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NATIONAL INTEGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRATIC STABILITY IN
NIGERIA

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Abstract

A united country and people are in a better position to ably confront its crises of development, nationhood and stability. The desire and consciousness of the political leaders and the entire citizenry to do this with the appropriate frame of mind and instrumentalities is imperative for a successful and durable result. This paper examines the issues, problems and contexts of national integration or the national question in Nigeria. It also discusses the strategies for ensuring national integration, while critically assessing some of the existing constitutional provisions for citizenship in the country. The paper is empirical. Finally, the paper posits that states should specify their minimum requirements for citizenship or acceptance of non-indigenes from other states of the Nigerian federation which (i.e. minimum requirements) should be collectively and centrally harmonized on the basis of mutual respect, equality and co-existence among the nation's diverse ethnic groups and constituents. Again, there should be a fair and equal treatment of all Nigerians as well as a

deliberate development of a feeling of oneness among Nigerians towards the attainment of a successful democratization process and national stability.

Key Words: National Integration, National Question, Citizenship, Indigeneship, Political Participation, Citizenship Requirements, National Dialogue, Democratic Stability

Introduction

Nigeria is a greatly divided country. This division is accompanied with serious suspicion, distrust, and antagonism among its diverse people. These problems have had grave consequences for the good health, orderly growth, development, stable democratic government, unity and survival of the nation. The different measures and approaches designed and employed by successive Nigerian governments to unite and preserve and generally keep the country afloat cannot be said to have been really effective as the polity is daily faced with increasingly monumental crisis of insecurity, sectarian violence, ethnic strifes, political instability and threats of disintegration.

A united country and people are in a better position to ably confront its crises of development, nationhood and stability. The desire and consciousness of the political leaders and the generality of the people to do this with the appropriate frame of mind and instrumentalities is crucial for a successful and lasting result.

This paper examines the issues, nature, problems, factors and contexts of national integration or the national question in Nigeria. It identifies and discusses the mechanisms for achieving national integration, while critically evaluating certain constitutional provisions for citizenship in the country. The study is empirical.

Finally, the paper will posit that States should specify their minimum requirements for citizenship or acceptance of non-indigenes from other states of the Nigerian federation which (i.e. minimum requirements) should be collectively and centrally harmonized on the basis of mutual respect, equality and co-existence among the nation's diverse ethnic groups and constituents. Again there should be a fair and equal treatment of all Nigerians as well as deliberate development of a feeling of oneness among Nigerians towards the attainment of a successful democratization process and national stability.

Conceptual Clarification

National integration, otherwise termed nation-building, national unity, national cohesion, national loyalty, or the national question "involves consensus on the limits of the political community and on the nature of the political regime" (Liddle,

1970:205 cited in Otite, 2000:188). This simply means the forging of agreement among the members of a state on the extent of unity they wish to have as well as the type of political structure and institutions they desire. It is also a “process of unifying a society which tends to make it a harmonious city, based on an order its members regard as equitably harmonious” (Duverger, 1976:177). This implies that integration promotes unity which encourages smooth interaction among the members of the given society based on certain established principles of fairness.

Jacob and Tenue (1964:9) define national integration as “a relationship of community among people within the same political entity... a state of mind or disposition to be cohesive, to act together, to be committed to mutual programmes.” They are thus referring to a society of oneness whose members are willing to live and work together harmoniously and share the same destiny. It has also been viewed as:

a process by which members of a social system develop linkages so that the boundaries of the system persists (sic) over time and the boundaries of sub-systems become less consequential in affecting behaviour. In this process, members of the social system develop an escalating sequence of contact, cooperation, consensus and community (Morrison *et al*, 1972:385 cited in Ojo, 2005:51).

This relates to a situation where territorial divisions within a polity gradually yield ground to cordial interactions of its members owing to the integrative mechanisms established.

Similarly, Coleman and Rosberg (1964:9) view national integration as the progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities in the process of creating a homogeneous political community. In other words, this is the increasing promotion or emergence of peace through the breaking down of cultural and regional divides in the process of evolving a united state. It has been argued that a society is integrated when “(a) it has effective control over the use of the means of violence; (b) it has a centre of decision making capable of effecting the allocation of resources and rewards; and (c) it is a dominant focus of political identification for a large majority of politically aware citizens” (Etzioni, 1965:4 cited in Ojo, 2005:51). It would seem here that Etzioni also has a ‘strong’ state in mind, and does not appear to have consideration for peaceful pursuit of integration. Do the citizens thought of by Etzioni identify with the political system peacefully or forcibly?

