

## **An Assessment Of The Impact Of Politics Of Identity On Nigeria's Foreign Policy In The Fourth Republic, 1999-2019**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Since Nigeria's political independence in 1960 up to the Fourth Republic, the country's foreign policy has been negatively affected by the problem of Politics of Identity. This has resulted into disarticulated and badly implemented foreign policies over the years. Politics of identity in Nigeria, which often manifests in tribal/ethnic, religious, regional/sectional and class, has been coming into conflict with the overall national foreign policy objectives. The study is a qualitative one where data was generated mainly from secondary sources through the scrutiny of academic journals, textbooks, internet materials and magazines. The data was analyzed through explanatory method. Concepts of Identity, Politics and Foreign Policy as well as the Realist Theory have been clarified which served as frameworks for the study. At the end of the study, recommendations have been proffered towards the elimination of foreign policy inputs emanating out of identity politics and the projection of national interests as vital inputs in Nigeria's foreign policy. Principal among these recommendations is the need for mainstreaming and elevation of nationalism above any other considerations in Nigeria's foreign policy from conception to implementation where Nigeria will assert its sovereign independence as an emerging third world power and interact with other international actors for greater returns in terms of economic benefits and rewards.*

**Keywords: Politics, Identity, Foreign, Policy, Nationalism and Benefits.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Even when Nigeria has been conducting foreign policy and international relations from the First Republic up to the Fourth Republic, it has not projected the country as respectable key global player that ought to have benefited tremendously from all her international transactions. Nigeria's foreign policy has been gagged by the serious problem of Politics of Identity, which made the country to benefit less from her international interactions and transactions. The enthusiasm of exiting prolonged years of military regimes that created negative image for Nigeria, made political leadership of the Fourth Republic to initially and temporarily sweep

politics of identity under the carpet. However, no sooner civil democratic experimentation of the Fourth Republic began to stabilize, politicians began to re-introduce dangerous politics of identity into all public policies and more particularly foreign policy. This politics of identity in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, which manifests in tribe/ethnic, religion, sectional and class, has tended to impede the formulation of nationally goal-oriented foreign policy. Nigeria's foreign policy in the First Republic has been heralded with much accolade and respect in the first three years. However, the antics of 1962/63 electioneering campaigns and of the election proper smeared by politics of identity not only brought the First Republic to its knee on January 15, 1966; but it set the stage for a very murky foreign policy and international relations for the country more especially during the period of the civil war (1967-1970). The Nigerian military, which capitalized on this politics of identity to capture political power, exploit and utilize it to perpetuate their stay in power for decades.

The military regimes between 1985 and 1998 in particular operated prebendal politics where foreign policies were nothing but the reflection of the interests of the military leaders and the interest of the group or class they belonged to and identified with. The first major consequence of politics of identity re-introduced by the military was the explosion of ethno-religious crisis of Kafanchan. Mark Anikpo recounted that in 1987, Kafanchan erupted into a violence that ignited pre-existing political tension against the Hausa-Fulani (Moslem) hegemonic domination of a hitherto Christian-dominated Southern Kaduna. This crisis according to him resonated throughout Kaduna State in violent clashes between Christians and Moslems irrespective of their states of origin. This was followed by another but more violent ethno-religious clashes between the Kataf and Hausa-Fulani in Zangon Kataf that resulted into wanton destruction of lives and property (Anikpo, 2007).

Events preceding the botched Third Republic and its strangulation in June, 1993 threw Nigeria's foreign policy in disarray. This is backed by the lamentation of Emmanuel Okpokpo where he stated that the Babangida regime gave a lethal blow to Nigeria's image abroad and its foreign policy in particular. He further stated that violations of the New Global Agenda – principally human rights, good governance and democratization set Nigeria at a collision course with the international community. That Nigeria's foreign policy under Abacha did not fare better either. He further lamented that the hanging of the 'Ogoni Nine' (Ken Saro Wiwa and eight other environmentalists) resulted into the crude mishandling of Nigeria's foreign policy where records showed that Nigeria under Abacha was like a country without a foreign minister and foreign policy during that period (Okpokpo, 2004).

