5. Crises of integration in Africa: Nigeria Federal experience

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Abstract:

The paper used secondary data in which newspapers, Journal articles, textbooks, documents, etc. are reviewed and analyzed in identifying the factors responsible for the crises of integration in the Nigeria federal system. These are with the intention of providing information on the crises of integration in Nigeria.

Keywords:

Crises of integration in Africa: Nigeria Federal experience

Introduction

Nigeria federal system coming since 1946 (Richards Constitution) foundation and formalization in the 1954 (Oliver Lyttleton) constitution has witnessed series of crises between the ethnic compositions of the country. The country through colonialism has been composed of major and minor ethnic groups. The major ethnic groups has high population, widely spoken lingua franca and possesses large geographical territory and are often identified to include Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani and Igbo. The minor on the other side has relatively small population and are often groups along major ethnic groups.

Colonial rule brought major and minor ethnic groups together alongside the diverse tribe within the ethnic groups in the formation of Nigeria. This is the reality with most African states that were colonized in the period. Crises then resulted from the composition of Nigeria due to inability to achieve integration by the colonial government among the ethnic compositions. Elite or Elite 'to be' in Nigeria thereby fall back to their established identity in pursuance of personal, group etc. interest.

The adoption of federalism in Nigeria is targeted at national integration, an approach to the creation of a nation from multi-ethnic composition of Nigeria. Anichebe (2005) captured this position when he stated that federalism is aimed at national integration and cohesion, taking cognizance of sectional heterogeneity, that is, unity in diversity. Nigeria state comprises ethnic groups with different languages and each holding on to a particular geographical location as their historical site: Yoruba in the West, Igbo in the East and Hausa-Fulani in the North. Each ethnic group thereby maintains there different identity including languages, cultural practices, territorial integrity, pre-colonial systems of government, geographical location, etc. in short their distinguishing identity.

The contemporary Nigerian State formation is composed of communities or state-systems classified and described variously as empires, a caliphate, kingdoms, chiefdoms, city-states

and village republics (Oyovbaire, 1983). Ojie & Ewhrudjakpor (2009) submitted accordingly that 'Before the advent of colonialism, indigenous nations and ethnic groups such as the Igbo, Yoruba, Ikwere, Afizere, Angas, Ndokwa, Bini, Gusu etc. existed as separate societies. The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 by Lord Lugard formed the bases of modern Nigeria and the ethnicity in the country (Obasanjo, 2012). There are over two hundred ethnic groups in Nigeria; no one seems to be able to agree on the exact number (Salamone, 1997).

In the creation of Nigeria, economic interest, among other interest, played significant role. The first major restructuring brought to Nigeria by the British colonial government was amalgamation. In the opinion of Falola, 1999 p. 5,

> The primary reason for amalgamation was economic. The north was poor. Without direct access to the sea, it could not generate sufficient revenues (by the way of custom duties) while capital was being consumed by railway construction. The administration in the south and the Imperial Treasury in Britain had to render financial assistance to the north. Amalgamation would shift excess money generated in the south to the north.

In literature, it is a popular opinion that the creation of Nigeria did not produce an integrated country and as such, this may have accounted for the restructuring that had been taking place in Nigeria since 1914 (amalgamation). The place of identity remains and consciousness is built around it in matter of national or general interest. In this view, Femi Taiwo (cited in Idowu, 1999) contended that:

> There are no citizens in Nigeria, only citizens of Nigeria. People flood Nigeria, but in actual fact, there are either no Nigerians or there are only a very few of them

In the position of Ademoyega (2012), Achebe (2012), Obasanjo (2012), and Onwubu (1975), it is often believed that the British or colonialist instead of integrating the inhabitant of Nigeria rather amalgamated the geographical territory. Britain is directly responsible for bringing the "Nigerian populace" together without their consent. The amalgamation has resulted in the various resistances characterized by appeals to primordial interest that reached its highest peak in the Nigerian civil war and which continues to influence ethnic relation in the country. In line with this, is the submission of Chief Obafemi Awolowo (cited in Onwubu, 1975) that:

> Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no 'Nigerians' in the same sense as there are 'English' or 'Welsh' or 'French'. The word 'Nigeria' is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.