Thus, **Karl** Deutsch *et al* (1966:2) seem to have considered these issues when they defined integration as “the attainment, within a territory of a ‘sense of community’ and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful community.” In other words, a sense

of community is an integrated group of people. According to them, a sense of community is a belief on the part of individuals in a group that they have come to agreement on at least one point that common social problems must and can be resolved through processes of peaceful change. This means the resolution of social problems without recourse to large scale physical force (Deutsch, 1966 cited in Ojo, 2005:51-52). There is no doubt that agreement on peaceful resolution of disputes is an important element of integration that can ensure lasting peace in a society. It also implies that the members of the community in question are ready to compromise and treat each other fairly and equally.

This line of thinking is therefore similar to the view that integration is a situation in which diverse groups in a political system have been successful in developing common institutions and norms by which to settle conflicts peacefully or pursue collective goals cooperatively, depending on the situation (Eisinger, 1976:53). It is asserted that “integration is built on the fact of diversity, the need for mutual accommodation and the desire of the parties in the system to maintain the integrity of the competing groups” (Eisinger, 1976:57-58 cited in Ojo, 2009:18).

Also, Ogunjenite (1987:224) believes that national integration relates to the building of nation-states out of disparate socio-economic, religious, ethnic and geographical elements. According to him, this entails the translation of diffuse and unorganized sentiments of nationalism into the spirit of citizenship through the creation of state institutions that can translate into policy and programmes in line with the aspirations of the citizenry. Stated in another way, national integration means efforts to weld together a plural society to enhance development but without necessarily jeopardizing ethnic identity (Ogunjenite, 1987 cited in Ojo, 2009:18).

Thus, national integration is a serious and purposeful endeavour, the failure of which has grave consequences. It is no wonder, therefore, that Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu sees it also as ‘active nation-building’ which means “forging out a nation out of our diverse ethnic groups.” He also contends that the failure to achieve this in respect of Nigeria is that: “Today, the result is that tribalism and ethnicity has become a potent source of friction, rather than diminish in the face of an emergent, virile and modern nation” (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 1989:174).

Penultimately, Ojo (2009:206) goes along with Osaghae (1984) and argues that national integration is “the process by which sub-national and particularistic identity with and loyalty to the state supercedes primordial loyalty.” According to him (Ojo), the end-product of this process is a nation which has been defined as the “largest community which when the chips are down effectively commands men’s loyalty,

overriding the claims of the lesser communities within it...” (Emerson, 1960, p.96 cited in Ojo, 2009, p. 206).

From the array of conceptualizations above by different scholars, it is obvious that there are many meanings of the term even though some of them have some elements of similarity. Yet, we would like, in conclusion, to see the concept of national integration as a situation where the members of a state see themselves as one, treat one another fairly and work together cooperatively and freely agree to and do resolve their differences peacefully in the overall interest of the nation. In this way, unity, fair treatment, cooperation, consensus, and peaceful conflict-resolution become essential components of loyalty to the nation. Citizenship is our next term of focus.

Citizenship simply relates to the status of being a citizen, which is usually determined by law (McLean, ed., 1996:69). It denotes the link between a person and a state or an association of states. Citizenship is normally synonymous with the term nationality although the latter term is sometimes understood to have ethnic connotations. Possession of citizenship is normally associated with the right to work and live in a country and to participate in political life. A person who does not have citizenship in any state is said to be stateless. Citizenship is determined by parental affiliation, birth within a country, marriage to a citizen, and naturalization (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/citizenship>).

In Nigeria a person is deemed to be a citizen of the country if he/she was born in Nigeria to Nigerian parents or grandparents, if he/she was born outside Nigeria to Nigerian parents or grandparents and registers to that effect, and if he/she naturalizes in the absence of prior parental affiliation. (*The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*) (as Amended) sections 25 – 27.