Most foreign policy inputs and the subsequent outputs then and even now are smeared with politics of identity, which have tended to impede any meaningful pursuance of the national interests at the international level. This is because of crisis of identity at the domestic level. It is

this negative role of identity politics on Nigeria's foreign policy that informs the motivation for the study; which is aimed at unearthing the root causes and proffering workable solutions.

#### **AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The major aim of the study is to assess how politics of identity has impacted on Nigeria's foreign policy in the Fourth Republic. The specific objectives are:

1. To assess how politics of identity had deprived Nigeria's foreign policy of highly qualitative inputs from critical stake holders.
2. To determine whether sub-nationalist politics of identity had made Nigeria's foreign policy to pursue sectional interest instead of national interest in the external environment.
3. To suggest alternatives/strategies on how to eradicate sub-nationalist identity in Nigeria and the promotion of national identity to service as an effective launch-pad for the prosecution of Nigeria's foreign policy.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The study is a qualitative one where secondary sources of data were mainly utilized in generating data for the study. The research, which is an assessment of the impact of politics of identity on Nigeria's Foreign Policy in the Fourth Republic, is essentially descriptive and explanatory.

#### **Sources of Data**

The secondary source of data collection was the one adopted and utilized in generating data for the study through document studies. Relevant documents on politics of identity and Nigeria's foreign policy were scrutinized. Documents scrutinized include official documents such as annual reports, internal memoranda and policy manuals. Other documents included published materials such as textbooks, academic journals, conference papers, newspapers, magazines and internet materials.

#### **Data Analysis**

Discourse analysis technique was adopted in analyzing data collected/generated on the impact of politics of identity on Nigeria's foreign policy in the Fourth Republic. Data collected/generated were discussed drawing inference from them. The critical discourse technique was involved at some points in the course of the analysis. The analysis also covers the assessment of how politics of identity had deprived Nigeria's foreign policy of highly qualitative inputs from critical stake holders; as well as the determination of effects of sub-nationalist politics of identity on Nigeria's

foreign policy that led to the pursuit of sectional interest instead of national interest in the external environment.

### CONCEPTUAL/THEORETICAL CLARIFICATION

The concepts of identity, politics and foreign policy as well as the realist theory are hereby defined, clarified and adopted as frameworks for the study:

#### IDENTITY

The concept of identity as any other concept in the social sciences does not lend itself easily to definition, such that scholars from each discipline have approached it from different perspectives. Most definitions given by scholars view it from individual/personal identity, communal identity, sectional identity, national identity, etc. For Snegovaya, M. (2015), he defines national identity as the collective understanding of a group of people and the feeling that they are a single nation with common values and a myth of common heritage and shared identity. His definition rightly depicts the context of this study. Also toeing the course of national identity, the duo of Ndom, D. A. and Ekekwe, E. N. (2015) defines it as the feeling of oneness by any collection of people. They went on to add that this feeling of course imbues in them the willingness to live and work together for a common course and for the defence of the nation. That the 'we' feeling generated by this sense of national identity among a people imbues in them the commitment to defend the nation which represents the platform upon which their commonalities are better projected and protected. The paraffin wax for solidifying this is the perception of the existence of a mutually beneficial bond between the people and the nation.

Beyond the establishment of national identity on the basis of the myth of a common ancestry and acculturation, Flahive (2007) maintains that it is engendered by a reciprocal cultural interaction among groups which provides another process for the evolution of national identity. This implies that national identity is not only required because individuals are ethnically or religiously homogenous, but also on the basis of shared values – through a civic process in which diverse entities are joined together for the fulfillment of common aspirations and values cherished by the affected identities. He further elaborated that states with common ancestry more especially those composed primarily of one major ethnic nationality tend to build their national identity on the basis of their shared common ancestry or ethnic homogeneity. He cited example of Japan, which constructed her identity on this, where they consider any non-Japanese as the 'other'. The Japanese case led to the feeling of absolute nationalism and patriotism that made it to assert not only her sovereign independence in the international arena, but also her emergence as a medium power in the events preceding the Second World War (WW II).