> It is a mistake to designate them 'tribes'. Each of them is a nation by itself ... There is as much difference between them as there is between Germans, English, Russians, and Turks... The fact that they have a common overlord does not destroy this fundamental difference. The languages differ. The readiest means of communication between them...is English. Their cultural backgrounds and social outlooks differ widely; and their indigenous political institutions have little in common.

It is an established fact that the British colonial power created the geographical entity known as Nigeria in 1914 (by amalgamating) the diverse and separated geographical territory instead of integrating the inhabitant of the geographical territory into one nation (Onwubu, 1975) or put different, in the words of Ademoyega 2012 p. 1

Nigeria's political problems sprang from the carefree manner in which the British took over, administered, and abandoned the government and people of Nigeria.

Ifidon (1996) assert that the level at which citizenship is truly realized in Nigeria is not the mega-state, but the home state or primary group level, where the Nigerian is a subject. Beyond this, a Nigerian is an alien in another state, enduring self-imposed social passivity as a strategy of survival. Usually too, his perception of the host community is in term of transferable benefits. Every Nigerian does have a homeland to return to, a Nigerian nationality is non-existent, properly speaking, and citizenship is operative at the homeland level (Ifidon, 1996).

In like manner, the "Nigerian" identity is a somewhat fragile and, there is the constant need of reconstruction (Salamone, 1997). It is so fragile that those who assumed it are tendentious in asserting its strength and the depth of its roots. They "protest too much" that they are all Nigerians. Supporters of the national Nigerian identity often go further and state that there are no serious competing identities within the country. The national identity may represent a creative response to the socio-cultural environment but also leads to cultural strains, often expressed in aggressive or even hostile behaviors (Salamone, 1997).

It is also important to emphasize that crisis of integration has been promoted in Nigeria due to failure of realizing a 'Nigerian nation' or an accepted 'Nigeria identity'. Integration crises or identity crises are socially constructed; hence, they carry several significance (e.g. political, economic, cultural, etc.) in the process of their interpretation. Young (cited in Abubakar, 2001) noted that:

"Historical parameters defined the bounds of subsequent crystallization of social identities. But the basic units of contemporary cultural conflict, themselves fluid and shifting, are often entirely novel entities, in other instances substantially altered and transformed, in most cases redefined versions of cultural groups.". Thus, the construction of the identity of one group could only be meaningful in relation to the way the identities of others are

constructed and not in isolation. For example, in Nigeria, the construction of Hausa-Fulani identity takes on more important meaning and political load, as it relates in a competitive socio-political environment with the Yorubas or Igbos, or even other minority ethnic groups in the north such as the Katafs, Tivs, Idomas, Kanuris, and so on. Simply, ethnicity does not exist or make sense outside inter- and intra-ethnic relations.

The problem of integration has generated a lot of argument in literature. Some believed that Nigeria has been a country since amalgamation and as such, there is no period in history or literature when the country ceased to be 'Nigeria'. They believed that the attribute of a nation has often been exhibited by Nigeria. Attribute of a nation such as common language or l*ingual franca,* common historical background, accepted system of government, geographical location, accepted means of ascension to power etc. has been fulfilled by Nigeria. On the contrary, the issue in integration of Nigeria has been identified with the elite or elite 'to be'. The elite agreement or disagreement has been perceived as the causes of the crises of integration or integration in the country. Nigeria's adoption of federalism is expected by many to fast track integration but till today, integration or disintegration remains an elite issue, hence this study.

Methodology

The study sourced for data from extant literature such as the newspaper, journal articles, textbooks, documents, etc. The study surveyed relevant literatures and reviewed published items in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

Conceptual clarification

The clarification of concept is necessary for proper understanding of academic work. The following concepts are clarified in this work:

Crisis: This is used in this study to imply problem, hindrances, challenges, etc.

Integration: The concept is used to mean bringing together into a perfect union or building of accepted identity for erstwhile multi-ethnic state.

