

## **URBANISM, ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS AND AFFINITY IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

Nigeria, just like any other nation in the world, can boast of several urban centers or settlements. These urban centers emerged as a result of their historical role in the formation and development of the country. With urbanization, it is expected that an urban culture of individuality, transiency and anonymity arising from the heterogeneous population as postulated by Louis Wirth and Max Weber would have emerged. This Urban culture consequently would erase every form of parochialism and traditionalism among the urban dwellers thereby making them more national than ethnic - minded. In other words, it would have undermined every form of ethnic sentiment and affiliation and promoting the feelings of patriotism and nationalism among the people. A historical consideration of the antecedents in the country (Nigeria) tends to point to the contrary thereby bringing to question Wirth's exposition. Happenings in the country seem to reveal more ethnic sentiments and allegiance among the people and urbanites in particular than national sentiment and allegiance. These ethnic sentiments and affinity are attributable to several causal factors as politico-economic marginalization, urban insecurity among others. This contradiction, of course, has implications for national security and development. For urban ethnic consciousness and affinity to be dissuaded and eradicated in the country, policies such as federal character, state and/or ethnic origin and sectional - perceived marginalization etc. should be re-considered for a meaningful national consciousness and patriotism devoid of ethnic sentiments and affiliation to be attained in the country.

**Key words:** Urbanism, Ethnic, Consciousness, Affinity, Affiliation, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Nigeria, just like other industrializing / industrialized countries of the world, can boast of urban centers. Such ancient urban centers like Kano, Zaria, Ile Ife, Benin etc. readily come to mind. These ancient urban centers emerged as a result of their historical, political and commercial antecedents. Slave trade and colonialism in turn heralded the

emergence of modern urban centers in the country. Centers like Lagos, Port Harcourt, Arochukwu etc. gained prominence as a result of their respective roles in the erstwhile slave trade and the colonization/ amalgamation of the country. These roles boosted their urban status consequently, culminating in the domestication of the hinter-lands, bringing about the drift of the rural dwellers (Abdullah: 2009: 25) to these centers thereby speeding up their urbanization process.

From the fore, it could be seen that the emergence and growth of urban centers in the modern day Nigeria has a direct bearing to the historical roles they enacted in the domestication of the erstwhile hinterlands. They were seemingly centers of exploitation of the hinterlands orchestrated by the then colonial masters in collaboration with their indigenous bigots. It is therefore not surprising that unlike the cities (urban centers) in the Western world, there is no direct and symbiotic link between these urban centers and their hinterland in the country. While cities in the Western world (U.S.A, Britain, etc.) are industrialization - driven, that of the Third World (Nigeria) is hinterland - exploitation driven. This accounts for the disparity in the level of socio-economic, political and technological development between these contrasting countries. While urban centers in the Western world tend to have a symbiotic link with their rural centers in terms of backward integration, what is prevalent in the country is that of backward disintegration and disarticulation.

This mode of relationship between the urban and the rural centers in the country equally manifest itself in the form and mode of relationship between and among the urban dwellers themselves thereby giving rise to ethnic consciousness and affinity. It is ironical that while urbanization in the Western world gave rise to national sentiment and affiliation, that in the country tends to foster and encourage attachment of urbanites to ethnic cleavages and identity. This ethnic identity and attachment has an undermining effect on the socio-political development of the country. It is equally mind bugging in that one would have assumed that urban centers in the country would have been a coloration of heterogeneity, transiency and anonymity, the reverse however is the case. It should have been assumed that migration and urbanization with the resultant interaction of ethnic groups would have led to the breakdown or collapse of ethnic boundaries, ethnic sentiments and affiliations in urban centers. Rather, ethnic affiliation by urbanites has assumed the order of the day. The question then is, why ethnic affiliations by urbanites irrespective of urban heterogeneity and anonymity? Why ethnic sentiments as against national sentiment? What are the implications of these to the urbanites and the nation at large? These fundamental questions the paper will attempt to discourse.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

**Urbanism** This concept is used by urban sociologists to connote urban ways of life. According to Wikipedia, urbanism is the study of the characteristic ways of interaction of inhabitants of towns and cities (urban areas) with the built environment. It is the study of urban life and culture. By this definition, it implies that urbanites have a

distinctive interaction pattern different from that of rural dwellers. That distinctive interaction pattern translates to a distinct culture known as urban culture.

