



## Revisiting Nnamdi Azikiwe's Idea on Ethnicity and the Implication for Nation-Building in Nigeria

IKONNAYA OKOMBA OSEMWENGIE  
University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

**Abstract.** Nigeria continues to grapple with national integration, political instability, and calls for restructuring, often attributed to the country's complex ethnic landscape. This paper revisits Nnamdi Azikiwe's perspectives on ethnicity and assesses their relevance for nation-building in present-day Nigeria. Contrary to the view that ethnic diversity is inherently problematic, the study contends that the challenge lies in the political manipulation of ethnic identities. Drawing on Azikiwe's speeches and writings, the paper examines his belief that ethnicity is a natural social reality that can be positively managed through constitutionalism, inclusive governance, federalism, and the protection of fundamental rights. Employing a qualitative and historical methodology, the analysis situates Azikiwe's thought within Nigeria's postcolonial experience and current political dynamics. The findings suggest that Azikiwe regarded ethnicity not as a barrier to national unity, but as a potential resource for promoting stability and cohesion, provided it is addressed with justice, equitable development, and democratic leadership. The paper concludes that Azikiwe's ideas offer valuable insights for advancing national integration and fostering sustainable nation-building in Nigeria today.

**Keywords:** Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ethnicity, Nation-Building, National Integration, Federalism

### 1. Introduction

Ethnicity may be broadly understood as the mobilization of shared identity markers such as language, culture, ancestry, religion, or territorial origin for advantage in contexts of competition, cooperation, or conflict (Suberu, 1996, 16). An ethnic group, in this sense, refers to a social collectivity

whose members share real or perceived common descent and possess a consciousness of distinct identity that differentiates them from others (Okonkwo, 1986, 22). These shared attributes may not always be uniformly present, but what remains central is the subjective awareness of belonging that sustains group cohesion. Ethnicity, therefore, reflects a combination of historical experience, cultural affinity, and social identity shaped by collective memory and interaction.

Prior to colonial rule, the geographical entity now known as Nigeria consisted of diverse ethnic nationalities with distinct languages, customs, and political systems. Despite this diversity, intergroup relations were largely shaped by indigenous mechanisms of coexistence and mutual exchange. However, the advent of colonial administration fundamentally altered these relations. Through policies of indirect rule and administrative restructuring, colonial authorities merged heterogeneous communities into a single political entity while reinforcing divisions along regional, religious, and cultural lines. The creation of administrative units such as the Northern and Southern Protectorates, and later the regional structure of East, West, and North, intensified ethnic consciousness and laid the foundation for competitive identity politics.

In the postcolonial period, ethnicity became deeply embedded in political practice. Nigerian politics increasingly reflected ethnic mobilization as political elites formed alliances along regional and communal lines to secure electoral advantage (Kirk, 1971). This pattern has weakened national cohesion and entrenched divisions, as political loyalty is often prioritized over national interest. In many cases, governance outcomes are shaped less by merit than by

ethnic affiliation, reinforcing perceptions of exclusion and inequality. Some analyses have further linked ethnicization of politics to the persistence of corruption and inefficient governance (Oladiran, 2017). Patronage networks rooted in ethnic loyalty have undermined institutional accountability, while competition over resource control - particularly oil wealth - has intensified intergroup tensions. Despite Nigeria's vast natural resources, widespread poverty persists, reflecting systemic mismanagement and elite capture of public wealth. Current governance studies and scholarly analysis continue to underscore the severity of corruption and its entanglement with identity-based politics (Joseph, 1987; Arowolo, 2020). However, the consequences of ethnic politics extend beyond corruption, affecting democratic consolidation, economic development, and national security. Ethnically driven conflicts, resource wastage, and institutional fragility have repeatedly undermined state capacity and social stability with roots from the colonial period (Nnoli, 1995). Addressing these challenges requires leadership committed to national integration and inclusive governance rather than sectional interests.

