Review of Public Administration and Management

Umoh and Adeyi, Pub Administration Manag 2018, 6:3
DOI: 10.4172/2315-7844.1000258

Review Article Open Access

Social Integration: A Nation-Building Strategy for Nigeria's Federalism

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Abstract

Federalism was adopted for Nigeria to effectively manage her multi-nationalities through negotiations and compromises on issues of political and national importance. As a system of government, it allows for the existence, side by side, of a myriad of groups differentiated by culture, history, norms and so forth and necessitates forging a common identity unclouded by ethnic cleavages as a prelude to national growth and development. The paper traces the evolution of Nigeria's federalism through the colonial and post-colonial era to examine the influence of governance or the lack of it over the nation-building processes in Nigeria. This is imperative if the threats to her social, political and economic development posed by problematic nuances including power sharing, ethnicity and religion must be effectively addressed. These have defined Nigeria's history, dotted her sociopolitical landscape, threatened her stability and existence as a federation and defied solutions by her successive military and civilian governments. For Nigeria, a developing country with unique federal characteristics, this paper proposes measures of remediation and social integration deriving from Rokkan's nation-building model. The model is deemed appropriate in view of its procedural qualities through which interest articulation and harmonization can eventually be achieved. The measures, if adopted, will offer a leeway for ensuring more beneficial intergovernmental relations, boost the practice of federalism and improve the tangibility of governmental functions, output and the value of public service delivery to her citizenry.

Keywords: Nigerian federalism; Diversity; Social integration; Stability; Nation building

Introduction

A federal state is more than a loose alliance of independent states. It defines a sovereign state characterized by the union of partially self-governing constituent units subordinate to a central government. The self-governing status of the component states is constitutionally entrenched and may not be altered by a unilateral decision of the central government [1]. The component states of a federation usually possess no powers in relation to foreign policy and so they enjoy no independent status under international law [1,2]. Federations may be multi-ethnic, or cover a large area of territory, although neither is necessarily the case. They are often founded on agreements between a number of sovereign states based on mutual concerns or interests. The purpose can be the desire to solve mutual problems or to provide for mutual defense. The initial agreements create a stability that encourages other common interests, brings the disparate territories closer together, and gives them all a more common ground without necessarily losing their individual identities. In a federation, the constituent units are considered in some sense as sovereign, insofar as certain powers are reserved to them that may not be exercised by the central government [1,2].

Federalism originated from the intergovernmental relations of the ancient Greece, when attempts were made to describe the legal relationships between the leagues and the city-states. The leagues represented the union of several city states under a single administration while the city-state, like the states in Nigeria today, existed to oversee individual affairs. The leagues then were different from the current structure of modern federalism in that while the various governments freely interacted, no direct contact between the citizens of the various governments was permitted [3].

There is no hardline rule on the characteristics that federations must possess. Though their unique historical backgrounds or origins may differ, they must possess certain basic distinguishing characteristics through which they are clearly identified as federal systems. Some federations may practice asymmetric federalism that allows some of their constituent units more autonomy than others as in Malaysia, whereby Sarawak and Sabah entered the federation on different terms and conditions from the states of Peninsular Malaysia, Canada in which Alberta and Ottawa have responsibilities which differ from those of the other provinces and India where special provisions are made for the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur and so forth [4,5].

Nigeria's federalism: A brief history

Prior to the British conquest of the different nations making up the present-day Nigeria, there were communities that were independent of each other and of Britain [6]. Most of what is now Nigeria became British Territory between 1885 and 1914, although some autonomous communities like the Benin Kingdom, the Yoruba and Ibo territories were not conquered and incorporated in the protectorate until the early 20th Century [7]. The Northern and Southern protectorates were created in 1900 for the administration of groups within the area. The Crown Colony in Lagos served as the administrative headquarters from which the Governor-General operated with oversight from Britain. In 1906, all units under the Northern protectorate were amalgamated and in 1910, the Southern Protectorate and the Crown Colony, Lagos, were amalgamated into a single unit, the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. In 1914, the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria were amalgamated into one unit, Nigeria, under the office of the Governor-General, Lord Frederick Lugard who had the powers to legislate on all matters relating to the whole country [8].

