

Civic education and nation-building in Nigeria

By

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Abstract

This paper examined the failure of the Nigerian state to intensify its nation-building efforts at the level of civic education amongst the citizenry. Since the return to civil rule in 1999, Nigeria's citizens have featured more than ever before at the centre-stage of violent conflicts arising from identity politics and primordial loyalties to its diverse ethnic groups. The rising incidence of citizens involvement in violent conflicts such as terrorism, kidnapping, suicide attack, bombing, sectarian killings etc, across the length and breadth of the country is a destabilizing factor in the pursuit of nation building. In light of the foregoing, the paper argued that the insensitivity of the state to addressing these challenges that undermined the quest for nation-building, equality, fairness, the lack of capacity to transparency, accountability, adherence to the rule of law and democratic development have contributed to the increasing level of violent conflicts in the country. Furthermore, the resultant denial of the citizen's entitlement to better living conditions, socioeconomic rights and privileges, exclusion from participating fully in the democratic process, all exacerbate the growing incidences of persistent insecurity in the country particularly in the North East. The paper concluded with the proposition that engaging the tool of civic education which represents one of the core prerequisites for nation-building would further promote national integration and development in a multiethnic state like Nigeria.

Keywords: Civic education, political culture, political system, state and nation-building.

1.0 Introduction

Nation-building is an important focus for post-colonial African governments (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013). Upon Africa's decolonization in the 1950's and 1960's, social scientists had expressed deep concern about the need for nation-building or national integration in societies with several ethnic, religious and racial cleavages in Africa (Binder, 1964; Coleman & Rosberg, 1966; Zolberg, 1967). Since the attainment of independence, Nigerian governments, past and present have made serious efforts to propagate policies and programmes (such as the unity secondary schools, federal character principle, state creation, National Youth Service Corp, National Festival amongst others) towards national integration. In spite of these varied efforts, Nigeria's unity has continued to be plagued or characterized by bad governance, corruption and weak institutions coupled with the lack of capacity to adhere to values of transparency, accountability, the rule of law, credible democratic and electoral systems. Apparently, the socio-political institutions and apparatuses of governance in Nigeria (such as the law-making, executive and the judicial authorities) manifest some degree of malfunctioning as evidenced by the various challenges from ethnicity, religion, indigene ship disputes, nepotism and governance-crisis to mention but a few. While the Nigerian state is challenged with the crisis of moral character, probity, fairness, equality and responsibility, the citizens' are affected by the loss of entrenched values of honesty, obedience, patriotism, loyalty and the spirit of nationalism.

With over a decade into the practice of "democratic rule", the process has been fraught with issues of corruption, poor socioeconomic policies, leadership impunity and recklessness, infrastructural decay and non-functioning educational and health institutions, amongst others (International Democratic and Electoral Assistance, IDEA, 2000). All these have resulted in the growing incidence of poverty, unemployment, inequality and poor conditions of living for the larger populace. Contrary to the notion that democratic culture unites citizens' and the state into a mutual accord, guaranteeing good governance, transparency, and democratic accountability, the Nigeria's political elites since the return of civilian rule have been found wanting in adhering to the practice of the ideals of democracy. This ineptitude

of the state or leadership in adhering to ideals of democracy (i.e., justice, equality, fairness, accountability, transparency and the rule of law, amongst others) is a factor that has lured some of the citizens into persistent violent-conflicts (such as bomb-attacks, terrorism, kidnappings, sectarian killings etc) since the advent of civil rule in 1999.

2.0 The concept of nation-building in Nigeria

Basically, nation-building is a normative concept that is understood from different viewpoints. Oche (2007) identified two categorical positions in nation-building. He averred on the *objective* and *subjective* dimensions of it—with each possessing varying degrees of particular characteristics. The objective dimension of nation-building includes a geographically definite territory with a population, while the subjective dimension include the way the people identify themselves, the extent to which they perceive themselves as a community despite their heterogeneity, and the way they feel about the government institutions under which they live. When nation-building operates like this, it is assumed that an effective nation-state is likely to emerge regardless of the extent of diversity and fragmentation that may exist. According to Yacob (2006), nation-building implies a vast extent of human relationships and attitudes ranging from the integration of diverse and discrete cultural loyalties, the development or a sense of nationality, the integration of political units into a common territorial framework with a government to exercise power as well as the integration of individuals into an organization for purposive activities. Corroborating this view, Oyetibo (2013) contended that nation-building aims at the unification of diverse people within a state in order to remain politically stable and viable. To exploit this, the writer maintains that its processes involve major infrastructural development that foster social harmony and economic growth, as well as the development of behaviors, values, language, institutions, and physical structures that elucidate history and culture, concretize and protect the present and insure the future identity as well as independence of the nation.

For Gambari (2008), nation-building has many aspects. *First*, nation-building is about building a political entity which corresponds to a given territory, based on some generally

accepted rules, norms, and principles, and a common citizenship. *Second*, it is also about building institutions which symbolize the political entity – institutions such as bureaucracy, an economy, electoral institution, the judiciary, universities, a civil service, and civil society organizations. He stressed further that, nation-building is about building a common sense of purpose, a sense of shared destiny, a collective imagination of belonging. Nation-building is therefore about building the tangible and intangible threads that hold an entity together, and gives it a sense of purpose. From a socio-cultural context, Ezeibe (2009) observed nation-building to mean the process of surrendering ethnic loyalty, cultural, linguistic loyalties to a powerful coercive authority in order to promote a sense of belonging and consciousness. For him, social formation is a combination of different ethnic nationalities (as distinct) coming together through legitimate authority (the state) to unite various nationalities together in order to live harmoniously in political systems. To enthrone nation-building, its processes (i.e., a sense of patriotism, solidarity and common destiny) should be effectively prioritized where national cohesion is properly carried out by the people and the institutions of the country concerned and this in turn promotes national integration. National integration is something that evades all ethnic biases, ties and affiliation and the trapping of these variables by a higher and central authority for the purpose of national stability and development. National integration is the process of bridging the social distances in a society such that harmony and cooperation rather than conflict and disagreement characterize the interaction between or among members of the society and this in turn overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties (Ezeibe, 2009; Nnoli, 1986).

