



Ethnicity: A Social Pathology in Nigerian Federalism and Unity

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Abstract

Prior to colonialism the various groups that have formed the present day Nigeria hitherto existed as autonomous ethnic/tribal groups with distinct socio-cultural, political, religious, economic, historical and geographical backgrounds, and shared minimal or no contact at all. After the Brussels conference of 1890 which gave Britain the permission to take absolute political control of the territories under its watch, there came a need to weld the entire territories into one, for administrative convenience. This work thus, examined the phenomenon of ethnicity as a social pathology in Nigerian federalism and unity. It relied on secondary data and adopted the Durkheim's social regulation and functional theoretical perspectives to explain the phenomenon under review. It is argued that Nigeria has not been able to develop sustainable "peoplehood" as a nation since the historic amalgamation. Restructuring that entails a return to true federalism is recommended, instead of ethnic federalism as the "elixir" to the Nigerian ethnic problem and concludes that ethnicity is really a cog in the wheel of Nigeria's progress which must be decisively dealt with by legislation and its enforcement if Nigeria must continue to be a unity in diversity.

Key words: Ethnicity, Federalism, Social Pathology, Unity, Social Regulation, Collective Consciousness

1. Introduction

Nigeria is known across the world as one of the most highly endowed nations of the world in terms of human and natural resources, with a stable and friendly ecosystem that holds great potentials for development of her inhabitants. But like many other African countries of her kind, she is plagued with a large number of pathological issues which are social in etiology, infectious in character, and chronic in nature, and which seem to have

militated against her development even in the 21st century. Some of these pathologies include: ethnicity, corruption, religious intolerance, bad leadership, manipulation of the judicial and electoral systems, militancy/terrorism, and many more.

The geo-political entity known today as Nigeria is a product of various modifications made by the British during the colonial era. Afigbo and Uya (2004) noted that the evolution of Nigeria from about 1849, until its attainment of independence in 1960, is largely the story of the transformational activities of the British on the people and cultures of the Niger-Benue area. A major part of the transformation is the lumping together of various groups of people that hitherto existed under different names and territories, with distinct historical, political, geographical, religious, economic, and cultural backgrounds through the process of amalgamation. The amalgamation of different territories by Lord Lugard in 1914, under the name Nigeria, was to make for administrative convenience for the colonizers, and not for the unity and peaceful coexistence of the colonized people. This situation resulted in Nigeria being engaged in a forced political marriage not originally meant to produce any marital bliss for its partners, but for the economic gains of the architect of such a marriage. Britain, the architect of the marriage, egoistically arranged for the union solely in her economic and political interests.

Since the inception of Nigeria till date, attainment of sustainable national peace and unity has been a herculean task for successive administrations. This is because various contentions, agitations, and wrangling from different ethnic units, erupt at one point or the other within the polity, usually resulting in loss of lives and property and further increasing the estrangement in the relationship among ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria. The development is connected with the fact that originally, the Nigerian peoples have never really developed the feeling and sense of oneness and “peoplehood”. According to Charles (2014) “peoplehood” is formed when aggregating groups or individuals uphold the ‘we-ness’ in intergroup relations, and that when there is a feeling of ‘they-ness’, there is no unity but diversity and division. Thus, given the inability of the social aggregates (Nigerians) to develop a common social feeling and social bond, inclination and loyalty to ethnic and subcultural groups became the norm in Nigeria.

Nigeria practices a federal system of government which gives extensive powers to the federal/central government to control the resources of federating units, thereby increasing the desire of all federating units to control the centre. Being one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world (Ukiwo, 2005), with a population that is very highly ethnically conscious (Lewis, Etanibi, and Michael 2002), Nigeria is still in search for an elixir that can cure the “ethnicity epidemic” that has shaped the handling of national issues (by actors and spectators) with an “ethnically coated mentality”. We therefore set out to examine the phenomena forming the core narratives of this paper, namely: ethnicity, social pathology and federalism.