Citizenship is more or less synonymous with indigeneship at the state level in virtually all the states of the Nigerian federation. Thus, in many states or communities in the country, a Nigerian citizen may be seen as a non-citizen or non-indigene, and therefore, may not enjoy (all) the rights and privileges available to those regarded as bona fide citizens or indigenes of the state or community in question. So, where is the citizenship stipulated in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution or glibly mentioned in official circles especially at the central government level in Nigeria? Now, let us look at the concept of political participation.

Political participation simply means taking part in politics. It is the general level of participation in a society in terms of the extent to which the people as a whole are active in politics: the number of active people multiplied by the amount of their action, to put it arithmetically. But the question of what it is to take part in politics is

massively complex and ultimately ambiguous. It raises the questions of what constitutes politics (McLean, ed., 1999:362)

Thus the myriads of definitions of political participation you find in the extent literature (For some Ten (10) possible definitions and connotations of political participation, see Weiner, 1971:1-3). But a somewhat comprehensive and acceptable definition is that by Myron Weiner. According to him, the concept of political participation is used to refer to:

...any voluntary action, successful or unsuccessful, organized or unorganized, episodic or continuous, employing legitimate or illegitimate methods intended to influence the choice of public policies or the choice of political leaders at any level of government, local or national (Weiner, 1971:3).

Despite the rather comprehensive posture of this definition, it should be pointed out that political participation may not always or necessarily be voluntary or action oriented or involve a choice-situation in political recruitment, for example. Thus, political participation may also imply conscription, withdrawal or alienation, or support participation or more appropriately 'coercive mobilization' (Edosa 2000:119). It therefore goes beyond voting, campaign activities, particularized contacting, communal activities and other similar modes of conventional political participation as Verba and Nie (1975) also tried to portray, but also includes unconventional modes of participation such as electoral malpractices, civil disobedience, kidnappings, cultism, political assassinations, coup-making, and bombings - involving private and public officials.

Lastly, here, it should be noted that political participation depends on the level of socialization and political culture which exist in a country (Almond and Verba, 1963; Oghi, 2008). Now, what, quickly, is democratic stability?

Democratic stability broadly implies the persistence of the state, adaptiveness and integration, congruence between autochthonously-derived structural and institutional rules on one hand and congruence between these rules and social realities of the given society, on the other. It also implies a widespread commitment to democratic principles and peaceful co-existence and leadership succession, economic decentralization cum unwealthy and unattractive state. Stability is the capacity of a democratic order to survive and contain its crises and divisive tendencies peacefully within the rule of law, respect for basic rights and tolerance of political opposition. We now proceed to examine the problems and its other related issues concerning national integrations.

Issues, Problems and Contexts of National Integration

There have been several attempts made to capture the absence or problem of national integration in relation to Nigeria. For instance, it has been argued that:

loyalty to the Nigerian state remains at best reluctant while stability has continued to elude the system. Inter-communal or ethnic hostility and even open violence have increased while the constant complaint of marginalization tells its own story of the declining sense of belonging that exists in the land. These are eloquent symptoms that the policy of federal character is not producing the desired effect. And it is easy to think of many reasons why (Onyeoziri, 2002:17).

Kola Olufemi has similarly submitted that:

While the geo-political divide and mutual suspicion between the North and the South have been resilient factors in Nigeria's political life, at no other time had the structural contradictions in the polity degenerated into multiple fratricidal and seemingly irreconcilable conflicts than in the period of the Fourth Republic since 1999. The depth and dimension of this development are reflected in the rise and popularity of ethnic militias such as the Odua People's Congress (OPC), Arewa Peoples Congress (APC), Egbesu Boys, Ijaw Youths Congress, Bakassi Boys and sundry militant organizations canvassing competing ethnic claims. It goes without saying that this spectre of ethnic militias is a poignant indicator of the level of discontent with the governing formula that many perceive to have worked to their disadvantage (Olufemi, 2005:67-68).

Olufemi further states that it is in the above context that the agitation for "true federalism" and political restructuring must be understood. He argues, too, that:

Although there is a fringe political tendency typified by the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) which advocates secession, most ethnic nationality movements share the imperative of political re-structuring to bring about an equitable and enduring federal arrangement. Beyond this broad consensus, however, there are deep-seated differences separating the groups; not least are the meaning of

federalism itself and the modalities for actualizing it.... (Olufemi, 2005:68).

