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THE CHALLENGES OF PATRIOTISM ON NIGERIA DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper investigates unpatriotic behavior among Nigerian citizens and its implications for national development, employing Civic Engagement Theory as a guiding framework. Through a comprehensive analysis of secondary sources, the study examines the various factors contributing to unpatriotic attitudes, including political apathy, social fragmentation, and governance challenges. Drawing on the works of scholars such as Putnam, Verba, Schlozman, Brady, and Pateman, the paper explores the role of civic participation, social trust, and inclusive governance in attitudes towards patriotism and national identity. Methodologically, the research adopts a qualitative approach, involving literature review, data collection from diverse sources, and thematic analysis to uncover patterns and insights into unpatriotic behavior. The findings highlight the importance of addressing systemic inequalities, promoting civic empowerment, and fostering a culture of national unity to combat unpatriotic tendencies and advance sustainable development in Nigeria. Through its theoretical framework and methodological approach, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the complexities surrounding unpatriotic behavior and offers insights for policy interventions aimed at building a more inclusive and cohesive society.

Keywords: Patriotism, Unpatriotic Behaviour, Nigerian Citizens, National Development



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Patriotism is the love, loyalty, and devotion to one's occupies a central place in the discourse surrounding identity and cohesion. In the context of Nigeria, a nation characterized by its diversity, historical complexities, and political challenges, the concept of patriotism evokes a range sentiments, from pride and solidarity to skepticism and disillusionment. This paper aims to provide a thorough and exploration of patriotism in Nigeria, analyzing its various dimensions, underlying factors, persistent challenges, and avenues for enhancement.

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Etymologically, or in literary origin, the word, patriotism is derived basically from two Latin words, pater patria (fatherland or home (father) and Etymologically, patriotism is quite domestic. In real meaning also patriotism shares common concepts and connotations with the family or domestic life. Being family connotes paternity and maternity, authority and loyalty, love and sacrifices, so also is patriotism analogously characterized by fatherland and motherland, loyalty and constituted authority, love and service (Pavan 1966). Patriotism is fundamentally a socio-ethical virtue which in climes the citizen to the enlightened and legitimate love of his home, his community and his native land. It is a particular form of social charity (amor socialis), and both are practically identical and interchangeable with public spirit, fraternity and community sense. Patriotism as love on a social scale has, as its primary objective and concern, the welfare and legitimate interests of one's community and fatherland. Thus the common good of one's community and nation and the relentless pursuit of the same by honest means and service are the hall-marks and primary objective of true patriotism. Hence patriotism is therefore characterized by the willingness to defend and promote its legitimate interests and values. It is a form of civic sharing of resources and responsibilities. It requires national ideology which will take Etymologically, or in literary origin, the word, patriotism is derived basically into consideration the cultural and religious into consideration the cultural and religious (traditional, Christian and Islamic) heritage of Nigeria, the lessons of its political history, the fundamental norms, values and legitimate aspirations of the generally of Nigerians, the unquestionable and crystallized principles of modern democracy and civilized humanity.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary by Hornby, a patriot is defined as "a person who fervently supports their country," and patriotism embodies the sentiments and characteristics of a patriot. Achebe (1983, p.15) simplifies the concept of patriotism, stating that a

patriot is someone who loves their country deeply, emphasizing that true patriotism is not merely expressed through vocal declarations or rituals, but through a genuine concern for the happiness and welfare of the nation and its people. Achebe's intention is to broaden the understanding of patriotism beyond superficial expressions, challenging both leaders and citizens to share a common goal of ensuring the well-being of the nation.

Similarly, Ezeogidi Cynado (2007) defines patriotism as the act of supporting one's community, whether local or national, with unwavering dedication and a desire for development and progress. This definition underscores the importance of love, care, dedication, and sacrifice in embodying true patriotism.

