

Beyond Democratization, Balanced Nationalism as Mechanism for National Development in Postcolonial Africa: The Nigerian Instance Since 1999

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Abstract

Since 1999 when military rule yielded way to civilian administration in Nigeria, democratization would seem to have grown sustainably given that periodic elections have been held to usher in transition from one civilian government to another. This implies that for a quarter of a century, Nigeria has had democratic succession into national leadership and governance. However, pervasive atmosphere of insecurity, poverty and social tensions as antitheses of true development have been commonplace under each and all of the regimes. This grim reality triggers the compelling need to ask and find answer to the question; why has democratic rule not propelled Nigeria into the pathway of state and human security, sustainable development and social harmony? Therefore, this article argues that while steady and sustainable development anchored on democratic rule was Nigerian nationalists' topmost shared desire as the country marched to independence in 1960, their failure to emplace and nurture a genuine balanced nationalism to grow a healthy postcolonial state-citizen synergy has been a cardinal causative factor for the obvious developmental challenges of Nigeria since independence. The main objectives of the study are: presenting a cursory but comprehensive account of plaintive and radical nationalism in Nigeria; and examining the multi-dimensional repelling impact of the prevalent skewed or imbalanced nationalism on sustainable national development in Nigeria by drawing some illustrations from the Nigerian democratization experience since 1999. Its central thesis is that, while democratic culture of governance is good and should be nurtured, a more balanced nationalism is an imperative

mechanism for meeting the national aspiration as domiciled in cohesion, sustainable development and rewarding citizen-state synergy.

Key words: Democratization; Balanced Nationalism; Decolonization; Peace-building; Development

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1. INTRODUCTION

Across Africa, decolonization was a struggle in phases. While the nationalist leaders had evolved plaintive nationalism to agitate for inclusion in the colonial structure, they later grew it to radical nationalism which served as their platform of struggle for outright freedom to guarantee self-determination. Central to their agitation and a legacy inherited from the colonial masters was instituting modern governance anchored on Western democratic ethos. Indeed, democratic civil rule was conceived as a critical pathway to sustainable growth and social development. However, they had, in many cases, not injected cultural nationalism into their platforms of struggle for independence. This was an underlying consequence of the artificial boundary policy of the colonial authorities across Africa. Thus, the skewed (imbalanced) nationalism consequently led to loss of identity and strong feeling of collectivism in many African countries with ethnicity emerging as a dangerous divisive force, such that they were ushered into independence as thoroughly disjointed entities. With this background finding, this study takes the Nigerian instance as working example to historicize the African experience of failure to

meet national aspiration in their postcolonial history.

It is a truism that the process of nation-building in postcolonial Africa has been bedeviled with many challenges. Some of the challenges are inter-ethnic tensions and disharmony among the ethnic components of the artificially created modern African states, the attendant consequence of enthroning sectarian interests over and above national interest; politicization of religions, which have severally culminated in inter-religious intolerance and wars; palpable insecurity; gross and seemingly intractable underdevelopment; corruption; overbearing elitism influence; poor organization of public life; sit-tight leadership; over-reliance on foreign aids; and many negative manifestations of neo-imperialism, among others. These challenges have combined to put Africa on a choking space in the global political economy such that, recently the continent was tagged in a World Poverty Clock report as 'headquarters of world poverty'. The report declares that, "of the fifteen countries across the world where extreme poverty is rising by World Poverty Clock data, 13 are African countries" (World Poverty Clock Report, 2018). Without being unnecessarily sentimental and pissed off by a statement that may appear racist and indecorous, Africa, it must be admitted, is more easily known and remembered for the crushing poverty and inhuman living conditions of greater majority of its citizens in the postcolonial age. This sad reality is naturally opposed to a functional African society to which African leaders and people had looked forward with hope, sense of pride and aspiration for good governance, more orderly society, and better life for the greater majority. The immediate implication of this despicable state is that the national aspiration of African countries as encoded in peace and stability, sustainable development and effective international engagements, still remains largely a statement of hope in well over seven or six decades after independence. This is an obvious, even uniform, pattern across many African states.

Against the above backdrop, this study attempts an anatomy of the Nigerian State since 1960 as a typical African example of failure to meet set goals of peaceful society and true development as encapsulated at independence. The main thrust of the study is to present a new insight into nationalism beyond the realm of anti-colonial struggle for independence. While many existing studies on Nigerian nationalism have examined its trends, nuances and impact in the colonial years, this study conceives nationalism in a postcolonial sense whereby it encompasses patriotism as a strong pillar by which a multi-ethnic Nigeria can secure maximum cooperation from its citizens in the drive to nation-building. The study is premised on a position that balanced nationalism is capable of ensuring smooth state-citizen relationship, which, in turn, can guarantee enduring peace, sustainable development and effective international engagements.