Fred Onyeoziri again tried to capture the absence of national integration in the country when he recalled that: “Both the events that built-up to the civil war and the handling of that political crisis were strong testimonies of the lack of the broad national consensus and nationalist identities that should form the constituent elements of an all-Nigerian culture” (Onyeoziri, 2002:37). It is because of this critical lack of national integration that the erstwhile Biafran leader, author and polemic, Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu, declared sadly that: “The true problem with Nigeria is that she is fully embroiled in an identity crisis. The Nigerian of today is a sociopath in search of a national programme. We live in a country in search of a common character” (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 1989, p.1).

What then are the factors or conditions which discourage national integration in Nigeria? According to Ojo (2009), “the most obvious of these conditions include ethnic cleavages, economic underdevelopment or dependence, and a weak sense of nationhood arising from a short period of independent statehood” (p.22). The adoption of a federal system of government was supposed to address these serious conditions such as ethnic cleavages, but it does not seem to have worked well. A federal system is even a difficult system to manage. As it has been well-captured: although several explanations have been proffered for federal failure – domination by one or a few constituent units, authoritarianism, economic underdevelopment, lack of constitutionalism, etc – the point cannot be denied that by its very nature of delicate balancing and competing claims, federalism is an inherently difficult system to manage (Osaghae, 2006:1 cited in Ojo, 2009:31).

To compound the problem, a federal arrangement can be rendered unworkable if the elements of diversity are very strong, or if they predominate over those of unity. As it has been put, “integrative elements of a federal system must, if that system is to function at an optimum level of harmony, predominate over existing elements of diversity...” (Tarlton, 1965). Charles Tarlton’s grave skepticism is acknowledged by other scholars such as Donald Rothchild (1966:27-28), who analyses how the application of the federal principle is made difficult in Africa by the lack of crucial support for the principle from the key leaders, by the centralizing imperative of the modernization process and by the threat that the forces of ethnic intransigence and separation have posed to the continuance of the federal ties (cited in Ojo, 2009:23).

As reported by Rotimi Suberu (1990), federal experiments in the Third World are not only endangered by deep sectional loyalties and largely unavoidable but politically explosive inter-segmental inequalities, but also by the intensely conflictual nature of

Third World politics (cited in Ojo, 2009:23). This conflictual nature of the politics of developing countries is squarely caused by maladministration. This is no doubt why Richard Joseph (2006) has stressed that the most obvious problem of Nigeria's federalism or national integration is what has been described as "misgovernance" (cited in Ojo, 2009:23).

A key expression of this misgovernance is in the critical lack of fairness in administration. As Ifidon (1996) rightly observed:

In Nigeria, competition for control of state power is as much a source as is a consequence of the failure of equitable government. At the root of the democratization, is not merely ethnic plurality but inequity. Inequity becomes a necessary feature of the relations among mobilized ethnic groups, and hence a multi-ethnic state is susceptible to democratic instability (p. 93).

Another way misgovernance has been correctly recognized vis-à-vis the problem of national integration in the country is this: "perhaps the underlying problem inhibiting Nigeria's national cohesion is the absence of a self-sufficient political commitment to the primary concept or value of federalism itself" (Frank, 1986, pp.171-173 cited in Ojo, 2005, p.61). Thus, Nigeria's political practice seems to be antithetical to the principle of federalism. Ojo opined that "a federal arrangement that is unable to resolve the problem of finding an acceptable revenue allocation formula is not good enough" (p. 61).

This ubiquitous and problematic issue of misgovernance and accompanying issues of inequitable government, poor commitment to the principles of federalism and the unresolved problem of revenue allocation have, not surprisingly, spurned many negative reactions with serious implications for national integration in the country. As a perceptive scholar puts it in relation to the Niger Delta, for example:

The feeling of deprivation and alienation runs deep in the region and this is responsible for the simmering and widespread insurgency in the area. In fact, the major youth's organizations had called for a boycott of the 1998-99 transition exercise, insisting on political restructuring through a Sovereign National Conference. From the standpoint of the ethnic nationality groups, federalism has not worked in Nigeria as evidenced in the complains of over-centralization of power, ethnic domination, marginalization and repression (Olufemi, 2005, p.69).