It is within this context that the thought of Nnamdi Azikiwe becomes germane. As a leading nationalist and intellectual figure in Nigeria's independence struggle, Azikiwe consistently engaged the problem of ethnicity which he often described in his writings as tribalism, as a major obstacle to national unity. He warned that unchecked ethnic consciousness could erode the foundations of the emerging Nigerian state. Revisiting his ideas offers a critical framework for reassessing the role of ethnicity in contemporary Nigeria and contributes to rethinking strategies for sustainable nation-building. Recent studies further reinforce these concerns, showing that identity-based political mobilization remains a key driver of electoral behavior and governance outcomes in Nigeria (Madueke, 2025; Chikwado & Jerry-Nduka, 2025; Osmond & Anaukwu, 2024). A central aspect of Azikiwe's (1937, 8-9) position was his call for social regeneration, which involved moving away from divisions based on ethnicity, religion, and other inherited identities in favor of a broader national outlook. Azikiwe maintained that political stability and development depended on building a shared sense of purpose and collective identity. His exposure in the United States to liberal democratic thought, Pan-Africanism, and Fabian ideas reinforced his belief that ethnic divisions could be managed through deliberate policies and civic reorientation (Falola, 2009). This perspective is clearly reflected in his 1964 speech on tribalism, where he directly addressed the dangers of ethnic politics and emphasized the need for national

unity (Azikiwe, 1964). In practice, his political actions - particularly in alliance-building and negotiation - demonstrated a consistent effort to rise above ethnic divisions and promote national cohesion (Sklar, 2004). Taken together, these ideas position ethnicity not as an unavoidable barrier but as a challenge that can be addressed through conscious political and social effort, making his thought highly relevant to contemporary debates on nation-building in Nigeria. In light of these developments, a renewed engagement with Azikiwe's thought provides not only historical insight but also practical direction for addressing enduring challenges of unity and development.

## 2. Ethnicity and the Dynamics of Nigerian Politics

Ethnicity has often been defined as "a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups" (Nnoli, 1978, 5). This suggests that ethnicity is not inherently fixed or biological, but develops through social relations and becomes more pronounced in situations where groups compete for political power, economic resources, and social recognition. Ethnicity remains a central factor in Nigeria's political and socio-economic life, shaping patterns of governance, resource distribution, and political participation. Rather than serving as a unifying force, it has often reinforced divisions, as public decisions are frequently interpreted through ethnic lenses. In many instances, access to state resources, public appointments, and employment opportunities is influenced more by ethnic affiliation than by merit, thereby undermining institutional efficiency and national cohesion (Osaghae, 1998; Suberu, 2001). This tendency reinforces a comprehensive pattern in which political actors mobilize ethnic identities to secure advantage within competitive state structures.

Nigeria's ethnic configuration - dominated by major groups such as the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, alongside numerous minority groups - has historically shaped political alignments and contestations. The roots of this dynamic can be traced to colonial restructuring, particularly the Amalgamation of Nigeria, which integrated diverse groups into a single polity without corresponding mechanisms for equitable integration (Coleman, 1958). Through indirect rule, uneven economic development, and regional administrative structures, colonial authorities encouraged competition among ethnic group for political relevance and access to state resources (Nnoli, 1978). Post-independence developments, including the Nigerian Civil War, further entrenched

ethnic consciousness and deepened mistrust among groups (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

In Nigeria currently, ethnicity operates through institutional and informal mechanisms. Electoral behavior often reflects ethnic loyalties, with political parties and candidates relying on regional support bases rather than national appeal (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997). Similarly, the politics of resource allocation (particularly in relation to oil revenues) has intensified perceptions of marginalization, especially in the Niger Delta, where communities have protested environmental degradation and economic exclusion (Watts, 2004; Ikelegbe, 2005). These grievances have contributed to the emergence of ethnic and regional movements, including the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), reflecting the link between identity, resource control, and political mobilization. The persistence of marginalization narratives across regions underscores the competitive nature of Nigeria's federal system. Groups frequently perceive unequal access to political power and economic resources, leading to demands for restructuring and, in some cases, self-determination. While such perceptions are not always empirically uniform, they remain politically significant, as they shape collective behavior and reinforce intergroup tensions (Horowitz, 1985). Moreover, elite manipulation of ethnic divisions has hindered the development of strong national institutions. Political leaders often exploit identity cleavages to consolidate power, thereby weakening democratic accountability and fostering patronage-based governance (Joseph, 1987). This dynamic has contributed to persistent corruption, institutional fragility, and uneven development outcomes.