What then is that urban culture that is distinct from rural culture? According to Louis Wirth (1938), urban culture, as against rural culture, is characterized by superficiality or impersonality, transiency and anonymity. These perceived cultural traits are resultant outcome of the indemnified heterogeneous nature of the urban population. It is this heterogeneous population that stimulates the urban ways of life. To understand an urban culture demands a commensurate understanding of the nature of the urban heterogeneity. It is this understanding that gives impetus and clarity to the mode and nature of social interaction in an urban center. That, in the Nigerian context seemingly, explains the recourse by urbanites to ethnic sentiments and affiliations. The question we may ask is, should urban heterogeneity with its attendant superficiality, transiency and anonymity stimulate ethnic consciousness and affinity? Is urbanism synonymous with ethnicity? Shouldn't it have been a barrier to ethnic awareness and affiliations arising from its assumed characteristics? An answer to these questions demands an understanding of the mode and nature of the emergence and growth of the urban centers in the country. It is this mode and nature of their emergence and growth that seemingly shape the nature and mode of the social relationships between and among the urban dwellers themselves on the one hand and between them and their rural counterparts on the other hand. Urban ethnic consciousness is therefore subsumed within the afore-assumed premise. There is a dialectical relationship between urban dwellers with their rural/ethnic origin. It is this relationship/attachment that seemingly spurs the ethnic consciousness and affinity among the urban dwellers. This affinity of the urbanites to ethnic/rural origin is a product of the exigencies of urban existence. These exigencies will be further illuminated as we progress. However, it is expedient to note that an understanding of urbanites ethnic consciousness/affinity is situated within the understanding of the exigencies of the urbanites daily existence.

**Ethnic consciousness** For clarity, it is necessary to start with an understanding of the term ethnic group/ethnicity. It is with this understanding or clarification that ethnic consciousness will be put into proper perspective.

An ethnic group, as defined by Dictionary.com, is "a social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, or the like". Buttressing this, Wikipedia encyclopedia defines an ethnic group or ethnicity as "a category of people who identify with each other based on similarities, such as common ancestral, language, social, cultural or national experiences. Unlike other social groups (wealth, age, hobbies), ethnicity is often an inherited status. Membership of an ethnic group tends to be defined by a shared cultural heritage, ancestry, origin, myth, history, homeland, language or dialect, symbolic systems such as religion, mythology and ritual, cuisine, dressing style, art, and physical appearance". From the above, it is noticeable that ethnicity/ethnic group has to do with the identification of an individual to others with shared cultural similarities. This shared culture qualifies the individual(s)

as group members. This in-turn spurs on these individuals who are now members of a group that feeling of “we” as against “they” on non-group members. This “we” and “they” feeling is a manifestation of group consciousness. It is this group consciousness, be it ethnic or racial, which influences/determines the social existence and/or reality of the members of the group which likewise informs and influences, to a large extent, their relationship with the out-group members.

