
Nexus between Political Ideology and Nation Building: with Reference to Nigeria

Adisa, O. Peniel

Department of Political Science, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo

Abstract

This paper examines the nexus between Political ideology and nation building. Extant literature is review. The study examines the concepts such as Ideology with its various typologies as capitalism, socialism, communism, democracy, among others and nation building. Additionally, the paper treats the functions of political ideology in a political system. A researcher questionnaire was employed to elicit responses from the respondents while data analysis was based on paired simple statistics. The results show that there is a great relationship between political ideology, political culture and nation building.

Keywords: Nexus, Political ideology, Nation building, Reference

Background to the Study

It is an indisputable statement that issues, terminologies, concepts and phenomenon in social sciences are not subjected to unidirectional meanings because of changing situations in an unstatic social environment. These concepts are living and are subject to change in a changing environment. That is why schools in social sciences use to agree to disagree and vice versa on social sciences concepts.

Therefore various political ideologies will be considered here as perceive by various scholars in nexus with nation building. This will serve a pointer or compass to determine if the ideologies are the problems for nation building or idiosyncratic extent of leaders in control or implementing those ideologies.

The study therefore examines the nexus between political ideology and nation building. Specific variables discussed are electoral system and nation building as well as political ideology and political culture. The variables are assessed in the light of the Nigerian democratic process and national unity.

Objectives of the Study

The study is set to examine the nexus between political ideology and nation building. Specifically, it will,

1. Examine the relationship between political ideology and nation building
2. Determine the relationship between electoral system and nation building
3. Determine relationship between political ideology and political culture

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between political ideology and nation building
2. There is no significant relationship between electoral system and nation building
3. There is no significant relationship between political ideology and political culture

Literature review

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (1998), ideology generally denotes a system of practical belief developed by and characteristic of a group whose members have common political, economic, religion or cultural bond. An ideologist according to the Encyclopedia is one who usually on his own initiative, formalities and enunciates a system of belief, or ideology for his group men. It was also made clear that ideological thinking is always competitive and controversial, seeking as much as discredit rival system of thought as to establish itself.

Growth (1971), added that ideology usually implies an argumentative defense of some values and opposition to others, it tells people what to think and how to act hence it may be described as normative. Ideology therefore implies a particular view of reality of what man, society and even the physical world are like in their nature, behaviour and relationship to one another.

Moreover, political ideology provides an excellent tool for the political elites in every political system to achieve varying degrees of mass involvement in the political process. This is seen when a state wages war particularly the large scale wars of the twentieth century characterized by exhortations to have democracy, socialism the motherland against external dangers. Ideologies are as much a factor in the stability and political unity as a source of challenge to the existing political structures. They can be used to disarm rivals and they may be used to divert attention away from difficult internal problems. Above all, they are means of legitimizing the government and its policies.

Macridis (1980), gave a number of definitions of what an ideology is. He says that one meaning of ideology is what of “deception” “distortion” or “falseness.” It conveys the notion of subjectivism as opposed to permanence. He defined ideology in these ways; Ideology conveys the notion of a dream of impossible and unrealizable goals. An ideological person is one who is constantly dreaming of other and better worlds.

The second definition of ideology given by Macridis shows that ideology often corresponds to social criticisms. Criticism confronts existing beliefs and attempts through argument and persuasion to challenge and change them. Thirdly, he added that ideologies are directly related to the outside world. In specific terms, he noted that “Ideologies often become powerful instrument of manipulation”

Macridis said that an ideology therefore consist of a set of ideas and beliefs through which we perceive the outside world and act upon our information. It is a medium through which we try to learn and comprehend the world, but it also generates emotions which hold people together. Ideologies are action oriented, they consist of ideas shared by many people who act in unison or who are influenced to act in unison in order to accomplish positive ends.

In addition when we talk of ideology in the same society there may be many particular ideologies mobilizing different groups and individuals for different purposes. Sometimes, there can be no reconciliation among them –ideologies will not compromise. Different types of ideologies co-exist some being more coherent and better articulated than the other. Indeed the line between a loose collection of political ideas and integrated ideologies is often difficult to distinguish clearly. These political ideas include; democratic, capitalism, socialism, communism and welfares.