Nigeria's federal structure began with Bernard Bourdillon's division of the British colonial entity into three provinces (the Northern, Eastern and Western) from two protectorates (the Northern and Southern) in

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Received December 04, 2018; **Accepted** December 24, 2018; **Published** December 28, 2018

Citation: Umoh N, Adeyi EM (2018) Social Integration: A Nation-Building Strategy for Nigeria's Federalism. Review Pub Administration Manag 6: 258. doi:10.4172/2315-7844.1000258

1939. The Richard's constitution of 1946, by further instituting regions to replace the three existing provinces, introduced regionalism in Nigeria. In 1951, the Macpherson Constitution improved on the preceding constitution by creating Houses of Representatives with powers to make laws for the country and Regional Houses of Assembly to make laws for the regions on specific matters. There were also constitutional conferences that encouraged the establishment of federalism in Nigeria such as those which held in Ibadan in 1950, London in 1953 and Lagos in 1954 [8-10].

The demands of the Nigerian conveners while focusing on independence included among others, the establishment of a federal system for the country, the sharing of legislative powers between the central and regional legislatures, self-government for the regions, regionalization of the civil service, revenue allocation, allocation of seats in parliament, the abrogation of electoral colleges, autonomy for Southern Cameroon which had been administered as part of Nigeria's Eastern region, and so forth. In 1954, the Lyttleton constitution consolidated federalism in Nigeria by effectively regionalizing the civil service and judiciary, creating a federal capital territory, Lagos, from the Western region and establishing a Supreme Court for the country [8,11].

In 1963, the Mid-Western region was created out of the Western region bringing the regions to four. In January 1966, the military intervention which brought Major General Aguiyi Ironsi to power, abolished the regions and created groups of provinces. After a second coup in 1967, Major General Yakubu Gowon became the Head of State. He abolished the group of provinces and created twelve federating states. In May 1976, 7 more states were created by the Murtala/Obasanjo military regime bringing the number of states to nineteen. In 1976, Local Government Councils were created and by 1979, they were accorded constitutional recognition as the third tier of government. By 1987, there were twenty-one states with the creation of 2 more and by 1991, 9 more states were created, further increasing the number to thirty with a Federal Capital Territory. In 1996, 6 more states were created bringing the total number of states to thirty-six [8,12].

The essence of the division of the regions into states and more states was mainly to give identities to the varied groups which make up the country but had been subsumed under the three main ethnic groups - Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba. These dominant ethnic groups were represented by three main political parties, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons and later the National Congress of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC), the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the Action Group (AG) respectively. The evidence of the dissatisfaction of the other ethnic groups with being identified under these broad ethnic groupings was manifested in the formation of more political parties from splinter groups as a result of the rise in dissenting factions within the political parties.

The Mid-West Democratic Front (MDF), the United Progressive Party (UPP), and the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) developed from the AG as a result of frictions between Obafemi Awolowo and Samuel Akintola, the Deputy Leader of the Action Group. The creation of the Niger Delta Congress (NDC) and the Dynamic Party (DP) from the NCNC was in reaction to the frosty relations between Nnamdi Azikiwe and Eyo Ita. In Northern Nigeria, the NPC had to grapple with parties like the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) and so forth [8,13] formed to further the causes of the 'disadvantaged' and 'under-represented' minority groups. These, among other factors, laid the foundation for the indices that subsequently characterized Nigeria's federalism.

The preference for the federal system of government for Nigeria was reflective of the heterogeneity in the Nigerian society and to date, has been the most viable option for managing the diversity within the country and mitigating the demands of the competing interest groups. The need for compromise led to the creation of more regions and subsequently, states and local governments [12].