Using the United States of America (USA) and Australian situations for illustration, the Bradley Project in 2008 based the national identity issue on common values. They went on to

add that differences in racial, ethnic, cultural and economic backgrounds notwithstanding, the existence of common values such as freedom, equality and justice to which members of different identities aspires, form another basis for the building of a national identity. Letchworth (2014), on his part focused attention on the existence of common national symbols through which all segments of the society can be identified with, which represents the basis for their identity.

Bechholfer and McCrone (2009) stress that shared commonalities among a people constitute a cord that generates the ‘we’ feeling among members of a society. This they uphold injects in the citizens the spirit of prior loyalty to the nation – a resolve to always commit to the cause of the nation and possibly pay the ‘*supreme price*’ (sacrifice) if situations demand. They went on to add that citizenship in civilized societies often invoke in people the spirit of nationalism, and that nationalism is a taken-for-granted ideology, which binds people to the state, or the nation. In a Country guided by absolute nationalism, people fight and die for the nation with alarming zeal and willingness.

## **POLITICS**

Politics is as old as the advent of organized human activity itself. However, the widespread utilization of the concept could be traced to the evolution of the Greek City States. In spite of its old origin and universal application, the concept politics does not lend itself easily to specific definition. Hence, it has no universally acceptable definition. Most definitions tend to emphasize one aspect of politics or the other. For instance, people see politics only in terms of partisanship where it is viewed as the activities of political parties usually linked with tricks, blackmails, manipulations, violence and assassinations. This according to Saleh Bailey is a mistaken view of politics; where he maintains that partisan politics is an essential feature of politics, but not its subject matter (Saleh, 2014).

For some scholars, politics is seen as the science or art of government. The study of politics concerns itself with the life of men in relation to organized States. It is seen as that ‘art’ dealing with the form of organization and the administration of the State; and the regulation of its relation with other States. Others see politics as that power relation consisting fundamentally of relations of super-ordination and sub-ordination of dominance and submission of the government and the governed. Thus, the scientific study of politics is the study of these relationships. It is also viewed as the authoritative and legitimate allocation of values (Laski 1967). Lenin Vladimir (1973), defines politics as - “who does what and when”. While Mao Se-Tung (1909) defines politics as “war without blood-shed”. Harold Lasswell (1936), whose view almost tally with that of Lenin; sees politics as the study of “who gets what, when and how?” Here politics is seen to have reasoned out the disagreement about the allocation of scarce resources among individuals.

A more comprehensive definition of politics is that which was given by Robert Dahl who sees politics as the process in the social system that is not necessarily confined to the level of the Nation State; by which the goals of what systems are selected and ordered in terms of priority and the allocation of scarce resources among the people. This process involves both cooperation and conflict by means of the exercise of political authority and if necessary coercion (Dahl, 1995). His stress on which goals of what systems (which represents the interest of the dominant identity) are captured into a nation's foreign policy agenda serve as the domestic launch-pad of the country's international interactions. If the national foreign policy objectives are overwhelmed by sub-nationalist objectives (of different identity groups), it suffers not only poor articulation, but also outright bad implementation; which is counter-productive to the attainment of the overall national interests at the external environment.

The word politics therefore stresses the process of decision-making on competing demands on public policy for public action in plural and diverse societies. For instance, the very decision to support a particular moral code, ideology and set of principles for a society, as opposed to other alternatives, is a political decision. Furthermore, the making of decision by public means or by any of these means; election, referendum, court judgments and administrative regulations, are political activities. Politics entails persuasions, disagreements and compromises among those contesting for the control of state powers.

### **FOREIGN POLICY**

Effective foreign policy rests upon a shared sense of national identity of a nation-state's place in the world, its friends and enemies, its interests and aspirations. These underlying assumptions are embedded in national history and myth, changing slowly over time as political leaders reinterpret them and external (foreign) and internal (domestic) developments reshape them (Hill & Wallace 1996).