As noted in Encyclopedia Britannica (1998), some political theorists see the growth of ideology as “danger to the continued existence of politics itself and have suggested “civil (non-ideological) society”. Baradat (1979), strongly and rightly concludes in his own discussion on ideology by saying that:

1. All ideologies provide an interpretation of the present and a view of a desire future.
2. The term ideology can be used in many contexts, but unless otherwise specifies it is proper to give it a political meaning
3. Each ideology includes a list of specific steps that can be taken to accomplish its goal.
4. Ideologies are simply stated and presented in motivational terms.

Ideology and Nation building

Rome was not built in a day, so also, building a nation is not an easy task anywhere and there is no short-cut by which a baby can attain adulthood. Building a nation is a very slow process usually carried out by means of trial and error. It is a continuous adventure and one generation passes away with another generation taking its place but the task of building a nation goes on. As noted by Dieutsch and William (1971), depicted the some

as “growth of nations” policy oriented political scientists speak of it as “National development”.

Adisa and Olawoore (2008), defined a nation as a human group whose members place loyalty to the group as a whole over any conflicting loyalties. They further explained nation –building as sum-total of public policy designed to create a nation. Within the African context, nation-building refers to the task of evolving a kind of human group suggested by Rustow out of the poly-ethnic societies created as states by Africa's erstwhile colonial rulers.

Olugbade (1989), opined that the task of the nation building includes the creation and consolidation, institution transformation of the economy into an industrial order. Defining the patterns and levels of relationships between the national and other units of government and accommodating the diverse interest of the nation state. Competition ensues in the process of attaining the lofty ideals of nation building such competitions have in the past led to crisis of various dimensions ranging from protest, threat, peaceful and violent demonstrations, clashes as well as the extreme cases of destructive civil wars. An example is the Biafra war of 1967-1970 in Nigeria. However, the task of a state building is never meant to be complete at once and for all, the state building process is always an on-going one. Most problems associated with state building only allow for temporary solutions. Others are more only intractable and thereby defy permanent solutions. What may pass as today's solution might constitute tomorrow's problems.

Nigeria has tried to solve these problems through varied ways such as the adoption of the cabinet system of government in the first republic and the presidential system in the second republic. But there are also failures and mistakes made by the politicians. Some of which led to the frequent military take-over in the administration of the country. A prime condition for nation building is ideology. It is this ideology that bound the people together, making them cohesive and politically organized thus the reason for such political ideology as socialism, welfarism and capitalism.

It is also political ideology that brings about togetherness and solidarity among people thus enhancing promoting nation building. Political ideology is used in party politics; each party has its own ideology (e.g the Unity Party of Nigeria's socialism). In party system, the trend in most African countries has been to consolidate the supremacy of the dominant party.

Typology of Political Ideology

Political ideologies address themselves to values; the quality of life, the distribution of goods and services, freedom and equality. If there were any agreement on each and all, there would be one single ideology shared by all. Nations projects different values and beliefs. There is no agreement within any society nor among the various political societies of the world. And this is to confirm individual differences as said earlier that we agree to disagree and vice versa. According to Macridis (1980), we may classify

political ideologies into three broad but distinct categories: those that *defined and rationalize the* existing any given time in any given society. We may call this status quo ideology. The other form of ideologies is those that advocate for *radical changes* in the existing social, economic and political order. We may call them radical or revolutionary ideologies. In between, this is of course a large gray area favoring changes. We call these the reformist ideologies.

Macridis stated difference between status quo, reformist and revolutionary ideologies. Someone who diligently learns to read a map and travel by following a given route and signal may be considered to represent a status quo mentality or ideology. He or She simply follows the rules and signs and is guided by them. On the other hand, a person who attempts to trace his or her own route and to change is a reformist. There is an agreement that the means must change not the end. But a revolutionary changes both the map and the destination. This classification is only a formal one; ideologies shift and change in content, but also in the particular functions and roles they perform. Looking at the spread of contemporary political ideological movement we have a rich choice of subject's like liberalism, capitalism, democratic, socialism, and communism.