Nigeria's federalism in practice

Nigeria's federalism started on a premise of incongruence borne out of a high degree of heterogeneity and multiculturalism evidenced by the presence of about four hundred (400) diverse ethno-linguistic groups occupying her vast territory but subsumed under three (3) major ethnic groups - Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba. These diverse groups were brought together by a 'holding together' process [14] which did not result from an agreement or the consent of the federating parties. The nations existed separately and independently under different political authorities for centuries until they were forcefully brought together, by the British, into the state called Nigeria [15,16].

Federalism in Nigeria is unique in certain respects due to the departure from the classical federal theory which canvasses government based on constitutionalism and the constitutional sharing of political and revenue powers between the federal and state governments and sometimes, the local governments using the principle of decentralization of powers. It is marked by party politics, which determines the nature of the federation, the configuration of powers and the prevalence of the rule of law (US Country studies). Asides these characteristics, federal structures are also expected to uphold a degree of self- rule for the constituent units with regard to some of the sectors of the economy e.g. health, education, etc. However, the varying historical backgrounds and experiences have contributed to the departures of federations from the norm [17,18].

Between 1954 and 1966, Nigerian federalism under the colonial and civilian regimes functioned fully despite imperfections. Ironically, under a civilian regime between 1979 and 1983, a weak federal system was practiced as a result of the influence of the preceding military governments and the fact that the constitution in place was a child of the military government leading to the operation of a unitary-federal system [19,20].

Military rule in Nigeria spanned about thirty years beginning from the early years immediately following her independence and gradually metamorphosing into 'military' federalism. The present structure of the federation whereby the creation of all the states and local governments was done by successive military governments further ingrained the excessive federal dominance in Nigeria's political landscape [21]. Even the delineation of the country into six geo-political zones – the North-Central, North-East, North-West, South-East, South-West, and the South-South [22] was done during the seemingly unending transition programme of General Sani Abacha which began on April 22, 1994 but was truncated with his death on June 8, 1998 [23]. Reasons for this included easier representation of the states within the zones, enhanced and effective governance and the smoothing over of topical political issues including rotational presidency, resource control and so forth, arising from the multicultural and ethnic diversity within the country.

Nigeria's military federalism between 1966 and 1979 and between 1983 and 1998 was characterized by suspensions and modifications of the constitution, the near suspension of federal principles, the ban on

all (civilian) political activities, the 'omnipotence' of the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) or the Supreme Military Council (SMC) at the centre, the over-centralization of powers arising from the existence of only one decision-making level of government and the weakening of federal practice [19].

In Nigeria, there are three levels of government and the constitution prescribes a clear distribution of powers between the state and federal governments. The exclusive list in the Nigerian constitution belongs to the Federal Government (FG) and contains 68 items. The concurrent list contains 12 items for legislation by the FG and state governments (SGs) with the FG having absolute veto power in areas of conflict. However, the items on the states' legislative list are almost inconsequential when compared to those on the exclusive list [24] thereby still upholding the age-long over-centralization of power. The local governments on the other hand are largely administrative agencies of the federal and state governments.

Fiscal federalism in Nigeria is determined by the Federal Government. It implies a process of dividing tax income and functional responsibilities across the various tiers of government in a federation [25]. In Nigeria, this process is heavily dependent on crude oil as the mainstay of the economy. Crude oil was first discovered in 1958 in the area now described as the South-South geo-political zone but better known as the Niger Delta region. Before the discovery of oil, which placed Nigeria on the world scene as the sixth highest producer of the commodity [26], agriculture was the mainstay of the economy and the regions fared well in the production of their staple crops. With the oil boom and the instituted sharing formula for the oil wealth, agriculture and other revenue generating sources like solid minerals were relegated, further threatening the stability of Nigeria's fiscal federalism.

Unlike most developed federations, the states in Nigeria depend on the allocations from the FG as prescribed in the power sharing formula which also vests authority over the key sources of revenue in the FG [27]. This position was decried by the states and especially the main revenue-producing states which felt short-changed by the population, need, minimum government responsibility and equality formulas on which allocations to states were based. Currently, the oil-producing states get higher allocations based on the derivation formula to enable them meet their responsibilities to and the demands of their communities [28,29].