Ethnic consciousness therefore, is that awareness of an individual of his membership to an ethnic group. It transcends a mere awareness to concrete action manifesting in deliberate affiliations and affinities (Kasfir, 1979; McCall, 1955). In Nigeria with three dominant ethnic groups (Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo) and about 250 other minority ethnic groups, and bearing in mind the nature and mode of the emergence and growth of modern cities in the country, the manifestation of ethnic group consciousness cannot be over imagined and emphasized. Due to the disarticulating effect of the urban/rural relationship in the country, there is a propensity for the development of urban ethnic consciousness and affiliation. This ethnic affiliation and affinity consequently tend to undermine national consciousness and integration, implying therefore, that the development of national consciousness/integration among members of the country demands a dismantling of the tendencies of ethnic consciousness and affinity by these members in contrary to Weber’s position that “in the western late medieval cities, men and women for the first time came together as individuals rather than as members of a kin group, clan or feudal entourage” (Wilson, 1991:6). Bearing in mind the exigencies that propel ethnic consciousness and affiliation among urbanites in the country, how possible then is the dismantling of ethnic consciousness and affiliations among urbanites in Nigeria? To Louis Wirth (1938) in his scholarly work, “Urbanism as a Way of Life”, the presence of the indicators of urbanity has the consequential effects or outcome of social disorganization, individuality/ individual alienation and superficiality. These outcomes are antithetical to the springing up of ethnicity or ethnic consciousness between and among urbanites. If that premise holds, what then accounts for the existence of ethnic consciousness among urban dwellers in the country (Nigeria)? Can’t this existence pose as a major challenge to Louis Wirth’s exposition bearing in mind that rather than urbanism dismantling all forms of ethnic consciousness and affinity in the country, the contrary appears to be the case? While not discountenancing Wirth’s exposition, could it be assumed therefore that urbanism has the tendency to reinforce ethnic consciousness and affinity among urbanites? This position calls for a further consideration and this therefore lies the central focus of this paper. While not theorizing, it should be noted that the focus of this paper is purely analytical. Its concern is on how a particular social effect of ethnic consciousness/affiliation can be a resultant stimulant of population concentration in an area (urbanity).

Being analytical, and holding on the premise that urbanism has the tendency to spur ethnic consciousness and affiliation among urbanites, what then is the necessary condition accounting for this action? Reiterating this, (William et al., 1976) demands that attention be focused on the question: under what conditions does ethnic culture

emerge? Specifically, what social forces promote the crystallization and development of ethnic solidarity and identification? In other words, irrespective of Wirth's characteristic outcomes of urbanism, rural/urban relationships or ethnic sentiments/consciousness and affiliation still persist in the urban centers.

### **Reasons for Urban Ethnic Consciousness/ Affinity**

It has been noted earlier as in Wirth's proposition that urban centers due to their heterogeneous population and inverse culture can be ascribed with the attributes of individuality, disorganization and anonymity among others. "The concentration of large and heterogeneous populations, Wirth (1938) posits, eventually leads to the weakening of interpersonal ties, primary social structures, and normative consensus. It does so largely for two reasons: the immediate psychological impact of the urban scene and the complex structural differentiation generated by dynamic density" (Fischer, 1975). These ascribed attributes discourage the formation, growth and development of ethnic ties and association in urban centers in the country. These seemingly assumed propositions by Wirth, when faced with situational reality in the country, find it difficult to stand its ground in that ethnic consciousness and affiliation still dominate the relationship existing in the urban centers. This supports the view as contained in the review by Gulick (1973) who "found a wealth of personal ties and thriving primary groups even in the innermost recesses of the large city". Consequently, he argued that "the variables of number, density and heterogeneity . . . are not crucial determinants of social life or personality". What then is responsible for the persistent urban ethnic consciousness and affiliation in Nigeria?

Urbanism is associated with heterogeneous population and culture. This urban characteristic of heterogeneity embedded the seed of ethnicity. According to Gao (2015), "the contradictions and conflicts produced by the difference in economic interests, traditional cultures, customs and habits etc. of different ethnic groups are also increasing" arising from the complexities of urban centers in the country. From the fore, it is obvious that the complex nature of urban centers in the country is a veritable source of ethnic conflict in the country which is a manifestation of the existence of ethnic consciousness and affiliation. In Nigeria, urban centers (Lagos, Abuja, Port Harcourt and Kaduna etc.), due to their complex nature, rather than propagate the philosophy of industrialization and bureaucratization which uphold the spirit of detachment, individuals in both inter/intra group relationships are grossly immersed with ethnic identifications and affiliations. While it could be wrong to argue that ethnic sentiments and affiliation exist in the urban centers in the country, it will be wrong to assume that ethnic sentiments and affiliations do not exist likewise. Such an assumption will amount to a truncation and bastardization of facts and reality. In fact, it could be right to stick to the belief that ethnic consciousness and affinity is prevalent in the urban centers in the country. This can be attested to by the numerous ethnic/town meetings and associations that run nook and crannies of the various urban centers in the country. Irrespective of an individual's socio-economic and political status in the country, there is always that propensity for such an individual to cliff or identify with