This is beyond, but not necessarily contradictory to, Coleman's two categories of nationalism (traditional and modern) (Coleman 1986, p.169). It argues that, while the Nigerian nationalists evolved what could be termed radical nationalism in the decolonization years, from the earlier plaintive nationalism, by harmonizing their resources and agitation strategies for the immediate purpose of attaining independence, their nationalist drive faded away with colonial rule as they did not grow it to the level of ideologically driven pan-Nigerian culture-centric nationalism, which would have made their nationalism a balanced one capable of fast-tracking the process of post-colonial nation-building. The study argues further that the nation-building process and the character and content of other state engagements of post-colonial Nigeria can be better enhanced by evolving a balanced postcolonial nationalism, which incorporates cultural nationalism, as a national ideology which can stimulate a pan-Nigerian drive in those regards. This initiative, it posits conclusively, can be better galvanized by a deliberate synergy between the coalition of civil society organizations and the youth on the one hand and the political leadership on the other, with the aim of indoctrinating the average Nigerian with a national identity and ideology as a connecting tool with the national drive for development.

2. METHOD SUMMARY

To achieve its set objectives, the study relies on primary and secondary source materials and adopts the historical interpretive method. The discussion is organized in five sections in addition to the above introduction, which offers a foretaste into the main content. The term 'nationalism, in its broad context, is conceptualized in the first section, as the core framework for the study, while section two provides an historical overview of colonial rule, and a trajectory of nationalism in its plaintive and radical variants in Nigeria. The third section examines Nigerian nationalism with a view to unpacking its (im) balanced nature with some illustrations as major impact factor on the process of nation-building. Section four discusses the nexus between balanced nationalism and peace-building and sustainable development as critical elements of nation-building and national aspiration. The fifth section concludes the study with underscoring the compelling need for emplacing balanced nationalism as a national ideology towards genuinely building a pan-Nigerian architecture for attaining the national aspiration objectives.

3. NATIONALISM: A CONCEPTUALIZATION

Nationalism: Nationalism defines the bond between a citizen and his/her nation. From the dateless past, people

have been attached to their native land, to the traditions of their parents, and to established territorial authorities; all combined as elements of heritage and identity. This attachment has, in turn, produced a citizenship imbued with a strong sentiment and philosophy clad with the principle that the individual's loyalty and devotion to the nation or state surpass other individual or group interests. This underscores the dynamic vitality and pervasive character of nationalism. With this modest, dateless beginning, nationalism grew in the closing years of the 18th century to be generally accepted as arguably the most powerful single determining factor, capable of molding public and private life of individuals. The American and French revolutions of 1776-1783 and 1789 respectively were clear indicators of the power of nationalism, thus making the succeeding 19th century an age of European nationalism. On the other hand, the imposition of colonial rule made the 20th century the age of nationalism in Asia and Africa.

Nationalism, in the wider context of politics, emphasizes the identification of the state or nation with the people or at least the desirability of determining the extent of the state according to ethnographic principles. In the age of nationalism whether in Europe, Asia, Africa or elsewhere, the principle was generally recognized (or so it ought to be) that each nationality should form its state and that the state should include all members of that nationality (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010). This was however not the case with Nigerians whose state (or nation if the 1914 entity could be so-called) was created and imposed by an external force – Britain. This scenario eventually triggered off a nationalistic tendency among Nigerians in a manner found in tandem with a scholarly view that;

Nationalism is certainly one of the most powerful forces in the world today, especially in non-Western countries and areas. It helps to explain the almost paranoic (sic) sensitivity of leaders and peoples of former colonies to any infringements, real or imagined, on their newly won independence (Palmer and Perkins 2005, p.xxv).

Yet, it is contested in this study that the Nigerian nationalism was not the type that established a bond between the Nigerian citizen and the Nigerian state because the latter was externally imposed and did not emerge from the preference and choice of the former.

Radical Nationalism: Ordinarily, radical nationalism is driven by the passionate belief that the State should be a culturally homogenous entity that reflects the cultural values, norms and peculiarities of its people. As such, radical nationalism is against international law or global universal law, and promoters of radical nationalism hold that the legitimacy of the State comes from its Sacred Duty to uphold and protect the culture and institutions of its own people. Thus, it emphasizes both the individual and the group dynamics. But, in the Nigerian instance, the

context of radical nationalism is a bit different. It means the vibrant nationalism pursued by the articulate educated elite, who by virtue of their education and enlightenment injected some modicum of radicalism into the process of nationalist struggle, particularly in the decolonization years.