Capitalism

According to Appadorai (1975), in his book "The substance of politic", Capitalism is an economic system in which private person are permitted to undertake enterprises, providing or borrowing the necessary have been met. Capitalism allows people to compete with one another. Marx (1998), explained that capitalism is a specific historical mode of production that is characterized by

- (a) The production and circulation of commodity
- (b) The buying and selling of labor power as a commodity by capital
- (c) The extraction and realization of surplus values.

Marx says capitalism obey certain laws and contrives that understanding them and studying them leads to unavoidable conclusion that capitalism is doom because of the following inherent danger and weakness identified in the system.

- (a) Capitalism result in an unjust distribution of natural wealth income and opportunity
- (b) Un-employment rate is high in capitalism system
- (c) Capitalism is exploitative in nature because the goods produce are not equality distributed.

Socialism

Karl Marx's major work Das capital (1984), is a true and critic analysis of capitalism. In it he concludes that "Capitalism" has within it the seeds of its own destruction. In short, Marx believed that the fall of capitalism was inevitable and that it would lead to total socialism. Socialism as an economic and political theory originated therefore as a protest against the evils of capitalism.

Socialism suggested that all the defects of capitalism arise from one root cause *that is the private ownership of means of production and the desire for private profit*. There are many types and brands of socialism and revisionism, democracy and socialism. Whatever the name or type, socialism generally has some advantages which include the following:

- i. It point out the evils of capitalism
- ii. It cater for the weak and the needy in the society
- iii. Efforts are concentrated towards the common goal.
- iv. There is centralized planning system-this gives government and the people sense of direction and a goal.

Despite the above advantages of socialism as an ideology, it has some short coming.

- i. Initiative and resourcefulness are not encouraged
- ii. Human freedom is not guar teed as we have in capitalism
- iii. State management may be less efficient than private management
- iv. Due to its adherence to one party system it may lead to a totalitarian state where opposition is never allowed.

Communism

This is an economic system in which the total means of production and distribution are controlled by the State. In this system individual ownership of property is abolished. Communism is the last stage of development. The main essential principles of communism are found in the communist manifesto which was a call to action on the part of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

According to Ayanlola (1986), the essential features of communism include,

1. Centrally planned economy
2. Absence of classes/classless society
3. Authoritarian and totalitarian government
4. The use of force in achieving communist good.
5. One-party dominance in a communist state

Democracy

Democracy simply means “the government of the people”. It comes from the Greek word demos, people and Kratos, government or power. The concept was first development in the small Greek City States. Democracy may be defined as a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through their representatives.

The content of political liberty has differed in different countries at different times but its essence in the right of every man bound by the decisions of a government to contribute to making and remaking of those decisions. Its Institutional expression in modern representative democracies is:

1. The equal right all normal adult to vote and to be voted for
2. Periodic elections; equal eligibility for executive and judiciary office (provided that essential qualifications for the performance of these duties are satisfied).
3. Freedom of speech, publication and association Democracy demand from the common man a certain level of ability and character:
 - a. Independent judgment
 - b. Tolerance and unselfish devotion to public interest.

Finally, democracy requires proper organization and leadership. Organization is supplied by parties which inspire of their admitted defects, are essential to the successful working of representative government.

Functions of Political Ideology

Whatever the type, form, content or characteristic, ideologies perform many and varied functions. Rodee (1983), has the following to say on the functions of ideology: By providing government with legitimacy, ideology justifies the status quo. Ideology may be used by reformists or rebels to attack the status quo while government may sanction their opposition on citizens by citing the “divine right of kings or historical inevitability”, rebellion citizen's right or the consent of the governed.

