

## National Integration and the Survival of Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Adebola Babatunde Ekanola\*

*University of Ibadan, Nigeria*

Nigeria is bedeviled by myriad problems which, despite its oil riches, inhibit its development and even threaten its continued existence as a sovereign state. The author examines Nigeria's socio-political and economic circumstances and concludes that many of its problems stem from its origin as an artificial colonial construct which lumped together a variety of separate peoples. Fragmentation is seen as a distinct possibility unless its citizens can be induced to accept a new sense of Nigerian identity, involving a commitment to the survival of the present state as a cohesive entity. This would necessitate a number of radical changes, not only in the political and economic structure of the country but also in the psychology of the people.

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Many [Nigerians] deceive themselves by thinking that Nigeria is one....This is wrong. I am sorry to say that this presence of unity is artificial.<sup>1</sup>

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 'Nigerian' is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.

*Benedict Anderson*<sup>2</sup>

The statements above capture the true condition of Nigeria prior to 1960 when she won her political independence. There has not been any positive change in this regard since then. Instead, the relationship among the constituent ethnic nationalities and religious groups has worsened drastically in spite of all pretenses to the contrary. Nigeria is not an ethnically homogenous society, having come into being

\* Adebola Babatunde Ekanola, Department of Philosophy, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. E-Mail: debekanl@yahoo.com

<sup>1</sup> Tunde Babawale, "The Poverty of Leadership", *This Week*, October 7, 1991, p.30

<sup>2</sup> Obafemi Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, London: Faber, 1947, cited in I.O Albert, "Sociocultural Politics of Ethnic and Religious Conflicts" in Earnest E. Uwazie, Isaac O. Albert and Godfrey N. Uzoigwe (eds.), *Inter-Ethnic and Religious Conflicts Resolution in Nigeria*, London, Lexington Books, 1999, p. 73

accidentally, as it were, as a product of British imperialism. Today, rather than integrating into a cohesive community with a common sense of national identity and destiny, citizens of Nigeria are returning more and more to primordial affiliations for identity, loyalty and security. Instead of forging a united front and presenting a concerted effort to face the challenges of development in an increasingly competitive and globalised world, Nigerians are busy waging ethnic and religious wars, struggling for control over resources, resisting marginalization by dominant ethnic groups, and contending with diverse problems of basic survival.

Why have attempts at national integration failed abysmally in Nigeria?

### **Nationality and Nation**

According to Marxist doctrine, the development of social division of labor, barter relations and unequal property relations produced modern nation-states<sup>3</sup> which are more complex than ethno-nations based on a common kinship and cultural ties. These latter, like earlier clans and tribes, are based on the ties of blood, and on common origin, language, custom, beliefs, and everyday features of life and culture. Clans are made up of the extended members of a family, while tribes are made up of several clans, and ethnically homogeneous nations may have millions of people. But most modern nation-states are even more complex, being multi-ethnic territorial units linked economically and politically under a common government. Their populaces do not necessarily have any traceable blood relationship, but are united by a common culture and language. Going by the above, the Ijesha, Egba, Itshekiri and Ijaw peoples of Nigeria may be rightly described as tribes while the more general classifications of the “Igbo” “Yoruba” and “Hausa” stand for nationalities, and Nigeria as a multi-ethnic state made up of different tribes and nations.

Modern multi-ethnic nations, frequently described as states or nation-states, became common in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries<sup>4</sup> with the economic integration of different regions, thereby strengthening the ties between people from different nationalities, and fostering the rise of a common language and common cultural features. It also produced relatively stable communities “with

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<sup>3</sup> F.V Konstantinov (ed.), *The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979, p.283

<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, London: Verso Publications, 1991, pp. 11-12

one government, one code of laws, one national interest, one frontier and one custom tariff"<sup>5</sup> features characteristic of modern states. Essentially, today's "nation-states" are politically organized communities of people that may be made up of one or more nationalities but which possess a more or less defined territory and government in addition to sovereignty and a common sense of identity and destiny as well as a common socio-economic system.