The immediate cause of discontent has been the transformation of the government of Nigeria from a federally to a unitarily administered authority. With this transformation, control of the economy has shifted from regional governments to the central government. This change in the balance of power between the regions and the center has been institutionalized by the balkanization of the First Republic regions into states. Every military government since Gowon has concluded its tenure with further balkanization of the founding regions, the North, the West, the East and the Mid-West (Amoda, 2001, p.84).

Failure to restore the balance of power to the regions symbolized by their control of the economy forcibly taken away from them by the acquisitive central government has resulted in the trenchant complaints of those frenzily campaigning for the restructuring of the government, governance and society in Nigeria. This is why it has been reiterated that:

The political problems of Nigeria since independence have been caused by abuses of power leading to military intervention rather than ethno-sectional competition. Today our union is threatened by various sectional demands. Several states in the core north have implemented the Sharia as substitute for statutory law; in the southwest, Yoruba leaders have revived the idea of regional federalism; in the southeast, the Igbo governors have called for confederation; in the South-south, ethnic federalism is back on the agenda. I would like to think that the common intention that motivates all of these demands is the preference for popular government and political stability without tyranny (Onwudiwe, 2001 p.317).

Having looked at the nature, problems, and dimensions of national integration in Nigeria, the next issue to consider becomes naturally that of how to promote or ensure it in the country.

Strategies for Ensuring National Integration

Various integrative mechanisms have been adopted in Nigeria since 1914, and they include:

- (i) The Amalgamation
- (ii) Nigerianization Policy
- (iii) National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme

- (iv) Unity Schools
- (v) National Language Policy
- (vi) Federalism, Party Politics
- (vii) New Federal Capital Territory
- (viii) States and Local Governments Creation (Ojo, 2009: chs. 4-8)

There are also other integrative mechanisms that have been adopted such as National Festivals of Arts and Culture, National Sports Festival, National Football League, as well as other sports competitions, policy of Federal Character (cf. Osaghae, 1994; Yakubu, 2003), which was to ensure that public appointments and positions are spread across members of all the geo-political zones, states, local governments, wards and communities such that all ethnic, linguistics and cultural groups are represented in government institutions and agencies as much as possible.

Partly owing to the resilience of ethnic groups, Otite (2000) strongly suggested that:

... one major step for solving ethnic problems is to recognize the fact of ethnic pluralism and ethnicity, irrespective of the politico-economic system of the plural society concerned. Ethnicity can then be properly viewed as a major force and as a part of social change. This may assume a dialectic form of a continuous synthesization of interacting and conflicting opposites (p.197).

However, Nzongola-Ntalaja (2001) is of the opinion that “ethnicity alone cannot constitute an insurmountable obstacle to a process of nation-building in which priority is given to eradicating poverty and providing all citizens with social and economic opportunities in a fair and equitable manner” (p. 17). This aspect of fair socio-economic opportunities as a strategic tool for fostering national integration is similarly given vent in extenso by Onwudiwe (2001) who explains that:

For the individual, ethnic and national interests are always at odds, and have always been so in many other countries, as well. Yet, one key to the unity of Nigeria may lie in the perception with which its leadership confronts this burdensome dilemma. One way to lure the individual away from the safety of his ethnic fixture to national political loyalty is through substantive policies that promote confidence and pride in the Nigerian nation and a sense of belonging to it by the individual Nigerian.

The inability of the national government to meet the basic needs of the individual causes the decline of confidence in the country. Among these basic needs, the economic ones are the primary.

Indeed, the need for government arose in the first instance because of the need by individuals to regulate increasingly more complex economic relationships in a more orderly fashion. Few will disagree that the most important political palavers in Nigeria in recent years from 'June 12' to the demand for the actualization of Biafra ultimately turn on economic interests. The successful stealing of Abiola's mandate by Abacha is not unrelated to the fear of marrying the so called southern economic domination with political power (p. 319).

Thus, the effective and democratic management of ethnic groups has, as well, been strongly canvassed in Nigeria in terms of respect, justice and fairness, equal benefits of "the valued things of society," even development, state actors and state policies being purged of all forms of ethnic group bias, and encouraging or developing cross-cutting cleavages instead of "cumulative cleavages with exclusive orientations." Socio-cultural groups should also be treated by the state just as socio-cultural groups for the purpose of identity only and not as political groups for representation of the people. Socio-cultural groups are not to be politicized (Onyeoziri, 2002:38-41).