The proliferation of ethnic organizations and militias further illustrates the institutionalization of ethnicity in Nigeria's political landscape. Groups such as Afenifere, Ohanaeze Ndigbo, and Arewa Consultative Forum, among others, function as platforms for articulating ethnic interests, while militant organizations in the Niger Delta have emerged in response to perceived state neglect and repression (Ikelegbe, 2005). Although these groups often claim to defend communal interests, their activities also reflect the failure of the state to establish inclusive governance structures. Generally, ethnicity in Nigeria is not merely a cultural phenomenon but a politically constructed and strategically deployed instrument within a competitive state system. Its persistence is sustained by institutional weaknesses, elite manipulation, and unequal development patterns. Understanding these dynamics provides the necessary foundation for examining how the ideas of Nnamdi

Azikiwe engage with and offer pathways for mitigating the challenges posed by ethnicity in Nigeria's nation-building process.

### 3. Nnamdi Azikiwe's Idea of Ethnicity

Tribalism is a reality. National unity can be a reality; but at present it is not quite a reality. How this reality of tribalism can be adapted to the unreality of national unity to make it a reality is the problem ... (Azikiwe, 1964).

The political thought of Nnamdi Azikiwe is important for understanding how ethnicity has been approached in Nigeria's political development. His ideas were expressed through his writings, and speeches, and reflect a consistent concern with unity, national integration, and the dangers posed by divisive entities. These were shaped by the realities of colonial rule, racial inequality, and the fragmented nature of African societies rather than abstract theorizing (Azikiwe, 1974, 2). In his early years, Azikiwe used strong, motivating language to inspire anti-colonial nationalism and a sense of shared identity among Africans. Concepts such as social regeneration, mental emancipation, and political resurgence were central to this effort, aimed at encouraging people to look beyond ethnic and racial differences (Azikiwe, 1937). As his thought matured, these ideas became more grounded in practical political principles, including the rule of law, representative government, and the protection of fundamental rights (Coleman, 1958).

Nnamdi Azikiwe's (1937, 9) critique of ethnicity is sharply captured in his observation that "tribal appellations cause tribal idiosyncrasies; these lead ultimately to vanity and superciliousness and disharmony". This statement reflects a causal understanding of ethnicity as a socially constructed process that begins with the labeling of individuals along ethnic lines and gradually shapes attitudes of superiority, exclusion, and conflict. Azikiwe's concern is not with cultural diversity itself, but with the elevation of ethnic identity into a primary basis for social and political organization. By emphasizing individuality over tribal affiliation, he advances a civic conception of nationhood in which citizens are judged by merit rather than origin. This position aligns with his wider idea of social regeneration, which calls for a deliberate transformation of social consciousness as a prerequisite for national unity. In this sense, Azikiwe's argument anticipates the enduring challenges of Nigerian politics, where ethnic identification continues to influence political behavior, access to opportunities, and perceptions of belonging. His analysis suggests that sustainable nation-building

requires not only institutional reforms but also a reorientation of collective identity away from ethnicity toward inclusive citizenship.

Azikiwe further offered a deeply layered and systematic understanding of tribalism in a speech which he delivered in 1964. He considered tribalism not as an anomaly peculiar to Africa but as a universal and inevitable feature of human society (Azikiwe, 1964). He grounded tribal identity in socialization, noting that every individual is born into a tribe whose customs and traditions shape behavior, loyalty, and worldview from childhood. This early conditioning makes tribal attachment both natural and resilient. However, he challenges the derogatory use of the term “tribe,” arguing that what is called tribalism in Africa is no different from what is termed “nationality” in Europe (Azikiwe, 1964). In this sense, he reframes ethnicity as a neutral anthropological reality rooted in three core elements - race, language, and culture - which structure human communities everywhere. He insists that tribalism is not inherently destructive as “some people seem to think that tribalism is an unmitigated evil, but it is not,” emphasizing that each cultural group possesses values that can enrich the larger society.