Historically, Nigeria's journey towards independence and nationhood has been marked by significant moments of collective action and patriotism. From the nationalist movements of the preindependence era to the struggles against colonial rule and the eventual attainment of sovereignty in 1960, Nigerians have demonstrated resilience, courage, and unity in their quest for self-determination. These historical narratives serve as testament to the enduring spirit of patriotism that has animated the Nigerian populace in times of struggle and triumph.

However, alongside these narratives of patriotism, there exists a complex web of socio-economic, political, and cultural factors that shape the contemporary landscape of national identity in Nigeria. Socio-economic disparities, exacerbated by decades of uneven development and resource mismanagement, have contributed to feelings of marginalization and alienation among certain segments of the population. Ethno-religious tensions, fueled by historical grievances and contemporary political dynamics, further complicate the narrative of national unity and solidarity.

Moreover, Nigeria's political landscape is characterized by a history of corruption, nepotism, and governance failures, which have eroded trust in public institutions and undermined the legitimacy of the state. The prevalence of corruption not only fosters a culture of impunity and cynicism but also undermines efforts to cultivate a sense of collective responsibility and civic duty among citizens.

Nigeria is today faced with many problems which include lack of patriotism among its citizens. Nigerians are said to be among the world's most unpatriotic people. However, "this is not because Nigerians are particularly evil or wicked; in fact they are not. It is rather because patriotism, being part of an unwritten social contract between a citizen and the state, cannot exist where the state reneges on agreement" (Achebe, 1983:15). Really, Nigeria as a state has not kept its commitment to the social contract.

The Nigerian state is unable to meet its basic obligations to the people. This is due to the crisis of accumulation which results from the appetitive mind-set. When appetite rules, reason takes flight. Indeed, the appropriation of the common wealth by public official reduces the capacity of the Nigerian state to meet the end for which it is established. Professor Sagay captures the situation correctly when he says that political office holders in Nigeria are mentally stunted and have not been liberated from the animal feeding frenzy (Sagay cited in Kalama et al, 2012). Ake (2004) agrees that the ruling class in Nigeria uses political position to grow its economic fortunes leaving the welfare of the people unattended.

In reaction, the people withdraw their trust from public institutions. Their obedience to the extant laws is at best patchy and the level of their patriotism very low (Ekekwe, 2015). And because the state sees itself losing the support of the people, it resorts to repression and self-serving campaigns for national unity in an attempt to hang on to power. In most cases, the state acting as though it were an alien force confronts the people and in turn, the people deny it the cooperation it demands from them (Ekekwe, 2015). The result is that patriotism diminishes by the day in Nigeria.

However, we have great hopes for a re-birth of patriotism in Nigeria. This optimism in a Nigeria of patriotic people is embedded in mental harmony which is largely what Plato's theory of tripartite soul addresses. The objective of this study, therefore, is to establish how mental harmony can be achieved and how this will bring about patriotism in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study relies on secondary sources of data to examine the unpatriotic behavior among Nigerian citizens. Secondary sources encompass a wide array of existing literature, including academic journals, books, government reports, and reputable online platforms. The methodology involves identifying pertinent sources, conducting a thorough literature review to gain insights into the topic, gathering data from these sources, and analyzing the information qualitatively. The analysis focuses on identifying recurring themes, patterns, and insights from the literature to draw conclusions and generate new perspectives. Proper citation practices followed documentation and are throughout the research process to maintain transparency and credibility. This approach enables the study to leverage existing knowledge and scholarship on the subject, providing

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a comprehensive understanding of the unpatriotic nature of Nigerian citizens.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, Civic Engagement Theory serves as a fundamental framework for understanding the complex dynamics of citizen participation and its implications for the unpatriotic behavior among Nigerian citizens. Drawing on the works of scholars such as Putnam Verba, Schlozman, Brady Pateman, this theoretical perspective provides invaluable insights into the role of active citizenship, social capital, and inclusive governance in shaping attitudes towards patriotism and national identity.

