VISITING THE HIPPOPOTAMUS: NATIONAL INTEGRATION ISSUES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

National integration is the hallmark of unity and development in any polity. A multiethnic state requires potent integration mechanisms because multi-ethnicity is a potential political 'time-bomb' which may explode at any time. There is the need to position integrating mechanisms which will stem the tide of violence, favoritism and nepotism in the polity. Nigeria like many developing countries of the world is a multiethnic state and needs a potent national integrative mechanism. The federal character principle is identified in this paper as a mechanism used in Nigeria. This integrative prowess had caused the country a tempo gusto but to a large extent had been corrupted and rendered less effective by the interplay of the duo of ethnic chauvinism and religious bigotry.

This paper concludes by remarking that the notion of political patrimony and corruption must be curbed by the stakeholders for a sustainable development in the polity.

1.Introduction

Sociopolitical and geo-economic instability is a trademark of developing countries and some suburbs in the developed polities. The regime of this political fallout is not a new imposter in Nigeria's sociopolitical and geo-economic space. This can be traced from the constitutional pre-colonial era to the independent era which includes the civilian regime, the civil war, the military interregnum and the present democratic administrations. An area of instability in the colonial era was the introduction of 1922 Clifford Constitution which established legislative council. The council was to legislate for the colony and the southern protectorate to the exclusion of the Northern protectorates. The southerners therefore participated in their legislative affairs before the north. The northern and southern protectorates were not brought under one legislative body until 1947.

Sir Bernard Bourdillion as Governor of Nigeria divided Southern protectorate into East and West provinces and this created structural imbalance between the North and the South. The 1946 Richards Constitution introduced regionalism, these regions (East, North and West), had both majority and minority ethnic groups situated within each region. Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo are majority ethnic groups in the Northern, Western and Eastern regions respectively. These regions were unequal: the Northern region was more than the West and East when combined in both population and land mass. Regionalism sharpened the dichotomy between the North and South, and also encouraged major ethnic groups within their (majority) regions. Regionalism further introduced into Nigerian politics of sectionalism, by promoting the interest of one region at the detriment of others. Viewing what policy of regionalism has caused, Ogunojemite (2001) concludes that "it has created disunity and also by reducing the country into a tri-national state" (p.228).

The Macpherson Constitution of 1951 retained national legislative body and regions created by the Richards Constitution. The Northern Region had fifty or more representation in the national legislative body than the Eastern and Western regions when combined. So the fears of minorities in the three regions (East, North, and West) persisted. These fears were on domination, marginalization and oppression, as it had to do with distribution of government positions and amenities. The fear caused disunity between the minority and majority ethnic groups on one hand and the three majority ethnic groups on the other hand.

With the breaking up of Nigeria into regions and the introduction of elective representations, it was not surprising that most of the political parties formed were region/ ethnically based. Some of the parties were formed to prevent domination or control of their regions by any other regional parties. The National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) headed by Nnamdi Azikiwe, an Ibo, had a national acceptance at its early stage of formation, but later wore ethnic robe. The military interregnum of Major General Aguiyi Ironsi's regime promulgated Decree 34 on assumption of office. The decree was the adoption of a unitary system of government by abolishing the federal system. The main objective of the new system was to promote stability and unity through the eradication of tribalism and regionalism as they acted as agents of disunity during the aborted First Republic.

However, the intention of the regime was misconstrued by some Nigerians especially Hausa-Fulani, who saw the decree as a design by the Ibos to dominate the political scene, General Yakubu Gowon's regime restored the federal structure and also divided the country into twelve states from the former four regions that existed in the country. According to Gowon, the creation was to protect the rights of minorities in the event of a civil war (Edigin, 2010). It could also be argued that creation of states by Gowon's regime was to weaken the political base of Lt. Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu who was asking for a confederation or the secession of the Eastern Region.

In an attempt to find solutions to disunity which sometimes affected Nigeria resulting from suspicion among the groups that make up each state, General Murtala Muhammed increased the number of states from twelve to nineteen; the creation tilted in favor of the North. Ten states in the North while nine in the south. This did not call for unity in the country. General Ibrahim Babangida continued the creation of states from nineteen to twenty in 1987 and thirty in 1991. General Sanni Abacha increased it from thirty to thirty six. Creation of states in Nigeria has not served as a panacea for disunity (Edigin, 2010).