The term ethnicity is given different conceptualizations by various scholars. As a portable concept molded out of attitude, it is easy to carry and manipulate, and also very easy to talk about. To Marshall (1998), ethnicity refers to individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others to share common characteristics which

differentiate them from other collectivities in a society, within which they develop distinct cultural behaviour. Macionis (1989, 1998) conceived ethnicity as cultural heritage shared by a category of people who have common ancestors, language or religion that, together, confers a distinctive social identity. For IEI Global (nd) ethnicity is conceptualized as human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration, and that this belief must be important for group formation but does not matter whether an objective blood relationship exists. All these perspectives on ethnicity fall short of what it is. Ethnicity is simply a consciousness developed among people who have certain benefits to share but which are either in short supply or manipulated to favour certain sections than the other by leaders put in position of sharing such benefits. The tendency to manipulate power and resources to favour sections with cultural affinity by those at the helm of affairs connotes ethnicity. It is attitudinal and founded on competitive communalism.

In the field of Medicine, pathology refers to diagnosis and monitoring of disease by means of information gathered from microscopic examination of tissue specimens, cells, and body fluids and from clinical laboratory test (Insel and Roth, 2002). In other words, pathology simply refers to the presence of disease in living organisms and the activities surrounding its detection and handling through clinical techniques. In the social sciences, social pathology is used to refer to behaviours or activities that contravene social norms, usually leaving undesirable consequences for society as a social-living organism. White (nd) has noted that the term is always used technically to refer to deviant behaviors, or actions that societies consider as corrupt and intolerable, and Joseph (2010) added that just as human beings have to deal with pathogens attacking and destroying their bodies, so also does the social system have ills or diseases that are not caused by natural pathogens (germs) by social pathogens (uncultured/anomic behavior). Thus for the purpose of this paper, social pathology is used to refer to social ills/vices/problems/diseases perpetrated by members of society which disturb/disrupt/infect the smooth functioning of social system. Ethnicity has become a major social disease to warrant Crowther (1978) lamented that the major problem with Nigeria was the emergence of three majority ethnic groups each qualified to be a nation of its own. This is outside the thousands of micro-ethnicities co-existing alongside these mega ethnic groups making Nigeria perhaps the most plural and ethnically-coloured country on earth (Charles, 2011).

Federalism is a political system in which two or more governments share authority over the same geographical area. Dugger (nd) saw it as a method of government that allows two or more entities to share control over the same geographic region. For Anyaele (2003), a federal system of government is one in which governmental powers that exist in the country are shared between a central government that represents the whole country and government of component regions or states so that each government is legally and constitutionally independent and autonomous. In a federal system of government, political power is shared between the central or national government and component or federating units. Most democratic countries in the world operate a federal

system of government, and include the United States of America, Germany, Australia, Brazil, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Canada, Argentina, India, Nigeria, etc. It is worthy to note that the structure of the federal system of government practiced vary from country to country. For instance, whereas the structure of some federal systems make for a central government that controls the whole country, some others give more power to the state or component governments. Also, in some federations there are clear divisions in the law-making powers of the different entities, while in other federations the powers overlap. However, federal systems are always governed by President with a *Congress/Legislature*, or a Prime Minister with a *Parliament*. The Nigerian Federal structure overwhelmingly gives more power to the President while federating units migrate to the center to beg from the crumbs that may be left depending on the temperament of the seating President. Federalism has become so pathological that the country seems to be pushed to the wall for a revolutionary action.

2. Objectives

The paper is driven by the following objectives

- To discuss the origin of Nigeria as the root of prevailing social pathology
- To situate constitutional arrangements since amalgamation as further compounding pathological symptoms of ethnicity
- To provide a theoretical background to the problem of ethnicity and lack of peoplehood in Nigeria
- To proffer solutions to cope with ethnicity and governance in Nigeria.

3. Forensic Analysis Of Ethnicity: A Review of Nigerian Constitutions

The amalgamation of 1914 was very successful in unifying territories of interest under a common name (Nigeria), but woefully failed to unite the feelings, identities, values, and aspirations of the people in relation to the country. This had great impacts on the country's political evolution over time, as ethnicity in various shades became embedded in various developmental concerns of the country from the colonial period till date. This section is thus intended to explore the embeddedness of ethnicity in the constitutional development of Nigeria.