his/her kinsmen and women as against the general expectation of detachment expected of an urbanite.

It should be noted that the British colonial policy of divide and rule accentuated the ethnic bigotry and sentiment on the colonial subjects (Nigerians). The British in their economic maximization interest entrenched the policy of divide and rule where by ethnic groups' segregation gained ascendancy. The Land and Native Rights Ordinance and the *Sabongari* Policy created a sharp division between the South and the Northern parts of the country. According to Celine (2011) "overtime, the effects of this emphasis have been negative forces which produce trails of destructive violence and threat to the nation's territorial integrity. The Ogoni-Andoni, Jukun-Tiv, Hausa-Mambilla and a host of other blood-lettings are aftermaths of the above said policies. They encourage urban-based segregations. Then the ethnic massacre of the Igbos living in the north preceded the civil war of 1967-70, the Ogoni saga of the 1990s and the subsequent Ijaw/Yoruba, Yoruba/Igbo crisis have lingering connections with the segregations". This policy promoted and further reinforced ethnic sentiments and affinity among the people of the country.

It could be adduced that one of the reasons accounting for the existence and persistence of ethnic consciousness and affinity among urban residents in Nigeria is urban life insecurity. In line with our earlier supposition and also in line with Wirth's preposition, life in urban centers in Nigeria is a reflection of superficiality, anonymity and individuality. These are assumed consequential outcomes of urbanity arising from its density and heterogeneity. It is worthy to note that as pointed out by Wirth (1938), that the presence of the indicators of urbanity has the consequential effects or outcome of social disorganization, individuality/ individual alienation and superficiality. These are attributable to urban life insecurity. It is this urban life insecurity that propels urban residents in the country to ethnic consciousness and attachments. It is believable that there is delink between the rural and urban centers in the country. The consequential effect of this is urban life insecurity manifesting in urban unemployment, inadequate housing, job insecurity etc. Man, being a surviving being with the instinct for survival therefore, sorts out his survivability by recourse to tribal/ethnic cleavages and affiliations. It is a common feature in Nigerian cities to find individuals identify with their fellow town/ethnic men or unions in the attempt to make 'ends meet' (survive). The need to survive arising from the inability of the state/government to cater for its citizens in terms of the provision of basic sustainable developmental initiatives account for the projection of ethnic consciousness and affinity among urban dwellers in the country. The urban poor in the quest for survival in the face of hearse urban life situation resorts to his kinsmen and women for existence while the urban rich in their self-interest of optimizing advantage to themselves in the struggle for the scarce resources in the society equally resort to the weeping of ethnic sentiments and affiliations, all just to confer undue advantage(s) to themselves. Situations abound in the country arising from the inability of the government (due to one reason or the other) to provide jobs or medicare to her citizens, leading to the people resorting to obtaining help through communal ties and affiliations (unions). The consequent effect of this is

the strengthening of ethnic ties and affiliations as against national consciousness and identity. These equally have great implications for national unity and development.