Consequently, in the book titled '*Civic Culture*', Almond and Verba (1963) in Babawale (1999:210) conceived "nation-building through the efficacy of political culture as a key index of development and modernization". According to them, political systems must embrace political culture in order to heighten nation-building. They conceived political culture as a specific pattern of citizen political orientations, attitudes towards the political system and its various parts and to the role of the self in the political system. A nation's political culture involves the political style, values, norms, beliefs and symbolic attachment that are dominant

among citizens. In view of this, they use three (3) classificatory schemes as determinants of nation-building in political system. These include *parochial culture* – that explains the absence of political roles where citizens have little knowledge of the political system beyond what happens in their immediate local environment. Thus, parochial culture explains politics as being permeated by ethnic loyalty and primordial sentiments; the second one is *subject political culture* – that explains the citizen as passive individual – who is aware of the outputs (decision-makings) of the government welfare programmes, but has no influence on government; while the third is the *participant political culture* – that characterizes the citizen as someone whose awareness lies in the heart of both the input (political socialization and interest articulation) and output (policy processes) sides of government. The citizen is conscious and aware of all of the programmes of the government and the impact of these programmes on their well-being.

However, Almond and Verba (1963) concluded that participant political culture is the basis by which nation-building is attained and sustained – and to this effect, the citizen (through political socialization and communication), is informed about the values and expectations of the entire political process; and this gives him a sense of belonging and makes him loyal, honest, obedient, and patriotic; expressing a kind of emotional attachment to the government he lives under. They averred that the emotive attachment that both parties' (citizen and state) share is the basis for the attainment of nation-building in political systems. Nation-building involves the transmission of political culture that invoke a shared sense of direction and purpose where the citizens' rights are protected by the state and in return owes allegiance to the state. Essentially, nation-building refers to the process of harnessing all the paraphernalia of national identity within the context of value orientations, institutionalizing mutual respects and other forms of democratic values linked with the role of the citizen and the state. It is an effort to develop the spirit of patriotism and solidarity to create a country whose people share a common identity and consciousness, the major aim of nation-building is to foster national unity by developing a new nation and an integrated race (Hippler, 2002 as cited in Wan Husin, 2011).

In all of this, nation-building, the world over, is expressed within the limits of value orientations, a common sense of purpose, political culture, integrative identity, ethos and other forms of institutionalized values of democracy such as equity, fairness, rule of law, legitimate authority and social justice to mention but a few (Nkom, 1994). Aptly, nation-building assumes that unity and integration are the necessary prerequisites to achieve gradual reduction and elimination of ethnic, cultural and other primordial differences among the citizens of a country and their conscious assimilation into a binding national culture and identity. Furthermore, Nkom conceived integration in terms of cultural homogenization or the creation of a shared common culture of norms, symbols, ideals, language and historical affinities. He enthused that, identification with common culture, national symbols, and the institution of the nation-state is seen as mark of patriotism, nationalism and political maturity. National integration is mainly a process that produces an omnibus of initiatives put in place by the state, its representatives or institutions guided by respect for the unique traditions and cultural backgrounds of ethnicities sharing same polity with the goal of harmonizing all interests through a form of dialogue and representation and addressing differences that may be divisive and conflictual using instruments of fairness, justice and equity in the sharing of resources, benefits, opportunities and responsibilities in order to guarantee stability, longevity and prosperity of the polity as long as the inhabitants decide to remain within the polity (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013). 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 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 process together.

However, a look at the Nigeria situation showed that all has not gone well with her quest for effective national integration or nation-building project. Since independence in 1960, the legal and political entity called Nigeria has remained a nation only by name – and not with effective and emotive identity characterized by a common sense of community and

character. The Nigerian nation encompasses well over 350 ethnic groups with each laying claim to its own separate heritage, language and culture (Tar, 2007). Accordingly, Davis and Kalu-Nwiwu (2001) opined that, Nigerian citizens for most part of their social history have been unable to recognize themselves as a people with a shared history, destiny, common identity and consciousness despite the 1914 amalgamation by the British colonialists. In the light of this, ethnic loyalty (among the diverse ethnicities) took precedence over national consciousness and identity; historical hostilities and rivalries among the different groups that agglomerated with political power (essentially at independence era) were repulsive to the quest for common national identity or social configuration. Similarly, Kew (2004), argued that, the moment the British in the 1940's announced their intentions to negotiate the terms of their gradual exit, Nigerian political elites (leaders) quickly turned to ethnicity using political parties as a preferred vehicle to pursue competition and mobilization for public support.

Pertinently, the National Council of Nigerian and Cameroon (NCNC), which was led by Nnamdi Azikwe, the Action Group (AG), led by Obafemi Awolowo, and the Northern People's Congress (NPC), which was headed by Ahmadu Bello were platforms used by these leaders to promote ethnic consciousness along regional lines. Pertinently, these three institutions expressed some sort of chauvinist ideologies that laid the foundation for the politicization of ethnicity and the intense rivalry (and division) in their geo-political regions (later states) in Nigeria. Remarkably, the complex nature of the Nigerian state made politics to be ethnicized and political struggles amongst emerging elites in turn took a separatist agenda. Towing this line, Ake (1978) as cited in Aluko (2009) urged that, since the regions and political constituents tended to be homogenous in ethnicity, hence, to win election you had to win an ethnic group and if this happened to be large, a political base was guaranteed. Against the backdrop, democratic institutions completely became weak to unite these groups as well as provide social and welfare benefits to the citizens. Ironically, the character of the elite was deeply grounded in ethnic and regional loyalties that in turn altered political stability. In all of these, the late regional leader of the Old Western Nigeria, Obafemi Awolowo captured the sentiment of the times when he wrote in 1947 that: "Nigeria is not a nation, but a geographical

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expression; the word 'Nigeria' is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not" (kew, 2004: 247). Similarly, independent Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (1947) asserted that, "since the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Province in 1914, Nigeria had existed as one country on paper...but the Nigerian people are historically different in their background, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any sign of willingness to unite. He stressed further that, Nigerian unity is only a mere British invention" (Ojukwu, 2009:183; Dienye & Atti, 2011; 48). Despite these criticisms from these foremost pioneering elites, Dr. Nnamdi Azikwe, in a sobering remarks emphasized (amidst ethnic controversies) that something could still be created out of nothingness, hence for him, "Nigerian is now a political reality, let us bury our differences and build it together" (Onwudiwe, 2011 in Odeyemi, 2014:45).

