

Review Article

Abolishing Tribalism: A Consideration for Nigeria

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Abstract: Considering the nature of tribal sentiments across Nigeria, this paper was designed to examine World Bank’s population estimates and projections for the years 2021 and 2050 in relation to Nigeria’s present ethno-linguistic problems. The examination, conducted by way of exploration using basic statistical techniques reveal a collection of consequences which if left unchecked may worsen insecurity challenges across Nigeria. The facts provide a basis to conclude that by the year 2050; 240,435,227 vulnerable Nigerians – of 29 years old or younger - must be saved from the effects of inadequate resources to provide their basic and essential needs. At least, governments at all levels must come together to ensure that this set of Nigerians are detribalized from birth by way of a national policy permitting only inter-tribal marriages for the next 30 years.

Keywords: Tribalism, Nigeria, Governments, National Policy, Inter-tribal.

JEL Classification:

INTRODUCTION

Tribalism is coined from the word ‘tribes’, which refers to ethnic, linguistic or national groups that provide great cultural diversity to a people (Oyedeji, 2017). In Nigeria, tribalism is perceived as a social phenomenon associated with the identity of members of competing communal groups seeking to protect and advance their interest in a political system (Adeyanju, 2014). While some see tribalism as natural (Clark, Liu, Winegard, & Ditto, 2019), or as a pragmatic instrument for national unity (Azikiwe, 1964), others see it as an obstacle to national unity (Bascom W. R., 1962). In any case, the assertion that tribalism in Nigeria is so fierce not because the tribes dislike each other but because of the aggressive competition for scarce resources (Schwarz, 1966) makes it safe to say that tribalism is overrated in Nigeria and the main feeder for the ugly ethnic intolerance now being witnessed.

Consequently, Nigeria seemingly heads for more ethnic crises as a result of growing tribal agitations for resource control and power rotation, spelling the need for all levels of government to honestly consider abolishing tribalism. With Nigeria’s population estimated at over 400 million by the end of December 2050 from a bit over half of this figure in December of 2021, there are some parameters to consider. These parameters as sourced from the World Bank’s data bank for population estimates and projections (see table hereafter) and are pointers to the consequences Nigeria may face unless tribalism is abolished now.

Table 1: Comparable Population Parameters for Nigeria

Category	2050		2021	
	% pop.	Figures	% pop.	Figures
Total	100.00	401,315,000	100.00	211,400,000
Rural	30.08	120,704,000	47.25	99,895,000
Urban	69.92	280,611,000	52.75	111,505,000
Working Class	64.80	260,052,120	85.40	180,535,600

An examination of the table above, which represents a 29-year period starting December 2021 and ending December 2050, using simple statistical techniques such as ratios and percentages help decipher the facts that: within 29 years, Nigeria’s population is expected to increase by 89.84%; though almost doubling the national population, with an increase of over 20 million to the nations rural population, the ratio of 47 rural dwellers to 53 urban dwellers as at 2021 would have dropped to 30 rural dwellers for every 70 urban dwellers by the year 2050; and as a result of this rural to urban drift, the urban population is expected to increase by more than 151.66% due to a double impact of population growth and the rural to urban drift.

In addition, the working class (which in Nigeria is usually within the ages of 18 to 65 years) is expected to shrink from 85.4% of the population in 2021 to 64.8% of the population by 2050 even though, the estimated population of the working class in figures should have increased by over 44% when comparing 2021 actual figures to 2050 projected figures. These are uneasy consequences capable of plunging Nigeria into more

dangerous trends considering that: in the wake of a serious population explosion in Nigeria, characterized by rural to urban drift and a shrinking working class, there is much likelihood for Nigeria to witness less production of basic or essential resources just as industries and government workforce are expected to experience shrinkages.

Table 2: Projected Mortality Rate per 1,000 population from 2022 to 2050

Year	Population	D/1,000	Year	Population	D/1,000	Year	Population	D/1,000
2021	211,400,000		2031	190,318,539	9.79	2041	173,573,467	8.741
2022	209,034,857	11.188	2032	188,480,443	9.658	2042	172,070,668	8.658
2023	206,736,728	10.994	2033	186,685,167	9.525	2043	170,595,162	8.575
2024	204,497,149	10.833	2034	184,926,966	9.418	2044	169,142,715	8.514
2025	202,314,755	10.672	2035	183,205,111	9.311	2045	167,712,952	8.453
2026	200,188,427	10.51	2036	181,518,891	9.204	2046	166,305,337	8.393
2027	198,116,677	10.349	2037	179,867,613	9.097	2047	164,919,681	8.332
2028	196,098,264	10.188	2038	178,250,604	8.99	2048	163,555,630	8.271
2029	194,126,496	10.055	2039	176,662,926	8.907	2049	162,209,077	8.233
2030	192,200,179	9.923	2040	175,104,052	8.824	2050	160,879,773	8.195

Another consideration is that with a projected average mortality rate of 0.94% in Nigeria from 2022 to 2050 based on figures from macrotrends.net website, the number of persons expected to be alive by December 2050 out of the December 2021 total population figure is estimated to be 160,879,773. This suggests that out of the projected 401,315,000 total population figure for December 2050, an estimated 240,435,227 of them shall be 29 years of age or younger - a vulnerable age bracket requiring food, security, shelter, education and health services. Governments at all levels in Nigeria should realize that even without adequate resources to provide the needs for this army of young persons, a minimum requirement would be to ensure they are (at least) detribalized Nigerians. This can certainly ensure the avoidance of a repeat mismanagement of the nation’s population growth which is presently connected to the insurgency witnessed in northern Nigeria and separatist agitations in the southern Nigeria.

It is hereby suggested that a 30-year national policy permitting only inter-tribal marriages could stem the increase in population of tribalistic Nigerians. By implication, every Nigerian intending marriage has to do so with a spouse from another tribe given the number of tribes in hundreds. Conversely, any persons who feel they can not marry outside their tribes are to be considered as the very persons who must not be allowed to birth another generation of tribalistic Nigerians.

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