In furtherance to the above proposition, the inclination by urban dwellers to beef up ethnic sentiments and affiliation is deducible from the desire to derive advantage over others in the struggle for scarce resources in the urban centers. Elementary economics tells us that resources in society are scarce or limited and that human desire for these resources is insatiable or unlimited. If these propositions are assumed to be true then the struggle to acquire these resources will be stiff and keen whereby the contestants/competitors will deploy all winning means and strategies available to them. The easiest and the most available means is an inclination to ethnic sentiment and affiliations. A critical look at the economic and political spheres or arena in the country reveals a display of attribution by individuals to ethnic sentiments and affiliation. Contest for political positions (elections) in the country is not devoid of individuals or contestants taking recourse to ethnic identifications and consciousness manipulations. In affirmation, Banton (1997) claims that collective action on an ethnic basis occurs most frequently when persons, who share a common ethnic origin, and associated attributes and interests, organize to influence the exercise of state power. Commenting further he posits, "Similarly ethnic consciousness commonly emerges in situations where groups sharing common attributes and interests, such as a religious belief, organize to influence the exercise of state power or to defend their shared interests. Ethnic and racial consciousness, then, is an emergent property of particular sorts of social relations" (Banton, 1997). In line with this, Celine (2011) states, "Peculiar to the Nigerian nation also is the fact that politics is seen as the only access to national resources. Based on the latter, a 'do or die' attitude is applied, hence avenues like ethnicism are mobilized to attain positions". This scenario plays out clearly in the country where politicians and public office seekers in the country in an attempt to outwit other contestants in the contest resort to beefing up ethnic sentiments all aimed at conferring to themselves undue advantage to the ignorance of the manipulated and later abandoned kinsmen and women (ethnic group).

The rising rate of ethnic consciousness and affinity among urban dwellers in Nigeria has equally been attributed to the desire for socio-economic development between the urban and rural areas. The rural areas or communities in the country are beset with lack of basic social amenities/infrastructures as compared to their urban counterparts. Social infrastructures like pipe borne water, functional electricity/power supply, accessible road networks etc. are scarce commodities (unavailable) begging for provision in the rural areas. These scarce commodities consequently act as rural push factors to the residents of the rural areas. Forced to urban centers in want of better living environment and being confronted with the exigencies and bustling of urban life, the need for home-land (rural area) development becomes imperative. The urge to develop their villages (rural centers) through the provision of social infrastructural amenities hitherto lacking becomes heightened and intensified. Being conscious of government bias to urban centers as against the rural areas or villages on the issue of development, it is therefore nostalgic that the responsibility of rural infrastructural

provision solely rests on the shoulders of the indigenes that mostly have migrated to the cities in search of better living conditions. Been in city and equally being aware that the responsibility of developing their villages rests on them, they have no other option than to take recourse to ethnic association and appendages by the formation of ethnic based unions and associations. This is most noticeable in the various ethnic/town unions and meetings in the cities/towns where the issue of community development occupies the front burner in their scheme of things or discourse. It is not surprising to observe that major cities/towns (Abuja, Lagos, Kaduna, Kano, Enugu, Port Harcourt etc.) in Nigeria play host to ethnic based unions and associations with the primary objective of ethnic or community development. Ethnic unions, associations/meetings such as *Ndi-Igbo* cultural union, Yoruba (*Afenefere*) cultural union, *Arewa* consultative forum, *Ogbako-Ikwerre* etc. readily come to mind. In the attempt to address their villages/communities neglect and backwardness in terms of infrastructural development, ethnic associations/unions are formed therefore whipping up ethnic sentiments and consciousness among the members of the unions. Rather than discuss issues of national interest, ethnic/town issues take pre-eminence. Rather than relate with others on the basis of citizenship/nationality, ethnic relationship and identification take precedence. It is not surprising therefore that most urbanites (city dwellers) in Nigeria tend to be more ethnic/town than nationality inclined. Most urbanites (city dwellers) in Nigeria because of the exigencies of urban life tend to be more comfortable (being at home) when they are in the midst of their fellow countrymen (town/ethnic group). The question one would like to ask is why are most urban dwellers in Nigeria more comfortable when in the midst of their fellow 'countrymen'? Why also the proliferation of ethnic based associations and town unions/ meeting in the city? Rather than lose the attributes of traditionalism which reflect itself in ethnic consciousness, affinity and all other forms of ethnic tendencies, the reverse appears to be the case. Contrary to Wirth's postulation that the concentration of large and heterogeneous population in an area (city) will eventually lead to the weakening of interpersonal ties, primary social structures and normative consensus, it has been contentious in that ethnic sentiment and affinity manifesting in the existing town/ethnic unions and associations tend to be dominant in Nigerian cities and in the lives of city dwellers in the country. It is important to reiterate that the inability of the concentration of large and heterogeneous population to dismantle or weaken ethnic ties in the city can be based on the mutual and inter-dependent relationship/affinity between the rural and urban dwellers necessitated by the needs to ensure that there is an even development of their villages/towns in terms of the provision of social amenities. It is this provision of social amenities in the villages that necessitates the coming together of people of the same village or ethnic group in the city to form ethnic unions and associations thereby intensifying ethnic consciousness and sentiments. This ethnic consciousness/affinity among urban dwellers in Nigeria has great implications for both the individual urban dweller and the country (Nigeria) at large.