Building on this foundation, Azikiwe turns to the problem of inter-group relations, identifying conflict as a product of interaction between different racial, linguistic, and cultural systems. His detailed typology of human groups demonstrates that the intensity of tribalism varies depending on the degree of similarity or difference among these elements. Yet, he draws a crucial sociological conclusion - while societies may begin as parochial and ethnically bound, they tend over time to evolve into more cosmopolitan entities (Azikiwe, 1964). This transition, however, is not automatic, it depends on the creation of conditions that reduce fear, insecurity, and competition among groups. As he puts it, people will “attach less importance to their racial, linguistic and cultural origins” when their liberties are protected and their material needs are met (Azikiwe, 1964). Thus, the persistence of tribalism is linked not simply to cultural difference but to failures in political and economic organization (Azikiwe, 1965).

The idea of Nnamdi Azikiwe on ethnicity is further portrayed through his broader commitment to national unity and political integration. Rather than treating ethnic diversity as an obstacle to nationhood, he approached it as a reality that required careful management within a constitutional framework. In *Political Blueprint of Nigeria*, Azikiwe (1943, 45) articulated the principle of social equality as a

fundamental right, emphasizing that all citizens, irrespective of ethnic origin, race, religion, or creed, should enjoy equal status in all spheres of life. This position reflected his recognition of Nigeria’s cultural plurality, which included centralized political systems in the North and West as well as more decentralized, republican traditions in the East. For Azikiwe, these differences did not negate the possibility of unity, rather, they underscored the need for a political system capable of accommodating diversity while safeguarding life, liberty, and collective progress. Azikiwe’s central argument is that tribalism can and should be transformed into a constructive force for nation-building. Rather than attempting its elimination, which he considers both impossible and dangerous, he advocates its management through institutional and constitutional arrangements.

In this regard, Azikiwe’s preferred framework to manage ethnicity is federalism, which he sees as the most viable means of reconciling diversity with unity. Federalism, in his view, must go beyond mere political structure to include substantive guarantees: protection of fundamental human rights, equitable distribution of resources, and recognition of the autonomy and dignity of all linguistic and cultural groups (Azikiwe, 1943). He proposes the principle of “de jure equality and de facto inequality,” meaning that all units of the federation should be legally equal while acknowledging differences in size, population, and resources in practical governance (Azikiwe, 1964). This approach is designed to counter fears of domination and foster a sense of belonging among all groups. On the role of federalism in addressing the problem of diversity, he had this to say,

The central problem of federalism in Nigeria is how to coexist in harmony. How can people who speak diverse tongues and have inherited different cultural traditions cultivate a national spirit of oneness? By enlarging the scope of authority of the Federal Government to include more concurrent subjects, by vesting the Senate with concurrent powers, by unifying our legal and judicial systems, by reinforcing the fundamental rights clauses in the Constitution, by creating more states, and by augmenting the prestige of the Head of State, definite steps would have been taken to strengthen cooperation between the regions and the Federal Government. This should create an atmosphere of confidence and ease tensions that are inherent in federations (Azikiwe, 1965, 461).

Nnamdi Azikiwe by this statement made a very practical submission - Nigeria’s diversity is not the problem rather failure to manage it properly is. Azikiwe sees the central challenge of Nigeria as how

different ethnic groups can live together peacefully within a federal system. His answer is not to eliminate differences but to build structures that make coexistence workable. He proposes strengthening federal institutions; expanding shared (concurrent) powers between regions and the center; ensuring equality through constitutional rights; creating more states or guaranteeing fair development for all units; and promoting balance so no group feels dominated. At the heart of all this is one idea, the fact that federalism must be built on compromise. No group should feel overpowered, and no group should withdraw. Unity, for him, is something negotiated and maintained, not assumed. What Azikiwe is saying in essence is redefining ethnicity. Ethnicity is inevitable (people differ in language, culture, history); it is important to note that the danger comes when it produces fear, suspicion, and domination; the solution is not emotional appeals, but institutional fairness and balance (Azikiwe, 1965). So instead of attacking ethnicity directly, he focuses on removing the conditions that make ethnicity toxic.