From the above rendition by these three eminent nationalist leaders, it is glaring that Nigeria, though a huge national enterprise, has suffered the challenge of ethnicity leading to a defective unification of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914. Since the time of independence in 1960, the country has been ruled by successive military and civilian governments that have been largely plagued by ethnic bigotry and corruption (Bah, 2004). Over past decades, the smaller ethnic groups (such as the Ijaws, Itsekiri, Tivs, amongst others) have demanded for proper political representation and fair revenue distribution and on several occasion, these grievances led to the outbreak of violence. Some of the most dramatic political events that have further increased ethnic tensions in the country include the assassination of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Ahmadu Bello (the Premier of the Northern Region) during the 1966 coups, the Biafra War (1967-70), the 1962-1963 census crisis also brought to light the problems of ethnicity, the controversies surrounding the 1979 and 1983 presidential elections, the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election (won by Moshood Abiola), the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 and the imprisonment of Moshood Abiola, who died in prison in 1988. These incidents are clear indications of the way in which ethnicity has hindered nation-building and national integration in Nigeria.

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Furthermore, Bah affirmed that, one cannot ignore the role of the elite in manipulating the political scene for their selfish ends. Complimenting this claim, Dent (1971) as cited in Ekanola (2006) reported that a prominent Northern political leader confessed they teach the people to hate the Southerners; to look at them as people depriving them of their rights, in order to win them over. Indeed, practically all nationalist leaders from other parts of the country did the same, educating/civilizing members of their ethnic groups to see members of other groups as significantly different and as people against whom they must strive in an effort to achieve their own sectional interests. They never encouraged their followers to develop a sense of commitment to the Nigerian nation nor sought for the proper integration of the diverse ethnic entities in the country. Ethnicity has been one of the main vehicles through which they (elite) manipulate the citizens that otherwise undermined civic education and value orientations amongst the diverse ethnicities in Nigeria. Obviously, the Nigerian state at independence (1960) inherited weak socio-political structure, defective and unbalanced federation, an intensification of ethnic consciousness and rivalries, a subverted indigenous ethos of government and culture and indeed inexperienced leadership (Ojukwu, 2008: 183) that failed to forestall national integration amongst diverse ethnicities in the country. It is pertinent to assert that, the nationalist leaders replaced shared values, common consciousness and nationalism for individualism, personalized loyalty, sectionalism, nepotism and parochialism that debased national integration in Nigeria's ethnic complex state since colonial to post-colonial era. The absence of a common philosophical approach towards civic knowledge in Nigerian is a factor that promoted sectionalist politics to the dearth of building a united Nigeria.

3.0 Theoretical framework of analysis

This paper employs the theory of deprivation to interrogate the subject-matter of civic education and nation-state building in Nigeria. The theory, deprivation, was popularized by Ted Gurr in his book, titled *Why Men Rebel (1970)*, hence its rationale is at the root of people's (citizens) denial of rights, privileges and entitlements as well as their exclusion from social and political process as controlled by the governing elites (Saleh, 2011). Theory of deprivation holds the view that, the elite domination widens the gap between its class and the less privileged in such manner that it alienated, extricated and put the masses (citizens) in perpetual incapacity. This kind of bias inured by the elite is a factor that often exposed citizens to acts of violent-conflicts and other forms of ill-feelings and, hatred for the state as caused by the governing elites. The Nigerian state (as represented by the political elites) had always denied and deprived the mass citizens' interests, rights and privileges. Its character, as a matter of fact, has negative and severe consequence on the citizens; it disenchanting, frustrated and lured them (some citizens) to develop parallel structures that seek to attend their socio-economic and cultural needs. This repudiation incurred by the Nigerian state propelled citizens' return to various groups such as militias, fringe groups, religious fundamentalists, ethnic nationalism groups and others that contested the political space particular at the return of democratic rule in the Fourth Republic. Admittedly, the weakening structures of the Nigerian state is a factor responsible various violent crises that recurred, degenerated into separatist and sectionalist agenda along primordial loyalties, ethnic and religious sentiments. Conflict among the various ethnic groups in the country represents a huge diversity of cultures and ways of life. For example, one of the country's great conflicts occurred in the early years following the country's independence. The political climate of the 1960's experienced ethnic and religious crises which ultimately undermined national cohesion.

Accordingly, Reisman, Arendt and Kornhauser (1985) in Animasaun (2010: 46), sustained that, the failure of the state to make the needed intervention in the face of worsening depravity of the people challenged the citizens to collectively organize, through a platform outside the control of the state, to arrest their miserable condition capable of making their

failure precarious. According to Kothari (2002), such a pervading sense of uncertainty has given rise to pyramids of insecurity, hopelessness, disorientation, distrust and lack of concern for governance. Reflecting on the post-colonial state in Nigeria, Ihonvbere (2003) concurred that, the state ignored socio-economic rights, exploited primordial identities, widened the gulf between ethnicities, religions and identities, and the premium of power became so high because of its direct and indirect relationship to accumulation of wealth and survival (Udombana, 2003). The total politics of the post-colonial Nigeria (amongst contending elite) became rapaciously fixated on the capture and maintenance of raw power that required the abuse or abridgement of rights of citizens.

The policies of structural adjustments and other bogus ideological and political programmes initiated by elite were largely designed to rationalize the oppression of the people.