Cultural Nationalism: Cultural nationalism, as against radical nationalism, pre-supposes the existence of an identifiable national culture, which defines the total character of a people within a given geo-political entity who share a common feeling about their existence in relation to other people. Over time this culture grows to be a springboard of national ideology, which encompasses the values, norms, and aspirations shared by the people. More than anything else, this ideology helps in strongly connecting the people's actions with transcendental principles, whereas the individual's or sub-group's feelings, aspirations and actions are subsumed under the larger framework of the national interest. It also defines their stature and promotes their interests in their relationship with other peoples. This study is not unmindful of Appiah's position that there is no such thing as a pristine culture or identity completely unaffected by another in today's world (Appiah, 2006, pp.110-113). Indeed, it has been argued elsewhere, every culture is a composite stock made of layers of other cultures (Okajare, 2022, pp.87-97). This underscores the elementary feature of cultural dynamism. Yet, the study aligns with Hutchinson's view about modern Ireland that "Cultural nationalism should be seen as an integrative force that sought to unite warring groups by reviving within them a love and knowledge of their common (Irish) history and culture" (Hutchinson, 1987, p.483). In other words, groups (countries) in the modern world can deploy the extant diversity and close compactness to strengthen their own cultural identity through a well-lubricated structure of cultural nationalism as a means to survive and develop within the over-arching global system.

Therefore, a balanced nationalism as conceived in this study is a direct derivative of the above radical and cultural nationalism. It presupposes a strong connection between Nigeria, as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural modern state, and its citizens in their diverse configurations. The study seeks a Nigerian nation-state where citizens demonstrate their nationalism with a considerable quantum of radicalism and peoples' national cultural ethos as a composite stock leveraged on truly national and well-orientated citizenship embedded in first-line allegiance to the Nigerian State instead of sectional/sectarian loyalty.

Nation: A nation simply implies a geo-polity of a people who share a common history, heritage, language, customs or at least similar lifestyles. This commonality of nationality of the people uniting together for a purpose would lay the foundation for their nationalism, which

strengthens their resolve to owe their allegiance to the nation, and its legal representative globally known as government. But beyond this elementary characterization, there are some distinctions that need to be noted. While language poses a natural limitation that everyone is reluctant to subdue, Ogundowole (1994, p.44) argues that nation is not a natural but historical phenomenon. In the same vein, it has been observed that formation of a nation required much more. There is usually a dominant social force..., which acts as protagonist of social progress together with which the whole society should feel the need for national linkage as their common economic and social interests, as an irresistible demand for economic development (Kardelj, 1981, p.21). He noted further that, "The phenomenon of the nation is a specific manifestation of social life on the basis and within the framework of a certain cultural-linguistic community: in other words, it is an historically determined synthesis of certain socio-economic factors and ethnic structures" (Kardelj, 1981, p.40). Therefore, a nation cannot be an arbitrary or artificial creation out of the whimsical fancy or impulsive preference of an external force as it was in the Nigerian experience. It can only evolve and develop into maturity whenever and wherever its characteristic essential elements are present Ogundowole (1994, p.47).

State: Rosenau (1990, pp.117-118) expressed the fear that a state appears too nebulous to be conceptualized, when he claimed that;

All too many studies posit the state as a symbol without content, as an actor whose nature, motives and conduct are so self-evident as to obviate any need for precise conceptualizing. Often, in fact, the concept seems to be used as a residual category to explain that which is otherwise inexplicable in macro politics.

However, there are some fundamental features that a geo-political unit should have for it to be categorized as a state. Normally a state has

- (a) a geographically defined territorial base or boundary, which captures its territorial integrity
- (b) a stable population that resides within the boundary
- (c) a government to which the population (citizens) owe allegiance
- (d) diplomatic recognition from other states, thus acknowledging its existence within the international system (Mingst, McKibben and Arreguin-Toft, 2019, p.151).

Yet, it should be admitted that the above criteria are not cast in iron as there could be certain peculiarities from one instance to another. Some states may not have precise extent of boundary as a result of boundary dispute. The experience of the Palestinian State in the Middle East suffices here, yet it has been recognized as a matter of diplomatic expediency. The criterion of stable population is also fluid as illegal migrants often cross borders undetected as we often have with Fulani nomads in Northeastern Nigeria. Also, it is not absolute that a

state must have a specific type of government. It is only expedient that the government enjoys acknowledgement of its legitimacy by greater majority of its people, since the institutional legitimacy of government is continuously questioned by people. Lastly, it is difficult to determine the extent to which diplomatic recognition can legitimize the existence of a state. Where such recognition is not pervasive, it becomes insufficient.