In addition to this constitutional design, Azikiwe emphasizes the importance of socio-economic incentives in shifting loyalty from tribe to nation. He argues that national integration requires the state to guarantee “freedom from fear and freedom from want,” alongside access to education, economic opportunities, and social welfare (Azikiwe, 1980). By advocating a welfare-oriented state that blends elements of capitalism and socialism, he situates national unity within a framework of human well-being. Political stability, in this sense, is inseparable from economic justice and social equity. He also calls for the reorganization of political parties along ideological rather than ethnic lines, insisting that “political parties would have to cut across the artificial barriers of tribe and region,” thereby producing leaders with genuine national appeal (Azikiwe, 1964).

Azikiwe consistently sought to emphasize shared experiences among Nigerians while downplaying divisions that could undermine national cohesion. He argued that, despite linguistic and cultural variations, Nigerians possessed sufficient common ground to sustain a unified state, rejecting claims that diversity made nationhood unattainable (Azikiwe, 1964). His advocacy extended beyond Nigeria to a broader African context, where he linked national unity to the dismantling of ethnic prejudice and the promotion of equality among all groups. Central to this position was his insistence that no ethnic group should seek dominance over others and that political leadership must be oriented toward cooperation rather than competition. His political career reflected this

commitment. He frequently opposed regionalization, ethnic-based alliances and promoted inclusive nationalism through his party, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), which was established to unify diverse groups and expand African participation in governance (Azikiwe, 1957, 15-7; Coleman, 1958). This commitment to unity also shaped Azikiwe’s political strategies, particularly his willingness to adopt compromise as a means of maintaining national stability. His approach to coalition-building, including alliances across regional and ethnic lines, demonstrated an effort to prevent political fragmentation and foster integration (Sklar, 2004). Even in moments of intense political tension, such as the period leading to and following the Nigerian Civil War, his position remained anchored in reconciliation and the preservation of national unity. However, his efforts were often constrained by the entrenched ethno-regional interests of political elites, whose priorities frequently aligned with sectional dominance rather than national development. This limitation highlighted the structural challenges facing the realization of his vision, as competing regional loyalties weakened the emergence of a cohesive national leadership.

Azikiwe’s reconceptualization of tribalism as a foundational, rather than obstructive, element of nationhood is the focal point of his political thought. His assertion that “without communities, there can be no tribe... and without tribes, there can be no nation” captures this logic succinctly (Azikiwe, 1964). Ethnic groups are not obstacles to unity but the building blocks from which a nation is constructed. The task, therefore, is to create a political order in which these groups can coexist peacefully, interact productively, and gradually develop a higher, shared loyalty. He remains cautiously optimistic, suggesting that although tribalism may persist for a time, “it is only a matter of time” before the diverse elements of Nigeria “converge through the channel of constitutional government, and flow into the river of national unity.”

#### **4. Implications of Azikiwe’s Ethnicity for Nation-Building in Nigeria**

When I proposed that Nigeria should become a federation of eight regions in 1943, I was political, and not sociological, in my approach. I did not necessarily overlook the tribal factor but, in my innocence, I minimized it. Within five years, tribalism had reared its horrid head and Nigerian politics was saturated with its ramifications. Since then, tribalism has displaced patriotism as the center of political gravity and Nigerian leaders were maneuvered to dissipate

their energies and turn against themselves (Azikiwe, 1974, 2).