Furthermore, the elite in Nigeria are product of the nation's tumultuous politics; it is an agent of corruption that often mobilizes ethnicity to canvass for support and political advantage in its quest to attain power. This condition accounts for contemporary division between the Nigerian state and the citizens. It is on this basis, the deprivation theorists assert that the state as anti-people and standing out as enemy of the masses with bias structures that reduced the citizenry and advanced the interest of the ruling elite in order to accumulate wealth and personal aggrandizement. Corroborating this claim, Ekweke (1986) argued that, instead of the post-colonial state to maintain or moderate socio-economic and political relations, it became an instrument of domination, exploitation and intimidation of the citizens – who are often seen as mere subjects- a fact which has been the common feature of successive ruling elite in the country. To this end, the character of the post-colonial state constitute the basis for depravity of the oppressed citizens who are contrived to loss of value, loss of obedience, loss of patriotism, loyalty and to the dearth of hatred for the state. The emergence of ethnic nationalities such as Oodua's People's Congress (OPC), Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF), Bakassi Boys (BB) and other militias groups in the Niger-Delta region at the advent of democratic governance in the Fourth Republic is not unconnected to the resultant denial of rights, privileges and claims of these citizens by the state. The Nigerian ruling elite, over the years, have assumed this character at the detriment of the populace.

4.0 Citizenship, violence and democracy in Nigeria since 1999

One problematic myth confronting Nigeria is the issue of achieving a greater measure of national unity. Since independence in 1960, the state had been immersed in the twin struggle of maintaining its corporate existence, nation building and national integration (Obianyo, 2007). Regrettably, the Nigerian state has struggled to integrate disparate nationalities and at each point of this struggle, the state has always lost to primordial sentiments that compose it. In this light, successive administrations have tried hard to look inwardly into the challenge of nation-building along diverse ethnic, religious and communal groups and other classes in order to interact and cohere peacefully, with each having a sense of belonging, patriotism and nationalism. But the centrifugal tendencies (such as ethnicity, religion, social history) have remained the major problem that stampeded efforts at building a Nigerian nation. However, in an attempt to tackle these issues, that national government over the years had introduced various developmental programmes to put the entire political system together. Amongst these initiatives are National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme, the Unity Schools, the Federal Character Principle, and the State Creation amongst others. The ruling elite did all of these to foster a feeling of belongingness and involvement so that loyalty to the nation shall override sectional loyalties with the intent of uniting the centrifugal forces into one indivisible nation (Ekeh & Osaghae, 1989; Ibaba. 2009). Conversely, the outcome of these programmes and the political behaviour of Nigerians towards nationalism fell far below expectations as a result of the continuous struggle along ethnic and religion lines.

Following the elections in late 1998 and early 1999, the military autocracy stepped down in May 1999, and the Fourth Republic came into being with President Olusegun Obasanjo as president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. There were promises of promoting democracy, putting the country back on the road to economic prosperity. This administration also stressed and promised overcoming ethnic and religious tensions and dealing with corruption amongst others. Against this backdrop, the new democracy launched a war against corruption by suspending or reviewing government contracts and by replacing several hundred bureaucrats with new ones, purged the military personnel who held political office between

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1984 and 1999 amongst other. Yet, few months into the country's democratic experiment, the Nigerian state continued to face harsh economic, political and social uncertainties like regimes of the past (IDEA, 2000). At the level of governance, the polity witnessed economic, political and social uncertainties such as flashpoints of ethnic, communal, religious and resource conflicts amongst the Nigerian citizens. Evidences of this dreadful scenes occurred in Kaduna, Kano, Bauchi, Maiduguri, Benue, Taraba amongst other states in the Northern part of the country (Duruji, 2010; IDEA, 2000; Ukoha, 2003). Similarly, this situation also happened in Warri Delta State, Sagamu in Ogun State, Amuleri/Aguleri in the Ibo parts of the country and also in Ife/Modakeke in Osun State to mention but a few. At this time, there was a general consensus amongst the Nigerian citizens about the insensitiveness of the state in addressing other fundamental issues affecting Nigerians, such as poverty alleviation, resource distribution, infrastructure development, and security and more prominently, the rise of ethnic nationalism amongst other things, which posed serious threats to the sustenance of democracy in Nigeria.

Prominent political leaders of the Fourth Republic were involved in various scandals (such as forgery of certificates, corrupt practices and gratification or 'kickbacks' amongst others). These events eventually led to the resignation and prosecution of the former Speaker of the House of Representatives; the removal of the Senate President and his successor as well as the impeachment of several Speakers of the States Assemblies and acrimonious relationships between several governors and their deputies. All of these occurrences had negative impact in the process of institutionalizing capacity building for the proper governance of the nation at all levels. In the light of the foregoing, Ikelegbe (2005) maintained that, a major manifestation and the unwillingness of state apparatuses to function (i.e., institutional failure) was evident by the resurgence of identity politics and violent conflicts amongst Nigerian citizens that often transformed into primordial groups within the polity. Their complex nature and the crisis these groups (O'odua People's Congress, Arewa Consultative Forum, Bakassi Boys and others) provoked further exacerbated the weakening notions of citizenship attachment and loyalty to the Nigerian state". And this is precisely because ethnic, communal,

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religious, regional and sectional identities provided a safe haven for an increasing number of youth citizens' given the circumstances of an incompetent, weak, and insensitive state to render standard of living for the populace. The proliferation of ethnic nationalist groups in major cities of the country obviously has a criminal dimension to such extent that ethnic and regional groups and their militias equally became part of the political landscape, and in turn, inflicted and threatened violence for political advantage. Such groups as the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) in the South-west, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in the East, the Arewa People's Congress (APC) in the North, the Egbesu and Bakassi Boys among Ijaws of the Niger-Delta region, among others, perpetuated the interests of their ethnic nationalities/regions in Nigerian politics at the expense of the overall vision and goal of the Nigerian statehood.