The first colonial attempt towards constitutional development in Nigeria, after its amalgamation, was the establishment of THE NIGERIAN COUNCIL in 1914 (Anyaele, 2003). The council comprised 32 members out of which only 6 Nigerians served as unofficial members appointed to represent chieftaincy interest. They consisted of 2 Emirs from the North, the Alaafin of Oyo, and one member each from Calabar, Lagos, and Benin-Warri areas. It is worthy to point out here that ethnic sentiments hardly featured in this council as the Nigerian representatives were very apathetic to the affairs of the council. This is because apart from being basically traditional rulers and serving only as an advisory body to Lugard on chieftaincy matters (with no executive or legislative authority), their resolutions had no force of law. This notwithstanding, the spread of appointments was representative of the north, west, mid-west and south east parts of the country. Enforcement or no-enforcement of resolutions were camouflaged under a go-

between foreigner whose office carried the burden of administration. Ethnicity was not pronounced and orchestrated.

The second attempt was the establishment of the Clifford Constitution of 1922. This constitution provided for a legislative and an executive council, and introduced the elective principle. The legislative council comprised 46 members out of which only 10 Nigerians were (unofficial) members. From these 10, 4 were elected, (3 from Lagos and 1 from Calabar) while the other six were appointed by the governor (Omipidan, 2015). It is worthy to note here that this constitution completely excluded the Northern Protectorate from the council, thus creating a fertile atmosphere for the expression of ethnic sentiments by the North and other ethnic groups that felt marginalized. This marked the beginning of ethnic agitation in Nigeria due to administrative flaws and, in fact, the emergence of a crack on the unity of Nigeria.

The third attempt was the establishment of the Richards Constitution of 1946 which aimed at promoting the unity of Nigeria, acquiring greater participation of Nigerians in their own affairs, evolving a constitutional framework to cover all parts of Nigeria etc. The constitution provided for a central legislative council for the whole country and regional assemblies in the North, East, and West to cater for the political needs of the people in their respective areas. The central legislature comprised 44 members containing 20 Nigerians - 9 from the North, 6 from the West and 5 from the East- all serving in unofficial capacity. By dividing the country into three regions along the 3 major ethnic groups, and by increasing the Northern representation in legislative council against that of the East and West combined, the constitution as Anyaele (2003) opined, fanned the embers of ethnicity, (tribalism) and sectionalism in Nigeria thus gradually making ethnicity a new bride in the Nigerian administration.

Richard's constitution, like Clifford's, also had inherent problems which led to its collapse and the subsequent enactment of Macpherson's constitution in 1951. Prior to the enactment of Macpherson's constitution, a constitutional conference was held in Ibadan in 1950, to address the complaints leveled against Richard's constitution. Among the proposals made at the conference was to allocate 50% of the central legislative seats to the North while the remaining 50% were shared between West and East combined. This proposal really materialized upon the enactment of Macpherson's constitution, when out of the 136 legislative seats of the central legislative council, 68 were given to the north while 34 seats each were given to both East and West. Thus, like the other ones, the constitution rather promoted the ethnic consciousness than unity in the system. The Macpherson's constitution broke down as a result of inherent defects and led to the making of the Lyttleton constitution. When the constitution came into effect in 1954, it established a federal house of representatives composed of 184 members out of which 92 seats were given to the North while the remaining 42 seats were shared between the West and East. Thus, Lyttleton Constitution, rather than allay the fears of other constituent regions (resulting from the Northern region being larger than the Southern regions put together), heightened the ethnic dichotomy within the polity and contributed greatly to its collapse.

The eventual collapse of the Lyttleton constitution necessitated the London conference of 1957, to address the challenges that plagued the nation, one of which was the fears of minority ethnic groups in each region, and their demand for creation of more states. Resolutions from the conference brought about the setting up of a minority ethnic group commission of inquiry headed Sir Henry Willink. In its recommendation to the Lagos Constitutional Conference of 1958, the Commission agreed that some of the fears of the minority were genuine, but didn't believe that creating new regions was the most effective way to allay such fears. It rather recommended the entrenchment of a bill of the right to protect the fundamental human rights of the minority in subsequent constitutions (Anyaele, 2003). This entrenchment was a mere administrative fraud to conceal imperfections in the Nigerian federalism. It was a grand deceit to ignore the yearnings of micro-ethnicities and jettison their aspirations in the federal system that continued to favour the north maximally and west/east cautiously. A new scenario of Nigerian ethnicity problem emerged : two majorities (Igbo and Yoruba) against one majority group (Hausa-Fulani), and the three major blocks against all minority groups housed in their respective political domains.

