

## THE ROLE OF ENDLESS POLITICS IN THE UNDERDEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA: THE NIGERIAN CASE

**STEPHEN OKHONMINA**

Department of Political Science  
University of Benin, Nigeria  
[stephen.okhonmina@uniben.edu](mailto:stephen.okhonmina@uniben.edu)

And

**EDITH NKECHI OGBUAGU**

Department of Public Administration  
University of Benin, Nigeria  
[nkechi.ogbuagu@uniben.edu](mailto:nkechi.ogbuagu@uniben.edu)

### **Abstract**

There is an agreement in scholarship that a major issue in Africa's development challenge is the weakness of the state in Africa. While the colonial origin of the state has been the major culprit in that weakness, the political elite in Africa have not done enough to make the state in Africa responsive to the challenges and desires of the people. A major challenge relate to the continuation of politics post elections to the extent that policy and administration are compromised. Whereas politics and policy/administration are closely related even intertwined in many cases, they ought to be clearly demarcated in other not to jeopardize the collective or national interest. Utilising desk search method and public administration framework, this paper seeks to revisit the development challenge in Africa and locates the problem of the weakness of its institutions, policy, and administration in the self-defeating deployment of the instrument of politics. Our finding is that this is the case in Africa generally and we recommend that African governments should observe the politics/administration distinction in other to achieve development

**Key word:** Politics, Development, Administration, Africa, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

Politics in pervasive in all societies including Africa. However, most societies strive to limit its impact on critical sectors. One of such areas where effort has been made to limit the impact of politics is administration.

Historically, attempts have been made to distinguish politics from administration. It was articulated that administration is a sphere of activity distinct from politics. Although there has not been a general agreement on this distinction, as arguments were also made against the politics administration dichotomy, the dichotomy remains a seminal idea in American public administration and appears unlikely to go away. In spite of the controversy, there is consensus on the need to exclude administrators from politics that has a more partisan character in other to ensure the political neutrality of administrators. Such that administration can be impartial and an outsider to political controversy. The concern was about the 'partisan politics' in administration and not the 'policy politics' in administration.

This is where the challenge lies for Africa. Administration is too involved in debilitating partisan politics. Since, even in classical conceptualisation, policy politics can be admitted in administration, suggesting that politics altogether is not meant to be removed from politics as that cannot be, African needs to

reform its politics in such a way that the politics in its administration is development oriented.

The paper is divided into seven sections. The first is this introduction. This is followed by a reflection on the nature of politics in Africa, where the finding is made that politics in Africa is largely pervasive, divisive, and elite driven. This is followed by the section that notes that the politics/administration distinction is not observed in Africa. Next is the section that characterises this type of politics as one that is not suited for development. Effort is then made in the next section to propose a type of politics that is development oriented. In the next section, the authors demonstrate empirical evidence from Nigeria to demonstrate the negative impact of the lack of a distinction between politics and administration on development in Africa. The final section concludes.

### **The nature of politics in Africa**

Ideology is an important factor in the development agenda. It is a coherent set of ideas that determines how society is organised, enables man to relate to society and reality. Within society nothing escapes the ambit of ideology; and in a class society the ideology of the society is that of the ruling class (Folson, 1973). Without ideology, society would lack a principle of organisation, purpose, and inner cohesion. Indeed such a society would strictly be no society at all. Where the society is communalistic, without competing 'segments' or 'groups', the ideology is that of the whole society. But where competing segments or groups exist then each has its own ideology, the ideology for the 'dominant' group is then the dominant ideology that is then the ideology of the whole society. This is about the same thing with Marxist conception of the genesis of ideology and its relation to class in class society. Within the African context it is useful to narrow down the meaning of ideology in some sense. Attention may now turn to a summary of the characteristics of ideology as seen by those in Africa who profess a belief in its universal existence. It is sometimes argued that nationalism, democracy, one-party systems, and socialism, besides others, are all ideologies

(Hodgkin, 1957). Nationalism in particular challenges socialism as a competing ideology on the continent. Without in any way attempting to belittle the mobilisational effects of nationalism in the struggle for independence, and in the period immediately after, it may, however, be objected that there are too many contradictions in nationalist rhetoric and realities in Africa for it to be able to provide that system of ideas with any consistency, without which one can hardly speak of ideology. There is hardly any African leader who is not nationalist, and yet some have systems of ideas that are recognisably ideological whilst others have not.