Accordingly, Ikelegbe (2005) argued further that, the increasing spate of violent-conflicts on the emerging democracy has negatively impacted the nation leading to what he called "*governance crises*" or "*governance failures*". With the state as a principal actor of governance, the locus of violence and the instrument of the inter-group struggles, politics in Nigeria became characteristically that of exclusion, marginalization and domination of one group by another and this, in turn, intensified social cleavages, tension and political competition among the elites who subscribed to using the various ethnic groups as a medium to access political power. The failure of the state security agencies allowed these citizens groups across the society to champion ethnic nationalism. For example, Ganiyu Adams, leader of the militant faction of the OPC (Dr. Federick Faseun, a leader of the other), and Ralph Uwazurike, leader of MASSOB were declared wanted by the Police Authority. Evidently, there were clashes between the Yoruba ethnics and the Northerners in various cities and towns in South-West Nigerian predates 1999, but was intensified under the current democratic dispensation as a result weakening structures of the state. In 2001 and 2002, MASSOB was involved in various acts, as singing the old Biafran anthem; planting the Biafran flag in Igbo cities; threatened to invade Lagos; and allegedly forcing Biafran currencies on traders in parts of Abia state. The movement also engaged in strong-arm tactics against perceived opponent.

In the same vein, the Egbesu “boys” constitute more militant arm of a more broad-based Supreme Egbesu Assembly which was organized as part of a Niger Delta Consultative Assembly initiative to prosecute the agenda of providing a common front for all the diverse ethnic groups in the oil-bearing Niger-Delta stretching from Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Delta and Edo states. In the regions, oil-workers of both local and foreign were kidnapped for ransom. Apparently, the Fourth Republic relatively propagated ethnic nationalism of which the Nigerian citizens’ appeared largely as vanguard against the state. Considering the challenges of institutionalizing the state apparatus, the society, ironically ‘popularized’ violence as a means of seeking redress, settling old scores, or negotiating with neighbouring communities. Ardently, violent communal clashes were recorded among Yoruba farmers and Fulani pastoralists in the Northern part of Oyo state, between Ife-Modakeke Yorubas, the Yoruba and Hausa traders in Bodija and Shasha markets in Ibadan, between Yoruba elements and Ijaw, Urhobo Addressing the scourge of violence amongst Nigerian citizens in some of these cities, the government devised a ‘shoot-a-sight’ mechanism, and imposed curfews on various quarters of the polity, all in the quest to stem the riots and restore order in these volatile urban communities (Agbaje, 2003).

Another crisis that loomed large since the return of civilian rule in 1999 is the case of Jos, Plateau over the ‘indigene-settler’ crisis, religious divide and the Jos North local government crisis amongst others. Since 2001, the state saw intermittent eruptions of ethnic and religious violence. There were conflict between Christians and Muslims that left more than 700 people killed (Socialist Democracy, 2010). In 2004, conflict broke out that led to the killing of 500 people. As the state security agencies curtailed the crisis, another version of it fuelled in November 2008 claiming the lives of almost 400 people in this region. According to the estimate of the Human Right Watch, over 2,000 lives were lost with tens of thousands maimed and dislocated from their homes and places of abode. In 2012, there have been ceaseless violent attacks in Plateau State and the one that often led to the death of a member of National Assembly in recent times. Since 1999 till date, the Jos crisis has remained unresolved, hence the indigenship-settler questions has not been addressed. The remnant of this crisis is still very much in the air and largely unabated.

Today, the Boko Haram insurgency is currently disrupting internal security in some states in Northern Nigeria particularly the North East. The Boko Haram is known as a radical Islamist group with strong affiliation to the international terrorist organizations like the Somalian al-Shabab and the Al-Queda in the Islamic Maghreb. Its fundamentalist goal is to influence and determine the political future of Nigerian state with such extremist objective of altering the Nigerian nation into a full Islamic state. According to some analysts, the Boko Haram is perceived as an outgrowth of the Maitatsine riot of the 1980 (African Today, 2011 as cited in Je'adayibe & Kudu, 2011). Membership into the sect were drawn from unemployed youths, university graduates who were indoctrinated to believe that their situation of hopelessness is basically caused by state-imposed western education and more importantly failed to manage the resources of the country to their benefits

Since 2009 till date, the Boko Haram sect has overwhelmingly dispensed criminal-attacks on government institutions, churches and sometimes Muslims clerics who often disregarded their ideologies and operations. Abruptly, the sect appeared overtly in nation's political environment shortly after Goodluck Jonathan's election as President in 2011. The sect stepped up violence, unleashed a systematic campaign of bombings and shootings of innocent Nigerians across some states in northern Nigeria. As at May 2012, the group carried out 118 terror attacks in six months resulting in 308 deaths and 33 arrests, according to police reports (<http://gga.org/analysis/book-haram-god-and-governance-in-nigeria>). In all of this, the Boko Haram were alleged to be responsible for the killing of 22 police officers, setting 25 churches ablaze, burning down the prison in the north-eastern city of Maiduguri, releasing inmates awaiting judicial trials and as well as setting public buildings on fire. Today, the political environment in Nigeria is tensed as a result of spate of violence in connection with the sect. Arguably, some states in Northern Nigeria today have witnessed ceaseless bomb-attacks, killings and the displacement of persons from their homelands, all due the heinous activities of the sect. The Jonathan's administration has made several promises to effect lasting solution to the Boko Haram menace, yet the measures adopted by government has yielded very little success. These happenings have raised several questions as to why is

the Nigerian state so weak to curb violence and to institutionalize a sense of common consciousness among the diverse groups in the country? Why is the appetite for corruption amongst the Nigerian elite so high that governance to them often means patrimony or an avenue to personalise governance and achieve self-aggrandizement? And lastly, why is Nigeria's democracy heinous to the social provisioning?

Pertinently, events in contemporary Nigeria have shown the insidious character of the political leaders in their bid to address social problems confronting democratic project in the country. Tar (2007) captured the weakening structures of the state in Nigeria when he argued that, democracy and the associated institutional machineries such as election (administration, funding and monitoring), party politics, the constitution etc are held hostage by a number of defectives practices (electoral riggings), faulty legislation and zero-sum power politics. He described of all of these as "the politics of survival of a nation" by the elites. Following the return to civilian rule in 1999, the country has been characterized by untold hardship and democratic denial against the citizens; the rampant systemic, bureaucratic and political corruptions of the elites which further exacerbate the crisis of national stability. Ogundiya (2010) corroborated this assertion when he averred that, corruption in the nation's democracy has reached a high crescendo such that an average Nigerian now possibly associates democracy with corruption. The consequences of corruption are patently manifested in cyclical crisis of legitimacy, fragile party structure, institutional decay, chronic economic problem and underdevelopment. The effects of corrupt practices by the elites are damaging. Without doubt, it has become part and parcel of the political culture of Nigeria. Corruption has indeed robbed Nigerian citizens' the benefits of economic, social, religious and political development because the scarce available resources that should have been deployed to execute developmental projects have gone into private pockets of the political elite.