Onyeoziri (2002) further articulated that:

The existence of multiple nationalities within the same nation-state tends to create problems for the stability of the state. The problem derives from two main sources. One, the national attraction which nationalities have for citizens who share their cultural identities tempts the citizens to develop more attachment or loyalty to their nationality groups than they would have for their nation-state. This near-automatic attraction for the nationalities can be weakened or strengthened by the attitude of the state authorities to these nationality groups. Where the state treats these nationality groups with respect, justice and fairness, it stands a good chance of attracting their support and loyalty. But where the state marginalizes the nationalities and disrespects them by seeking to coerce their loyalty, the groups are more likely to feel estranged from the state, and therefore become a threat to the stability of the state (p. 40).

Moreover, Onyeoziri argued that there is need to democratize the relationship between the nationalities and the state. He adds that this democratization project requires that the integrity of each nationality group be recognized, respected and defended. To him, this policy of mutual respect should remove from the system the

fear of domination, oppression and discrimination from both the minority and the dominant group alike. The idea here is to create a multinational state in which there is a healthy respect for all nationality groups. Similarly, national integration in Nigeria “requires that opportunities be provided within the system for individuals and groups to find some meaningful place and role relevant to the survival of their locality and the nation” (Otitte, 1986, p.17).

These integrative strategies of recognition, respect and provision of opportunities for all nationality groups has apparently led to Onyoziri’s postulation that:

Perhaps a new political theory of the state should not only seek to cure traditional theory of its suspicion of nationalities as potential threat to the stability of the state but should also free the state to see that its future stability requires it to treat its nationalities as partners in progress with fairness, equity and equal respect. The new political theory should go beyond to finally resolve the national question by making the intervention of nationalities unnecessary for every citizen of the state to enjoy all the benefits of membership without any form of discrimination, conscious or unconscious (Onyeoziri, 2001:45).

Consequently, there is need for “a strong state to be able to both win citizen loyalty and attachment to it, and prevail on the otherwise warring nationalities from tearing one another apart and ultimately the state. In this sense then the national question is this: “how do we achieve a harmonious relationship between the different nationalities within a state frame that is strong enough to win loyalty and commitment from all its citizens and nationalities” (Onyeoziri, 2001:47).

Apart from the above suggestions, Ojo (2005) intoned the need to recognize that:

... managing a federal system is a delicate balancing act requiring flexibility and rigidity, particularly rigidity on matters in which the operating principles are unambiguous. Therefore, the distribution of power, privileges and liabilities must follow commonly agreed principles both in form and in content. Indeed, no federal system can survive on an ad hoc basis neither can one function effectively where the spirit of its operating principles are constantly abused (p.61).

Crucially, too, “Nigeria needs to find a solution to the crisis of unity in fiscal federalism, political re-structuring (see Enahoro, 2002 (a & b), derivative revenue sharing and the extensive decentralization of the present warped union where there is

too much power and resources concentrated in the centre (Osuntokun, 2000:25). In essence, Nigeria needs an entirely different government approach based on a different philosophy that guarantee groups' rights by recognizing the heterogeneity of the polity" (Ojo, 2005, pp. 61-62) rather than denying it, which is what is actually "dangerous for civil peace" as Professor Jean-Pierre Derriennic has declared (cited in Ojo, 2005:62).

As it has likewise been stressed by Olufemi (2005), "for a federal system to be acceptable it must guarantee the minimum conditions of self-determination or ethno-regional autonomy, resource ownership or fiscal federalism as well as equitable access to resources and opportunities for growth, development and actualization" (p. 69). True federalism is a kind of "power-sharing arrangement that promote unity in diversity" and which "requires tinkering with the essentially centrist arrangement which is reflected in the 1999 Constitution through a measure of decentralisation that increases the powers of the federating units in terms of political and development responsibilities, and provides a guarantee of appropriate fiscal autonomy to carry these responsibilities. But federalism is ultimately about bargain, dialogue, trade-off and compromise, all of which are at the heart of the federal culture and the domain of the political elite" (Egwu, 2005, p.112).