The objectives of this study will therefore be to examine the expediency of national integration among Nigerians with a view to pointing out whether integrating mechanisms are succeeding in integrating Nigeria or widening the dichotomy.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of analysis is the Federalist approach to the integration theory. This theory is important here because of their proficiency in analysis of the modern multi state system, on one hand, and of the post colonial political economy, on the other. The main thrust of integration theory is that modern states, especially new emergent ones, cannot afford the luxury of isolationism

(Akinboye and Ottoh, 2009). As an approach to integration, federalism, just as its definition indicates, is essentially the coming together of diverse national entities in order to create a central unit to which they relinquish their sovereignty, thus leading to the creation of a supranational entity (UNRISD 1994; Caporaso 1998; Dosenrode 2010). The state in the words of Charles Pentland, possesses sufficient political authority and coercive and material power to satisfy the member states (or federating units) needs for collective defense, internal security and economies of scale, while still permitting them to maintain their individual identities and to exercise local autonomy in appropriate fields of policy. Thus, federalists' consider integration as a rapid process of change occurring from an international institution to essentially a supranational one.

This explains why the Nigerian state continue to depend on the west for economic and political guidance and the tendency for the political leadership to neglect the respect for human dignity, rule of law and due process in states creation exercise and other policy processes in virtually every sector of the economy. This character of the Nigerian state is informed by the liberal or neo-liberal ideology. Nigeria had to toll the line for fear of sanction or in expectation for favour. Since Nigeria lacks the technology and capital to sustain her economy, Nigerian leadership continue to seek economic and political advice and directives from their former colonial masters. Though most of the Western policies initiatives and directives to Nigeria are anti-people and have the tendency of introducing confusion among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria, these policies are religiously implemented in Nigeria even when a commensurate assistance from the West is guaranteed.

3. Perspectives on national integration

Shona (2003) describes National integration as referring to "the awareness of a common identity among the citizens of a country. It means that though we belong to different castes, religions and regions and speak different language, we recognized the fact that we are all one". Nigeria is a country with about 250 ethnic nationalities distinctively isolated interms of religion, languages etc. national integration implies that we should de-emphasis these differences and promote such polices that could unite Nigeria. The introduction of unity schools, National Youth service corps (NYSC) state creation, quota system are some of the policies aimed at achieving national integration.

According to Deutch, and Foltiz (1963), nation building and national integration have common expressions. Nation building is the process of surrendering ethnic loyalty, cultural and linguistic loyalties to a powerful coercive authority (nation) thus, national integration implies the

evading of all ethnic biases, ties and affiliations and the trappings of these variables by a higher and central authority for the purpose of national unity, stability and development.

Durverger (1980) asserted that national integration is the process of unifying a society, which tends to make it a harmonious city based upon an order, its members regarded as equitably harmonious. This implies that national integration, requires harmony, but the fact is that not all harmonious cities are integrated. Again, integration is a process which permits interaction, which could not be attained by staying apart.

Suberu (2001) also argued that mere interaction of these structures would bring about political or national integration in a plural polity in contradistinction to the opinion of Nnoli (1978) that mere interdependence of political structures in a polity cannot command the loyalty of its citizenry towards national building. Nnoli (1986) defined national integration as the process of bridging the social distances in a society such that harmony and corporation rather than conflict and disagreement that characterize the interaction between members of the society. Nnoli attributed conditions of extreme socio-economic scarcity, hostility, prejudice, antagonism and conflict among individuals, groups and collectivities as hindrances to national integration. Similarly, Olupona and Turaki (1988) identified the clashes of the various religion in Nigeria like Islam, Christianity and the African Traditional Religion as posing obstacles to the full take off of national integration in Nigeria and argued that the issue of religion is something that cannot be taken lightly in the country.