Federalism: The concept of federalism simply means a system of government in which the power of government is constitutionally shared between the levels of government.

Theoretical framework

The work adopts the theories of federalism and elitism to expatiate its findings. The choice of the theories of federalism was a response to the recent 'wave' of agitations for federalism and devolution of power in a number of African countries and also, due to the fact that federal Systems are today increasingly seen as political arrangements that afford an opportunity for the myriad diversities within a political system to find legitimate expression. (Okolo, 2014)

Federalism has emerged as a means of accommodating the growing desire of people to preserve or revive the intimacy of small societies, and the growing necessity for larger combinations to mobilize the utilization of common resource better (Schmitt cited in Akindele & Olaopa, 2003). Thus, the Livingston's sociological school holds that federalism is the most appropriate form of government for societies where ethnic cleavages are territorially defined.

However, federalism is used very loosely (Anichebe, 2005) and this explains the varying degrees of definitional elucidations given to the concept of federalism by most scholars (Akindele & Olaopa, 2003). Federalism as a concept of governance connotes a political system or arrangement erected on two (or more) levels of government and, these levels deal with common and territorially diverse issues and policies (ibid). Livingston (cited in Akindele & Olaopa, ibid) defined federalism as a union of group united by one or more common objectives but retaining their distinctive group being for other purposes; it unites without destroying themselves that are uniting and it is meant to strengthen them in their group relations. According to K.C. Wheare (cited in Anichebe, 2005), federalism is a system of associated States, which has been formed for certain common purposes, but in which the member States retain a large measure of their original independence.

More so, Wheare's doctrine of federalism (cited in Akindele & Olaopa, 2003), which, while recognizing components of the federation or any federation, prescriptively advocates

mechanism for constitutionally dealing with such conflicts include the following: (1) the division of governmental responsibilities between levels of government. (2) A written constitution spelling out this division and from which federal and state authorities derive their powers. (3) A judiciary independent of both levels of government that acts as an arbiter in cases where there are conflicts over the jurisdictions enumerated in (1) above. (4) The federal arrangement emphasizing coequal supremacy of the various levels each in its respective field of operation and the citizens of the federation being concurrently under two authorities and owing loyalties to them the inevitability of conflicts among them. On the other hand, Friedrich (cited in Akindele & Olaopa, 2003) theoretically espoused that Federalism is a process rather than a design. Any particular design or pattern of competencies or jurisdictions is merely a phase, a short-run view of a continually evolving political reality. If understood as a process, it will become apparent that federalism may be operating in both the direction of integration and differentiation (cited in Akindele & Olaopa, 2003).

Federalism is usually practiced in countries with many ethnic nationalities or groups with different backgrounds and peculiarities, with each group wanting its distinguishing identity to be maintained within the federation (Anichebe, 2005). More so, Federalism is a formidable mechanism for managing plural societies (Aleyomi, 2012). Ethnic diversity or pluralism usually inclines to confliction and coercive political behaviour in a society (Furnivall cited in Ojie & Ewhrudjakpor, 2009). The ethnic conflicts are usually struggles and wars of subordination, rebellion and hegemony (Ojie & Ewhrudjakpor, 2009). These are characteristically struggles for autonomy and freedom from exploitation by small groups from large groups, ethnic diversity may lead to increased civil strife (Osinubi & Osinubi, 2006). Nigeria is a country with over 374 ethnic groups, over 400 distinct languages (as against dialects), diverse belief systems, customs and institutions (Tamuno cited in Bassey, Omono, Bisong, & Bassey, 2013). The principal objective of federalism in Nigeria is national integration and cohesion, taking cognizance of our sectional heterogeneity, that is, unity in diversity (Anichebe, 2005).

The study also adopts the elite theory. Elites derive from a fundamental and universal fact of social life, namely, the absence in any large collectivity of a robust common interest (Higley, 2008). Elites may be defined as persons who, by virtue of their strategic locations in

large or otherwise pivotal organizations and movements, are able to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially (Higley, 2008). Put differently, elites are persons with the organized capacity to make real political trouble without being promptly repressed.