Civic engagement theory, a cornerstone of democratic scholarship, illuminates the dynamics of citizen participation in civil society and political processes. As elucidated by Putnam (2000), this theoretical framework underscores the significance of active citizen involvement in decision-making to fortify democracy and address societal issues. Putnam's seminal work, "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community," underscores the repercussions of diminishing social capital and civic participation on democratic resilience (Putnam, 2000). Similarly, Pateman (1970) asserts that participatory democracy and civic republican theory underscore the necessity of civic virtues and active citizenship. The literature emphasizes that declining civic engagement, marked by reduced membership in voluntary associations and waning voter turnout, poses substantial challenges to democratic governance and social cohesion (Putnam, 2000; Pateman, 1970).

Central to civic engagement theory are several assumptions that underscore its importance in democratic societies. First, it presupposes that democracy thrives on citizen participation in political processes, encompassing activities such as voting, community organizing, and advocacy (Putnam, 2000; Verba et al., 1995). This assumption, elucidated by Putnam's analysis of social capital, underscores the critical role of active citizenship in holding governments accountable and fostering public deliberation (Putnam, 2000). Additionally, civic engagement theory posits that robust social networks and social capital are vital for fostering civic participation (Putnam, 2000; Verba et al., 1995). Trust, reciprocity, and cooperation within communities, as highlighted by Putnam's research, facilitate collective action and mobilization toward common goals (Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, the theory emphasizes inclusivity and diversity in democratic decision-making processes (Pateman, 1970; Verba et al., 1995). Advocated by Pateman, the inclusion of marginalized groups, such as minorities and youth, ensures that all voices are heard and represented in the public sphere (Pateman, 1970).

The Civic Engagement Theory posits that individuals who are actively engaged in civil society and political processes are more likely to develop a sense of civic duty and loyalty to their nation. In the context of Nigeria, low levels of civic participation, such as voter turnout in elections, attendance at public meetings, and involvement in community organizations, may contribute to feelings of alienation and detachment from the nation. This lack of civic engagement can diminish the sense of responsibility towards the country and lead to unpatriotic behavior.

Unpatriotic behavior among Nigerian citizens may be influenced by feelings of political apathy and disillusionment with the political system. When individuals perceive that their voices are not being heard, or that their participation in political processes does not lead to meaningful change, they may disengage from civic life and prioritize their personal interests over the common good. This can manifest in behaviors such as tax evasion, corruption, and indifference national issues. Civic engagement emphasizes the importance of social trust and cohesion in fostering a sense of community and collective responsibility. In Nigeria, ethnic and religious divisions, coupled with low levels of trust in government institutions, may undermine efforts to promote national unity and patriotism. Individuals may identify more strongly with their ethnic or religious group than with the nation as a whole, leading to conflicts and tensions that erode social cohesion and hinder efforts to address common challenges.

The Moral Challenge of Patriotism for Nigerians

Patriotism imposes a set of obligations on every member of the community such as mutual respect among all the citizens in their equal citizenship and the integrity of their fundamental human rights; equitable allocation and distribution of material and cultural available to the Nigerian society; scrupulous avoidance of such attitudes and practices which subvert and corrode social love and fraternity, such as class spirit, and tribalism (or ethinicism) all of which are highly detrimental to the spirit and principle of patriotism; and pursuit of peace and the readiness to resolve all conflicts and differences by peaceful and mutual understanding, as the common good which is the primary concern of patriotism clearly dictates.

Other principles of patriotism include readiness for service and sacrifice, for the welfare of the community, if and when legitimate circumstances so require; refraining, both at home and abroad, from all acts of commission and omission, capable of weakening the nation or tarnishing its image The Challenges of Patriotism on Nigeria Development

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abroad; promotion of the good name of the country through achievements and constructive criticism, if and when necessary, and the unswerving and uncompromising pursuit of excellence, merit and social justice at all times without ill-will, fear or favouritism (Achebe,1983). There should be prudent and careful attitude to public funds, property and other resources; prayer for the welfare of the country and its leaders; loyalty and rational obedience to constituted authority and the amenability of both the governed and the governor, (those in authority and under authority) to the principles of the rule of law and public order.