In the Nigerian civil war years, the defunct Republic of Biafra enjoyed diplomatic recognition from some countries, but this was not sufficient to keep it alive for too long. Arising from the above analysis is that while the four features as outlined are fundamentals as yardstick for statehood, they cannot be measured in absolute terms. Thus, some geo-polities that do not command all the four features are still states in their own right. While it serves no useful purpose to be detained here with details of contending conceptualizations of the state (Mingst, 1999, pp.112-114; Sabine and Thorson, 1973, pp.84-87, & 275-276), it is pertinent to further examine the nation-state as a congruence arising from nation and state.

Nation-state: A nation-state is better conceived as a coincidence or congruence between nation and state. While nations could establish their own state as a legal, institutional superstructure with most of the afore-noted features of a state, some states came into existence through a process of integration (willing or forced) of different nations. In the former, like France, the emergent nation-state becomes the foundation for national self-determination. In the latter category, like USA, South Africa, and Nigeria among several others, such state would have within its borders a number of different nations. Palmer and Perkins (2005, p.2) define nation in a tone that sets it as a synonym of state as "a body of inhabitants of a country united under one government". But they draw a further and more informing clarification that a nation may be taken as "any aggregation of people having like institutions and customs and a sense of social homogeneity and mutual interest".

It is suspected that writers often use 'state', 'nation', 'country' and 'nation-state' interchangeably as a means to avoid repeated use of one word, but not necessarily because they have exactly the same meaning. However, for the present purpose, it is considered safer to take Nigeria as, at best, a nation-state following the forced cohabitation (integration) of different nations that the 1914 amalgamation represented, and continues to represent, in contemporary Nigerian history. Ever since then, the country has always exhibited features of a geo-polity that is made up of different ethnic nationalities, most of which have the potentials of developing individually into full-fledged nation.

National Ideology: Ordinarily, ideology is a form of social or political philosophy in which practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones. It is a system of ideas that aspires both to explain the world and to change

it (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2010). It is quite difficult to define ideology more so because while it is a term with marked emotive content, it is also often taken to be a dry, technical term. The subject of ideology is a controversial one, and it is arguable that at least some part of this controversy derives from disagreement as to the definition of the word *ideology*. One can, however, discern both a loose way and strict sense of using it. In the loose sense of the word, ideology may mean any kind of action-oriented theory or any attempt to approach politics (or ways of life generally) in the light of a system of ideas. On the other hand, ideology in the strict sense may be identified by five characteristics

(a) it contains an explanatory theory of a more or less comprehensive kind about human experience and the external world;

(b) it sets out a program, in generalized and abstract terms, of social and political organization;

(c) it conceives the realization of this program as entailing a struggle;

(d) it seeks not merely to persuade but to recruit loyal adherents, demanding what is sometimes called commitment;

(e) it addresses a wide public but may tend to confer some special role of leadership on Intellectuals (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2010).

For the present purpose, national ideology is therefore conceptualized as that action-driven, conviction-based philosophy, which can be adopted by government and citizens of a given nation for the purpose of approaching the task of building their nation or nation-state (in the Nigerian instance) for their overall benefits. Such philosophy would benefit tremendously from the above-noted features and particularly on commitment, which serves as the connecting bond between the citizen and the nation-state.

4. COLONIAL RULE AND TRAJECTORY OF NATIONALISM IN NIGERIA

While it is a truism that in 1914, Nigeria was created by the British as a new country through the amalgamation exercise as formalized in 1914 Amalgamation Ordinance, there was no evidence to show or suggest that the peoples of the different political units spread across the Northern and Southern halves of the country were consulted to discuss and give their consent to live together as one people and one country, under one constitution. This was a replica of the partitioning of Africa at the Berlin 'Africa' conference of 1884-85, in which European colonial powers sliced the African land and waters among themselves as a way of staving off what would possibly have been a European inter-state war in Africa. Yet, this imposition that the amalgamation represented notwithstanding, it has become a reality in contemporary

Nigeria as the peoples *have been made* to live together for over a century even if so in the midst of deep-seated, inter-ethnic distrust and disharmony.

In the colonial years, resistance to colonial rule in Nigeria began, at first, as strident calls for accommodation made mainly by the western educated elite in what may be termed plaintive nationalism. The strides of colonial policies that followed amalgamation were such that bred discontent in the people across their various divides. As Christine Scott (2019, p.1) notes;

Colonial policies generated discontent among the people – especially the elite who originally demanded reforms, and later on, independence. Among the issues that displeased the people were racism and the damage to traditional values during European rule. Nigerians in the civil service complained of racial discrimination in appointments and promotions. The aspiring ones among them were envious of the status and privileges enjoyed by the white officials.