Furthermore, Akinbade (2004) views integration as the process of maintaining the territorial integrity of a state. What this means is that, in a deeply divided society with 'babel' of voice like Nigeria, integration becomes a necessary task that must be implemented for the purpose of securing stability and adaptability within the state. National integration is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept. This thinking according to Fatile and Adejuneon (2012) arises from the plurality that seems to attend attempts at conceptual explication of the term. From the conception of national integration, two things stand out. The first has to do with the geographical or territorial mass of a country. In the light of this thinking, national integration could be achieve if the different parts that make a country a lumped together as a monolithic whole. This implies the unification of different parts of a state which will serve as a forum co-operation and interdependence. This second perspective sees national integration as a processing together the various interest groups in a territorial entity to the pursuit of common goals or objectives (Okafor and Okeke, 2008: Iwokwagh, 2008). This second perspective is more relevant to this study.

National integration was firstly used to refer to specific problem of creating a sense of territorial nationality which eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties. In this sense, it is generally

presumed that there exists an ethnically phrasal society in which each group is characterized by its own language or other self-conscious cultural qualities. This integration is used to refer to the tensions and discontinuities on the horizontal plane in the process of creating a homogeneous progressive reduction of cultural and regional territorial political community (Bamisaiye, 2003).

National integration can also be seen as the process whereby several desperate groups within a given territory are united together or cooperate under conditions which do not appear to permit satisfaction of their system needs in any other way (Fatile and Adejuwon, 2012). According to Elaigwu, (1987), national integration is determined by the degree to which members and groups in a plural society adapt to the demands of national existence while co-existing harmoniously. In a practical note, national integration is a process, not an end in itself and it is usually affected by contending social forces.

National integration is a process leading to political cohesion and sentiments of loyalty towards a central political authority and institutions by individuals belonging to different social groups or political units. National integration is a process whereby political actors in distinct national setting are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new centre whose institution possess or demand jurisdiction over pre-existing nation – state (Suberu, 2001). As noted by Mazrui (1983), the five major aspects of national integration includes; the fusion of norms and culture; the promotion of social independence; the narrowing of the gap between the elites and the masses, the urban and the rural areas, rich or poor etc, the resolution of emergent conflicts, and the sharing of mutual experiences so that people can discover that they had undergone some important experiences together.

For there to be national integration, Ibodge and Dode (2007) stated that there must be a central authority to serve as a rallying point. In the quest for national integration, citizens are expected to respect the overriding supremacy of the national government. This entails subordination of institutions and cultural values to the demands of the central authority. Often, intra and inter ethnic crisis result in tasking the state's security apparatus. The ability of the state to resolve or regulate the recurring crises and to create an enabling environment where the people's respect and love for their nation is enhanced would definitely affect the tempo of the nation's integration positively. National integration, thus, covers a vast range of human relationships and attitudes, the integration of diverse and discrete cultural loyalties and the development of a sense of nationality; the integration of the rulers and the ruled and the integration of the citizens into a common political process. As diverse as these views or definitions are, they have a common link in that they all point to the fact that integration is what holds a society and a political system together.

4. Federalism and the question of integration in Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the states that owe their existence to the imperialistic activities of Britain, which by virtue of a superior technology and economy subjugated people from diverse nationalities and organized them to construct Nigeria in 1914, with the amalgamation of the Northern and southern protectorates. By the time Nigeria won her independence from Britain in 1960, its artificial origin, coupled with other factors, had bequeathed it a number of fundamental problems, one of which is the challenge of integrating, into a cohesive socio-political whole, the various entities and strange bed fellows that were lump together by the colonialists (Ayodeji, 1997).

The Nigerian federation has been enmeshed in contradictions, paradoxes, controversies and crises. These are subsumed in the national question, and social groups of varying ideological leanings cohere on the central issues. These are linked to national unity, local autonomy and self-determination, equitable distribution of revenue, rewards, opportunities and power. They also include the observation and implementation of fundamental human rights, among which are the rights of franchise and empowerment, and socio-economic rights to basic needs' satisfaction, sustainable environment and life (Anifowose and Seteolu, 2004). The Nigerian federal principle has been struggling against the forces of social cohesion.