From 1999 to date, Nigeria has been under civilian rule with a very strong federal system. All tiers have functioned effectively particularly since the second tenure of the Obasanjo administration that ran between 2003 and 2007. The first tenure was dotted with influence by the out-gone military administration but with much adjustment to democratic practice, more signs of a future for federalism in Nigeria have appeared [19,20].

Nation-building: An insight

Globalization, with advantages like westernization and free trade among countries, still has a few down sides such as brain drain, non-unionized workforces, Americanization, and so forth, reflective of the cultural hegemony of the richer nations. Liberals coming from a stance of cultural pluralism argue that nation-building is actually wrong in principle and is an unjust attempt at cultural imperialism. The 'options' and 'opportunities' that come with globalization are taken because of the desires for better conditions and the failures of leadership to provide good governance.

Originally, nation-building referred to the efforts of newly-independent nations, notably the nations of Africa but also in the Balkans, to reshape territories that had been carved out by colonial powers or empires without regard to ethnic, religious or other boundaries [30]. It is also the process of establishing civic order and governmental functions in countries that are emerging from a period of war or other types of upheaval [31]. In foreign policy, it defines the relationship between countries, especially between the developed and less developed countries in a bid to avert state failure by ensuring that states develop democratic structures deemed imperative to the survival of any state.

Nation-building entails regional, political, social and economic activities that are directed towards national development. It is a complex undertaking because of the task of fitting the basic interconnected structures of any country (political, economic, taxation and judicial systems, infrastructure, cultural, educational, and medical institutions and more) into a unified, organic whole. It involves the policies and programmes put in place to ensure that a nation does not become a failed state [32]. Pan [31] noted that nation-building as described by the United Nations (UN) entails essential steps such as:

- Security which guarantees citizens a safe environment;
- Political reform that involves building a civil society, developing strong local and provincial governments, and ensuring freedom of the press and other civil liberties;
- Economic reconstruction implying the restoration of economic infrastructure by establishing lines of credit for business, restarting industry, creating jobs especially in the agricultural sector, which accounts for most of the Gross Domestic Product (GDPs) of developing countries; and
- Strengthening legal institutions by ensuring functional and independent judiciaries.

Based on the successful nation-building examples by the UN in countries like Kosovo, Sierra Leone, and East Timor, these steps can be likened to foundational responses achievable by the eagerness to unite and cooperate [31]. Osaghae [29] and Falola [33] give credence to nation-building processes that engender less ethnic fragmentations as in Kosovo, the presence of a clear command and structure for rebuilding, the institution of democracy and democratic structures, the integration of civil society into government's schemes and programmes, and the need for innovative leadership and governance that works.

Nigeria's federalism: Challenges and threats to nation-building

Nation-building is affected by a number of factors including the background of a nation or the environment in which the nation finds itself. The Native Nations Institute (NNI) views the challenges of nation-building as foundational and therefore, requiring foundational remedies.

In Nigeria, the threats to nation-building are embedded in the characteristics of her federalism. Her 'holding together' background makes the achievement of unity in diversity which federalism offers, a herculean task. Since the pre- and post-independence era, the competing constituent groups have remained loyal to the ideologies of the individuals whom they consider founding fathers - the Western Region to Awolowo, the East to Azikiwe and the North to Ahmadu Bello.

This loyalty underlay the failure of conciliatory moves by the Ghanaian president, Nkrumah, to broker peace between Ojukwu and Gowon and fueled the subsequent 3-year Nigerian civil war [34]. In contemporary Nigeria, this division of the country along ethnic lines

still plays major roles in the determination of political deliberations and economic issues in the country today. It is suggested as responsible for the proliferation of amorphous, dissident groups as vanguards of one ethno-religious cause or the other [35,36]. It also threatens agreements and compromises on the trajectories that development strategies in Nigeria should take.