Apart from frequently involving the integration of several nationalities, modern multi-national-states may come into existence when one or more nationalities become the driving force in the creation of a centralized political state. In other instances, multi-national states may emerge when the ruling classes of a nation-state, with centralized state power in their hands, subjugate other nationalities, which are usually at a lower level of economic development. This is how many bourgeois states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century divided the world among them, turning several parts of the world into colonial empires with great diversity of nationalities in their populations.<sup>6</sup> These empires later metamorphosed through various political and economic stages into independent political states, with many of them still struggling through different phases of integration in an attempt to become nations in the true sense of the word. This is the situation in which many of the multi-national states of Africa, including Nigeria, find themselves.

From the above, we can infer that for there to be a coherent multi-national sovereign-state, there must be a common economic life, which need not be capitalistic in orientation.<sup>7</sup> Other features of a nation-state include a common language<sup>8</sup>, a common territory, sovereignty and certain peculiarities of the people's social psychology, bordering on a common sense of identity and belongingness. These peculiarities are usually expressed in the specific features of the culture of the given people, which distinguish its culture from that of other peoples"<sup>9</sup>. Thus,

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<sup>5</sup> K. Marx and F.Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Vol. 6, cited in F.V Konstantinov, *op.cit*, p.284

<sup>6</sup> Konstantinov, *Ibid*.

<sup>7</sup> Marxists and the advocates of what is described as the orthodox theory of the nation are of the view that the emergence of nations is necessarily a product of capitalist social formation. Critics like Samir Amin, however, contend that this view thrives on a confusion of one of the historical expression of the origin of nations with its essential precondition. For some details of these views, see Emmanuel Hansen, *Africa: Perspectives on the Peace and Development*, London: Zed Books Ltd., 1987, pp. 57-58

<sup>8</sup> See Anderson, *op.cit*, p. 37-46 for an account of how national languages are developed.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*.

we may conclude that the important distinction between a nation-state and a multi-national state is that while the former is made up of people from a single nationality or from several nationalities that have become so integrated that they have evolved a common sense of national identity transcending their previous nationalities, the latter is made up of several nationalities that have not yet evolved a common sense of national identity but, in a fundamental sense, hold on to and strive to perpetuate their different identities.

### **Nationalism and the Question of Integration in Nigeria**

Nigeria is one of the states that owe their existence to the imperialistic activities of Britain, which by virtue of a superior technology and economy subjugated people from diverse nationalities and organized them to construct Nigeria in 1914, with the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates. By the time Nigeria won her independence from Britain in 1960, its artificial origin, coupled with other factors, had bequeathed it a number of fundamental problems, one of which is the challenge of integrating, into a cohesive socio-political whole, the various entities and strange bed fellows that were lumped together by the colonialists.<sup>10</sup>

What the creation of Nigeria as a single political entity did was to bring together people of different nationalities “under a single territorial and institutional framework, [and] widened their social space as a result of greater inter-ethnic interaction through the institution and practice of the colonial system and thus created a common historical experience of economic exploitation, political and administrative oppression and cultural oppression.”<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, the peoples making up the country were not effectively integrated toward the end of evolving a true sense of national identity and commitment to the survival and development of the nation. One factor responsible for this is the class interests and political ambitions of the “African petty bourgeoisie, the class that was to become the standard bearer of modern African nationalism.”<sup>12</sup> To fully understand this factor and its ill consequences, we need to carefully examine the idea of nationalism and its manifestations within the Nigerian context.