The problem of ethnic minority has been receiving attention of scholars and practitioners of governance and development. This is because ethnic minority is usually sidelined and ignored by the majority in decision making and resources distribution. The consequence of such politics of exclusion has been agitation and demand for social inclusion, which at times by violent actions. Since society is a system of human cooperation, the question of how society can mainstream the minority groups in decision making on welfare matters requires adequate policy consideration (Akinola and Adesopo, 2011). One of the three factors that is important in understanding how a society functions, as identifies by Tocqueville (1966), is the peculiar and accidental situation, which providence places people.

It is no longer plausible to account for the rivalry and disunity among ethnic nationalities in Nigeria strictly in terms of cultural divergence or irrational loyalty to primordial groups. Although there might have existed some traditional differences and hostilities among some of these groups, these are not necessarily absolute or incompatible differences and need not generate the kind of rivalry witnessed in the colonial days and that, sadly, has remained in the relationship among these ethnic groups until today. At least, prior to the institution of the colonial regime, some of these

ethnic nationalities engaged in productive relationships. Besides, many of them have claims of common ancestry and basic similarities in their culture. For instance, the Yoruba and the Benin peoples trace their origins back to a common ancestry in the Oduduwa and Oranmiyan legends. Similarly, the kisra myth traced the ruling dynasties of a good number of the tribes in the middle-Belt region of Nigeria to the Eastern region.

In Nigeria, ethnic balancing has been pursued via different strategies: the creation of more states, the adoption a uniform system of local government in the country, the multiplication of local government units in the federation and finally the constitutionalization of a system of quotas for political appointments in the form of the federal character principle as well as the provision for revenue allocation. However, as the author just quoted pointed out in the work under reference, ethnic and regional balancing does not only aggravate the problems it was designed to resolve, it also subverts the very essence of federalism. While it is possible to accept the theoretical soundness of Nnoli's position above on the grounds of scientific and objective analysis, the recommendation for the need to forego all attempts at regional balancing in Nigeria will be difficult to put into practice for the important reason that politics is not all objective and rational. There are also strong subjective, emotional and irrational forces that propel the political process (Ikeji, 2011).

The problem with national integration in Nigeria is that people are made to feel like strangers in their fatherland; whereas, chapter II paragraph 15(2) of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended states that: 'national integration shall be actively encouraged, while discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited'. The problems of national integration in Nigeria stare us in the face all the time and no one can argue that we ignore them. But they are problems which require long term solutions and yet we deal with them on an ad hoc basis without a consistent or coherent policy or ideology.

5. Federal character principle as integrative mechanism in Nigeria

Since the 1970s, Nigeria's constitution-making experiences have taken special interest in developing the consociation model for plural societies. This results in the adoption of the federal character principle in the constitution, and agreements by the political class on zoning and rotation of offices among ethnic groups (Ejobowah, 2000). Federal character is one of the policies of gaining integration of diverse ethnic groups in the country. The introduction of federal character policies in Nigerian state is to foster unity, peace, equal ability to equal access to state resources and promote the integration of the less advantage states for better improvement and good conditions of living in the country. The principle of federal character touches on array of problems in the political

process which includes ethnicity, the national question, minority problem, discrimination based on a indignity, resources allocation, power sharing employment and placement in institution, etcetera.

It provides a formula for participation in the governance of the country in such a way that a single section of the country will not dominate another or a segment dominating the rest (Ojo, 1999). The basic assumption, as noted by Ojo (1999) is that, if every segment of the federation participates in governance, there would be almost equality in the country in the scheme of things and expectedly, it will engender a sense of belonging and national integration. At the heart of federal character principle, is the attempt to eschew group imbalance in public institutions and affairs. The federal character principle was adopted in the 1979 Nigerian constitution as a directive principle of state policy. Accordingly, therefore, section 14(3) of the constitution provided that:

"The composition of the government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carries out in such manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few state or from a few ethnic or sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies".