In the light of the nature and obligations of patriotism as outlined above one may legitimately conclude that as social justice is the true foundation of social order, so also is patriotism and its animating and dynamic spirit. Nigeria needs spirit-filled leaders, morally sound leaders and the led alike and financial prudent citizens.

We need strong sports institution where Nigerian footballers and athletes should play for honour and not for money. We need strong political institution where the leaders will rule for good name and not to amass wealth to the detriment of the citizens. We need strong security institution whereby the police, army, navy, customs and civil servants etc. should render selfless service to our beloved nation devoid of corruption, violent, nepotism, tribalism, statism, embezzlement of public funds meant for security. Nigeria is at war against kidnapping, armed robbery, corruption, human trafficking, child abuse, unemployment, religious bigotry, election rigging, maladministration etc. The security agencies should not involve themselves in politics. They should avoid political, spiritual and moral cowardice. They should respect democratic principles. No administrative office that is for one person or for a family. It is for Nigeria. And Nigeria is greater than any person.

There should be strong educational institution devoid of examination malpractice, nepotism, statism, god-fatherism, but it will serve as a veritable formative centre for future leaders. It should be an institution whereby one can be a Headmaster, Principal, Provost or Vice Chancellor irrespective of his state of origin. Obama's victory at USA Presidential Poll should be a lesson to us. We need also strong judicial institution where justice is seen and rendered without sentiment, emotion, delayed and without been biased. There should be a strong traditional institution consolidated with sound moral spiritual and traditional values.

There should be strong political institution that is greater than individual or group of persons, and also devoid of corruption, thuggery, nepotism, statism, tribalism, god-fatherism, embezzlement of funds, ego-centric and maladministration but with strong political ideology. Nigeria needs also strong electoral institution led by men of integrity from good family backgrounds,

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pious, and straightforward as independent national electoral commissioners who will conduct credible, fairest and freest elections. Elections where our votes will count they must be dogged without being bullish, mature in approach, discourse, action, principled and integrative. Their motto should be, "We-minded" and "We-focused", and not I-minded or I-focused.

Our country needs strong religious institution guided by enlightened minds, broad-minded clergy, and honest pious minds devoid of denominationalism, religious bickery, fundamentalism, fanaticism, envy, and the like. The religious leaders should be interested in restoring solidarity spirit among different religions.

We should serve God and our country. When we seek for welfare of our country, in its welfare, we shall also find welfare for ourselves. The image of our country should be paramount thing our mind should focus on.

Reasons for the Unpatriotic Nature of Nigerians

The unpatriotic nature of some Nigerians can be attributed to several underlying factors. Firstly, historical injustices and perceived marginalization by certain ethnic or regional groups have led to feelings of disillusionment and detachment from the nation as a whole. This sense of alienation can diminish one's willingness to identify with and support the country.

Secondly, pervasive corruption at various levels of government has eroded trust in public institutions and discouraged civic engagement. When individuals witness widespread graft and nepotism, they may become cynical about the prospects for positive change and choose to prioritize personal gain over the collective well-being of the nation. (Jibrin 2017).

Socioeconomic disparities and lack of equal opportunities exacerbate feelings of inequality and resentment. Many Nigerians, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, may feel excluded from the benefits of national development and thus disengage from patriotic sentiments.

Moreover, the prevalence of ethno-religious tensions and communal conflicts further fractures the social fabric of the nation. In such an environment, allegiance to one's ethnic or religious group often takes precedence over loyalty to the nation, hindering efforts to foster a unified sense of patriotism.

Additionally, ineffective governance, inadequate infrastructure, and persistent insecurity contribute to a sense of disillusionment and frustration among citizens. When basic needs are unmet and fundamental rights are

disregarded, individuals may question the legitimacy of the state and its ability to serve the interests of its people.