Ethnicity in Nigeria doubles as a tool for primitive accumulation with political liberalization and democratic openings allowing for varying forms of expression of dissent and the intensification of ethnic competition. The uneven rates of development among the states and regions complicated by the pattern of distribution of the major ethnic groups as per size and population fuel the tensions and controversies associated with the application of the federal character principle [37] making the satisfactory representation of the minority groups, almost impossible.

Incidences of conflicts abound across the nation and predominantly in Borno, Plateau, Kaduna, Adamawa, Kano, Ibadan, Benue, Anambra, Zamfara States and so on, as fallouts of strong ethno-religious and political cleavages arising from decades of distrust, misunderstandings and the zeal for political power and control over the machineries of government. There have been calls for state control of the police force and the power sector to boost the efficiency levels in the sectors since the Federal Government has been unable to effectively tackle the issues plaguing them. Only recently, the Federal Government decentralized the power sector through public-private partnerships to enhance electricity generation.

The marginalization of the other ethnic groups and the dominance of leadership positions by the Hausa-Fulani of the northern Nigeria are assessed as consequences of their romance with the British who found their highly centralized administrative structures suitable for the propagation of their imperialist colonial ideals [38]. By installing the North as the 'husband' of the south and the master of Nigeria in 1914, the British inevitably ensured that the reins of power remained with the north perhaps as a payback for the cooperation received from the region during the colonial era. This 'permanent power' is further strengthened by the Arewa oligarchy, a permanent majority in census figures [39], Census Reports), a greater land mass for the North, 50% of the seats in the central legislature and the control of the military. The indirect rule system also gave the Hausa-Fulani the upper hand while reducing the status of the minority nationalities of the middle belt area in the northern region.

Years of military dictatorship introduced a form of unitarism in the country and further ingrained the federal dominance established under British rule. Constitutionally-defined structures were dismantled through series of decrees that transferred state resources and control over intergovernmental relations (even in civilian dispensations) to the Federal Government in an unbridled over-centralization of power. Under Obasanjo's civilian rule, the nation slowly evolved into a one-party state and the witch-hunt of political opponents became a feature of the governing process [40,41]. This militarization of democracy has advanced under the Muhammadu Buhari-led civilian administration which disregards inputs and decisions of the legislative and judiciary in policy and governance matters [42].

Fiscal federalism in Nigeria leaves a lot to be desired and its handling erodes the doctrines of true federalism. The ripple effects reverberate throughout the cores of numerous contending interests with the minority groups decrying their marginalization in the resource distribution equation. The majority of Nigeria's revenue sources are found in the South-South (Niger Delta region) which is perennially prone to devastation, degradation, neglect and poverty as a result of the activities of the transnational corporations. The Federal Government is complicit in that it does little or nothing to bring errant transnational oil exploration corporations to book rather, it ascribes all the accruing revenue to itself and based on the principle of derivation, allocates certain percentages to the states and local government.

Corruption within the Nigerian political and socio-economic landscape is endemic and continues to hinder the performance of the key sectors of the economy. It resonates in the failure to adequately deliver on governance policies cognizant of the diverse groups and interests that make up the polity. Agitations and protests by the minority groups are for development or protests against the drive of the political class for personal gain, the lack of a genuine commitment to serve the people and the failure of their representatives in the central and state legislatures to deliver on their promises to them.

Wide-spread poverty, insecurity, illiteracy, poor health facilities and lack of basic utilities continue to plague the majority of the populace bringing the issues of bad governance and leadership failures to the fore. Service delivery is at an all-time low and quality of life continues to drop below the minimum acceptable standards. Suicide rates in Nigeria have spiked with Nigeria ranking fifth in the World Health Organization report published by Spectator Index [43].

The institution of Sharia law to guide the conduct of Muslims especially in the North has given rise to Islamic fundamentalism spearheaded by the notorious Boko Haram Group that has pitched itself against westernization, the government and its institutions while the notoriety of the Fulani herdsmen continues against the rural populace.