Section 153 of the 1999 Nigerian constitution established the federal character commission, as a federal executive body, empowered in section 8(1) of the third schedule of the constitution to oversee and monitor the implementation of the federal character clauses, as follows:

1. Work out an equitable formula subject to the approval of the National Assembly for the distribution of all cadres of posts in the public service of the Federation and of the States, the armed forces of the federation, the Nigerian police force and other security agencies, government owned companies and parastatals of the states

2. Promote, monitor and enforce compliance with the principle of proportional sharing of all bureaucratic, economic, media and political post at all level of government

3. Take such legal measures, including prosecution of the head or staff of any ministry or government body or agency which fails to comply with any federal character principle or formula prescribed by the commission, and as provided for in section 8(3) of the schedule.

4. Notwithstanding any provisions in any other law or enactment, the commission shall ensure that every public company or corporation reflects the federal character in the appointment of its directors and senior management staff.

Going by the wordings of the constitution, the expectation on the federal character principle was that it would pave way for a federal government that would be all-inclusive of all segments of the federation thereby assuring a stable federal polity. However, lofty as the federal character

provision is, there was no executive agency charged with the responsibility of implementing it until July 2002 when the Federal Character Commission (FCC) was inaugurated. Thus, its implementation before this period by various government ministries and agencies was more or less haphazard with the consequence of a declining confidence of citizens in the principle as a means of achieving relative equity in the federation. Even till date and with the establishment of a commission to oversee its application, there seem not to be too much hope in the whole process (Majekodunmi, 2013).

The implication of the provisions of the 1979 and 1999 constitutions for federal bureaucracy in Nigeria are interesting. Following these provisions, the composition of the federal public services for instance and the conduct of its affairs must reflect the federal character of Nigeria. And this can only be seem to have been done if it does not contain a predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups. In practice this means that in the appointment, promotion and positing of the federal public servants, every state., ethnic group religions or any other sectional group should be represented (Bello, 2012).

Federal character principle has spawned a vast repertoire of formal and informal consociation practices that seek to distribute, balance and rotate the federal presidency and other major public offices among the country's diverse ethnic, religious, regional and geo-political zones or constituencies. The most elaborate and formal power-sharing arrangement contained in the Nigerian constitution is the federal character principle. The purpose of the federal character principle is laudable. According to Afigbo (1989), the federal character principle is anchored on the:
"...distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria".

The principle of federal character was formulated and put into use by successive governments in Nigeria to address and hopefully mitigate the problem of diversity so as to ensure a peaceful, stable and united Nigeria. Federal character principle as an integrative mechanism is defined as fair and effective representation of the various components of the federation in the country's position of power, status and influence. As practiced during the tumultuous period of the second republic (1979-1983) under Shagari's leadership, Abacha's military junta and even under the present democratic dispensation, the principle essentially focused on enhancing the dominance of the ruling class through patronage. The constitutional provision of federal character and zoning system within the political parties is for appointing trusted pretends, clients and hangers-on in

strategic offices who in turn manipulated their powers by allocation of contracts, import licenses, access to bank loans, fertilizers etc. Thus through the control of state power at the centre, the ruling class not only enhanced her leverage through patron-client alliances that cut across ethno-regional and religious cleavages, but also appropriated federal character principle to ensure its hegemony at all levels (Suberu 2001).

As a strategy for national cohesion, Ofigbo (1997) remarked that the federal character is expected to ensure fair play in the appointment of persons to high ranking government establishments without discrimination of any kind. It is to ensure a broad public participation in the country's affair as well as fostering even development. While the principle of federal character has been fully entrenched in the constitution, the application of the principle remained problematic because of the disparity in the standard of western education attained among the states in the federation. Often a times, appointments are given to mediocre under the umbrella of belonging to less-privileged and educationally backward areas and this is the major drawback of the principle which does not help Nigeria to progress as a nation. As observed by Dagaci (2009), to those from the Northern parts of the country federal character is synonymous with quota system and means therefore a proportional absorption into federal institutions.

To those from the southern parts of the country, it means an attempt by the "North" to infiltrate into areas which they hitherto regarded as "theirs" by right. The federal character principle carried an inherent tug-of war between the claims of belonging to the nation and the claims of locally recognized diversity. It is the insisting on equal representation and individual rights that will rock the boat of national integration. If we are to accept the intent of the concept that it carries an unambiguous and unchallengeable mandate for national integration, then the present provision has to be completely re-examined.