Sam Egwu has also thoughtfully stated extensively that:

While a national consensus needs to be built on the way forward, there are a number of issues that require urgent and immediate attention in shaping the future of Nigeria. These include issues of democratic consolidation, governance, and constitutional reform. With respect to the last issue, for example, there is need, to provide and entrench independent commissions around issues of minority rights and how to protect and advance such rights. The most important of these would be the rights of ethnic and religious minorities in whatever context they might exist. It remains a daunting challenge to state actors and the civil society to build a legitimate constitution by taking on board the popular interests and demands of the Nigerian people, because there is high political value in building ownership of the constitution. Above all, there is need to consider the reform of the state in the direction of bringing the state back-in to the arena of development (Egwu, 2005, pp. 112-113).

The pertinent and urgent issues of democratic consolidation, good governance and legitimate constitution and development are critically important to the question of

how ordinary Nigerians can enjoy the same feeling of Nigerianness on the basis of which our political leaders demand their political loyalty. According to Ebere Onwudiwe, this question assumes a nationalized citizenship which presently only exists in theory for millions of ordinary Nigerians. To him, the reality is that ordinary Nigerians have two citizenships, the citizenship of their states which they share in common with only fellow natives of their states, and the larger, more nebulous Nigerian citizenship, which they share with every other Nigerian. As Onwudiwe (2001) contends:

Until there is in practice one Nigerian citizenship for all Nigerians, and until the individual Nigerian feels this citizenship relatively equally with other Nigerians from other states, through for example, the enjoyment of standardized civil liberties and equal opportunities in any part of Nigeria irrespective of state of origin, prospects for a united Nigerian state will remain hollow (p. 322).

Onwudiwe has also observed that: “States and local governments still discriminate against Nigerians who do not hail from within their boundaries. This government sponsored discrimination is a clear statement against national unity even as it represents an official case of government sanctioned human rights abuse” (p. 322). In the North of Nigeria, Southerners are only employed in the civil service only on non-pensionable basis. This is clear discrimination on citizenship criteria. Also, no southerner can become Principal or Headmaster in any state government secondary or primary school. What then is national integration, etc? The situation may not be too different in the south of Nigeria.

At the time of writing, Abia State, in South-East of Nigeria, sacked non-Abian citizens (including co-Ibos from Anambra, Enugu and Imo States) and people from other states of the federation such as Edo State allegedly because of financial constraints. Discriminatory school fees are also charged in many states of the federation. However, Governor Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State in the south-south of the country abolished discriminatory fees in the states institutions of higher learning including the state-owned Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma. Nevertheless, discrimination is the general practice in Nigeria despite the few exceptions to the rule as we just mentioned in the case of Edo State under Governor Oshiomhole.

This unending problem of discrimination is no doubt fallout of the equally lingering fear of ethnic domination and scarcity of resources as well as poor governance. There is no doubt that the problem of ethnic suspicion still exists in Nigeria. The fear of the minority ethnic groups may even be worse because of the fear of being swallowed up

by the majority ethnic groups and even other powerful minority ethnic groups in the country.

Because of all these concerns and fears, states should be asked to specify the requirements and conditions for citizenship which non-indigenes from other states would be expected to meet. These different requirements and conditions could be harmonized at a national round-table where a common minimum set of conditions and requirements could be arrived at and generally agreed upon. The present omnibus provision of the 1999 Constitution for attaining citizenship has obviously not worked and the implementation in practical terms cannot just be by fiat. In other words, the implementation is problematic. Any feeling that all is well, that there are no ethnic suspicions or fears of ethnic domination, or that these suspicions and fears are not real or have no basis to exist, would be pretentious. Nigerians should no longer live in pretence. These fears and suspicions should be commonly discussed and addressed. With sincerity, openness and understanding, Nigerians should be able to accommodate and help themselves. With proper handling of things, mutual accommodation and understanding could be worked out and nurtured.