The above grim reality, which traversed the whole colonial period, was sufficient to motivate Nigerians into evolving an enduring platform that would emplace the country in a strong pedestal for efficiency in both domestic and international engagements after independence. While some Nigerians made efforts to express their nationalism in cultural ways (Scott 2019, p.2), such efforts were too feeble and less collective in mainstreaming Nigerian nationalism in the requisite cultural context.

The plaintive nationalism graduated later to radical nationalism particularly from 1945 after the World War II when the tempo for nationalist agitation and decolonization politics increased substantially. In all the phases however, the nationalist leaders would seem to be tremendously influenced by some primordial tendencies as against the pan-Nigerian over-arching interest that predictably brought them together. This manifested in the fact that Nigerians appeared not convinced of the reality of their new-found identity that amalgamation foisted on them. Apparently, in spite of the 'national unity' or at least, national unification, which the amalgamation signaled, the peoples were not truly *Nigerian* in feelings and pursuits. This position, which was a major challenge to the nationalist struggle, endured for the most parts of the decolonization years, and found copious articulation in the expressions of two of the most prominent Nigerian leaders (Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa) who made unambiguous declarations that Nigeria was not a nation. Chief Awolowo (1947, pp.47-48) set the tone when he averred that:

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

In a similar vein, Sir Balewa strengthened this view in 1948 in his remark to the Nigerian Legislative Council audience that:

Since 1914, the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their backgrounds, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any signs of willingness to unite.... Nigerian unity is only a British invention (LCD 1948, p.227; Coleman, 1986, p.320).

Apparently, it was on the basis of the failure to grow a nation out of the disparate ethnic nationalities that amalgamation forced together in 1914 that the two leading Nigerian nationalist leaders (Chief Awolowo and Sir Balewa) made their assertions, which of course, appear to command eternal veracity. Yet, it should be added that from all indications, the sustenance of the Nigerian nation-state is reversible only with some deleterious consequences, and if Nigerians desire to stave off such consequences, there is the pressing need to find ways and means of managing the Nigerian diverse nationality. In tandem with this line of thought, it has been argued that, "...it is doubtful if there is any modern plural state that is not a product of an artificial creation, but the largely successful states in nation-building have been aided by building a workable consensus among the elites on the appropriate direction for their countries" (Obinyan, 2011, p.341).

What is more, the two postulations evidently suggest that the radical nationalism of the decolonization years was not sufficiently pan-Nigerian to stimulate a process of sustainable nation-building that would have guaranteed a stable and progressive post-colonial Nigeria nation. Indeed, as it has been visibly shown since 1914, Nigeria is made up of a heterogeneous collection of people with little or no bond holding them together. The situation grew worse and became more apparent towards the end of the colonial era when it was apparent that the British were favourably disposed to granting independence. This scenario culminated in a palpable atmosphere of dichotomy and disharmony across the country, which has been severally entrenched and exploited by the influential ruling elite (Sklar, 1983; Awa, 1964; Arifalo, 2003, pp.99-121; Ikime, 1986, pp.10-29).

While the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), which Post (1967, p.457) calls 'the modern independence movement', had been formed and led by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1944, the working out of the new (McPherson) Constitution in 1950/51, stimulated formation of more political parties. The Action Group (AG) and the Northern People's Congress (NPC) were formed in 1951. These parties, including the NCNC that would seem to have begun as a national party, were region-based particularly as a result of the electoral provision of the 1951 Constitution that, members of the regional legislative councils would elect people to the central legislature from among themselves. This provision, which passed for 'ladder election' (Dibua, 2011, p.6), threw up each region as the necessary strategic base for political harvest. What the following experience portended

was expression of regional rivalry through political party platforms. Consequently, as Post (1967, p.457) observes;

....the period 1951-8 became a period of the adjustment of interests between three major parties, between the north and the two southern regions taken together, and between the majority and the minority ethnic groups in each region; the first and second of these adjustments resulting in the adoption of a fully federalized constitution in 1954.

More importantly, these protracted rivalries and their accompanying divisions, which were not properly ironed out, delayed the country's march to independence. This was beneficial to the colonial authorities in their *divide et impera* game. It also culminated in a federal government that ushered Nigeria into independence as more of an amalgam of strange bed fellows, or put more succinctly, an uneasy coalition of very disparate interests (Post, 1967, p.457). It has not abated ever since, and from 1960 till the present, inter-ethnic rivalry particularly among the three major ethnic groups; Hausa/Fulani in the North, Igbo in the East, and Yoruba in the West on the one hand, and between these major ethnic groups and minority groups on the other, has remained a recurrent decimal (Rabushka and Shepsle, 1972, pp.181-182).