Nevertheless, foreign policy, most broadly defined, is central to people's sense of national identity, and to an understanding of their nation's purpose, role and values. A nation, and an administration without a realistic and well articulated foreign policy, which explains the bewildering present and illuminates the uncertain future, is rudderless (Howell, 1997). Good as his views are, yet no matter how articulated a foreign policy is, if the national pride by foreign policy makers and implementers is lacking; then the realization of the foreign policy goals at the external environment, will remain uphill tasks.

There seems to be agreement between many foreign policy practitioners and theoreticians that perceptions of identity are of importance as psychological frames of reference in foreign policy and international relations. However, there is the problem of how to conceptualise this relationship between identity and foreign policy. Such that it poses a great task of how, when and

why cultural norms and values come to play in Nigeria's foreign policy. In addition, it poses a great task on how to operationalise the theoretical linkage between identity and foreign policy in the empirical analysis of the Fourth Republic (Prizel, 1998; Ndom & Ekwewe, 2015).

Hence, this study is an attempt to outline a conceptual framework that focuses on the reasoning of Nigeria's foreign policy-makers in the Fourth Republic, the influence of their different identity groups on their decisions and their understanding of international relations in a very dynamic new global setting. The analytical framework emphasizes how cognitive (idiosyncrasies), cultural, social or even religious factors motivate and legitimize decisions that relate to the general direction of Nigeria's foreign policy. In as much as immediate situational factors are important in understanding the daily flow of foreign policy decisions; however, the broader foreign policy approaches, especially regarding mega national interests, are bound-up with sub-nationalist identity politics in Nigeria's foreign policy. In this view, the individual Nigerian foreign policy-makers and implementers are both subject to norm-conforming social structures and are involved as agents in constructing or reconstructing identities and interests, some of which may well be far beyond the imagination of the country.

### **REALIST THEORY**

The Realists emerged in the late 1930s when Europe was faced with such evils as the rise of Adolf Herr Hitler and his Nazi aggressive policies; the invasion of Ethiopia by Italy and Mussolini's aggression; Japanese aggression in China etc. All these culminated in the outbreak of World War II in 1939. The Realists believed that there were laws of political behaviours by nations, and one of such laws is that states are always seeking to increase their power or to maximize it. If this is true, then nation-states must perpetually be in conflict. They then concluded that conflict is unavoidable in international relations such that conflict and the struggle for power characterize international relations. The second law introduced by them was that the dominant states are always pursuing their selfish national interest. The third law is that although helpful lessons can be learnt from war, it cannot be completely removed from international relations. Hans Morgenthau who was one of the proponents and chief advocates of the Realist school, argued that the pursuit of power explains the way states behave and that "*might take right*". He went further to add that states are not concerned about morality, because they define that in line with their national interest (Morgenthau, 1978).

Therefore, since sovereign states are constantly seeking to increase their powers as they pursue their various national interests, it is compulsive that all sub-national interests, should be dissipated while formulating and conducting Nigeria's foreign policy. This is based on the fact that, developed countries of the world have buried sub-nationalist identity politics in the formulation and conduct of their foreign policies as they constantly seek to increase their powers

in pursuit of the fused national interests. Here in lies the need for the adoption and utilization of the Realist theory as a framework for the study.

### **THE IMPACT OF POLITICS OF IDENTITY ON NIGERIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE FOURTH REPUBLIC**