The most controversial contemporary political problem and contending issue in Nigeria's federal political structure is the asymmetric unequal power relationship as far as the fundamental imbalanced of the country's structure is concerned. As a matter of fact, this issue is one of the seemingly intractable and insurmountable perennial problems which have not only defiled all past solutions but also have a tendency to evoke high tensions and emotions on the part of all and sundry whenever it is raised. This is the contending issue of who becomes the president of Nigeria and for how long.

Table 1. The time period used by each zone of the country holding executive President position from 1960 to 2013

S/N	NAMES	DATE	STATE	REGION

1.	Tafawa Balewa	Oct 1, 1960-Jan 15 1966	Bauchi	North-East
2.	J.T.U. Ironsi	Jan 15 1966-July 29, 1966	Abia	South-East
3.	Yakubu Gowon	July 29, 1966-July 29, 1975	Plateau	North-Central
4.	Murtala Mohammed	July 29, 1975-Feb 13, 1976	Kano	North-West
5.	Olusegun Obasanjo	Feb 13, 1976-Oct 1, 1979	Ogun	South –West
6	Alh. Shehu Shagari	Oct1, 1979-Dec 31, 1983	Sokoto	North-West
7.	Muhammadu Buhari	Dec 31, 1983-Aug 27, 1985	Katsina	North –West
8.	Ibrahim Babangida	Aug 27, 1985-Aug 26, 1993	Niger	North-Central
9.	Ernest Shonekan	Aug 26,1993-Nov. 17,1993	Ogun	South-West
10.	Sani Abacha	Nov.17,1993-June,8,1998	Kano	North-West
11.	Abdulsalam Abubakar	June 8, 1998-May 29,1999	Niger	North-Central
12.	Olusegun Obasanjo	May 29, 1999-May 29,2007	Ogun	South-West
13.	Umaru-Musa Yar'Adua	May 29, 2007-May 5,2010	Katsina	North-West
14	Goodluck Jonathan	May 5, 2010 to 2013	Bayelsa	South-South
15	Muhammadu Buhari	May 29, 2015 till date	Katsina	North –West

Source: Sunday Tribune, 7th August, 1994, Ibadan, pp-7-9 and researcher's update 2015

From the above table, we could see that the ruler ship of this country is dominated by the northern section of the country. The appearance of some southerners as heads-of state was accidental. The Northern part of the country taken together had been in power for 441.5 months translating to 73.6%, while the southern part had been in power for some 158.5 number of months also translating to 28.4% of the total time period since independence. The domination of number one seat, from independence to date also revealed the domination of the ministries by the Northerners. The greatest manifestation of this tendency is the implicit policy of reserving the political and top bureaucratic management positions in certain key ministries at the federal for people from certain parts of the country.

6. Challenges of federal character application and national integration

In view of the fact that Nigeria is a country of diverse religious and ethnic nationalities, it is strongly believed that introduction and application of federal character and its affiliate concepts are faced with certain problems, some of which include:

6.1.Ethnocentrism

A famous nationalist from northern oligarchy, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello in 1960 remarked that; "The new nation called Nigeria should be an estate of our great Grandfather Othman Danfodio. We must

ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the North as willing tools and South as conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us and never allow them to have control over our future" (Shilgba, 2011). Furthermore, a prove was instructively recorded in 1986 when, a Sokoto Prince, Alhaji Shehu Malami and Alhaji Maitama Sule, one of the Nigeria's respected bureaucrats created a storm among southerners when they respectively informed their listeners of Hausas superiority. To their bewilderment (southerners), they were informed that they (Hausas/Fulanis) acquired their dark skin form inter-marriages with the local Africans and that they were endowed with leadership qualities.