At best, what we have thus far is a nation-state and not a nation as it were. That is a major reason that explains the penchant of Nigerian leaders in the successive epochs of decolonization and post-colonial history for using national office for ethnic patronage. This has been commonplace in Nigeria, at least from 1954 when regions were under the administrative control of regional Premiers. This trend continued into the post-colonial epoch and has remained a critical but regressive feature of Nigeria ever since. Following the attainment of independence in Nigeria in 1960, the quest for nation-building and development has remained an enduring, common agitation by all Nigerians of different shades and persuasions. While this is a mere continuity of the radical agitation of the colonial years, it further points to the much-expressed view that the country is well-endowed with diverse human and material resources that are sufficient in terms of quantity and quality to fast-track the process of nation-building such that greater majority of Nigerians will easily experience decent life and living.

5. IMBALANCED NATIONALISM AS IMPEDIMENT TO NATION-BUILDING

Nationalism in Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, had begun as early as the 19th century mainly as a response to foreign conquests and alien policies. The wars of resistance (even if feeble) in various places later inspired the more articulate nationalist drive of the 20th century. Agitations of early African thinkers like Edward Wilmot Blyden, Alexander Cromwell, and the famous African American scholar; W.E.B. Du Bois had made the early attempts at

conceiving a common African cultural identity as a means to confront the racial discriminatory tendencies of their age. Their efforts were a platform of courage and impetus with which the latter, radical nationalism was well calibrated. As Eze (2014, p.236) succinctly puts it,

I bring a sympathetic understanding to the efforts of earlier generations of African and African diaspora thinkers who had to fight their overwhelmingly racist world. Thus, their recourse to nativist, relativist, and autochthonous arguments were employed as a means to fight erasure. I understand that nativism has a political relevance as a stage in the liberatory (sic) process of a people. Marcus Garvey's 'Africa for Africans', considered to be the theoretical source of African nationalism, was expedient at the time it was propounded.

This implies that, the early agitation was mainly (if not merely) against racial discrimination. Yet it provided the foundation for what emerged in the mid- to late 19th century as nationalist movements.

The resistance was not only against the commercial officers but also against the church. Even among Christian converts, there was a pervasive atmosphere of discontentment, which culminated in a mix-grill of secessionist tendencies and protest against domination. Essentially, radical nationalism in the Nigerian context may be taken to have both traditional and modern phases of development. While the former entails the spontaneous, sporadic and ill-organized movements of resistance and revolts against the British early intrusion into different parts of the geo-polity, the latter is a more explicit, better organized, objective-driven resistance promoted by the educated elite whose main target was self-government for Nigeria. According to Coleman, the defining features of radical nationalism, in the Nigerian context, include (a) the explicit goal of Nigerian self-government (b) the concept of Nigerian unity (c) the predominance of Westernized elements in leadership groups (d) the development of permanent political associations to pursue nationalist objectives; and (e) the predominance of modern political values and ideals (Coleman, 1986, p.170).

However, a keen observation readily indicates that this pan-Nigerian agitation, driven by radical nationalism, and the availability of resources, have not culminated in the much-anticipated pace of development and nation-building, and the enthronement of a national architecture for effective international engagements. Indeed, after more than a hundred years of nationhood by virtue of the 1914 amalgamation, there is no Nigerian nation, but a mere nation-state, where ethnic interest is held in higher esteem than the national interest. As already hinted, ethnicity has become the main tool of national life in Nigeria such that "From the system of job recruitment, resource allocation, party politics to sporting activities, Nigerians have used the weapon of ethnicity to advance one or two interests in such a way as to generate crisis and disruption at different points in time" (Oyeweso, 2011, p.31). This is a contradiction to nationhood as it impedes the process of

nation-building. As it has been noted;

The dilemma of the Nigerian case is not that it has been faced with the challenges of nation-building but that half a century after independence, the challenges seem to be even greater. The problem has not been the lack of efforts to deal with the problem of national integration. Indeed, over the decade of Nigeria's independence conscious efforts have been made to build "national institutions" in order to forge national cohesion (Obinyan, 2011, p.339).