The intangibility and dysfunctionality of the numerous governance institutions in Nigeria are pointers to the failures of leadership in Nigeria. Calls for the amendment of the 1999 constitution to address lapses in electoral matters, power sharing, resource control as well as other issues with the capacity to destabilize the nation have gone unheeded. What constitutional amendments there are, only serve the interests of the government of the day. Under Obasanjo, it was intended to prolong his stay in office by propagating the third term agenda, with Jonathan, the amendment of the Electoral Act, among others, afforded his cabinet and special assistants automatic tickets to the PDP primaries as delegates, etc. Without a re-evaluation of the power sharing formula in Nigeria to clearly define and enhance state and local governments spheres of responsibility and influence, the risks of hampered development cannot be overruled [44].

Gambari [45] summarizes these numerous, unravelling issues confronting nation-building in Nigeria under five major subheads – the challenge of history, the challenge of socio-economic inequalities, the constitutional challenge, the challenge of lack of institutions for democracy and development (that foster public integrity, deliver on essential public-cum-social services, ensure social justice in the public and private sectors and in civil society and provide economic governance) and finally, leadership.

Nation-building: Some development perspectives

Nation-building is different things to different nations. It is approachable from the perspective of need prioritization. Nation-building scholars emphasize different prerequisites for descriptions and definitions of nation-building. In a nutshell, it is an all-encompassing concept that involves the stabilization of post-conflict societies, peacebuilding, militarization or otherwise of democratization processes,

modernization, the rights of the citizens, the satisfaction of their basic needs, the healthy competition for resources and power, respect for the identities and needs of others nationally and internationally, educational and socio-political development, interdependency and multi-functionality of political structures and systems, and civil society participation [46,47]. Nation-building engages with the social integration theory and describes the processes of national integration and consolidation among contending interests that result in the establishment of the modern nation-state [48]. It implies the conscious strategies, macro-historical and social dynamics as well as the processes of societal change which produce and establish the modern state [49].

The Native Nations Initiative (NNI, 2002) describes nation-building as the efforts of native nations to increase their capacities for self-rule, for self-determined, sustainable communities and for economic development. It involves building institutions of self-government that are culturally appropriate to the nation and effective in addressing the nation's challenges. Nation-building involves developing the nation's capacity to make timely, strategically informed decisions about its affairs as well as implement the decisions that drive comprehensive efforts to rebuild societies that work.

This nation-building approach recognizes that native nations today confront the classic problems of human societies that include building effective, sovereign governments, developing vigorous economies that fit their circumstances and cultures, solving difficult social problems, achieving their own objectives in interaction with other governments, managing their environment and natural resources and balancing change and cultural continuity. The approach also recognizes that native nations are wrestling not only with improving community life but with preserving their distinctive nationhood; not only with inventing programs to solve particular problems but with becoming consistent and effective problem-solvers; not only with finding and training leaders but with how to govern and implement effective and culturally appropriate systems of governance; and finally, not simply with raising living standards on reservations but with building successful societies.

Rokkan's [50] nation-building model envisages 4 distinct phases of nation-building through which there is firstly an economic and cultural unification at the elite level followed by the second phase where the masses are integrated into the system through conscriptions into the army, enrollments in compulsory schools and backed by the role of the media as a mid-point between the periphery populations and the central elites within the larger political system. In the third phase, the subject masses get involved in the workings of the political system thereby leading to the fourth stage which requires an expansion of the administrative apparatus of the state to enable the establishment of public welfare services and nationwide policies designed to equalize the economic conditions [51].

Rokkan's [50] model describes the phases of development of nations like the US and others in Europe. It is adopted as the working model for this paper because it is contextual and captures key variables recurring in the Nigerian scenario. Rokkan [50] depicts nation-building as procedural and highlights the responsibility of individuals, groups, social classes in the society and lastly, the government in the entire process. His views also enable an exposition of the expectations of polities from nation-building strategies.