On the other hand, it is implied that in Africa, those who insist on the universal prevalence of ideology are overwhelmingly the socialists: the Marxist- Leninists and the Afro-Marxists. Three reasons why socialism has emerged as the characteristic ideology in Africa may briefly be noted. Socialism, as Apter (1965) has noted, provides a simple explanation of the causes of backwardness, places the guilt for Africa's backwardness squarely on the shoulders of foreigners, and helps the African leaders professing it to repudiate the prevailing hierarchies of power and prestige. In other words, according to Apter, it helps to legitimise the power of those professing it. The most remarkable feature of ideology, then, is its attempt to account for man's total experience and to subordinate this experience to politics. The socialists claim to explain the history of African societies, especially their underdevelopment, the politics of today, the present social and political institutions, sometimes religion and a view of reality all in a logical whole, and on the basis of this explanation, to specify certain policies which they regard to be imposed on African society not by them but by the logic of the 'whole' (Thomas, 1966).

However, it should be reasonably clear that no single explanation of Africa's multifarious problems can be sufficient. There is no doubt about the responsibility of colonialism for most of Africa's present problems (see Ekeh, 1975, 1983). But the problems of African development is not here located in colonialism alone. Besides the fact

that the era of colonial explanations have passed (see Young, 2004), it is simplistic and extremely harmful to blame every problem in Africa on the imperialists and to see in socialism the answer (Folson, 1973). The lack of experience of most of Africa's leaders, the deprivation of education quite a number of them suffered in their youth, the lack of honesty and integrity in public life on the continent and the corresponding love of materialism so prevalent in present-day African societies, the shortage of trained and experienced administrators, the existence of tribes and the loyalties they generate to compete with loyalty to the nation, the lack of patriotism, the sheer irresponsibility of the educated classes these and other deficiencies cannot all be legitimately blamed on imperialism. They have their roots in African societies themselves (Folson, 1973).

Flowing from the above, Andrain (1964) isolates certain structural similarities in the beliefs of African leaders. First, most of the leaders differentiate between European forms of democracy (with their apparent emphasis on institutional components) and African democracy, which attempts to express the will of the masses. In like manner, the African concept of socialism is distinguished by its humanistic overtones rather than by the economic or political orientation of European varieties. Finally, Africans adopt a long-range time perspective on the achievement of a democracy with an institutionalised opposition, economic abundance, and full independence. Hodgkin (1957) contends that there is a 'common political language' and that 'common themes recur' in Africa. Haven observed the ideology of African leaders and the role it plays in the politics and development in Africa, Wallerstein (1965) attempts to view the different political ideas within the context of social stratifications in independent states. In order to speculate upon the values that elites will hold in the future, he suggests that we identify the sources of strain in the societies under consideration and thereby indicate what ideologies might serve the purposes of each social group. Adopting different ideologies in different segments of the society would be better

than the dominating ideology of the dominant class for the whole society.

Due to the similar ideology shared by African leaders, African countries tend to share similar political features. Pye (1958) characterises some of these features as follows: In African societies the political sphere is not sharply differentiated from the spheres of social and personal relations. In most African societies, just as in traditional societies, the pattern of political relationships is largely determined by the pattern of social and personal relations. Power, prestige, and influence are based largely on social status. The political struggle tends to revolve around issues of prestige, influence, and even of personalities, and not primarily around questions of alternative courses of policy action. The fundamental framework of politics in Africa is a communal one, and all political behavior is strongly colored by considerations of communal identification. In the more conspicuous cases the larger communal groupings follow ethnic or religious lines. This essentially communal framework of politics makes it extremely difficult for ideas to command influence in themselves. The response to any advocate of a particular point of view tends to be attuned more to his social position than to the content of his views (Neumann, 1958). In other words, there is more emphasis on the community than on the substance of their political views.