Upon the attainment of independence, an independence constitution was enacted in 1960. The constitution adopted Sir Henry Willinks commission's recommendation and included in the constitution a long list of fundamental human rights to protect the minority citizens. However, this did not allay the feelings of domination and marginalization of the minority ethnic groups by the majority ethnic groups. Thus, agitations for creation of more regions continued which the independence constitution could not address until its abandonment in 1963 for the republican constitution which was instrumental to the creation of the Mid-Western region out of the western region. It is worthy to note that the period from 1960 to 1966 was characterized by widespread inter and intra-ethnic hostilities which culminated into the military intervention in partisan politics in 1966. The period of military rule from 1966 to 1979 also had a fair share of manifestations of ethnicity in Nigeria. These ethnic manifestations were significantly responsible for most of the events that took place within the period, including the first military coup of 15th January 1966, the counter coup of 29 July 1966, the Nigerian Civil War that broke out from 1967 to 1970, the creation of twelve states from the four regions, etc. Meanwhile all other constitutions such as the second republican constitution of 1979, the 1989 constitution of the Federal Republic, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic, and the current 1999 constitution as amended, thrived on the foundation of the previous ones and possessed the imbalances in addition to creating other horrendous ones that made ethnicity to linger. Moreover, even with the creation of thirty six (36) states, the feeling of domination, marginalization, and discrimination continues to increase among members of the minority and majority ethnic groups in Nigeria.

5. Nigerian Federalism: Origin, Structure, And The Ethnic Problem

(a) Origin of the Nigerian federalism

The emergence and practice of federalism differ across countries. Scholars have argued that the origin of federalism is a critical factor in its successful practice (Babalola, 2013),

and for Hicks (1978), the historic origin of federations influences the structure of their constitution as well as their working. Meanwhile, Stepan (2001) emphasized the need for scholars of federalism to distinguish between the main purposes behind the formation of federation, and while writing on the modes of formation of federal creations, Stepan (2005) identified three typologies of federal formations namely: “coming together” federations; “holding together” federations; and “putting together” federations. He described coming together federations as previously sovereign entities that united while retaining their individual identities e.g. America, Switzerland, and Australia. Holding together federations on the other hand is used to describe cases where certain constituent units that were not sovereign and characterized by “historical and political logic” decide to merge and become a federation, e.g. Nigeria and India. He further described a “putting together” federation as one in which previously independent states are merged together through the use of force, e.g. former Soviet Union.

Apart from the ‘merger of convenience’ single-handedly done by Lugard and consequent emergence of constitutional craftsmanship in Nigeria thereafter, there seems to be no agreement among scholars regarding the exact origin of as well as the factors responsible for the emergence of federalism in Nigeria. Whereas some like (Anyaele, 2003) see it as a product of the British colonial authorities, some others like (Maddox, 1941; Awa, 1964; Adamolekun and Ayo, 1989 and Babalola, 2013) all see it as a product of a strong desire expressed by Nigerian regional leaders, backed by compromises and concessions between them and their colonial overlords. That is why Babalola (2013) asserts, in strong terms, that it is misleading for anyone to argue that a federal political framework was imposed on Nigeria and concludes that such argument would be a misrepresentation of Nigeria’s political history. Contrariwise, in this paper, we like to categorically state that: (1) the federation known today as Nigeria is only a product of the ‘putting together or merging together’ arrangement of the British during the colonial period, which involved the lumping together of different autonomous ethnic groups with different historical, cultural, and territorial backgrounds, (2) this ‘putting together or merging together’ arrangement was to make for administrative convenience of the colonizer and not based on the collective conscience and desire of the colonized people to live together, and (3) the desires, compromises, and concessions that the nationalists and regional leaders expressed or made towards federalism, came in the later years of their colonial experience and not from the beginning of colonialism. They were like a people who became caught in a web and decided to fathom a survival strategy for themselves while in the web. That web was erroneously assembled and has constituted a social pathology that should be diagnosed and treated. This paper maintains therefore, that Nigeria federation is an imposition masterminded by Britain. We here attempt to trace the power sharing character of Nigerian federation from 1914.