It also functions in imparting an ethical basis to the exercise of political power, ideology also helps citizens of the state or followers of movement who seek to change the state ideology enables them to struggle with each other in terms of principles instead of personalities. Ideology serves as a guide to policy choice and political behavior. And ideology explains to all those who consult it and believe in it, the meaning of their existence and purpose of their action.

Ayanlola (1986), identified three reasons for ideology in a country because it makes for clear-sightedness in politics

- i. It helps to identify where society is
- ii. It includes where society should be or ought to be moving
- iii. It shows how to get there.

A society without an ideology is a society without a map; Ideology tells where the society is in terms of development. It establishes the objectives or goals of the society. However, some reasons have also been given against ideology. According to Ayanlola (1986),

- a. It gives distorted views of society
- b. It breeds fanaticism/authoritarianism
- c. No single individual or any view that can be wholly correct.
- d. Society is complex and no simple explanation of it can be correct

Despite these arguments against ideology however, ideology still remains a vital and necessary factor in nation-building.

Leadership and Ideological Challenges in Nigeria

Leadership in all senses entails responsibility. It is the leader that serves as a driving force in any society. The formation of Nigeria state did not base on any ideology Lord Lugard (1914), did not put into consideration the ideological differences between the North and the South before amalgamating it to an entity called Nigeria.

The Northerners are predominantly Muslims and conservatives and their adherence to traditional Feudal system. They have dogmatic coloration. But the monarchical system in the South was contrary to what was obtainable then in the North and Southerners are Christian. Specially, fundamental differences in their cultures and traditions made them to be ideologically incompatible. Beside the formation of political parties during the colonial and in the first republic (1963) fell along tribal lines when we have Northern People's Congress(NPC), Action Group(AG) and National Convention of Nigerian Citizens(NCNC). This motivated ideological superiority struggle in Nigeria. Also, NPC in the Northern region, while AG Western region and NCNC in the Eastern region.

Some scholars believed that colonialism was not an unmitigated disaster. Taiwo (1986) went to the extent that "the good the British did in Nigeria in material terms, is considerable and cannot be obliterated. They brought peace, order good government". This explains that the inability of Northern and southern Nationalist leaders to reach compromise on when independence should be granted to Nigeria was more or less and ideological difference.

During the life Chief Obafemi Awolowo, he advocated equality of opportunity for all within the certain limits imposed by naturally strutted inabilities. This is not say that he believe we are all equal. But there were other that differed in opinion about this belief. Hence, it was bound to affect the policies of the government since individuals control the instruments of governance.

On the eye of Nigeria's independence in 1960, the Action Group of Nigeria issued a manifesto entitled Democratic socialism: the ideology intended to build a democratic socialist society founded on the three principle of natural greatness, the well being of the individual and international brotherhood. To achieve this, the party was against deed-weight of feudalism aristocracy and privilege.

It was in the same spirit that Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe critically examined capitalism, socialism, welfares. He found each of them wonting as well: But none of them, in his view, is totally bad without some good elements. He therefore worked towards a harmonization of these systems by combining what he believes to be good element in each of them. The result of that was "neo welfarism" Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa somehow inclined to Islamic doctrines. These in the final analysis show that there was never a unifying ideology in Nigeria history and it affected us negatively.

The event of the second Republic (1979) was another testimony to the effects of differences in the ideology of our leaders to politics. Then Unity Party of Nigeria U.P.N. introduced free education and free health, U.P.N controlled states and of course a welfarist ideology but instead N.P.N controlled states and of course a welfarist ideology but instead N.P.N made services cost attached. It means people have to pay for the services they enjoy.

Another incident was Udoji award of 1976 for civil servant. What happened then was like a case of capitalist economy giving out welfarist service which was ideologically surrounding the issue of subsidy whether to remove, reduce or maintain it. The pendulum is now tilting towards the total removal of subsidy under the influence of international monetary fund (IMF) and World Bank. What is spectacular in this is that subsidy is a programme of neo welfarist state but incorporated into Nigeria capitalist economic system.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between political ideology and nation building.