In addition to the above, the character of political loyalty in African societies gives to the leadership of political groups a high degree of freedom in determining matters of strategy and tactics. The communal framework of politics and the tendency for political parties to have world views means that political loyalty is governed more by a sense of identification with the concrete group than by identification with the professed policy goals of the group (Kahin, Pauker & Pye, 1955). The expectation is that the leaders will seek to maximise the interests of all the members of the group and not just seek to advance particular policies or values.

Another characteristics of politics in Africa is that opposition parties and aspiring elites tend to appear as revolutionary movements. Since the current leadership in

African countries generally conceive of itself as seeking to effect changes in all aspects of life, and since all the political associations tend to have world views, any prospective change in national leadership is likely to seem to have revolutionary implications. The broad and diffuse interests of the ruling elites make it easy for them to maintain that they represent the interest of the entire nation. Those seeking power are thus often placed in the position of appearing to be, at best, obstructionists of progress and, at worst, enemies of the country (Pye, 1958).

More so, in African states, the affective or expressive aspect of politics tends to override the problem-solving or public-policy aspect of politics. Traditional societies have generally developed to a very high order the affective and expressive aspects of politics. The peculiar Western assumption that issues of public policy are the most important aspect of politics, and practically the only legitimate concern of those with power, is not always applicable to non-Western politics. Indeed, in most African societies the general assumption is not that those with power are committed to searching out and solving problems, but rather that they are the fortunate participants in the central drama of life. As a result, charismatic leaders tend to prevail in African politics (Almond, 1956). The charismatic leader possesses great advantage over his opponents, even though they may have greater ability in rational planning. However, the very lack of precision in the image that a charismatic leader casts, especially in relation to operational policy, does make it possible for opposition to develop as long as it does not directly challenge the leader's charisma.

However, it is essential to state that African states may have different political background, independence history and democratic style, they are characterised by ideology which plays out in the type of politics in African countries. More so, they are faced with similar phenomena (Allen, 1995). Socialism, nationalism, ethnicity and other notions of parochialism have therefore become the guiding principles in Africa. This is due to the fact that African leaders have elevated them

to the level of an ideology which must guide politics in Africa.

### **The politics/administration distinction is not observed in Africa**

A primary role of public institutions has been to help secure public order and accelerate national development, including reducing poverty. In the case of Africa, it is meant to serve countries that are still in the process of settling in politically (Hyden, 2020). The Western legacy of public administration which conforms to Max Weber's 'ideal type bureaucracy', reflects that public administration is typically treated as a managerial or technical activity. However, public administration in Europe's emerging democracies had already evolved as an activity largely freed from partisan political interferences. Transferring institutional models across national and cultural boundaries, however, has its own limitations. The experiences with capacity-building in public services outside the core Western democratic societies show that it is easy to reform the organisation but much tougher to change institutional practices (Andrews, 2013).

The practice of public administration in Africa can be said to be distinct from what is obtainable in Western societies. The ideology of African leaders seem to be a strong variable in African public administration. The contributions of colonialism to the system of administration in Africa is also valid. In African countries, states have not been formed around nations but instead function as institutional mechanisms to forge nations together. The African state-nation poses challenges to public administration that the modern nation-state in the West doesn't have to address (Mamdani, 1996). This feature can be attributed to colonialism and neo-colonialism. As Kasfir (2014) rightly observed, the reason for this type of politics in Africa is as a result of the fact that administrative practices have not stabilised years after independence and perhaps another reason in the case of Africa is ideological.

As a result of the way African states are structured, it is easy for ideology of the elites to control both politics and administration in Africa. That is why it is difficult to differentiate

politics and administration in Africa. Whereas politics is supposed to end for administration to begin. Development in Africa tends to concentrate on politically relevant parties and voluntary associations at the expense of administration (Kasfir, 2014). Measurements, by the World Governance Indicators produced by the World Bank Institute, confirm that sub-Saharan Africa scores lowest on government effectiveness of all geographic regions of the world. The trend has even worsened to negative in recent times (World Bank, 2017). To fully understand the reason for this trend in Africa, it is important to differentiate between administration by 'capacity' and administration by 'adherence'. With respect to this distinction, systems can be placed as 'strong' to 'weak' respectively.