The analysis here centers on how identity politics influences the decisions of foreign policymakers in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It is widely held that collective (fused) identities (national identity) express ideas about membership within a social group or of a nation. As such, national identity provide a system of orientation for self-reference and action (Ross 1997). Culture as an important variable in this study is interpreted as the broad context in which individual and collective identities are linked where they produce shared meanings that influence the framing of political action. This political action, include the formulation and conduct of all public policies which of course include foreign policy. In foreign policy, the concept of culture could be characterized as broad and general beliefs and attitudes about one's own nation, about other nations, and about the relationships that actually obtain or that they should obtain between the self and other actors in the international arena (Vertzberger 1990). In a plural society like Nigeria, one cannot divorce culture from influencing the country's foreign policy. Even though the citizens of Nigeria euphemistically identify with the national interest in her foreign policy and relations with other countries; but there are instances where the citizens are divided more especially on issues bordering on Arab-Israeli conflict. This is drawn largely on religious differences between adherents of the two major religions (Christianity and Islam) in the country. In addition, the controversy generated over Nigeria's membership of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) is still serving as a 'black-spot' of Nigeria's foreign policy. When this incongruence occurs, foreign policy will be at the receiving end because of sub-nationalist religious identity (Osimen, 2013).

The position of politics of identity is very important in this study because it refers to a particular set of ideas about political community that those policymakers used and drawn-on to mobilize a sense of cohesion and solidarity to legitimize the general thrust of foreign policy. As the result of its articulation and institutionalization in the political culture, it may become internalized in the cognitive framework (prism) through which foreign policymakers interpret the political reality. This is based on the assumption that all citizens of Nigeria (foreign policymakers and implementers inclusive) are nationalists and their inputs and actions in Nigeria's foreign policy are borne out of patriotism and absolute identification with the overall national interest that is being pursued in the external environment. However, in pragmatic terms, the ideal and well-articulated Nigeria's foreign policy is often influenced by sub-nationalist politics of identity that results into implementation lag (Lewis, 1996).



Even when politics of identity largely drawn on culture, ethnic and ideology has been well utilized in the foreign policy of developed economies in the past, Ignatieff (1998) believes that identity constructions are however contextually dependent and develop and change over time. He went on to add that, national identity is not fixed or stable; rather it is a continuing exercise in the fabrication of illusion and the elaboration of convenient fables about who we are. Just as it evolved in particular historical circumstances, current transformations internally and externally to the state have an impact and may lead to re-definitions of identity and foreign policy interests. This notwithstanding, the practice of civil democratic governance in Nigeria that has been ongoing for over nineteen years, has re-introduced divisive politics of identity, which unscrupulous politicians exploits to win political power. These have sparked off debates in the country about the different conceptions of sub-nationalist identity – which is destabilizing; and of national identity – which is a strong anchorage for strong social cohesion and national integration that will ensure a fused national foreign policy interest that will lead to the efficient conduct of a focused and reward-yielding international relations (Ekwekwe, 2015).

It is widely held that membership of a political community is institutionalized spatially within territorial states whereby the framing of foreign policy follows as a consequence of the political community being recognized as a sovereign state in the international system. This has been referred to as the ‘*grand strategy*’ definition of foreign policy; where it states that foreign policy is about national identity itself and invariably about the core elements of sovereignty it seeks to defend, the values it stands for and seeks to promote and protect abroad (Krasner, 1988; Wallace, 1991). The view of Krasner and Wallace is more pragmatic in developed economies. Whereas in developing countries like Nigeria, it is largely constrained because of the absence of ideology which is the main driver of a solidified national interests that are being pursued in the external environment through foreign policy and international relations (Elebeke, 2010; Osaghae, 1998).

The earlier recommended stress on nationalism (national identify) for a more effective conduct of Nigeria’s foreign policy has been further buttressed by the views of Bloom (1990) who reiterates that if there has been a general identification made with the nation, then there is a behavioural tendency of unity among the individuals (citizens) who made this identification. He equally believes that they will make-up the mass national public that will be ready at all times to defend and to enhance the shared national identity. This ideal condition will make Nigerians to positively contribute their own quota (in-puts) to Nigeria’s foreign policy for maximizing greater national powers for greater benefits and rewards in the country’s interactions with other actors in the international arena in line with the realist theory (Orngu, 2014).

However, the loyalty and attachment that the state may enjoy from its population is not simply emotional, but to some extent functional. It is functional in the sense that an identification

with the nation-state relies on it being enhanced and protected through all-inclusive government that operates people-oriented governance. An all-inclusive government based on universal best practices (democratic principles) will make the state stable because it is directed at fulfilling basic requirements of security and welfare of the entire citizens. The resultant stable political and socio-economic domestic conditions will serve as an effective launch-pad for goal-directed Nigeria's foreign policy (Flynn, 1995; Saleh, 2018).