Table 1: Responses on the Relationship between Political Ideology and Nation Building

S/no	Questions	Yes	%	No	%
1	Could it be said that the elite's ideology will in no doubt affect nation building?	140	93.33	10	6.67
2	Can we equate nation building to building of political structure?	98	65.33	52	34.67
3	Is it true that Political ideology of a nation will either negatively or positively affect such a nation?	141	94	09	6
4	Can a nation's ideology serves as unifying factor?	133	88.67	17	11.33
5	Is it true that an ideology is good when it satisfied the nation's interest?	144	96	06	4
6	Has democracy any role to play in nation building?	147	98	03	2
7	Is Nigeria operating a true Democracy?	123	82	27	18
8	Is the way Nigeria operating her democracy different from other countries of the World?	142	94.67	08	5.33
9	Is it acceptable that success of any government in Nigeria depends on the type of political ideology?	12	8	138	92
10	Are all Nigerian politicians desired to positively contribute to nation building?	11	7.33	139	93.67

Source: Author's field work, 2016

Table 2: Paired Sample Statistic

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Pair 1 YES	114.5833	12	49.98629	14.42980	2.743	11	.019
NO	35.4167	12	49.98629	14.42980			

From the above analysis, it is clear that t-calculated is greater than t-table. By interpretation, the hypothetical statement will be rejected and restated that there is significant relationship between political ideology and nation building.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between electoral system and nation building

Table 3: Responses on the Relationship between Electoral System and Nation Building

S/no	Questions	Yes	%	No	%
11	Do you agree that an ideological stand of a nation is largely dependent on state policies and electoral system?	128	85.33	22	14.67
12	Is Nigerian Electoral body independent?	20	13.33	130	86.67
13	Can you assess the Nigerian Electoral body to be an unbiased umpire?	15	10	135	90

Source: Author's field work, 2016

Table 4: Paired Sample Statistic

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Pair 1 YES	54.3333	3	63.84617	36.86160	-561	2	.631
NO	95.6667	3	63.84617	36.86160			

From the above analysis, it is clear that t-calculated is lesser than t-table. The interpretation of which is that the hypothetical statement will be accepted. There is no significant relationship between electoral system and nation building.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between political ideology and peoples' political culture.

Table 6: Responses on the Relationship between Political Ideology and Peoples' Political Culture.

S/no	Questions	Yes	%	No	%
14	Is building the youth tantamount to building the nation?	134	89.3	16	10.6
15	Does the nation's ideology influence the values and attitudes of people?	139	92.67	11	7.33
16	Is there any relationship between a nation's ideology and peoples' political culture?	146	97.33	04	2.67
17	Could political ideology exclude women from nation building?	13	8.67	137	91.33

Source: Author's field work, 2016

Table 7: Paired Sample Statistic

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Pair 1	108.0000	4	63.52427	31.76214	1.039	3	.375
YES	42.0000	4	63.52427	31.76214			
NO							

From the above analysis, it is clear that t-calculated is greater than t-table. By interpretation, the hypothetical statement will be rejected. It is concluded therefore that there is significant relationship between political ideology and peoples' political culture.

Conclusion

From the above data analysis and interpretation, one will clearly see that there is a great nexus or interconnectivity between political ideology and nation building. The result of data analysis shows that out of three hypotheses, two were rejected while only one was accepted. This means in any nation, leaders' idiosyncratic element determines whatever ideology a nation is practicing. Since ideology in itself cannot achieve anything without leaders' input, leaders must have strong political will to ensure the ideology that drives the nation's economy. Most Nigerian leaders are egocentric and self centered and this affects nation building.

Recommendations

The study recommends as follows,

1. It is imperative for whoever found his/herself in any position of authority to operate an acceptable ideology to the people they are ruling.
2. Nigerian leaders should try to conduct free, fair and credible elections rather than making it a do or die affair in order to satisfy their egocentric motive(s) against the will and wishes of the electorates.

3. Leaders are implored to implement programs and policies that will promote peoples' political culture most especially to make them more participatory rather than being apathetic.

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