According to Anyaele (2003), Nigerian federalism can be traced back to 1914 when the northern and southern protectorates were amalgamated under a unitary kind of administration, and involved the sharing of governmental powers between the central government (headed by the then Governor- General) and the governments of the northern and southern protectorates (headed by the Lieutenant -Governors). In other words, the

existence and recognition of the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria as near autonomous entities, (yet under a central administration), made the then administrative system to start wearing the looks of a federal system. Furthermore, the Richards constitution of 1946 gave more impetus to the practice of federalism when it divided the country into three regions-Northern, Eastern, and Western regions with Lagos as the centre serving as the seat of the central legislative and executive councils. Further support into the practice of federalism was given by the Macpherson's constitution of 1951 when, in addition to the existing three regions, Lieutenant governors were appointed to oversee the regions, while the regional legislative and executive councils were granted powers to exercise authority in their respective regions.

The Lyttleton constitution of 1954 is usually given the credit for introducing true federalism in Nigeria. This is because it was this constitution that removed the final shades of unitary state from Nigeria and actually shared governmental powers between the central and regional governments, as well as restructuring the judiciary (by the establishment of a supreme court) to be at par with the federal structure of the country. Suffice it to say, without exception to the military regimes, that every other constitution that came into force in Nigeria, including the Independence constitution of 1960, the Republican constitution of 1963, the second Republican constitution of 1979, the Nigerian constitution of 1999, and the present Nigerian constitution of 1999 as amended, adopted federalism as a system democratic rule. In other words, what was initially and imposition subsequently became the practice and a style.

(b) Structure of Nigerian Federalism and the Ethnic Problem

From the colonial era to the present democratic dispensation (except in the Ironsi 1966 very brief militarized Unitary government), Nigerian federation has always had an administrative structure that permits the sharing of governmental powers between the central government and component units or regions. However, this power sharing is arranged in such a manner that allows the central government to wield most of the constitutional powers of constituent political units or states in country. The present structure of Nigerian federalism has a power sharing arrangement, in which governmental powers are shared between the federal, state, and local governments, and such powers are enshrined in the exclusive, concurrent, and residual legislative lists of the constitution. The Exclusive legislative list contains items which the federal government alone can legislate upon. Items in such list include currency, defense, international relations, customs, immigration, mining, census etc. The concurrent legislative list contains items which both the federal and state governments can jointly legislate upon. Items found in such list include education, health, commerce, religion, local government, taxes, antiquities and monument, etc. However, the residual list contains all matters not identified in the exclusive, concurrent, and the local government lists and come under the jurisdiction of the states. They include, among others, health services, rural development, and social welfare.

The arrangement of the constitution by its originators makes for a very strong federal government and a seriously weak state or regional government, thus constituting a serious deviation from what true federalism should be. This is because given the exclusive

right to legislate on a wide range of issues (most of which are domiciled within the states) the federal structure rather deprives most states of their potentials to develop themselves using their local resources. This then created a situation in which most states of the federation depend entirely on the federal government for survival. The consequence is an ever rising demand/desire for control of the federal government by members of different ethnic groups, as that alone guarantees members of one ethnic group control over the lives, resources, and aspirations of other ethnic groups of the federation. This desire clearly manifested in the various coups and counter-coups (including failed and successful ones), and the sit-tight tendency that characterized the military regimes in Nigeria, in which one ethnic group - the Fulani, has dominated the political scene for almost thirty years. This also keeps manifesting in the present day democracy where contest for the seat of the President usually generates a lot of heat which, most times, threatens the peaceful coexistence, security, and overall unity of the nation arising from the lack of trust among members of the different ethnic groups and the high level of contempt that has developed among the people over time.