On the other hand, March & Olsen (1998) contend that the institutionalization of national identity that takes place through various forms of political socialization tends to make identity constructions relatively resistant to change. That it reinforces certain practices and rules of behaviour which explain and legitimize particular identity constructions. Toeing the same line of argument, Giddens (1985) upholds that political socialization is a necessity given that the state itself is an unnatural (artificial) social construct where nationalism helps naturalize the recency and contingency of the nation-state through supplying its myths of origin. This makes Buzan (1991) to conclude that if the idea of the state fails to be supported by the society, the state itself lacks a secure foundation. The secure foundation, which of course is the stable domestic environment, is the most desirable requirement for the conduct of a reward-yielding foreign policy. This according to Anderson (1991) is based on the fact that foreign policy with all the symbolic trappings of sovereignty and statehood plays a significant role in the socio-political imagination of a collective identity. He went further to add that foreign policy speeches often reveal subjective 'we' feelings of a cultural group that are related to specific customs, institutions, territory, myths, and rituals. These expressions of identity indicate how Nigeria's foreign policymakers (who certainly belongs to one identity group or the other) view past history, the present and the future political choices they would face, that subsequently mould their foreign policy decisions (Elebeke, 2010; Letchworth, 2014).

The need for the aggregation and integration of all sub-nationalist identities into a single (fused) national identity made Vertzberger (1990) to conclude that if sufficiently internalized, these accounts of national identity may become part of the political culture and '*national style*' of a state's foreign policy. He further stressed that culture represents a unified set of ideas that are shared by the members of a society and that establishes a set of shared premises, values, expectations, and action predispositions among the members of the nation that as a whole constitute the national style. Vertzberger's recipe is sound and operationable in developed economies whose diverse politics of identity have been integrated into one fused national culture known as ideology. However, its pragmatic application has been inundated by sub-nationalist politics of identity in Nigeria's heterogeneous society. Such that Nigeria's foreign policy in the Fourth Republic has been heavily afflicted by sub-nationalist politics of identity (religion, tribe, section, class, etc) that has resulted in poorly articulated and badly implemented foreign policy.

This has denied the country of the required international recognition and respect as well as the dwindling of foreign capital inflows (Ndom & Ekwewe, 2015; Saleh, 2014).

Osaghae (1988) upholds that these cultural norms and values could be interpreted as a national 'ideology' or belief system in foreign policy, in the sense that ideas about who 'we' are serve as a guide to political action and basic worldviews. He went on to add that the conceptual lens through which foreign policymakers perceive international relations; tend to set the norm for what is considered by themselves as 'rational' foreign policymaking. However, the ideal requirement of a standing ideology that should guide Nigeria's foreign policy, has been a stillbirth from Nigeria's independence up to the Fourth Republic due largely to divisive sub-national identities. The Sharia debacle started in Zamfara State created the catalyst that rejuvenated Islamic fundamentalism in the country's body politik. Politicians who have nothing to offer to the masses during their electioneering campaigns, capitalized on this to capture political powers in mostly the Northern states. The inability of these politicians to implement the fundamentalist agenda more especially in Borno state resulted in the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgent group (Saleh, 2018).

Therefore, it is important to stress that socio-cultural sources of foreign policy are dynamic and may be subject to change, not least because the state itself contains a range of different social groups with varying interests and identities. The concept of political culture does not assume that everyone in a society necessarily support its institutions at all times, nor interpret national identity in identical ways. There may well exist 'credibility gaps' in a political culture, giving rise to competing interpretations of historical myths and meanings or even of nascent differences among different identity groups in the country. As the result, changes in the predominant idea of the nation are likely to have significant foreign policy implications; such that a country's foreign policy may be dictated by internal domestic realities as much as by the actual nature of its international relations (Bloom, 1990). In line with the argument of Bloom, Nigeria's foreign policy in the Fourth Republic has at some points been influenced, enhanced and impeded by the dynamics of politics of identity prevalent in the country.