For instance, in 2006, the head of the Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, Nuhu Ribadu, estimated that Nigeria lost some US\$380 billion to corruption between 1960 and the end of the military rule in 1999 (BBC 2007 as cited in Ogundiya, 2010). According to the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, this amount is

equivalent to all the western aid given to Africa in almost four decades and also equivalent to 300 years of British aid for the continent. It is also said to be six times the American aid given to post-war Europe under the Marshall Plan. Corruption in governance is widespread and deep-seated in all sectors in Nigeria. This terrible situation aptly fit into what Myrdal (2005) described as “folklores of corruption”. This has been worsened by the culture of impunity which has had a debilitating impact on the socio-economic and political development of the country. In spite of the establishment of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC), by the Obasanjo’s administration, corruption has become a perpetual economic crisis, to the extent that Nigeria is perceived of becoming an outright failed state. For instance, Tar (2007) called it a regressive state – a fragile state drifting backwards in developmental terms, when its contemporaries are moving forward, irrespective of the speed and level of progress. The regressive character of the Nigerian state is what Richard Joseph (1987) referred to as a Prebendal state (cited in Tar, 2007).

Furthermore, the Transparency International (2006), an independent global watch on corruption ranked Nigeria among the five most corrupt nations in the world. There is prevalence of corruption at all levels of governance and this has undermined the process of sustainable growth and development. Ideally, there is high decadence of public immorality in the government circle. The people in government have abandoned and out rightly neglected basic civic responsibilities (ethics, transparency, and accountability) which have given rise to mundane and corrupt practices in virtually all spheres of governance. Since independence, the Nigerian political elites had been immersed in corruption; they harbour a mentality that public money belongs to no one and that any person who has access to it should convert it into his or her personal use. Thus, corruption in Nigeria is synonymous with political culture and has become a way of life. This attitude has made corruption a virulent disease that shapes the psyche of the leaders and the followers too; they are corrupt and dishonest as a result of their depravity and hopelessness. The resistance of the followers to corruption in Nigeria owe largely to their near absence of entrenched values. This is one factor that heightened

civil disorder and unrest since the return to civil rule in 1999. More poignantly, leadership/ elite crisis is troubling and this has largely undermined the process of nation building. Leading a nation involves making policies and finding solution to problems, ensuring stability of the polity, and guiding the state to prosperity.

Political leaders in Nigeria have the power to make these necessary provisions and render rights, privileges and entitlements to the people with the abundance of oil monies, but they have failed in their responsibilities to lead by good example. This reality was aptly captured by Achebe (1983) in his book, *“The Problem with Nigeria,”* where he submitted that:

... the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. He enthused that, “there is nothing wrong with the Nigeria character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge or personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership”.

Complimenting this claim, McCormick (2007), opined that, the cumulative effect of the inability of the political leaders to integrate all ethnicities or other groups in the country, and put development as top priority with effective use of the nation’s substantive resources has been a story of unfulfilled dreams and missed opportunities, where narrow agenda of selfishness on the part of the political elite undermined the larger goals of building a stable and successful nation. Dike (2008) affirmatively stressed that Nigeria leaders are responsible for the nation’s underdevelopment. He noted that, the world’s leading nations are what they are today because their leaders are innovative and always in search for solutions to their social, political and economic problems. In the case of Nigeria, leaders have not gone beyond a promise of change. Nigerian leaders are good *drummers* of the nation’s troubles, but with no accurate and fundamental solutions to them. The greed and selfish attitude of the leaders have prevented the larger society from benefitting from the wealth of the nation. In an article,

“Oil Giant that Run On Grease of Politics”, Nigeria is described as a rich nation floating on oil wealth, but almost none flows to the common people (Dike, 2008). This explains the character of the state being a nation ruled, managed and administered by government of thieves, shibboleths, quacks, and cheaters hampering the progress of the citizenry and the society at large.

Thus, since the return of democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria’s nation-building crisis are multifaceted, and stem from economic development, individual prosperity race, power and energy supply, poor governance, ineffective institutions and dismal social infrastructure, high profile corruption, dwindling educational standards and security, rising inflation, unemployment, poverty and many more. The myriads of policies of successive administrations like, SAP, NEEDS, Anti-Graft War, EFCC, ICPC, WAI & C, NAPEP, Seven Point Agenda to mention but a few have not improve the quality of governance and delivery of the dividends of democracy. Yet, corruption in the country has remained unabated. Thus, the discourse within the social matrix has been of the failure of the political leadership in tackling corruption which has otherwise cast doubts upon the moral uprightness of the state as a whole and on the political will to manage the affairs of the nation. This problem is one that has fuelled the emancipation of ethnic nationalism and other recurring violent-conflicts since the Fourth Republic began. The various crises that debased nation-building in Nigeria includes ethnic, religious, tribal rivalry, corruption, mismanagement of funds, forgeries, fraud, poverty etc., are basically the repugnance of leadership failures to lead by example and to teach values, morals, discipline, obedience, loyalty, patriotism, tolerance and others that are virtues of civic knowledge and democratic citizenship.