6. Theoretical Input

For the purpose of this paper, the *Social Regulation* aspect of Emile Durkheim's organismic-functional theory is adopted to explain the phenomenon of ethnicity in Nigerian federalism and unity. Durkheim's organismic-functional theory is a framework that envisions society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability (Macionis, 1997). The theory emphasizes the interrelationship and togetherness of parts as a prerequisite for the stability, healthiness, and smooth functioning of the whole, and without which a system collapses. Proponents of this theory include Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and later Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, etc. According to Durkheim, societies, especially the pre-industrial ones, are not bound by a strong tradition that operates like *social cement* because of their *mechanical solidarity*. One-man-entity encapsulates community living, which informs that a single individual can be a wine tapper in the morning, a builder and farmer in the afternoon and a tailor in the night to provide for himself and the family (Charles, 2014). He may not rely so much on his neighbours to earn a living and survive in the society. This *social cement* which was lacking in pre-industrial society in economic and political spheres was later engineered by religion. According to Durkheim, religion builds *collective conscience*, providing a solidarity which never existed before within such societies. With the new *collective consciousness*, the pre-industrial communities were able to unite for a common purpose when an individual or group injured this feeling. This meant that the injury done to a person was an injury done to all. Communities were held together by symbols of oneness called *collective representations*, made possible by religion.

In industrial and modern societies, there exists what Durkheim called *Organic Solidarity*. This refers to social bonds, based on shared morality, that unite members of industrial societies and enhance the survival of such societies. For Durkheim, (cited in Macionis, 1997) organic solidarity springs from division of labour (specialization) and a feeling of differentiation for a purpose (overall unity of the community). People have an

automatic sense of belonging (oneness) so as to gain from each other's strength and progress. A person or group that withdraws specialized services usually performed by him/her or group from the community, renders the entire community distressed. Applying this to the Nigerian society, one can adduce even from the abundance of specialties in all regions the inability or reluctance of the various ethnic groups that make up Nigeria to develop organic and collective consciousness as a strong factor. This is responsible for lack of true federalism and unity in the country. This can be attributed to lack of *Social Regulation* popularized by Emile Durkheim, in our federal system. Social regulation holds the constituent parts together without rancor or acrimony. Social regulation can be low, high or not existent. High social regulation breeds high social integration and therefore high organic solidarity and high collective consciousness.

In Nigerian federalism, social regulation of our laws, policies and programs is low and/or nonexistent and therefore harbours all social evils that have plagued and weakened our collective consciousness thus having a strangulating hold of ethnicity in Nigeria. A society with low or non-existent social regulation is neck-deep in anomie and criminality. Since there is no more social regulation to whip people into line, a situation of normlessness/lawlessness is created in the polity (Charles, 2014) where ethnicity thrives and blossoms. Normlessness results from inability of the society to provide moral standards and moral guides both in policy output and behavior (Macionis, 2010). Lack of social regulation depreciates social integration and extols social conflict that unsettles the system. This results in social behavior that could best be understood in terms of tension and conflict between groups and individuals, and further suggests that society is an arena of ethnicity in which struggles over scarce resources take place (Vago, 1989). A conflict analysis is chronically embedded in lack of social regulation in a system. Rather than encourage order, togetherness and collective consciousness in the society, social structure typically adorns ethnic consciousness and ethnic solidarity. Applying this theory to the Nigerian situation, one can easily situate the reasons for the numerous latent and manifest inter-ethnic tensions, agitations, struggles, and conflicts within the system. Since the making of Nigeria and its adoption of 'ethnic federalism', the center continues to harmonize ethnicity for its gains, the periphery organizes ethnicity to unseat the center, while the ethnic micro-minority strategizes for resource control. This, indeed, is the ethnic *python-dance* that ravages the Nigerian society.

7. Ethnicity: A Social Pathology In Nigerian Federalism And Unity

Nigeria, like USA, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Argentina, etc., operates a federal system of government, but her's is a rare kind of federalism embedded in ethnicity and clannishness which has become too pathological for survival as a united federation. First is the issue of power sharing in which the constitution reserves a wide range of powers for the federal government and limited powers for states or federating units. This makes it possible for the federal government to control the states and put them under its apron-string, thus making them largely dependent on her (the federal government) for their survival. Second is the issue of monopolization of state-owned natural resources, by the federal government, thereby denying the states the right to exploit their God-given

resources for own development. The consequence of these anomalies is a steady rekindling of ethnicity with its attendant challenges.