Indeed, the factors which promote socio-political disharmony should always be done away with and avoided. Policies such as those which promote one culture over others, disrespect, inequality, domination in any guise, uneven development, majoritarian democracy (instead of something even more than consociational democracy and proportional representation), discrimination, and others alike should be discouraged and avoided (Onyeozri, 2001). Somewhat along these lines, Larry Diamond has opined that there are four principal mechanisms for managing ethnicity politically within a democratic framework: federalism, proportionality in the distribution of resources and power, minority rights to cultural integrity and non-discrimination, and sharing and rotation of power particularly through coalition arrangements at the centre (Diamond, 1990). In a similar classification, Crawford Young outlines 'four major policy spheres' for the management of ethnic diversity. These are:

- (i) constitutional formulas, particularly federal decentralized alternatives to the centralized unitary state;
- (ii) cultural policies, especially in the fields of education and language;
- (iii) remedies for marginalized population categories (indigenous peoples, immigrants, peripheral minorities); and
- (iv) resources distribution issues (including "affirmative action questions") (Young, 1994, both cited in Ojo, 2009:26).

Another plural accommodation and management strategy that is applicable to plural societies is that of Rupesinghe (1987). He summarises the broad spectrum principles in his assertion that:

democracy, devolution, and power sharing are important for accommodation and management of segmented societies. Within this spectrum are the instrumentalities of human rights, including minority and groups' rights, local political autonomy, affirmative action or quota system and other elements of consociationalism, secularism, and so on. They also include the five types of devolutionary arrangements identified by Gurr such as confederalism, federalism, regional autonomy, regional administrative decentralization and community autonomy (cited in Ojo, 2009:24-25).

One of the common themes of the above broad spectrum principles for the fostering of national unity are that of avoiding exclusion of any group in a heterogenous society. Emeka Odumegwu-Ojukwu sees to unequivocally support this position when he strongly and colourfully advised that:

We should, as a people, beware of any policy founded upon exclusion: the exclusion of person, and of an area. Policies founded on exclusion look very much like AIDS. They invariably begin with self-indulgence, certain distortion and self-abuse. Once the disease has set in, there is no cure (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 1989:200).

As we get close to the end of this part of this paper, we need to recall that several methods of ensuring national integration have been adopted as well as suggested. They include the amalgamation, the Nigerianization policy, NYSC scheme, unity schools, national language policy, federalism, new federal capital territory, states and local government's creation, national festivals, national sports competitions, and federal character principle. Others are recognition of ethnic pluralism and ethnicity, poverty eradication, provision of socio-economic opportunities, fair and equitable treatment, providing basic human needs and a sense of belonging, effective and democratic management of ethnic groups in terms of respect, justice, even development, unbiased policies, developing cross-cutting cleavages, citizen enjoyment of benefits without discrimination, and establishing a strong state. Yet others are adopting fiscal federalism, carrying out political restructuring, derivative revenue sharing, extensive decentralization, guaranteeing group rights, ethno-regional

autonomy, building national consensus, legitimate constitution, commonly agreed citizenship requirements, democracy, devolution, inclusion, et cetera.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, the quest for national integration is an important, serious and demanding task. Onyeoziri (2002, p. 37) has thus advised that a more deliberate effort must be made to develop a feeling of oneness among Nigerians. According to him, the literature on nation-building is emphatic on the relationship between the creation of a national culture and the legitimacy of political rule. As Harty (2001) sees it:

In order to provide a basis of legitimacy for the centralized rule they sought to consolidate, state modernizers had to “break down the segments of the traditional order to create a common culture capable of integrating all citizens” (cited from Hall, 1993, pp.4-5).

“Rulers had to construct a common national culture in order to re-direct citizen loyalty from the traditional forms of local authority towards the state, thereby legitimizing the new form of centralized rule.” In other words, the creation of a national culture is required to direct citizen loyalty to the central state (that is, the nation-state) (cited in Onyeoziri, 2002, pp. 37-38). Citizen loyalty to the nation-state means that the citizens see themselves as one and thus able to work together for the overall good, peace, harmony and stability of the state. It is an environment like this that promotes stable democracy since everybody sees it as a collective goal to be pursued by both the big and the small in society. Building a consensus is therefore crucial for a successful democratization process and national stability. Ayo Akinbobola seems to have had this in mind when he correctly observed that: “A symbol of shared values between the political elite and individual citizens brought about by an accepted pact depicting a concluded negotiation, bargaining and consensus in appreciating the imperatives of democracy is indispensable to democratization” (Akinbobola, 2002, p. 27).

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