5.0 Civic education and nation-building in Nigeria

When it became clear that independence was imminent in Nigeria, national citizenship took ethnic dimension in the country, and the emerging elites did nothing to avert this – simply because their mission was not to build a nation but rather to build or usurp power based on sectional or primordial interests. As a result of this, they championed ethnic

consciousness and used its force to mobilize people along socio-cultural lines to canvass for support (IDEA, 2000; Kew & Lewis, 2004; Bah, 2004). Hence, with the demise of First Republic (1960-66), the national government came up with National Policy on Education amongst others initiatives, to help build a new united Nigeria. This initiative aimed at integrating the entire people in the country to a sound and effective citizen, with equal educational opportunities for all at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school system (National Policy on Education, NERC: 1981). The recommendation of this initiative was adumbrated in the 1973 National Seminar on Civic Curriculum and the National Policy on Education in 1981. Its document is predicated upon the objectives of the Second National Development Plan, and these are: a free and egalitarian society; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-hermit nation; a great and dynamic economy; and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Apparently, given the character of the nation's social formation, these quotes as highlighted in the objectives of educational curriculum are by themselves contradictory and illogical considering the levels of educational development in different parts of the country. In this light, Momoh (1997) opined that the illogicalities embedded in its philosophy is the reflection of the Nigerian economic and social arrangement and the enduring complexities of ethnicities, where the people across the length and breadth of the nation do not have equal educational opportunities. And for that reason, the Nigerian society is neither "free" nor "democratic". While a few having access to the knowledge and wealth of the nation, the multitude are alienated and deprived from it given the elitist-character of the state. Against this background, the Babangida administration in 1987 established the Directorate for Social Mobilization (MAMSER) that was eventually transformed into National Orientation Agency (NOA). The agency set the vision to move the nation to greater heights, building a Nigerian society that is orderly, responsible and disciplined; where citizens demonstrate core values of honesty, hard-work and patriotism; where democratic principles and ideals are upheld; and where peace and social harmony reigns (National Orientation Agency Annual Report, 1999). Amongst other objectives of NOA initiatives are: to ensure government programmes

and policies are better understood by the general public; encourage informal education through civic enlightenment activities and publication; establish appropriate national framework for educating; orientating and indoctrinating Nigerians towards developing socially desirable attitudes and so on and so forth.

More emphatically, Agbaje (1997) argued that the political culture and socialization of the NOA as introduced by the regime is rather not a new initiative, hence, its content draws largely from the earliest ones that the country adopted in the past. The NOA initiative failed in this respect to unite and integrate all national groups into a new culture of Nigerian-hood. Agbaje affirmatively suggested that, the highlight of this political culture, include amorality of the state, political corruption, apathy and mass alienation, violence, mistrust and generalized stereotyping that have encouraged hostile cleavages largely around the contours of ethnic, regional, religious, ideological and class divides. Furthermore, Nigeria had always lacked political stability simply because the state and the political elites have no regard for democratic culture and values. With fifty-four years of existence, the country experienced eight military coups. The interventions of military in politics indicated that Nigeria lacked democratic culture and prospect for good governance. In these years of nationhood, Nigeria is yet to produce a nationally accepted leadership that transcends ethnic, regional and religious boundaries, and that can unite its diverse peoples for mobilization towards national development.

The criticisms against Nigerian leaders across the federal, state and local governments are many and justified. These include corruption, unpatriotic attitude, selfishness, despotism, tribalism, and religious bigotry. These and many more are the challenges of democracy, good governance and nation-building that tend to undermine the sustenance of viable political culture, political socialization and political communication that constitute the components of democratic culture. No democracy survives without political culture, socialization and communication coming into fore. Democratic culture means the societal ways of life toward the political process and active participation in politics. The near absence of these principles of liberal ideologies of good governance such as, political socialization, political culture, and

civic orientations have unquestionably remained inimical to nation-building in the country. The delivery of civic education in Nigeria has suffered from years of neglect, compounded by inadequate attention to policy frameworks within the education sector. Greed and leadership incompetence has exacerbated this situation and in turn led to the absence of values of good governance, transparency and accountability. It is worthy of note that, the state is a product of moral consciousness that discerns liberty, freedom and fundamental rights of citizens – exhibiting the citizenry genuine human personality. Respect and responsibility are the two foundational moral values that the state teaches; others include honesty, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, courage amongst other democratic values. All these virtues of good governance and transparency are fundamentally absent on the mind and psyche of leaders in Nigeria. The inability of Nigerian elites to sustain democratic culture and political integration, through civic knowledge, has been influenced by primordial sentiments that have consistently affected nation-building efforts.

Thus, to sustain democratic governance in Nigeria's political landscape, at least the majority of the people (who are citizens) need some degree of social engagement through political communication. They deserve to know the basis for the existential realities of being treated as human and the ties they have with the state. Amongst other things, the Nigeria citizens deserve to be educated about the essence of state, its institutions or agencies, political parties, democracy and governance, ethnicity, diversity and integration, religion, electoral institutions giving the posture of all other aspects of social existence. Simply put, to earn democracy and good governance in the polity, it is essential that citizens' possess the requisite skills to demonstrate core values of true citizenship, and display the behaviors that democracy entails. The skills and values they needed are often expressed through their relationship with the state. Gouba (2007:32) conceived of citizenship as "the status of an individual as full and responsible member of a polity community who owe allegiance to a state and in turn receive protection from it". As he fulfils his duties and obligations towards the state, the state grants civil, political and social rights to him. He is entitled to possess sufficient knowledge on how democratic political system functions; as someone willing to participate in the democratic

processes at the national, state and local levels and citizenship is bestowed on democratic participation.

This is contrary to the situation in Nigeria where the entire polity is perforated with a range of prevalent crises such as unemployment, poverty, faltering economic policies, indigene ship/citizenship divide, constitutional crisis, ethnic militancy, political corruption and so forth. Supposedly, ethics, transparency and accountability have been substituted for morale and administrative decadence of which corrupt leaders have become celebrities and their protection against criminal justice became a direct policy of the state. Therefore, to revive the nation's political system, national consciousness and build a culture of decency, the government will have to come up with a new social compact that defines democratic governance and this simply means that government in the country will change for better as a matter of urgency by committing themselves to new realities in order to re-educate, re-enlighten and change the orientations of; one, the political elites that sees the resources of state as means to personal wealth and acquisition, and second is the attitude of the citizens towards a new political culture, political socialization and communication through education in both formal and informal sectors of the political system. It is on this basis that the paper argued that civic education is a thread towards rebuilding a culture of decency and honesty to how a people govern themselves.