### **Implications of Urban Ethnic Consciousness and Affinity**

Urbanism is associated with a distinct culture referred to as urban culture. This culture of transiency, anonymity, individuality, monetization etc. arises as a result of the heterogeneous nature of the population. It is this heterogeneity that accounts for the existence and persistence of the nature and form of the social relations between and among the urban dwellers. This heterogeneity, according to Weber and as buttressed by Wirth (1938), inhibits the formation and development of any form of ethnic or parochial feeling, sentiments, affinity and association. It destroys the emergence and subsequent existence of affinal ties. This though ought to have been the expectation, however, the reality in the country seems to point to the other direction. Urbanism rather than inhibit the springing up of ethnic sentiments and ties tend to aggravate such feelings and associations. This aggravation undermines the essence and spirit of urbanism cum urban culture thereby eliciting both latent and manifest implications.

Urban ethnic sentiment and identification have a consequent effect of the great inclination by individuals to build up a sense of ethnic identity as against national identity. The development and inclination to ethnic identity has a potential danger of destroying the existence and development of national consciousness and affinity by members of the society. Individuals in the society or country rather than build and develop national consciousness they rather circumscribe to ethnicity and to ethnic cleavages. This development diverts individual's love for the nation to his/her ethnic identification. Can this then be an explanation for the seemingly lack of genuine patriotic zeal by Nigerians toward their country? Happenings in the country tend to point to the belief (rightly or wrongly), that Nigerians are more ethnic conscious than they are for their nation. Can this explain why it seems an average Nigerian is ever more willing or eager to die for his/her ethnic belief than he/she is willing to do for the country? Happenings in the country equally reveal the desirability of an average Nigerian to defend the course or interest of his ethnic origin when it runs in conflict with that of the country. If not, how do we then explain the craze by some to defend the course of their ethnic group as against that of the nation? Why the clamour for secession by ethnic group(s) instead of a demand for a strong and united country? How do we also explain the wanton destruction of national assets in the attempt to protect and/or promote group (ethnic) interest? This is but a pointer to the growing sense of ethnic consciousness and affinity between and among the people as against that of national interest. This situation has a tendency of undermining national socio-economic and political development.

The growing urban ethnic consciousness and association has an attendant implication of stimulating ethnic conflict between the various ethnic groups in the country. Nigeria is a multicultural country being made up of numerous (about 250) ethnic groups. These ethnic groups are unique and diverse in their cultural heritage. These cultural uniqueness and diversity supposedly ought to have been a source of strength channeled to the development of the country however the reverse appears to be the case. This cultural diversity rather than be a source of strength has become a divisive force, breeding conflict and tending to the balkanization of the country.