Public administration in Africa is considered weak because it deals more with adherence than with capacity. People are not yet organised according to shared economic interest but rather in communities with a common culture (Foucault, 1991). African leaders must balance the conflicting pressures from tribe and the larger political community. Any lasting political settlement is a transactional compromise involving power-sharing rather than an institutional arrangement to facilitate the conduct of state business. As a result, political considerations often interfere in the conduct of public administration. Whereas, Wilson (1978) articulated that administration is a sphere of activity distinct from politics.

In the Study of Administration, Wilson explained the broad plans of government are not administration but the detailed execution of such plan is administrative (Wilson, 1966). Whereas the field of politics aims to answer the question, 'Who shall make law and what shall it be?' (Caiden, 1984). In the same line, Goodnow (1900) made it clear that politics is limited to crafting of policies and lawmaking, a function generally vested upon a State's legislative body; and administration is focused on the implementation of laws, a function normally held by the State's executive branch. To Wilson and Goodnow politics bore too strong an influence on public administration. Their aim was to take politics out of administration (Fry,

1989). Weber (1919) also arrived at a dichotomy between politics and administration, but from the opposite direction of Wilson and Goodnow. Weber argued that politics is too weak to curb administrative power. Therefore, he insisted that it was essential that administration stay out of politics.

However, there have been several arguments against the politics-administration dichotomy. Explaining the relationship between the nominal policy makers, elected or appointed, and the nominal implementers of policy presents political science and public administration with one of the greatest of theoretical challenges (Moe, 1990). The dichotomy, as fact or ideological invention, continues to be debated and to withstand attacks on its 'Progressive orthodoxy'. It persists despite evidence that politics and administration are inseparably linked in a number of ways: (a) administrative acts have political consequences; (b) administrators initiate policy; (c) administrators shape policy after the fact; (d) civil servants are not politically neutral; (e) legislators investigate and intervene in administrative processes. Despite this evidence the dichotomy remains a seminal idea in American public administration and appears unlikely to go away (Skelley, 2008).

Wilson knew that it is not possible to achieve absolute separation of politics and administration as what he really wants was to keep public administration out of the ills of politics and institutionalise the practice of effective administration. He stated four reasons why there should be a science of administration: (1) straighten the paths of government; (2) make its business businesslike; (3) strengthen its organisation; and (4) crown its dutifulness. As governments today serve several masters (the people), the role of the administrators became more complex which made Wilson to underscore the need for great mastery in running the government. For this monumental task, the role of the study of administration is to produce competent administrators who will not just serve as passive instruments of power but vanguards of the public interest, and to promote a type of governance responsive to the needs of

the public and reflective of the people's will (Wilson, 1978).

Meier (1997) argued that intellectually the field of public administration made the mistake of rejecting the politics-administration dichotomy. This has contributed to our current governance problem. We have never recognised that the political branches of government had administrative components and that the real problem with the politics-administration dichotomy is that we only study part of the policy process. He argues the key problems are failures of electoral institutions rather than failures of bureaucracy. Another argument about reconceptualisation of the politics-administration dichotomy is that there is a distinction between two types of politics: 'partisan politics' and 'policy politics' (Overeem, 2005). In these two different types of politics, the stakes are different. In 'partisan politics' the stakes are the powers to make decisions (votes and offices), whereas in 'policy politics' the stakes are the contents of those decisions. Public administrators can have an involvement in the latter, but not in the former. In brief, public administrators cannot (and should not) be excluded from the kind of politics that is inherent to policy-making, but they can (and should) be excluded from politics that has a more partisan character.

