin America", in Buvinic, M., Mazza, J. and Deutsch, R. (Eds.), *Social Inclusion and Economic Development in Latin America,* Inter-American Development Bank, pp. 307-335.

Vanhanen, T. (2004) "Problem of Democracy in Ethnically Divided South Asian Countries", Paper presented at the 18th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies Panel 33: Problem of Democracy in South Asia, 6-9 July, Lund, Sweden, available at www.sasnet.lu.se/EASASpapers/32TatuVanhanen.pdf (accessed 20 July 2012).

Vega, N.P. (2004), "Social Inclusion and Indigeneous Peoples' Rights", in Buvinic, M., Mazza, J. and Deutsch, R. (Eds.), *Social Inclusion and Economic Development in Latin America*, Inter-American Development Bank, pp.55-61.

Young, M.C. (1986), "Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Class in Africa: A Retrospective", *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, Vol. 26, pp. 421-495.

Zenker, O. (2011), "Autochthony, ethnicity, indigeneity and nationalism: Time-honouring and state-oriented modes of rooting individual-territory-group triads in a globalizing world", *Critique of Anthropology*, Vol. 31 No.1, pp. 63-81.