According (Nmah P. et al, 2010) there are a lot of reasons for the unpatriotic nature of Nigeria citizens which are:

1. Decline of domestic discipline.

In most recent times, the average Nigeria family is threatened by instability and disintegration owing to several factors. Lack of adequate premarital and marriage counselling facilities has meant eventual domestic disharmony or disintegration. Unemployment and corruption among some government officials have imposed problems and domestic disabilities.

2. Tribalism or Ethnicism

Achebe (1983), gave the definition of tribalism in Nigeria as "discrimination against a citizen because of his place of birth" (p.7). In operation and effect, tribalism is the secreting of excellence, merit, social justice and true national interest on the altar of unjustifiable and selfish ethnic considerations (Iwe, 1990). It is tribalism that has made impossible of realization, so far, the idea of a Nigeria in which a citizen could live and pursue any legitimate goal open to his fellows; a Nigeria in Kaduna or Lagos states, and a Fulani or Hausa to become governor of Enugu, Cross River or Rivers states. Tribalism, in other words, is the antithesis of patriotism. The former is after exclusive selfish sectional interest, while the latter is a quest for the common good of all the citizens.

3. The Deficiencies of Public Functionaries

The short- comings of our public servants and functionaries are a matter of common knowledge. Many of them are servants only in name, for in reality they behave as masters of their fellow citizens, in their attitude to and discharge of their duties. Often the civil service always lack resourcefulness and imagination, limping bureaucracy, self-serving conformity, and downright insensitivity to the legitimate requirements of the citizens, who in extreme cases are treated with spiteful arbitrariness and arrogance, if not subjected to physical violence.

4. Lack of Proper National Ideology

At various times and occasions, opined Iwe (1985), many Nigerian leaders of thought have suggested one form of ideology or the other-leaning in general towards one brand of socialism or the other. However, today in the third millennium and sixty years after political independence, Nigeria as a nation is still wallowing in a socio-political disarray and ideological vacuum, without a systematically well-articulated body of ideas, norms and strategies for its national identity and development. Even when these ideas that are lacking are made available to the government of the day, it will discard the noble ideas with ignominy and look for its selfish ideology that will not stand the test of time. In Nigeria, there is no strong electoral institution and no strong political will.

IMPLICATIONS OF UNPATRIOTIC NATURE OF NIGERIAN **CITIZENS**

The unpatriotic behavior of some Nigerian citizens has profound implications for the development and progress of the nation across various sectors. These implications stem from a range of factors, including corruption, ethnic tensions, socio-economic disparities, and governance challenges (Achebe).

Some of the implications are:

1. Economic Impact:

Unpatriotic behavior, such as embezzlement, bribery, and tax evasion, not only deprives the government of muchneeded revenue but also distorts economic incentives and impedes private sector growth. When funds meant for infrastructure projects, healthcare, education, and other essential services are siphoned off through corrupt practices. it stifles economic development and perpetuates poverty. Additionally, the perception of widespread corruption deters both domestic and foreign investors, undermining efforts to attract capital and create jobs. Without a strong commitment to integrity and accountability, Nigeria's economic potential remains constrained, hindering its ability to achieve sustainable development goals and improve the standard of living for its citizens.

2. Social Cohesion:

The unpatriotic actions of some citizens exacerbate social divisions along ethnic, religious, and regional lines, undermining efforts to foster national unity and cohesion. Ethnic tensions, fueled by political manipulation and competition for resources, often result in violence and instability, disrupting social harmony and hindering cooperation among communities. Furthermore, identitybased politics perpetuates a cycle of distrust and animosity, impeding efforts to build bridges and promote dialogue across diverse groups. In a fragmented society, the collective pursuit of common goals becomes increasingly challenging, hindering progress in areas such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure development.

3. Governance and Rule of Law:

Unpatriotic behavior undermines the foundations of democratic governance and the rule of law, eroding public trust in institutions and fostering a culture of impunity. When public officials prioritize personal gain over the public good, it undermines the credibility of government institutions and weakens the social contract between citizens and the state. Corruption not only distorts decision-making processes but also undermines public confidence in the

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fairness and impartiality of the legal system. Without effective checks and balances, the concentration of power in the hands of a few perpetuates inequality and undermines efforts to promote transparency, accountability, and the rule of law.