Therefore, the elusiveness of genuine and strong architecture for enduring peace, sustainable development and effective international engagements in post-colonial Nigeria, can justifiably be taken as a by-product of the very precarious colonial foundation of what is herein termed the unbalanced Nigerian nationalism. More specifically, this unbalanced nature of the extant Nigerian nationalism can be located and highlighted in some critical aspects of Nigeria's national life, which include, but in no way limited to, diversity and inter-ethnic relations; entrenched colonial legacy as evident in the elitist influence in public space; postcolonial politics and power sharing among others. On diversity and inter-ethnic relations, Nigeria has not fared well since 1960. With its foundation well laid in the colonial period, inter-ethnic disunity became a major factor that whittled down any potential gains accruable from diversity. In this vein, Ajayi (2014, p.83) argues that disunity in Nigeria is traceable to the colonial policy of divide and rule, which often pitched one ethno-religious group against another. He adds more elaborately that,

While the colonial policy of divide and rule which pitched one ethno-religious group against another safeguarded colonial rule and interests, this policy did nothing (good) for the post-colonial unity of the diverse people. After independence, the nationalists' activities were mostly carried out in an uncoordinated fashion by regionally based political parties and their parochial leaders. Consequently, the various ethnic nationalities were developing at different paces (in the decolonization years) with the tacit endorsement of the colonial administration. This was when a seed of discord that was to have deleterious impact on post-colonial Nigeria was planted (Ajayi 2014, p.85). *The two emphases in parenthesis are mine*

In a related vein, Ikime (1986, p.16) examines the character of Nigerian politics in the decolonization years and submits that,

It is common knowledge that the politics of decolonization witnessed a worsening of inter-ethnic and inter-regional relations. Essentially, those politics involved little more than negotiations aimed at reconciling the competing interests of the three regions into which the country was divided at the time, with the British taking full advantage of the situation which they had helped to create in the first instance.

In essence, the inter-ethnic disunity that has destroyed the emergence of genuine nationhood and enthronement of real and balanced nationalism in post-colonial Nigeria is one of the wicked consequences of colonial rule, which, unfortunately continued in the post-colonial years up to

the present. This unpleasant situation was strengthened by the full entrenchment of colonial legacy as particularly witnessed in the elitist leadership that took power from the colonial authorities. This new crop of leadership, who had emerged as a new bourgeois class in the colonial era as educated elite did not enjoy the same latitude of autonomy like their European aristocratic tutors. But, they helped the latter to finally nail the coffin of the pre-existing traditional aristocracy across Africa. And, by way of rewarding them and concluding the well-scripted project of cultural imperialism, the European colonizers transferred power to them gradually in the decolonization years and finally at independence. Ekeh (1975, p.96) provides a description of them thus:

In the course of colonization, a new bourgeois class emerged in Africa composed of Africans who acquired Western education in the hands of the colonizers, and their missionary collaborators, and who accordingly were the most exposed to European colonial ideologies of all groups of Africans.

He adds a ringing opinion about them that,

In many ways the drama of colonialism is the history of the clash between the European colonizers and this emergent bourgeois class. Although native to Africa, the African bourgeois class depends on colonialism for its legitimacy. It accepts the principles implicit in colonialism but it rejects the foreign personnel that ruled Africa. It claims to be competent enough to rule, but it has no traditional legitimacy. In order to replace the colonizers and rule its own people it has invented a number of interest begotten theories to justify that rule (Ekeh, 1976, p.96).

The African bourgeois' justification was (and still is) in no significant sense, different from that provided by the colonizers on the eve of colonial rule. More than anything else, it has provoked a baseless thought of superiority/inferiority complex between Western educated ruling elite and the uneducated natives respectively in postcolonial African public life. In Nigeria for example, this sustained thinking trajectory has gravely widened the gap between state and society such that is not dissimilar to that between Ekeh's two publics; primordial and civic (Ekeh, 1976, pp.92-93). Indeed, the sociological history of postcolonial governance in Nigeria is a scenario of dichotomy between the numerically minority ruling class and the multi-numbered masses who, more often, feel alienated and dispossessed of the apparatus of governance. With this wide disconnect and rather ironically, the masses who daily exhibit and live by the rubrics of society's extant culture do not enlist into the compelling need for evolving a culture-based nationalism.

6. BALANCED NATIONALISM - THE ELUSIVE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IDEOLOGY

Thus far, this study has examined the contents and quality of Nigerian nationalism from the beginning of colonial

rule, and has established some revealing fundamentals on Nigeria's bumpy ride to genuine nationhood in its postcolonial history. Since 1960, the Nigerian nation-building experience has been dramatic narrative of contradictions. While the march to independence was motivated and enhanced by the hope for a lofty height of peace, development and international prestige, the subsequent reality of abysmal failure to get the hope fulfilled has plummeted the hoopla of freedom which the 1960 feat symbolized. The largely unstable political atmosphere up to 1999 had worsened the situation, while the exciting contemporary history of unbroken civil rule of more than two decades up to the present has made no significant difference in addressing the national question. Dichotomy, disharmony, discontent and discord are terms that are more popular and familiar than development in the Nigerian reality. Consequently, palpable fear of domination, complaints of marginalization and pervasive tension are common features in the trajectories of inter-group relations among ethnic nationalities across Nigeria, particularly in relation to sharing of political power, office and patronage. This is summed up in what Kirk-Greene (1975, p.19) calls psychological fear. He states that;

Fear has been constant in every tension and confrontation in political Nigeria. Not the physical fear of violence, not the spiritual fear of retribution, but the psychological fear of discrimination, of domination. It is the fear of not getting one's fair share, one's dessert.