Overeem (2005) contended that in its classical conceptualisations, the dichotomy between politics and administration implied a deep concern about the political neutrality of administrators. Whether attempts were made to take politics out of administration, as in the case of Wilson and Goodnow, or the other way around, as in the case of Weber, the aim was always to render administration impartial, an outsider to political controversy. Although he admits that, by the end of the 1930's, no one took a practical separation of the two activities seriously and most recognised the role of administrators as policy initiators, the popularity of the dichotomy continued. Later Waldo (1987) finds the idea sustained in part by two philosophical streams in Western culture, the Greek civic-culture (political) tradition and the Roman imperial (administrative) tradition, inherited by the American system. Similarly

Montjoy and Watson (1995), while arguing for dual interpretations of the dichotomy, a 'conceptual one' and an 'institutional one', conclude that the former doesn't exclude administrators from participating in policy formation, but the latter presents a behavioral standard against 'particularism' in administrative activities. The nature of decision processes and how they result in action lie at the center of this perspective. Although public organisations exhibit both kinds of behavior, Brunsson (1989) contends that these should be decoupled both theoretically and practically since 'it is not possible to be good at both politics and action'. Such is the case because politics involves one kind of decision making and action involves another.

Flowing from the above, it can be said that the scholars who argued for politics-administration dichotomy were concerned about the 'partisan politics' in administration and not the 'policy politics' in administration. Goodnow wrote that 'too much control by "politics" will inevitably "produce evil rather than good" by fostering "inefficient administration ..."' (Goodnow, 1900: 270). It should be recognised that Wilson and Goodnow aimed to eliminate the spoils system by freeing administration from political intervention and establishing a merit system in its place. They particularly opposed political appointments and patronage. Also, Weber, noted that in the political controversies public administrators should operate above all impartially and remain politically neutral. In sum, it should be said that in all, it was partisan politics they wanted to keep apart from public administration rather than politics per se (Van Riper, 1984).

In view of the above arguments, it is difficult to separate partisan politics from administration in Africa because African politics is not yet settled since after independence. Also, the African system is heavily controlled by the ideology of the leaders who controls both what happens in politics and in administration. It is therefore difficult to separate partisan politics from administration in Africa as those who control politics also directly or indirectly control administration.

### **A politics not suited for development**

Partisan politics play side by side with administration in Africa as in other places. The problem with the case of Africa is the debilitating consequences. The reason for this was linked to colonialism and the ideology of the elites in Africa. This section examines the politics in administration and the impact of this type of politics on the administration of development in Africa.

Election is one of the vital aspect of the administrative process. It is a means of ushering in the administrative heads and those who make policies for implementation. The effectiveness of an election is dependent on the structures and processes. These include the establishment of a competent, relatively autonomous and non-partisan electoral body to administer the conduct of elections, the existence of an impartial judiciary to interpret electoral laws and adjudicate on electoral matters, a viable press and a non-partisan police force; the latter involves the rules, procedures and activities relating to the conduct of elections: the electoral laws, the organisation of political parties, voters' registration, nomination of candidates for elective public office, balloting, ballot-counting and the declaration of election results (Jinadu, 1995; Adejumobi, 1997). Mackenzie (1958) refers to these as the 'rules of the game'. However, in Africa, elections originated from the colonial masters. It evolved as part of the institutional transfer of the superstructure of liberal democracy (Jinadu, 1995). Elections has been perceived to be a process of political decolonisation during the colonial era (Cohen, 1983). For example, in Nigeria the elective principle was introduced in 1922, with the Clifford's constitution. However, from 1945 the process of political decolonisation was marked by the extension of both the franchise and the scope of representative institutions. Colonialism produced some paradoxes for post-colonial electoral politics and behaviour, particularly of the leadership. For instance, colonialism was based on authoritarianism and the ideals of self-determination and social justice, the emergent political elites were educated and socialised under a highly centralised and authoritarian

order (Chazan, 1993). This was to later affect their post-colonial political behaviour.