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation which, having been created by the British to meet her colonial administrative convenience, became plunged into a myriad of challenges which are still trending and threatening her existence till date. Umezina (2012) described Nigeria as a mishmash of over 250 ethnic groups, each of which is pushing for recognition and relevance in the political arena; each having terrible anxiety of being dominated by others; and each crying of political marginalization. The cry, according to Umezina (2012), appeared to be getting louder with each passing electoral year, and even seems to threaten the corporate existence of the nation. Thus, ethnicity constitutes a kind of social pathology (a social disease) which is continuously eating up Nigeria in various ways:

1. Ethnicity was seriously behind the various coups, counter coups including failed ones, and their aftermaths.
2. Ethnicity was behind the 30 months civil war that consumed lots of lives and property of Nigerians between from 1967 to 1970.
3. Ethnicity is responsible for the tensions and turbulence that usually characterize Nigeria's general elections over the years. The killings in the north, associated with the outcome of 2011 presidential elections, are one among numerous cases at hand.
4. Ethnicity is behind the development of contempt against members of different ethnic groups in Nigeria. This accounts for the confrontations, complaints, wrangling, jesting, and the use of all manner of derogatory adjectives to describe Nigerian presidents especially if not from the preferred ethnic group.
5. Ethnicity is behind the emergence of "sacred cows and untouchables" within the political system who could violate constitutional provisions with impunity. Some are sacked or suspended but called back under ethnically defined terms.
6. Ethnicity is responsible for the wrong mentality that a President/Governor popularly voted into office by constituents groups during elections must begin his developmental programmes and projects from his home town, and not from a needs-assessment based on a scale of preference. This is a major reason a former President was tongue-lashed and caricatured by most people from the South-South for concentrating most of his development activities in the north relative to his geo-political zone in general, and his home town in particular.
7. Ethnicity is responsible for seating President's concentration of his appointments (of heads of security and vital offices within the country) in the North, which in most cases result in the compulsory retirement of senior officers from certain ethnic groups, to create room for other immediate younger ones from favoured ethnic groups.
8. Ethnicity is behind the high handedness of government and its agencies towards some organizations, and lackadaisical attitude towards herdsmen's killings across various states, as well as their illegal possession of firearms and ammunitions.

9. Ethnicity is responsible for the death of public recruitment exercises in most government establishments and the emergence of underground or covert recruitment methods that favour indigenes of few ethnic backgrounds against others.
10. Ethnicity is responsible for the development and expression of resentment (overtly or covertly) by most Nigerians over merely being erroneously associated with “some other” ethnic groups.

Ethnicity is seriously behind the social phenomena of ethnocentrism, prejudice, labeling, and hate speech, and the coinage of derogatory adjectives and nicknames for people from different ethnic groups. In all, ethnicity sows the seed of “economy/polity of affection” in all ramifications and selfish attitude to development in Nigeria. Odukaeze (2016) notes, that Nigerians are fanatics when it comes to ethnicity, adding that instead of harnessing our ethnic diversity to a developmental advantage, they have rather become slaves to ethnicity. All these pose serious threats to the unity and peaceful coexistence of the federation and needs to be addressed as a fact of social etiology for a healthy and vibrant nation. This scenario of ethnic federalism must be replaced by true federalism.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

Ethnicity is a social pathology and like any pathological condition, it constitutes a real cog in the wheel of Nigerian federalism and unity. It is a social problem and must be sociologically handled to forestall impending collapse of Nation-Nigeria and consequently propel her to sustainable growth and development. Indeed, ethnicity has brought untold hardship, pains, losses in human and material forms, upon Nigeria and the citizenry. Therefore, if Nigeria must continue to exist as one, concerted reforms have to be made to tackle this hydra-headed monster code-named ethnicity and true federalism must replace ethnic federalism.

In order to put an end to the problem of ethnicity and allow Nigerian federalism to work, the following recommendations are made:

- Nigeria must, as a matter of fact reorganize or restructure her federal system of government. This entails:
 - i) enthroning true federalism in which states are granted more political power than the centre and ethnicity is legislated against.
 - ii) allowing states to control their own resources, generate their revenues, and develop their domains at their own pace different from the centre;
 - iii) allowing states to make financial contribution to the federal government based on certain determined formula as is done in most federations;
- Politics, especially at the centre, must be made less financially lucrative and to rather require more of integrity and the possession of broad-based knowledge and experience in stimulating economic growth, overall development and the cultures that make up Nigeria.
- The country must evolve a digital political process in which voting is done online to reduce the risks associated with manual voting that is characterized by ethnic manipulation.

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