Ideally, Nigeria's foreign policymakers are regarded as agents (human capital instruments) collectively representing the state as a '*social actor*' and used in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy. In line with the realist theory, a strict interpretation of instrumental rationality and methodological individualism implies that this collective action in foreign policy is simply based on the maximization of power and security interests of the country at the external environment (Katzenstein, 1996).

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the analysis so far, the following findings have been made:

1. The study has established that divisive ideas emanating from sub-nationalist identities had negative inputs on Nigeria's foreign policy and her international relations.
2. The study also established that there was lack of mainstreaming and elevation of national identity among the citizens by successive governments of the Fourth Republic in the conception and implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy. This deprived the country of greater returns in terms of economic benefits and rewards from international business partners.
3. The study further established that governments have failed to adopt nationalism as our national ideology that will yield a fused and stronger foreign policy for Nigeria where national interest ought to superimpose over any other interest in the formulation and implementation of the country's foreign policy.
4. That the domestic environment was not clean, stable and safe enough for doing business where basic infrastructures were not fairly and equitably provided to the citizens. This led to agitations, resurgence and aggravation of identity politics.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the analysis so far, conclusion can be drawn that right from the birth of the New Nigerian state on October 1, 1960, her foreign policy has been largely influenced by politics of identity. It has also been observed that there was an exception where Nigeria's foreign policy during the First Republic (more especially the first three years) was devoid of politics of identity. However, the 1962/63 electioneering campaigns and the general election proper, introduced Nigeria's foreign policy to trappings of ethnic/tribal identity politics, regional/sectional identity politics, and religious identity politics. Class identity was later introduced as one of the powerful influencers of Nigeria's foreign policies during military regimes of the late 1980s and the 1990s. At the end, Nigeria's foreign policies were nothing but by-products of prebendal politics largely emanating from the personal idiosyncrasies of the political leaderships (military or civilian) and the groups they identified with. These injurious identity politics over the years have worked to displace the most ideal and desirable national identity politics, which often attracts and accommodates objective foreign policy inputs from critical stakeholders in the country. Consequently, the projection and factoring-in of sub-nationalist identity politics in Nigeria's foreign policy has resulted in poorly articulated and badly implemented foreign policy. This has denied the country of the much-needed sovereign recognition in the international arena in line with the realist theory and lack of attraction of the desired rewards and benefits in her interactions with other actors at the external environment.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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At the end of the study, the following recommendations are hereby proffered towards projecting national identity politics as a solid anchorage for the conduct of Nigeria's foreign policy and international relations:

1. All divisive ideas emanating from sub-nationalist identities with their negative inputs should be downplayed and completely eliminated from Nigeria's foreign policy inputs and from the conduct of her international relations. Strong bond of affinity must be built among the citizens for integration and greater cohesion where they will see themselves as their brothers' keepers. This calls for general attitudinal change on the part of both the rulers and the ruled where their major pre-occupations will be, to put Nigeria first before any other considerations in the formulation of her foreign policy and the conduct of international relations.
2. There is the need for the mainstreaming and elevation of national identity above any other considerations in Nigeria's foreign policy from conception to implementation where Nigeria will assert her sovereign independence and interact with other international actors for greater returns in terms of economic benefits and rewards. This is so required to expand the country's sources of foreign revenue and grow the domestic economy for general development.
3. There is also the need to adopt nationalism as our national ideology that will yield a fused and stronger foreign policy for Nigeria. Under this condition, national interest superimposes any other interest in the formulation and implementation of the country's foreign policy for greater assertion of her sovereignty and respect in the international system.
4. The domestic environment should be synchronized and all basic infrastructures provided to all citizens fairly and equitably in order to eradicate agitations and eliminate the resurgence of identity politics. A clean, stable and safe domestic environment will serve as a very effective launch-pad for the efficient implementation of Nigeria's foreign policy through good conduct of her international relations.

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