After colonial rule ended in Africa, democratic project appears to be in crisis in most African states even up to the present. For example, between 2010 to date, countries like Sudan, Guinea, Mali and Zimbabwe have had military coup mostly for the purpose of dethroning autocratic leaders (Durmaz, 2021). There seems be a gradual, but dangerous reinstitutionalisation of autocratic and authoritarian regimes clad in democratic cloak (Adejumobi, 2000). In some cases, yesterday's despots and military tyrants resurfaced as today's 'born-again' democrats to re-establish their rule, while in others, a new genre of budding autocrats did emerge (Decalo, 1994) These have not protruded an election that will usher in an administration that will bring about development.

In addition, governance entails public policy making and implementation for the purpose of development. Although, administration has been largely tied to policy implementation, but it has also been argued that it also includes the 'policy politics'. Being involved in the policy politics means that administration is also part of the policy choices in governance. However, political corruption seems to be a huge hindrance to effective governance or administration in Africa. There are several definitions of political corruption, however, they are similar in the fact that they all explain that political corruption involves the abuse or misuse of public office, public resources or some public obligation or duty for purposes of private (personal, group or sectional) gain (Szeftel, 2000). Political corruption is traditionally viewed as a 'phenomenon characteristic of developing countries, authoritarian regimes or, at the outside, 'Mediterranean' societies in which the value system favour clientelism, vertical relationships or neopatrimonialism' (Della Porta & Vannucci, 1999:5). Yet, there is evidence that high-level corruption is much less an African (or 'third world') disease, and much more a universal problem (Szeftel, 2000). There is no doubt that wealthy advanced countries are corrupt as well, but their economies can support

the marginal cost of corruption, which weaker economies cannot. For instance, several sub-Saharan African countries have been ruined by criminal dictators, such as Bokassa of the Central African Republic or Mobutu of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Abacha of Nigeria, who shifted much of the national wealth to their own Swiss bank accounts. African leaders have behaved as dictators who would rather bless their home region at the detriment of the entire nation, pack the civil service with their tribesmen, award uncompetitive, overpriced contracts to foreign companies which grant them, their families and their associate's large kickbacks and manipulate price and import controls to weaken profitable businesses. The effects of these have been catastrophic in Africa (Riley, 2000). Political corruption can be said to be a major factor in the underdevelopment of African countries because if the private interests of administrators/leaders supercede public interests, inequality of access to the state becomes the norm. It therefore means that the interest of 'a few' would be fulfilled rather than the interest of 'the whole'. This certainly will not encourage development. Finally, ethnicity is another major index of politics that hinders effective administration in Africa. In fact, it is the most important variable to discuss about because it has a huge role to play in the two issues previously discussed. Ethnicity tends to be the idea behind the ineffectiveness of election in Africa. It is also the major factor that encourages corruption in Africa. African elections are more than 'ethnic censuses' (Horowitz, 1985). One of the explanation for this is rooted in the social identity theory which explains that individuals might derive psychological satisfaction from voting for a member of their own identity group (Tajfel, 1974). In contrast, the rationalist approach emphasised that it is the more tangible (i.e. material or security) benefits that identity group membership can provide to its members (Cohen, 1969). In these scenarios, both elites and citizens benefit from the organisation of political competition along ethnic lines (Conroy-Krutz, 2013). Eifert, Miguel and Posner (2010) affirmed in a study conducted in ten African countries (Botswana, Malawi, Mali,

Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) that ethnic identities become systematically more important to people at the time that competitive elections are being held. This suggests that ethnicity plays a role in the struggle for political power. Politicians therefore find it advantageous to 'play the ethnic card' as a means of mobilising supporters to acquire or retain political power. Since elections are the moment when the people who will control the allocation of resources are chosen, the regular citizens on the other hand, specifically, believe that jobs, favors, and public goods will be channeled disproportionately to coethnics of the person who is in a position to allocate them (Van de Walle, 2007; Wantchekon, 2003). Ethnicity therefore does not only divert the aims of elections but also breeds corruption. It encourages the diversion of public goods for the compensation of an ethnic group. A country where a particular ethnic group is favored against other groups will certainly not be heading towards development.

The ensuing political discourse does not enforce the development of the instruments the state needs to conduct its business. Instead, it encourages modes of governance that are either rivalrous or monopolistic. It is therefore safe to say that the existence of these partisan politics in administration is the reason why African countries are still largely underdeveloped.