In his work 'politics: who gets what, when and how', Harold Lasswell views man in society as belonging to either the elite or the mass. The elite are the influential who gets the most of what there is to get; the rest are the mass (cited in Ulmer, 1965). More so, C. Wright Mills defines the power elite as those who are able to realize their will even if others resist it. In practical terms the power elite for Mills consists of the political, economic and military circle which share, through overlapping cliques, control over decisions having at least national consequences (Ulmer, 1965). They consist not only of prestigious and "established" leaders – top politicians, important businessmen, high-level civil servants, senior military officers – but also, in varying degrees in different societies, relatively transitory and less individually known leaders of mass organizations such as trade unions, important voluntary associations, and politically consequential mass movements (Higley, 2008).

In the identification of the elites therefore, most identifiable elites seem to have one thing in common; the pursuit of power (Ulmer, 1965). More so, the elite are believed to have some attributes which distinguished them. In line with the above, Mosca (cited in Higley, 2008) emphasized the ways in which tiny minorities out-organize and outwit large majorities, adding that "political classes" – Mosca's term for political elites – usually have "a certain material, intellectual, or even moral superiority" over those they govern. Pareto (cited in Higley, 2008) postulated that in a society with truly unrestricted social mobility, elites would consist of the most talented and deserving individuals; but in actual societies elites are those most adept at using the two modes of political rule, force and persuasion, and who usually enjoy important advantages such as inherited wealth and family connections. Michels (cited in Higley, 2008) rooted elites ("oligarchies") in the need of large organizations for leaders and experts in order to operate efficiently; as these individuals gain control of funds, information flows, promotions, and other aspects of organizational functioning power becomes concentrated in their hands. In Nigeria, there are series of resources under the control of the elite. One of the many resources used is ethnicity. In the words of Osaghea (2004),

> Ethnicity is not a resource only for the elites and the non-elites are
> not the passive materials of ethnic manipulation.... However, the
> elites are still predominant ethnic actors largely because they are in
> the forefront of political and economic competition and it is they
> who use ethnicity to get the big things that attract attention-
> contracts, appointment and promotion to top position in the public
> and private sectors, securing electoral victories and so on.

The integration of the inherited state (Nigeria) will depends majorly on the integration of
her elite. What then are the characteristics of elite integration? Putnam (cited in
Gulbrandsen, 2012) identified six "integrative factors "or" dimensions of integration" to
include; social homogeneity, common recruitment patterns, personal interaction, value
consensus, group solidarity and institutional context, of which, according to Putnam, value
consensus is perhaps the most central (Gulbrandsen, 2012). Also, Kim and Patterson (cited
in Gulbrandsen, 2012) maintained that an elite group is integrated if its members share
common social origins, educational and career experiences and recruitment paths. They
also added that an elite group could be integrated by sharing basic values.

National integration or disintegration will mean the integration or otherwise of the elites.
This is because the idea of ethnicity will continued to be used by the elite as a political
weapon in achieving and furtherance of their selfish objectives within the state to the
detriment of other ethnic group member of the inherited country.

Crisis of integration in Nigeria federalism

Understanding the current nature of crises of integration in Nigeria necessitated the need to
examine relevant literature on the issue. In like manner, Achebe (2012 p.1) stated that:

> The rain that beat Africa began four to five hundred years ago, from
> the "discovery" of Africa by Europe, through the transatlantic slave
> trade, to the Berlin Conference. That controversial gathering of the

> world's leading European powers precipitated what we now call the
> Scramble for Africa, which created new boundaries that did violence
> to Africa's ancient societies and resulted in tension-prone modern
> states. It took place without African consultation or representation,
> to say the least.
> Great Britain was handed the area of West Africa that would later
> become Nigeria…

Obasanjo (2012 p. 1) in an attempt to explain the possible problem of integration or
nationhood in Nigeria which has manifested in the form of the 1960-1970 (Biafra civil) war,
stated that:

> The land mass known today as Nigeria existed as a number of
> independent and sometimes hostile national states with linguistic
> and cultural differences ……With the creation in accordance with the
> 1899 (Selborne committee Report) of the protectorates of Northern
> and Southern Nigeria, along with the colony of Lagos, the building of
> Nigeria as a multi-national state began.