4. National Security:

The unpatriotic actions of some citizens exacerbate security challenges, destabilizing communities and undermining efforts to promote peace and stability. Ethnic and religious tensions, exacerbated by political manipulation and competition for resources, often lead to violence and conflict, posing a threat to the lives and livelihoods of ordinary citizens. Additionally, porous borders and weak law enforcement enable criminal networks and extremist groups to thrive, undermining national security and regional stability. Without effective measures to address the root causes of insecurity, Nigeria's ability to attract investment, promote tourism, and harness its demographic dividend remains compromised.

5. International Reputation:

The unpatriotic actions of some citizens tarnish Nigeria's international reputation, undermining its standing in the global community and hindering efforts to attract foreign investment and assistance. Corruption scandals, human rights abuses, and political instability diminish Nigeria's credibility as a reliable partner for international cooperation and development. Additionally, the perception of insecurity and instability undermines Nigeria's potential as a regional leader and impedes efforts to foster diplomatic relations and cooperation with other countries. Without a concerted effort to address these challenges, Nigeria's ability to achieve its development goals and contribute positively to the global community remains compromised.

The unpatriotic nature of some Nigerian citizens poses significant challenges to the country's development and progress across various fronts. By addressing the root causes of unpatriotic behavior and promoting a culture of national pride and civic responsibility, Nigeria can unlock its full potential for sustainable development, prosperity, and peace.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nigeria is still in need of a carefully and systematically developed political ideology to serve as a basis for effective reincarnation of social values, for political, economic, cultural education and socialization of the masses, and guiding spirit of the juridical constitution of the nation, as a strategy for the integration of the various ethnic groups and as a bulwark against all forms of corruption and abuses of power and ownership and lastly, as the foundation of public order and social justice.

To revive the nature of patriotism to the country Nigeria government and all stakeholders should:

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- **1. Promote Civic Education:** Implement comprehensive civic education programs at all levels of the education system to instill values of patriotism, national identity, and civic responsibility from an early age. These programs should emphasize the importance of active citizenship, democratic principles, and respect for diversity.
- **2. Combat Corruption:** Strengthen anti-corruption measures and promote transparency and accountability in public institutions. This includes prosecuting corrupt individuals, implementing whistleblower protection mechanisms, and enhancing oversight mechanisms to prevent misuse of public funds.
- **3. Foster Inclusive Governance:** Ensure that government policies and programs are inclusive and address the needs of all segments of society, particularly marginalized communities. Promote equal representation and participation of all ethnic and regional groups in decision-making processes.
- **4. Invest in Socio-Economic Development:** Prioritize investments in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and job creation to improve the quality of life for all Nigerians. Provide equal opportunities for all citizens to access education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, regardless of their background.
- **5. Strengthen National Security:** Enhance security measures to address the root causes of insecurity and instability in the country. This includes addressing issues such as terrorism, insurgency, banditry, and communal conflicts through robust security measures and targeted interventions.
- **6. Promote National Pride:** Launch campaigns and initiatives that celebrate Nigeria's rich cultural heritage, history, and achievements. Encourage citizens to take pride in their country and actively contribute to its progress and development.
- **7. Engage Civil Society and Youth:** Foster partnerships with civil society organizations, youth groups, and other stakeholders to promote civic engagement and participation in nation-building activities. Empower young people to become active agents of positive change in their communities and the nation as a whole.
- **8. Lead by Example:** Government officials and leaders should demonstrate exemplary behavior and uphold ethical standards in their conduct. By leading by example and demonstrating commitment to the principles of good governance, transparency, and accountability, they can inspire trust and confidence in the government and encourage patriotic behavior among citizens.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can foster a culture of patriotism and national unity that strengthens the social fabric of the nation and contributes to its peace, stability, and prosperity.

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