Nation-building in Nigeria: A discussion

In keeping with the positions of the Native Nations Initiative and Rokkan [50], autochthony is therefore key to the success and viability of development efforts. With the status of Nigeria as a developing country, nation-building strategies must derive from and encompass the social, cultural, political, economic, technological, educational and all other overlapping characteristics prevalent within the nation. It lies within the direct responsibility of the levels of government which should be empowered or equipped constitutionally for effective service delivery to her citizens. Consequently, strategies deemed workable or fit for adoption must reflect her socio-culture and diversity.

In developed federations such as the United States of America and Canada, autonomy over the revenue sources that lie within the jurisdictions occupied and administered by the constituent units, rests with the units. In the Nigerian context, this alternative can minimize the extent of degradation and neglect and checkmate the proliferation of militant groups [28] but may be impracticable due to corruption and constitutionally established federal dominance. However, it is not unachievable as measures that engender proper oversight, accountability and sanctions as deterrents to irresponsibility and corruption can be instituted.

The undue preference accorded the major ethnic nationalities comprising Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba culminating in the marginalization of the teeming ethnic minorities must be revisited to ensure a balance. The new world order demands that contemporary governance rise above the proclivities of ethnicity, religion and other barriers to social justice and inclusivity, essentially ensuring a harmonization of core groups with non-core groups [52] to checkmate violent or non-violent reactions. In federations like Pakistan for instance, 'Urdu', the language of one of the smallest minority groups serves as the national language and in India, the extent of its multiculturalism is reflected in her recognition of up to twenty-three (23) groups as ethnic majority groups.

Representation in Nigeria's federal legislative and executive positions should be reflective of the ethno-religious differences. On the one hand, the nation-building processes and structures are responsive to the factors, for instance, the president and vice president are usually not of the same religious faith nor from the same geo-political zone. However, this may be as good as it gets. The occupation of key appointive or elective offices in the bicameral legislature and other political offices does not always reflect Nigeria's ethno-religious diversity as a result of the erosion of constitutional provisions and the highhandedness of the executive [53], the elitist nature of the National Assembly and party politics which have tainted the representativeness of legislature to the detriment of the minority ethnic groups.

The aim must be to create a sense of belonging in the spirit of federalism and nation building though this measure must be structured such that the federal character principle and quota systems for civil/public service job placements, entrepreneurial, educational, social and other benefits are handled equally and meritoriously across the states regardless of the population or number of local governments with which they are comprised.

Conclusion

Joseph Siegle in Pan notes that in nation-building, the social cohesion and tolerance necessary for building new nations are difficult to cultivate, especially among citizens of formerly closed, totalitarian systems where mistrust of authorities and other competing groups ran high. On this premise, we reiterate that a successfully federated Nigeria will depend on state capacity to promote unity in diversity through the homogenization of her population as was done in France and Italy with the enforcement of a 'national language' among other

measures [54]. For Nigeria which is still transiting democratically, this homogenization will subsequently override the benefits accruable from the existence of fragmented nationalities that may lack the capacity to cater for their citizens if secession calls are to be heeded. This does not however preclude the fact that a lot still remains to be done beyond the current practice of the federal system of government in Nigeria. Several prevalent indices reverberating throughout the nation's socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-economic landscapes necessitate the foundational need for transformation and proper social integration of all the ethnic nationalities.

Nation-building in Nigeria must incorporate the actions, activities and commitment of reoriented and responsible citizens if it will be maintained. Civil society integration and citizen reorientation encompassing law, order, patriotism, loyalty and commitment to governance processes play a key role in ensuring the success of government efforts and the delivery of social services and governance dividends. Also unequivocal to nation-building is the influence of technology and communication on twenty-first century political socialization, civic engagement [55], the development of new political identities [56] consistent with the norms of citizen engagement [57] and a constantly evolving society. Furthermore, the nation-building process is continuous. What is relevant in the process is that Nigeria evolves and develops according to its peculiarities and the influence of her inherent characteristics.

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