The quotation above confirms that Nigeria is a creation of the British colonial imperialism.
The State did not emerge from the civil society, and hence defied the conventional social
contract theory of State origin as pontified by the trio of Hobbes, Rousseau and Locke,
whose point of consensus is the emergence of State through the basic agreement of the civil
society to live under the same polity for the purpose of law and order (Kolawole in Ajayi &
Ajaye, 2005). Thus, Nigeria, as a political entity, did not exist before colonial invasion (Ajayi
& Ajaye, 2005).

Nigeria is one of the states that owe their existence to the imperialistic activities of Britain
(Ekanola, 2006). The British by virtue of a superior technology and economy subjugated
people from diverse nationalities and organized them to construct Nigeria in 1914, with the
amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates with the crown colony of Lagos
(Ekanola, 2006). Accordingly, Alapiki (2005) attested to the fact that political analysts have
argued that the 1914 (Nigeria's amalgamation) was a product of economic necessity and

political convenience as there was a strong need to use the revenues from the buoyant southern economy to fund the administration of the less-endowed feudal northern protectorate.

During colonialism in Nigeria, the British colonial government adopted series of measures to keep Nigeria together as one. In this effort, there was the convention of various conferences, change of administrator, adoption and practice of federalism etc. in the colonial states. The 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria declares in section two (2) subsection two (2) that 'Nigeria shall be a federation consisting of States and a Federal capital territory (FGN, 1999). This is the reality of the necessity for integration in Nigeria. Olowu (1991) inquiring the origin of federalism in the country identified five likely sources, viz;

>......the origins of Nigeria's federalism have been studied extensively by historians and political scientists. Five strong views have developed on this subject, each of which has drawn its own controversies. The first view suggests that federalism was imposed by the British colonialists on the eve of their departure in order to sustain their neocolonial links with politically independent Nigeria. A related, but different, view states that the logic of British colonial economic interests in occupied Nigeria favored a strategy of "divide and rule," a strategy that was corroborated by the infighting among British officials stationed in the different parts of Nigeria." Ballard's oft-quoted remark that if Nigerians were to leave Nigeria, British colonial officials would go to war against one another is quite revealing with respect to the latter part of this position.... An alternative view argues that Nigeria's pre-colonial structures and the manner in which Britain conquered each of the kingdoms, states, and empires separately and negotiated separate treaties with each of them made a federal or confederal arrangement inevitable. A related view is that federalism was a compromise solution worked out among Nigeria's regionally based elites in order to ensure that the

country earned political independence when it did. Finally, Chief Obafemi Awolowo has added a fifth viewpoint-the preference of Nigerians for federalism when the choice between federalism and unitarism was given to the representatives of the people in local, provincial, regional, and general conference assemblies."

Postcolonial Nigeria, besides its alien origin, is characterized by multi-racial, multi-culturalism and multi-linguistics, arising from the arbitrary partitioning and aggregative territorialization of about (250) ethnic groups speaking about (400) languages, thereby depicting the nation as the world's linguistic crossroad (Ajayi & Ajaye, 2005). In the words of Achebe (2012 p. 2)

Africa's postcolonial disposition is the result of a people who have lost the habit of ruling themselves. We have also had difficulty running the new system foisted upon us at the dawn of independence by our "colonial master".

The polity (Nigeria) is known to have many ethnic groups, which scholars have put at different figures. The fact that Nigeria was formed from numerous nations that were distinct in orientation, culture, government, dressing etc. made Nigeria a multi-ethnic state (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). Nigeria is, one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world with well over (250) ethno-linguistic groups. Some of these groups are bigger than many independent states of contemporary Africa (Ojie & Ewhrudjakpor, 2009). It is therefore a commonplace fact that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation state with socio-cultural differences between its component ethnic groups all of which have resulted into cultural dissimilarity (Salawu & Hassan, 2011). In the observation of Onabanjo, 2011 that:

From amalgamated Northern and Southern protectorates, Nigeria has moved to a 36 (state structure) with 774 (local government areas) and a Federal capital territory (FCT), Abuja, which according to the 1999 (constitution) should be run as if it were a state of the federation

After the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates by Lord Lugard in 1914, there were many constitutional developments to define the form and structures of government in Nigeria and also to facilitate national integration (Anichebe, 2005). The Clifford constitution of 1922, the Richard's constitution of 1946, the Macpherson constitution of 1951, the Lyttleton constitution of 1954, the Robertson constitution of 1959 otherwise called the Independence constitution and the Republican constitution of 1963, the republican and presidential constitutions of 1979 and 1999 (Anichebe, 2005).

There are diverse views and opinions on the reasons accounting for changes in the constitutions in Nigeria especially during the colonial era. The main reason for these constitutional changes in the opinion of Anichebe (2005) was that it was intended to create nationhood for Nigeria; more so, Elaigwu (2002) submitted that the dissatisfaction of Nigerian nationalists with the level of Nigerian participation in government then, led to a number of constitutional reforms. However, the constitution reforms were attempts by the British to arrive at a workable integration policy for Nigeria which was a partial reality with federalism. These reforms saw the gradual federalization of Nigeria's unitarist colonial state.

In contrast to the above, Salawu & Hassan (2011) claimed that the Nigerian constitutional changes all along the colonial rule encouraged factionalism which later resulted into ethnic nationalism. Moreover, Alapiki (2005) submitted that the introduction of the Richard's Constitution factionalized the emerging spirit of nationalism through the creation of three regions: Eastern, Western, and Northern. Also, regional Houses of Assembly were established to serve as the fulcrum of politics in the regions. This development, according to Alapiki (2005), could be said to be responsible for the strong sectional orientation and political outlook that prevailed in Nigeria. The result of the Macpherson's constitution encouraged ethnic identity at the detriment of national integration.

In line with the above, Salawu & Hassan (2011) stipulated that though the Richards constitution established the first regional governments in Nigeria, achieved the integration of the North and South in a common legislative council, it actually brought to force the concept of regionalism, which is the foundation for the sustenance of ethnicity in Nigeria. He submitted that 'many political observers and commentators have observed that the Arthur

Richard's constitution formed the beginning of the process of fragmentation along ethnic line in Nigeria'.

In the opinion of Fawole & Bello (2011), the British Colonial authority did nothing to integrate the political units between 1914 to 1944 not until after the Richards Constitution, which created regions (that is North, West and East) in order to propel unity in diversity. The Richard's constitution recognized three regions-the Northern, Western and Eastern regions, and the Colony of Lagos (Elaigwu, 2002). What emerged up to the Richard's constitution in the opinion of Oshintokun (cited in Alapiki, 2005) was a country with two separate administrations and a growing schism in terms of tradition, character, and orientation. In addition, Ademoyega (2012 p. 7) stated that:

> there was no constitutional advancement in Nigeria, because the British held firmly to their constitutional framework of tripartite Nigeria. Secondly, the regional political head initiated their own concept of rulership in their respective area of government. Thirdly, the same political leader strove to keep their hold on own regions.

In Nigeria, like other African countries like Djibouti, Eritrea, Liberia, Sudan, etc., one of the greatest challenges of nation building since independence has been that of separating elite interest from national interest with elite interest promoting ethnic identity. Many writers on Africa often assert that there is currently a conflict between ethnicity and nationalism which threatens the stability of African countries including Nigeria.

The need to integrate the various units in Nigeria is very practical. Nigeria is an artificially created States; created by the British colonialist in the hope of ensuring administrative convenience and economic exploitation. There were attempts at the integration of Nigeria during colonial rule and aftermath and as such, various constitution conferences were convened at different point in time, constitutions were changed, governor (or governor-general) were changed, Nigeria was separated into three regions (West, North and East), there was the adoption of federal system of government but hitherto, the British colonial government is often rebuked for failure of integration in Africa.