### **A development oriented politics for Africa**

Instead of having a politicised election, political corruption and ethnicity in administration, Africa should adopt merit based politics in administration. However, the evolution of genuine free and development oriented politics in administration in Africa will, of course, take a long time. In the first place the damage done by decades of colonialism and elite ideology (i.e. determining what is wrong or right for the public based on their selfish interests) must be repaired. This will of necessity entail formulation of totally new education policies to fall in line with the policy of self-reliance. It was obvious that in order for Africa to play its role as a source of raw materials and potential markets for European manufactured goods,

local indigenous Africans had to be, as it were, socialised to be receptive to the European capitalist incursion; and, which was equally important, for these Africans to be reasonably proficient in the roles to which the capitalist system might assign them. The only way which Africa can maintain its independence, avoid exploitation domestically as well as externally, and at the same time prevent the internal fragmentation and the resultant instability, is to opt for self-reliance (Mohiddin, 1977).

Although, hostile reactions from the metropolis should be expected, but this could be most effectively met by collective self-reliance amongst the Third World countries. The countries of the Third World have a lot among themselves, in terms of natural resources, techniques of production, relevant technology, trained and experience personnel, administrative expertise, and so on, which could be shared in the spirit and objective of collective self-reliance (Bienen, 1967). But unless we beg the question by stipulating the criteria for modernity so that traditional norms and institutions cannot play a part in negative partisan politics. There is evidence to show that some traditional guideposts and institutions facilitate economic development and political equilibrium without enforcing political stagnation (Rudolph, 1965). This means that Africans must be enlightened to stop thinking of their tradition as crude or uncivilised or as that which encourages underdevelopment by allowing or justifying illegal or corrupt practices in administration. Where things are done wrongly in the civil world and are justified in the traditional world or by traditions. It is the notion of seeing our traditions as uncivilised and that of the white man as civilised that has nurtured ethnicity, political corruption and lack of election credibility in Africa. If we cannot engineer incorruptible public officials and citizens, we can nonetheless foster competition, change incentives and enhance accountability. In short, African governments must be able to fix the systems that breed corruption, ethnicity and politicized elections (Aye, 2002).

More so, in order to practice a politics that is suitable for development, Africans must imbibe political emancipation. It is the political

processes which facilitate and enable the diverse human beings to face and solve their basic problems of living and working together harmoniously and constructively (Mohiddin, 1977). In its modern sense, emancipative politics is a creative invention, meaning 'let us do something about the situation' (Le Blanc, 2008). It characterises a political attitude that unfolds until all conditions of subjective break disappear. In the absence of emancipative politics, the state problematic or the imperialist influence prevails in the treatment of matters of politics (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1993).

### **The Nigerian case**

Nigeria just like most African countries also came under colonialism in the 19th century. The nature of colonialism that was introduced to Nigeria can be said to be one of the bedrocks of the problem of development in Nigeria today. One of the ideologies the colonialists left Nigerians with is that power belongs to the majority including the power to implement development in the country. This ideology was well accepted especially by the political north who are mostly favoured by numbers. However, this ideology did not put competence into consideration. The number is important in electoral victory in Nigeria. The North has it. Unity of purpose is key; the North keys into the political unity of the region (Eze, 2022). Political attempts to correct the skewed balance inherent in one region dominating the political space since independence has proved abortive. Those favoured by the imbalance will sabotage efforts to mend the already bent tripod stand. This brings us to the problem of ethnicity in the Nigeria administrative system.

It was mentioned earlier in this paper that a variant of partisan politics that has largely affected the achievement and sustainability of development in Africa is ethnicity. It was also argued that ethnicity is at the background of the other variables mentioned (i.e election and political corruption). Ethnicity does not only affect the outcomes of election, but also has a huge impact on the make-up of those who are appointed to implement the country's policies. It also affects the type of policies that are being approved for implementation. In the 2015

presidential election of Nigeria, President Buhari won the election because he got more votes in the northern region due to the fact that his opponent was from the south. The northerners supported their own with their power of numbers which again is a problem in Nigerian politics. However, in the 2019 presidential election, the level of support President Buhari got from the north reduced as a result of the fact that his opponent this time was also a northerner (Olufemi, 2019). This explains the effect of ethnicity in the outcome of elections in Nigeria. It is not based on the most competent candidate but based on the candidate that comes from the largest ethnic group.