Conflicts assuming ethnic dimensions and/or coloration are assuming the order of the day in the country. Ethnic conflicts between the various ethnic groups in the country such as that between the Fulani and the Igbo, Fulani and the Yoruba, Tiv and the Fulani, Ogoni and the Andoni in Rivers State, Urhobo and the Itsekiri in Delta State etc. can attest to that. These ethnic conflicts are mainly conflicts over land ownership. Whatever be the cause and whatever be the dimension assumed, the growing ethnic fundamentalism arising from the rising urban ethnic consciousness, affinity and association has a destructive tendency in the country arising from its ability to not only negatively affect lives and properties in the country but also undermine national development, being aware that conflict and disunity are antithetical to sustainable development.

Another implication of urban ethnic conscious and association is the 'ethnicization' of politics in the country. Politics is supposedly an act of governance whereby the people devoid of all sentiments pilot their political life. However in Nigeria, politics is not devoid of sentiments most especially ethnic sentiment. Where ethnic sentiment beclouds the people's political sense, mediocrity is entrenched in that leadership is vested on individuals based on ethnic affiliation and affinity. This scenario is dangerous in that it undermines national unity and development. Buttressing this view, Celine (2011) posits, candidates ascend to leadership positions not for issues they stand for but because they are 'sons/daughters of the soil' and the conviction on the size of the 'national cake' that will accrue through them. Corruption is been encouraged and promoted by reliance on ethnic patronage. Lamenting, she avers, "it has been widely perceived that ethnicity is the bane of Nigerian politics". Where mediocrity is enthroned and entrenched on the altar of ethnicity, social vices and underdevelopment of course gains ascendancy. That is the bane of Nigeria's ethnic politics.

### **Conclusion**

It is an assumption that increasing urbanization will bring about a reduction or elimination of all tendencies of parochialism associated with traditionality and rurality. Wirth is of the opinion that increasing urbanization will lead to diminishing effects of rural culture resulting to urban culture of anonymity, transiency, individuality, monetized economy and a de-ethnicized society etc. necessitated by the heterogeneous nature of the population. Urban life in Nigeria seems to be on the contrary in that urbanites still uphold and tenaciously maintain a relationship with their rural roots rather than be de-ethnicized as proposed by Wirth. It is rather witnessing an increasing urban ethnic consciousness/affinity and association. Urbanites in Nigeria still stick to their ethnic identity rather than national identity. Ethnic consciousness and affiliation have a high preponderance in the urban life of the people. There is a preference and a strong feeling of ethnic attachment than national attachment which, of course, have negative implications on national security and development.

### **The Way Forward**

Ethnic sentiment in the country is so pervasive that drastic measures must be taken to avert it and its associated eminent danger. One of the measures is the de-emphasizing of policies that tend to encourage and promote ethnic feelings and association. Policies such as the ethnic identification of individuals, place of origin etc. should be discouraged in our national life. The other policy such as the Federal character as enshrined in the country's constitution, though intended to promote equity among the constituent parts or federating units, however consciously and /or unconsciously, harbour and promote ethnic identification and association by its insistence on state or ethnic representation. Celine (2011) in affirmation to this posits, "the most recent policy, which seems a distributive effort to representing various groups in the national decision making, is called the 'federal character'. This policy which was initiated in 1979 is hoped to replace ethnic consciousness with national consciousness, that is, in determining people's political behaviour. However, federal character encourages marginalization and domination... It should be noted that some ethnic groups have inherited disadvantages in the sense that they lack representation at the elite level. However, the above illustrations are indications that the instruments used to manage multi-ethnicity themselves become factors responsible in its increase in intensity". These National policies must be de-emphasized if ethnic consciousness among the people will be eradicated for national unity and development.

Furthermore, to eliminate ethnic consciousness and association among the people, national as against ethnic political parties should be encouraged. This, in no small measure, will stimulate a healthy political atmosphere devoid of ethnic sentiment, rancor and acrimony having an attendant effect of the emergence of a meritocratic political leadership poised to execute sound leadership quality for the socio-economic and political development of the country.

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