National integration in Nigeria

The promotion of national integration in Nigeria obligated the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (FGN, 1999) to stipulate in Section 15 subsection 2 the political objectives of Nigeria as follows;

> 'Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encourages, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status. Ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited. For the purpose of promoting integration, it shall be the duty of the State to-
> a) provide adequate facilities for and encourage free mobility of people, goods and services throughout the federation; b) secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the federation; c) encourage inter-marriage among person

The above section of the constitution shows how vital national integration is to the Nigeria state. Also, the need to achieve national integration or nationalism and promote nation building was one of the major factors that necessitated the convention of national conference in Nigeria in the 50s etc. The Ibadan constitutional conference, which was the first of its kind, afforded Nigerians the opportunity to assemble in a location to discuss issues that affect them directly and come up with an acceptable constitution for all (Awofeso, 2014). The conference which lasted for nineteen days revealed the division between the North and the South which continue to plague Nigeria politics and hinder national unity even in the post-independence period (Olusanya, cited in Adeforiti, 2016).

More so, given the weakness of the Macpherson constitution such as the prioritization of ethnic identity in the issues of national interest which manifested in the form of Kano riot, two constitutional conferences were convened in Lagos and London respectively. The essence of these was to propel and encourages regional or ethnic relationship in Nigeria but instead promoted the identification along an ethnic group in Nigeria, hence ethnicity became the hallmark of Nigeria political landscape (Olusanya in Adeforiti, 2016).

The process of achieving national integration in Nigeria has necessitated the adoption, and implementation of diverse principle. However, Steven Nkom (cited in Osaghea, 2004) outlined three different approaches to national integration. The first is the "melting pot" approach, the second is to "recognize and accept these subnational loyalties in some political arrangement" that allows such units their self-determination, while the third approach is national integration accommodates "ethnic and cultural pluralism"

The melting pot approach, in the words of Nkom (cited in Osaghea, 2004) is conceived as a 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. The approach entails the undermining and obliteration, if necessary, of compelling loyalties and identities Nkom (cited in Osaghea, 2004). With the approach, there is the conscious effort at nation building through the creation of shared national identities such as national symbols, common language, culture etc.

The second approach, which is to 'recognize and accept these sub national loyalties in some political arrangement' that allows such units their self-determination. This could be the basis of some form of confederalism (Nkom cited in Osaghea, 2004). The third approach is ethnic and cultural pluralism and it is the process of building an institutional framework within which the various ethnic, religious and communal groups can co-exist harmoniously under a genuinely democratic and just social order Nkom (cited in Osaghea, 2004). He posited that the strategies of achieving national development must be closely interwoven with the management of the economy.

Ethnic crisis and national integration in Nigeria

The outbreak of conflicts and political violence in various parts of the country has become so frequent that Nigerians, rather than being surprised at the outbreak of conflicts, have adapted to their reality. The rising incidence of violent ethno-religious conflicts is being traced to the return to civil rule in Nigeria (Ukiwo, 2003). For every conflict, there is a dominant ethnic identity factor (usually as the underlining factor).

These ethnic conflicts, whether seen from the primordialist, instrumentalist or constructivist perspective, ethnicity is perceived as inherently conflict prone. Claude Ake

(cited in Ukiwo, 2003) offered a strong critique of this perspective, argues that the term 'ethnic conflict' has for this reason become too popular, pointing out that ethnic relations need not always be conflictual. Evidence of harmonious coexistence between ethnic groups, both in traditional and industrial societies, debunks the assumption that ethnicity necessarily results in conflict (Ukiwo, 2003). In line with the above, Stavenhagen (cited in Ukiwo, 2003) stated that:

> conflict between ethnic groups are not inevitable nor are they eternal. They arise out of specific historical situations, are moulded by particular and unique circumstances, and they are constructed to serve certain interests by idealists and ideologies, visionaries and opportunists, political leaders and ethnic power brokers of various kinds.