Flowing from the foregoing, there seems to be no end to partisan politics in Nigeria as it also plays out in political appointments. It has been observed that the key cabinet members in the Buhari administration seem to favour a particular group. When he first took power in 2015 and began his initial appointments, President Muhammadu Buhari demonstrated unbelievable insensitivity to Nigeria's diversity, unity and constitution by unfolding a list of appointees clearly dominated and monopolised by his Northern kinsmen to the alienation and disadvantage of other regions, especially the South-East (Faseun, 2017). This act by the president can be justified as a means of pay back to his people who voted him into office. It therefore becomes a politics of ethnicity and loyalty at the detriment of competence in the administration of development.

More so, the impact of partisan politics in the policy making process cannot be underestimated. Apart from the fact that it affects the outcomes of elections and political appointments, it also has a huge impact on the policies and policy process in Nigeria. The legislature is the body charged with the responsibility to make development policies and also act as check on the executive and judicial arms. This task has also been subjected to the vices that comes with the type of politics that dominates the Nigerian space. For example, the recent attempt by the legislature to checkmate the president of Nigeria on the inability of the present administration to tackle the rising insecurity in the country by proposing the

impeachment of the president, seems to be frustrated by the President of the Senate who happens to be the head of the legislature. While he may also be playing the role of a loyal party man, some have argued that this is as a result of the fact that both the President of the Senate and the President of Nigeria are from the same region (Umoru, 2022). There seems to be a sense of loyalty and protection of the interest of the President at the detriment of the development expectations from the public.

The continuous interference of politics in administration in Nigeria has not only affected the administration of effective and sustainable development in Nigeria but has also led to various uprisings from the different regions in the country. In some regions, the target is to become independent of the bias system and control their own government. In other regions, their aim is to get a fair share of the national benefits. Whereas, in some other regions their goal is to get and retain political power. In all these, politics seem to have an upper say than administration. Partisan politics controls both policies and administration in Nigeria and this has a huge negative effect on the administration of development.

### **Conclusion**

This paper began the examination of the problem of the impact of the non-observance of the politics/administration dichotomy on development in Africa by trying to locate the importance and place of ideology in the development agenda. While noting that the dominant ideology in a society is that of the dominant class, it asserts that adopting different ideologies in different segments of the society would be better than the dominant ideology of the dominant class for the whole society. Due to the similar ideology shared by African leaders, African countries tend to share similar political features. One of such features is the tendency for politics to dominate realms other than the strictly political. Unfortunately, the political struggle tends to revolve around issues of prestige, influence, and even of personalities, and not primarily around questions of alternative courses of policy action (Pye, 1958). Whereas, African states may have different

political backgrounds, independence history and democratic style, they are characterised by ideology which plays out in the type of politics in African countries. More so, they are faced with similar phenomena (Allen, 1995). Ideological guides like Socialism, nationalism, ethnicity and other notions of parochialism have become the guiding principles in Africa. This is due to the fact that African leaders have elevated them to the level of an ideology which must guide politics in Africa.

Whereas most states will have to grapple with the challenge of distinguishing politics from administration, the case in Africa is more challenging given the mode of formation of the state in Africa. As a result, whereas politics is supposed to end for administration to begin, politics is not differentiated from administration in a manner that development can be achieved. To achieve development therefore, politics, particularly the extremely partisan and divisive variant will have to be done away with and merit based politics adopted in administration

In summary, to tackle the problem of partisan politics that have deeply eaten into the administration of development in Africa, it is important to trace it from the root. This paper has suggested that adopting the policy of self-reliance and the politics of emancipation would go a long way to clean up the politics in administration. It will bring about the kind of politics that is required for development in Africa.

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