One major implication of Nnamdi Azikiwe's ideas for contemporary Nigeria lies in his understanding of ethnicity as a political and structural problem rather than merely a cultural one. Azikiwe argued that ethnic consciousness becomes intensified when citizens feel excluded, insecure, or deprived within the state. This position remains relevant in present-day Nigeria where political competition, public appointments, and access to state resources are still widely perceived through ethnic and regional considerations. His insistence that citizens would attach less importance to ethnic identity when their rights, security, and economic welfare are guaranteed suggests that sustainable nation-building depends on strengthening democratic institutions, ensuring justice, and promoting equitable development across all regions (Azikiwe, 1964). In this regard, ethnicity in Nigeria persists not simply because of cultural diversity, but because the state has often failed to inspire confidence as a neutral and inclusive institution.

Azikiwe's defense of federalism also provides an important framework for addressing the challenges of national integration in Nigeria. He believed that a stable federation must accommodate diversity through constitutional guarantees, local autonomy, and balanced development. This idea is particularly significant in Nigeria till date, where excessive centralization has intensified competition for control of federal power and reinforced ethnic mobilization. His proposal for "de jure equality and de facto inequality" was intended to ensure that all groups and regions enjoyed equal recognition while acknowledging differences in size, population, and resources (Azikiwe, 1964). This suggests the need for institutional reforms that promote fairness in resource distribution, strengthen subnational governance, and reduce fears of ethnic domination. Such measures would help shift political competition away from zero-sum ethnic struggles toward cooperative national development.

Another important aspect of Azikiwe's thought is his belief that ethnicity itself should not be destroyed but transformed into a constructive force for national unity. He recognized that ethnic identities are deeply rooted in language, culture, and historical experience, making them enduring features of social life. However, he argued that these identities could coexist within a broader national framework where citizens share common political values and collective aspirations. This position has implications for contemporary efforts at civic education, inter-ethnic

cooperation, and national orientation in Nigeria. The persistence of ethnic politics in elections and public discourse demonstrates the continued weakness of national consciousness, despite decades of state-building. Although recent political developments such as the "Obidient Movement" reflected attempts to transcend traditional ethnic alignments, ethnic loyalties still significantly shape political behavior across different parts of the country (Opejobi, 2023). Azikiwe's ideas therefore highlight the importance of inclusive leadership, national civic culture, and policies capable of fostering trust and cooperation among Nigeria's diverse groups. Furthermore, his emphasis on constitutionalism, social justice, federal balance, and national consciousness offers a practical framework for promoting unity in a plural society.

## 5. Conclusion

One important question that arises is the extent to which Azikiwe was able to implement these ideas during his political career and how successful they were in practice. Although Azikiwe emerged as one of Nigeria's foremost pan-Nigerian nationalists, capable of transcending ethnic boundaries and appealing to people across the country, his position as Head of State was largely ceremonial, thereby limiting his executive influence. In addition, broader structural challenges such as colonial divide-and-rule policies, deep ethnic suspicions, regional rivalries, and fears of domination significantly constrained the realization of his vision for national integration. Nevertheless, the purpose of this study is not to assess Azikiwe's political achievements or failures, but rather to revisit his ideas on ethnicity and examine their continuing relevance to contemporary Nigeria. The study, therefore, highlights how his thoughts can still provide useful insights for addressing persistent ethnic tensions, recurring demands for restructuring, and the broader challenge of nation-building in Nigeria. Nnamdi Azikiwe viewed ethnicity as a natural feature of human society, which, if properly managed, could contribute to national development rather than political instability. He rejected the idea that ethnic diversity was itself the major problem in Nigeria. Instead, he argued that the real danger lay in ethnic domination, injustice, political exclusion, and unequal access to resources. For Azikiwe, national unity could only emerge where citizens, irrespective of ethnic background, enjoy constitutional protection, equal opportunities, economic security, and participation in governance. His defense of federalism, local autonomy, fundamental rights, and inclusive leadership reflected his belief that Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups could coexist peacefully within a democratic political framework founded on fairness and mutual respect.