The evils of tribalism in Nigeria are many. Tribal appellations cause tribal idiosyncrasies, these lead ultimately to variety and superciliousness and disharmony. An Hausa man may think a Yoruba man is inferior, while the Yoruba man in turn communizes the Igbo; and Igbo man concedes to himself that both the Hausa and Yoruba are just the people without gut. The above quotations capture the reason and current situation in Nigeria due to ethnocentrism. An ethnic group is distinguished by language, culture, religion or both (Nnoli, 1978). Ethnocentrism is a self judgment that one's ethnic group is superior to others. Such assumption promotes antagonism evidenced in Nigeria.

Drawing from the above quotations, principles of federal character, nation building and national integration are irreconcilable with the composition and attitude to most Nigerians. Nweke (1995) described ethnocentrism as being attitudinal in form and perceptual in content. It is not easily erased particularly when the leaders do not display sufficient and convincing attitude that our strength lies in the diversity and exploration of resources for equitable benefit of every citizen irrespective of affiliation or originality.

6.2. Elitism

The principle of federal character arose out of a compromise among the protagonists of 1976 CDC. Federal character has been manipulated and channeled to serve the overall interest of the petty bourgeoisies ruling class. In a similar option, elitism represents interest of the few minorities. Implicit in the above explanations is that those who champion the principle and policies are indirect benefactor hence it is another form of expanding their solid political and economic empire.

Emergence and rise of elitism in Nigeria is traced to the unmarcheable amalgamation and introduction of federalism in 1914 and 1954 respectively, it is understandable that significant number of pre and post-independent nationalists do not have sound economic base. Federal character principle is merely an elite ploy which could not materially improve the lot of the down-trodden in whose name it is raised. They constitute corrupt cabals and use ethnic sentiment to cover

their ills. They strategically position their few agents in offices who act as political representatives against the set out goals of the establishment where they work.

Nigeria has had more crises since the introduction of federal character, some of which includes: the Nigeria civil war, several election violence particularly in 2011. Why and who is responsible? These concepts serve interest of elite who are eager to use their slaves to unleash terror and destabilize the country when they are schemed out.

6.3. Mediocrity

Federal character is introduced for purposes of ensuring ethnic balancing. In Nigeria, ethnic balancing is conceived, perfected and applied by elite for the promotion of their egocentrism through an institutionalized mediocrity. Nigeria is divided along ethnic nationalities. The most outstanding is language and it impliedly forms the basis for consideration in federal appointments. Given the share size and nationalities of the sub groups, it is repeatedly vital to acknowledge that difficulties of nation building and national integration are deeply rooted in putting the wrong peg in the right hole. This has been identified as one of the major challenges of public enterprises in Nigeria. There are other countries with federal system but has viable public enterprises, why? Federal character is introduced in Nigeria as an acceptance of bad and non responsible governance (Okorie, 2013).

Public enterprises management is however a progression and requires that administrative managers should possess certain kind of education, knowledge, skills and values as pre-requisite for effective performance in the job. This suggests that competence not quota system or ethnic balancing as opined by apostles of federal character is the nexus for successful, effective and efficient performance of public organizations. Sharma et al., (2011) affirmed that politicization of public enterprises breeds mediocrity which is destructive and thus contributes significantly to the inefficiency of most public organizations. Mediocre are more loyal to their godfather because they lack competence. They tend to frustrate organizational goals and go unpunished.

There may be no doubt that offices secured by provisions of federal character may begin to act like political representatives without paying due attention to their duties. The variation in human and material resources across ethnic nationalities is known but competence promotes good governance and in turn reduces tension of ethnic revolt. What Nigerians need most is good, responsive and responsible government that has the courage and will to do the right thing at all times and for all Nigerians.

6.4. Mutual Suspicion

Before 1914 amalgamation and 1954 introduction of federalism, each of the sub-nationalities lived independently. Each of them enjoyed autonomy which explains insignificant social strive when compared to experiences after the amalgamation. In expression of the volume of problems bedeviling Nigeria state, Awolowo (1947) described it as a mere geographical expression. Shortly after independence, Nigeria was faced with plethora of problems including mutual suspicion. Afigbo (1987), and Obiezuofu- Ezeigbo (2007) pointed suspicion and hatred among the major problems in Nigeria. To cushion the effects, protagonists of 1976 CDC compromised for inclusion of federal character in the constitution. Nation building and national integration were some of the slogans advocated in justification of its inclusion.