In this context, civic education is defined as, "educational, learning or promotional activities carried out to enable citizens understand the ideals of democracy, develop a reasoned commitment to the values and principles of democracy, be motivated to identify with areas of the political process they can participate in, and what they can do to influence political outcome and thereby improve the quality of government and governance" (Civic Education, 2007). Civic education is essential to the sustenance of democratic culture; culture in terms of government by consent, transparency and public accountability, fundamental rights, constitutional governance, and minority rights etc. As education suggests training and teaching of the mind and character towards national ethos, civic education implies the teaching/training of the mind and character of citizens, their rights and duties as citizens, and to the way of

government in the state. Civic education exposes the individual (or citizen) to the need for imbining positive attitude such as patriotism, peaceful co-existence, hard-work, diligence, honesty, mutual respect, love, tolerance and self-discipline. It is a kind of panacea to solving problems confronting human kind (Banks & Cleggs, 1977; Okam & Ibrahim, 2011). Against this backdrop, civic education remains a panacea that collective minds use to solving social problems in man's social world. The notion of civic education is perceived as adaptation of the ideals intrinsic in ameliorating or solving the problems arising from man's inhumanity to man. In other words, it is embraced by nation-states in a way to reducing the multifarious challenges of man at all levels of development.

Significantly, civic education and nation-building are inseparable. Their relationship cannot be divulged; both concepts come in bold relief with the evolving nature of democratic values. To compliment this claim, Stoller (2008) maintained that, civic education puts emphasis on civic participation and the skills necessary for informed and responsible citizen in the state. It also explores the political process with an eye toward understanding how it promotes the rights, duties and obligations of the individual and the responsibilities of government, while nation-building is the transmission of political culture that gives a sense of direction to enable citizen have a stake in the state, and in turn his rights are met and protected by the state. Political culture is perceived as a specific pattern of citizen political orientations, attitudes towards the political system and its various parts and to the role of the self in the political system. A system is an assemblage of many parts; these parts work together in order to carry out certain functions for the sustenance and continuity of the whole. Political system here denotes a system of interaction in any society through which binding and authoritative allocation of values are made and implemented for all and sundry that lives within the confines of the state (Mahajan, 1988). Accordingly, political system in the contemporary world is integrative; and this is because societies have come to know the relevance of integration as a basis for survival amongst complex socio-cultural groups. The integration of people in political systems has made the nomenclature of citizenship too, as integrative. Citizenship identity is shared in common by different groups in the state and this denotes a feeling of oneness on the part of

the people within a particular territory with common historical experience, tradition and heritage. This prescription negates the situation in Nigeria where citizens' integration has degenerated to rivalry, contest, and power struggle, primordial sentiments in tribal, ethnic and religious chauvinisms and making governance and administration weak, repressive and forging a distance relationship between the political elites and less privileged masses who are often used as subjects, and whose citizens' rights have been eroded.

Thus, in order to overcome the crisis of nationalism, crisis of ethnicity and religion, the crisis of corruption at the national, state, and local governments, the crisis of electoral violence, and all other crises that affects the progress of the Nigerian nation, civic education then becomes an ethical and moral code or principle that must be seriously taught in both formal and informal institutions of the country. In all of this, the ultimate goal of civic education is to produce good, responsible, independent, educated and strong character citizen. Civic education is the residue that every citizen (leaders and followers) need to change or overcome the Nigerian culture of endemic corruption, ethnic contests, disobedience and unpatriotic behavior that otherwise promote institutional decay that is currently tearing the nation apart. For Nigeria to build a strong foundation for true democracy and economic development there is the urgent need to resolve, rebuild and reconstruct her institutional and infrastructural crises. The state should promote democratic ethics that include good governance that is accompanied by accountability and transparency. This is the reason why reputable ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle referenced on the efficacy of civic education as a cure for corruption amongst public office holders and it helps imbibe the culture of honesty; transparency and responsibility (Ramaswamy, 2007). For all of these to be possible, Nigerian citizens must be politically educated and mature; and this will enable the future political elites to make ethical decisions and for the people to begin to make political office holders accountable while in office. According to Mahatma Gandhi, "politics without ethical principles" is among the "social sins of humankind" (Dike, 2008). Nigeria has the potential in both human and material resources to realize nation-building progress if the political elites and the general populace can change their mind-sets and learn to play ethical politics that adds good

value to the system. If the state in Nigeria is willing to transmit fully from the current democratic underdevelopments to national stability, all stakeholders (state, political elites and the citizens) must adhere strictly to code of ethics, and any person that contravenes the set rules should be punished without fear or favour.

7.0 Conclusions and recommendations

Quintessentially, the paper emphasized the need for the institutionalization of civics and values education as rational philosophy that needed to be taught in all spheres of governance that is, at the national, state and local governments (both formal and informal institutions) in order to forestall a new orientations for Nigerians (leaders inclusive) about governing processes, and the proliferation of nationalism amidst ethnic and socio-cultural affinities. Civic education deals with the learning process of the status of citizenship that enable people participate in the life of the community to the extent that they (citizens) possess entitlements and responsibilities. The emphasis of civic education lies at the heart of citizenship and democracy on the basis that no individual is discriminated on the ground of race, religion, gender and the place of birth to participate in the democratic affairs of his state. The argument here conjures up image that democracy promotes political equality and individual liberties such that the political system becomes competitive and marketplace of ideas that emanates from both citizens and representatives. It is on this basis that civic education should be a sure instrument for the advancement of growth, progress and development of a nation.

To sustain and consolidate democracy in Nigeria, the state must unite every citizen into a social contract, as they are taught and made to internalize the purpose of democracy. Values, such as liberty, service, justice, constitutionalism, diversity, religious equality and tolerance among other must be inculcated. With civic knowledge, negative traits such as religious violence, armed robbery, ritual killing, electoral malpractices, and official corruption must be condemned and isolated from private and national life. All of these must be taught in all spheres of governance, that is, both formal and informal sectors of the state. In a conclusion, Nigerian citizen must come to the realization of the fact that democratic values are not embedded in genetic code; they evolve overtime and each generation can decide their values and their preferred models of society. If all these are well-articulated particularly through liberal democracy ideology, nation-building in Nigeria shall be attained and sustained.

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