It can be established that every society is heterogeneous, and conflict is a feature of interaction among its components (Ifidon, 1999). As stated earlier that there are over two hundred ethnic groups in Nigeria and as such no one seems to be able to agree on the exact number due to the fact that some minor ethnic groups change their names at will (Salamone, 1997). Nigeria has been proved to be a heterogeneous state with major and minor ethnic groups and conflict has been witnessed among the ethnic groups ranging from communal clashes through the Nigeria civil war.

In Nigeria, ethnic groups draw boundaries around selected symbols that serve as identity markers in order to emphasize their contrast with other similar group/categories and mask differences among their own members. They do so to present a united front so that they gain political advantages not otherwise perceived as attainable (Salamone, 1997). Due to the aggregated character of the states that were produced by colonialism in Nigeria, the identity symbols usually considered relevant are kinship, language, culture and spatial location, conveniently referred to as ethnic identity (Ifidon, 1999).

The identity politics has been fuelled, in Nigeria, by the struggles for the control of economic power through the control of government by the ethnic groups in the post-colonial Nigerian state. While there was struggle between the East and the West on the one hand, that is for posts, and economic advantages, and on the other hand between the East and the North for

political power. On another level, it was between the South (East and West) and the North. Then, there is friction between the Hausa-Fulani and the Ibo, and between the Ibo and the Yoruba (Ifidon, 1999) which has manifested in diverse forms ranging from the contest for political power through admission to tertiary institutions of learning.

These frictions between the ethnic groups in Nigeria as ensured the formation of ethnic groups such as the Oodua People's Congress (OPC), the Igbo People's Congress (IPC), the Arewa People's Congress (APC), the Egbesu Society of the Niger Delta, and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) (Akinyele cited in Adeforiti, 2016) by the diverse ethnic. The ethnic groups are formed for political, economic, and social reasons. They are formed for the purpose; of obtaining something that is more easily attained by belonging to an ethnic group than as an individual or as a member of some other group (Salamone, 1997).

By their nature, the ethnic groups are ever-changing. Their ideology change as historical eras fade into one another or as the total social and cultural ecological setting mutates (Salamone, 1997). Only in its need to distinguish itself from other similar groups does an ethnic group remain constant. In order to distinguish itself from other similar groups, ethnic groups promote an ideology that claims permanence. Ethnic ideology asserts a common ancestor for all members, a common set of values, culture, behavior, and ideology. This myth of uniformity leads to the belief that members, for many purposes, are interchangeable (Salamone, 1997).

During the nationalist struggles for independence and constitutional developments, the three dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria, the Hausa-Fulani in the north, Yorubas in the southwest, and Igbos in the southeast, controlled their respective regions under the framework of ethnic/regionally based political parties that developed from the ethnic group during the colonial era (Abubakar, 2001). Thus, after independence, regionalism and the "ethnic trap", ethno-regional and religious identities significantly influenced the pattern and processes of political contestation, fundamentally characterized Nigeria's politics. Regionalist politics coupled with divisive ethnic chauvinism culminated in a civil war between 1967 and 1970 and occasioned the ascendance of the military into politic (Abubakar, 2001). Thus, Michael Banton (cited in Salamone, 1997) state that if ethnic

alignments persist, it is because ethnic divisions are maintained by the efforts of their members as part of a pattern of social interaction. Thus, crisis is a necessary outcome of such situation and circumstances in a multi-ethnic Nigeria state.

Conclusion

The paper concluded that the foundations of federalism were laid by the British consciously or unconsciously for the existence of Nigeria. The country subscribed to federal system of government and had been practicing it. The problem facing Nigeria federal system today among other is no longer amalgamation of the country but the interest of various elite or elite 'to be' in the country.

Recommendation

The paper therefore recommended the following, the government of Nigeria through her various agencies should increase the level of political awareness available to the people of Nigeria on the fact emphasizing the place of equality. Government should also create an enabling environment for the meeting of the goals of Nigerians. Enabling environment for Job, security, etc. should be provided. The people should also be enlightened to participate in all government activities. The activities of government such as spending etc. should be made open to the people. There should be transparency and accountability on the part of government. The opinion of everyone should be made to count. There should also be enactment of law preventing the promotion of negative aspect of ethnicity, promoter should be arrested and tried.

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