Major crises ever recorded in Nigeria since the amalgamation is significantly rooted to suspicion. This cuts across ethnic and religious boundaries but more pronounced across ethnic boundaries. They include 1964 federal election, where political parties and alliances were more ethnic than ideological, Nigeria's civil war 1967-1970, 2011 and 2015 general elections and so on. Each of these crises shook the foundation of Nigeria due to suspicion as against reasons for the introduction of federal character. There can be no successful implementation of federal character principles amidst suspicion and hatred amongst the ethnic groups.

By and large, lack of adequate representation by the federating states in Nigeria constitutes the greatest threat to national integration and economic development. Remarkably the choking socio-economic competition among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria manifest in ethno-regional conflict and tension that characterize Nigeria since 1960. Thus the relationship between these groups is characterized by fear and suspicion of domination of one state or ethnic group by another. This leads to national disintegration and consequent canonical underdevelopment.

Meanwhile, this suspicion and fear between groups is historical. It became pronounced when sir Frerick Lord Lugard began the process of subjecting ethnic groups with a history of mutual distrust and hatred together as one Nigeria. Remarkably, these ethnic groups are not of equal population and hence some tend to dominate others thus exploit others. Today we talk about the Igbos, the Hausa/Fulani and the Yoruba as the major ethnic groups and the Urobo, It Shekiri, Ijaw, Igala, Kanuri, Nupe, Tiv and more than 200 others are referred to as the minority. These inherent competitions for control of the limited resources has the tendency to destabilize hence disintegrate the polity and stifle economic development. This explain, why Dudly (1973) argued that political stability is the inevitable consequence of the failure of constitutional and institutional rules to find firm roots in the society and in the wind of the political actors. This political instability is a consequence of the nature and character of the post colonial states. The Nigeria state could not

perform the primary role of state, rather, it become part of the struggle which it ought to moderate. This tends to discourage national integration which is a prerequisite for economic development

7. Concluding remarks: options for achieving national integration in Nigeria

Inclusion of federal character into the 1979 and 1999 constitutions is a display of heinous attitude by the elite. Since its inclusion, Nigeria has known no peace. That Nigeria is still united is not unconnected to the elite tie that sacrifices popular agitation for personnel gains. The raising security challenges orchestrated by militia groups are indications of disillusionment among different ethnic groups and sub-nationalities (Okorie, 2013).

Against the provision, Sanusi (2012) aptly criticized the constitution as a document that hinders development. The mistake has been made and is unlikely that it will soon be deleted. Efforts should be to thinker smart options for survival as a nation such as true federalism, patriotism, honesty and fairness.

There is need to replace quasi or centripetal federation with true federation. Federation purports that everybody can be satisfied (or nobody permanently disadvantaged) by nicely combining natural and regional/territorial interests within a complex web of checks and balances between a general, or federal government on the one hand, and a multiplicity of regional government, on the other. Drawing from the above assertion, true federalism is a system of government in which the individual states within a country have control over their own affairs, but are controlled by a central government for national decisions. True federalism will significantly grant constitutional autonomy to states as well as local governments. This will undoubtedly reduce tension at the center because the different tiers will have shared responsibilities.

For years Nigeria has been practicing quasi federalism meaning that a shift from the status quo would either require constitutional amendment or sovereign national conference which will permit autonomous and independent status in decision making for the continuation (or not) of Nigeria state. At present, we practice centripetal federalism in nature and practice. There is need for regional/sub-national autonomy in areas of resource control, policy making and implementation, fiscal relationship and so on.

Therefore there is need for radical value re-orientation to be embarked on by all stakeholders who include the government at all levels and the civil society. In the past Nigerians are known for hard work, high moral standard which is the epitome of each sub-nationality. In recent times, corruption and immorality is celebrated thereby promoting evil. Value orientation will help re-shape the attitude of Nigerians particularly the elite who are the major actors and benefactors of federal

character. Good moral value will entrench national patriotism and fairness rather than ethnic bigotry, patrimonialism, neopatrimonialism, prebendalism and patron-client relations.

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