One, Nigerian nationalism began in a plaintive shape as an inclusion-seeking agitation to achieve integration of Blacks to the emerging colonial governmental structure. It had the unintended consequence of consolidating the European conquest of the pre-existing traditional ruling class and the people's culture over which they were the custodial authority. Later, the nationalism grew radical immediately after the World War II with its ruinous impact. This phase of nationalism helped in fully mainstreaming the emerging educated African bourgeois into the colonial administration in the years of decolonization, and in preparing them for eventual take-over of leadership. Indeed, their emergence marked the final annihilation of the traditional aristocracy, and served as the starting point of creating a gulf between citizen and state. This was because the people's collective identity, and the vestiges of extant culture and pristine values of Africa were eroded, while Western cultural orientations were fully enthroned. This was calibrated with the flaunting of the concept of 'modern government' as introduced, nurtured and approved by the colonial masters. It was a hoax!

Consequently, for the most part, the much-lauded agitations of Nigerian nationalists in the decolonization years clothed in vibrant radicalism was significantly bereft of the necessary cultural elements of collective bonding which were essential for systematic inclusion

and involvement of the masses and their deep sense of identity ownership into the nation-building process. Thus, the so-called radical nationalism agitations which were ostensibly geared towards national emancipation were inherently motivated by sectional interests. This created a wide gap that has alienated greater majority of Nigerians from their government over time. This readily explains why many of them easily resort to promoting ethnic sentiments and interests over and above the collective national aspirations. It is no surprise therefore that many Nigerians, in their daily life, manifest nonchalance, with no sense of ownership towards the Nigerian government and public structures. It is common knowledge that, even those involved in government business by way of civil service career, election and appointment see their inclusion as an opportunity for them to serve the turn of their ethnic group and have a meaty bite of the proverbial national cake. They serve the nation 'on behalf of their people' and use the tenure of office to promote their group's narrow interests in the process of allocation and usage of political power, public utilities and other resources. This underscores the country-wide subscription to 'we-versus-them' feelings by ethnic chauvinists, thus rendering the claim to national unity as a red herring; more symbolic, less real, more cursory and far less profound. Essentially, balanced nationalism, which would have sufficiently served the purpose of a strong and credible national development ideology is utterly elusive in Nigeria. It is in this context that Falola and Heaton (2014) have convincingly explored nationalism and other thematic issues of Nigeria's march to statehood to explain how the country has responded to the challenges foisted on it by some centrifugal and centripetal forces.

7. CONCLUSION

This study conclusively offers that, the need to revisit the national question with a view to building a formidable architecture for enduring peace, sustainable development in both municipal and international pursuits has become more compelling in Nigeria's current dispensation. Not only will it engender peace, which is imperative for promoting local businesses, it will also assure foreign investors and other intervention agencies of their safety to conduct mutually beneficial businesses in Nigeria. By extension, a well-groomed Nigerian national identity in its interesting diversity is capable of emplacing Nigeria in a vantage footing of strength and prestige in its international engagements. To achieve this, a balanced nationalism heavily subsumed in a national culture template that accommodates Nigeria's diversity and superimposes national interests over and above sectarian aspirations remains the cardinal antidote. Critical stakeholders including the political elite, civil society, youth, intelligentsia, captains of religious cathedrals and community leaders

among others need to come together to promote sincere enlightenment on, and subsequent enthronement of, a truly national culture beyond the rhetoric of integration initiatives like the extant federal character principle and national youth service corps, which have failed to address the national question. A close scrutiny of the mythology passed down from 19th Century Europe readily shows that, the common identity and strong sense of nationhood found in many European countries did not precede the states. Instead, they were deliberately 'produced' by the states through the mechanisms of common language and culture, which were usually spread by public education. In the Nigerian case, this new-found national culture will predictably serve as the launching pad for a new and balanced nationalism that will, in turn, promote elements of national consciousness among Nigerians. Before long, the balanced nationalism will serve as a new national compass with which to navigate the complex labyrinth of the contemporary world system for rewarding conduct of local and global business of government.

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