Azikiwe's ideas remain relevant in Nigeria today, where ethnic distrust, sectional politics, uneven development, and identity-based political mobilization continue to weaken national cohesion. His thought suggests that nation-building in Nigeria requires strengthening democratic institutions, promoting equitable distribution of resources, protecting minority interests, and encouraging political cooperation beyond ethnic loyalties. Azikiwe believed that when citizens are guaranteed justice, security, and a sense of belonging within the state, loyalty to the nation would gradually supersede loyalty to ethnic groups. In this regard, his thought continues to provide valuable insights for current debates on national integration, democratic stability, and sustainable nation-building in Nigeria.

## References

- Arowolo, D. E. (2020). "Ethnicisation of Corruption in Nigeria". *Journal of Financial Crime*, 29(1): 246-57. Accessed from <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFC-06-2020-0106> on 26/03/2026.
- Azikiwe, N. (May 15, 1974). "Creation of More States in Nigeria: A Political Analysis". Being a Public Lecture Delivered at the Political Science Association, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Azikiwe, N. (1965). Essentials for Nigerian Survival. *Foreign Affairs*, 43(3): 447-61.
- Azikiwe, N. (1980). *Ideology for Nigeria: Capitalism, Socialism or Welfarism?* Lagos: Macmillan.
- Azikiwe, N. (1943). *Political Blueprint of Nigeria*. Lagos: African Books Company Limited.
- Azikiwe, N. (1937). *Renascent Africa*. London: Frank Cass.
- Azikiwe, N. (1957). *The Development of Political Parties in Nigeria*. London: The Office of the Commissioner in the United Kingdom for the Eastern Region of Nigeria.
- Azikiwe, N. (1964). Tribalism: A Pragmatic Instrument for National Unity". Accessed from <http://www.blackpast.org/1964-nnamdi-azikiwe-tribalism-pragmatic-instrument-national-unity> on 04/07/2025.
- Bratton, M., & van de Walle, N. (1997). *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chikwado, U. H. & Jerry-Nduka, O. E. (2025). "Identity politics and National Integration Challenges in Nigeria, 1999-2023". *African Scholars Multidisciplinary Journal (ASMJ)*, 10: 251-59.
- Coleman, J. S. (1958). *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Falola, T. (2009). *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Falola, T., & Heaton, M. M. (2008). *A History of Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Horowitz, D. L. (1985). *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. California: University of California Press.
- Ikelegbe, A. (2005). The Economy of Conflict in the oil rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 14(2): 208-34.
- Joseph, R. A. (1987). *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of the Second Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kirk, A. H.M. (1971). *Crisis and Conflict in Nigeria*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Madueke, O. (2025). "Ethnic Mobilisation and State Fragility in Nigeria: An Instrumentalist Perspective". *National Identities*: 1-21. Accessed from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14608944.2025.2566825> on 26/03/2026.
- Nnoli, O. (1978). *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension.
- Nnoli, O. (1995). *Ethnicity and Development in Nigeria*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Okonkwo, I. E. R. (1986). *The Great Debate*. Anambra: First Edition Publishers.
- Oladiran, A. (2017). "Ethnic and Development Consolidation in Nigeria". Accessed from <http://folk.U10.no/geirthe/ethnicity.html> on 30/03/2025.
- Opejobi, S. (2023). "Presidential election: How Nigerians Defied Ethnic Lines", *Daily Post*, March 8, 2023. Accessed from [https://dailypost.ng/2023/03/08/presidential-election-how-nigerians-defied-ethnic-lines/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://dailypost.ng/2023/03/08/presidential-election-how-nigerians-defied-ethnic-lines/?utm_source=chatgpt.com) on 26/03/2026.
- Osaghae, E. E. (1998). *Crippled Giant: Nigeria since Independence*. Indiana University Press.
- Osmond, I. E. & Anaukwu, N. O. (2024). "Ethnic politics and Nigeria's democratization process: 2023 presidential and gubernatorial elections in Lagos State". *West African Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 2(2): 30-41. Accessed from <http://www.openjournals.ijaar.org/index.php/wajir/article/view/550> on 26/03/2026.

- Sklar, R. L. (1963). *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*. New York: Nok Publishers International.
- Suberu, R. T. (1996). *Ethnic Minority Conflicts and Governance in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.