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<sup>10</sup> Nigeria has over four hundred ethnic groups with a great variety of cultures and languages. See Ayodeji Olukoju, “Nigeria: A Historical Review,” in F.U Okafor, *New Strategies for Curbing Ethnic and Religious Conflicts in Nigeria*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1997, pp.12-13

<sup>11</sup> Hansen, *op.cit.*, p.60

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60

### Nationalism and Ethnic Nationalism in Nigeria

Nationalism, especially within the African context, is a political movement committed to a positive and radical alteration in the power structure of a country. Although, nationalism comes in different forms, it is essentially “the terminal form of colonial protest.”<sup>13</sup> It began in West Africa as a pan-African or Pan-West African movement but gradually evolved into a movement that was essentially national in orientation.<sup>14</sup> African nationalism had at least two principal objectives: First was the achievement of self-government and second, the creation of a cultural and political sense of nationality and unity among the different ethnic nationalities living within the boundaries of the area of a country. Nationalism seeks to transform society and the consciousness of its members through a process of mobilization designed to unify several ethnic elements, create in them a sense of common identity and build a new national community out of the diverse human resources located within the artificial boundaries of existing colonial territories. Nationalism is essentially a nation-building endeavor. At least, this is what it was in India, Indonesia and Latin America.

But the political consciousness that might have enhanced a sense of Nigerian nationality and unity, drawing together the disparate ethnic groups within the borders of the former colony, took the form of ethnic nationalism. This emerged with the politicization of the different cultural and ethnic elements, and their mobilization for political objectives, which included regional autonomy in a multi-national state, or even the total break up of Nigeria into one or more independent sovereign nation-states.<sup>15</sup> This “accentuated centrifugal tendencies in the country and eventually aborted the birth of a truly independent and unified nation-state”<sup>16</sup> In truth, ethnic nationalism in Nigeria continues to work against the integration of the different ethnic nationalities, with dire consequences on the continued existence of the country.

During the colonial era, ethnic nationalism showed itself in an aggressive regionalism with the formation of political parties along ethnic and regional lines. For instance, there was the Northern People’s Congress (NPC), formed by the Northern educated elites in 1949. The National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), formed by

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<sup>13</sup> Richard L. Sklar, *Nationalism and Development in Africa*, California: University of California Press, 1994, p.25

<sup>14</sup> Olukoju, *op.cit.*, p.24

<sup>15</sup> Hansen, *op.cit.*, p. 65

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 24 -25

Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikwe, started as a national political party, but it was quickly taken over by Nigerians of the Igbo extraction. In the West, there was the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, which quickly metamorphosed into a political party in 1951, by the name of the Action Group, dominated by the Yoruba nation. These regional political parties sought to advance regional and ethnic interests instead of the overall interest of the country. This further exacerbated the ill-will already existing between the different ethnic groups, eventually leading to the Igbo attempt to secede as a separate, sovereign nation, in 1967 secession. Their decision was no doubt assisted by the fact that the territory in which they lived was rich with oil, but the result was civil war, because the politicians representing the other nationalities did not wish to lose Nigeria's most profitable asset, its oil reserves. The Igbo lost that war, but remain unhappy, complaining that they do not benefit sufficiently from the vast profits resulting from the exploitation of the extensive oil wealth lying beneath what they regard as their ancestral lands.

The disunity of the major ethnic groups in the country was very much evident in the events that unfolded between 1948 and the attainment of independence in 1960. During this period, the Igbo-Yoruba ethnic rivalry and the North-South majority-minority ethnic group cleavages became unmistakable. For instance, "the Yoruba-Igbo rivalry was finally played out on the floor of the Western House of Assembly where the AG exploited ethnic sentiments and the pitfalls of the electoral college system to edge out Azikwe who had won a seat in Lagos and was widely expected to have been elected into the House of Representatives from that constituency."<sup>17</sup> The North-South hostility reached its peak in the pre-independence era in 1953, when the North refused to go along with the AG-led motion for independence by 1956. The events that followed culminated in the famous bloody Kano riot of 1953, which lasted from May 15 to May 20, 1953.<sup>18</sup>

Events surrounding her independence give credence to the claim that the pursuit of self-government lessens the likelihood of achieving cultural and political unity, or national integration.<sup>19</sup> Ethnic-nationalists succeeded in wresting independence from the colonial master but failed woefully in integrating the country. The relevant questions to ask are:

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<sup>17</sup> Olukoju, *op.cit.*, p. 31

<sup>18</sup> See for more details, Isaac O. Albert, "Communication in the Escalation of Ethnic and Religious Conflict" in Ernest E. Uwazie, et al (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 25-29

<sup>19</sup> Sklar, *op.cit.*, pp. 34-35

why did the colonial nationalists in Nigeria fail to integrate the different nationalities living within the territory of the country into a cohesive national community? Why did the foremost Nigerian nationalist elites choose to sow the seeds of discord, and not unity in the country, with their choice of ethnic nationalism? Is there any hope of harmonious multi-ethnic integration today?

### **The Doom of the Pre-Independence National Integration Project**

It is no longer plausible to account for the rivalry and disunity among ethnic nationalities in Nigeria strictly in terms of cultural divergence or irrational loyalty to primordial groups. Although there might have existed some traditional differences and hostilities among some of these groups, these are not necessarily absolute or incompatible differences and need not generate the kind of rivalry witnessed in the colonial days and that, sadly, has remained in the relationship among these ethnic groups until today. At least, prior to the institution of the colonial regime, some of these ethnic nationalities engaged in productive relationships. Besides, many of them have claims of common ancestry and basic similarities in their cultures. For instance, the Yoruba and the Benin peoples trace their origins back to a common ancestry in the Oduduwa and Oranmiyan legends. Similarly, the Kisra myth traced the ruling dynasties of a good number of the tribes in the Middle-Belt region of Nigeria to the Eastern region.<sup>20</sup>

Rather than magnify and constructively exploit these similarities, the colonial government and ethnic nationalists alike chose to preserve, and perhaps even amplify the differences between the various ethnic groups. Certainly the colonial power found it easier to placate local leaders rather than to force changes upon them. This suggests that there are factors other than cultural and historical incompatibilities responsible for the failures of the nationalist movements to effectively integrate the different nationalities and create a vibrant national community. We endeavor to discuss three of these below.

### **Uneven Acculturation, Development and Acquisition of Modernity**

During the colonial era, there was much tension among ethnic groups arising from uneven development, acculturation and acquisition of modernity. This is a result of differences between groups in terms of their receptivity and adaptability to modernity or duration and intensity

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<sup>20</sup> Olukoju, *op.cit.*, p.17

of Western impact.<sup>21</sup> For instance, the Yoruba and the Igbo of the South were more receptive to Western education than the Hausa-Fulani of the North; hence the educational imbalance between the South and the North, which still exists today.<sup>22</sup> The Yoruba and the Igbo became urbanized and politically conscious more quickly than the Hausa-Fulani, who by 1952 obviously lagged behind the former by practically all the Western yardsticks for measuring development and civilization.<sup>23</sup> Realizing their disadvantaged position in the country, the Northerners were determined to protect their own interests in the political arena, given their perception that Southerners already controlled the educational and economic sectors. Consequently, the North refused to go along with the rest of the country and threatened to secede when Anthony Enahoro moved the motion for independence in 1953, to be effective from 1956.

Events following this refusal produced the Kano riot, which further intensified the Yoruba–Hausa-Fulani hostility and the resolve by nationalist leaders to perpetuate ethnic interests above national interests. For instance, the Northern Peoples Congress, committed to the interests of the Hausa-Fulani people, “made no pretense about its purely sectional interests or its lack of anxiety to get rid of the British.”<sup>24</sup> Sir Ahmadu Bello, for instance, in response to the 1953 motion for independence by 1956, argued:

As representatives of the people, we from the North feel that in all major issues such as this one, we are duty bound to consult those we represent...If the Honorable members from the West and the East speak to this motion for their people I must say here and now, sir, that we from the North have been given no such mandate by our people...We were late in assimilating western education, yet within a short time we will catch up with other regions and share their lot.<sup>25</sup>

### **Class Interests: Exploiting Ethnicity for Personal Advantage**

The personal ambitions of nationalist leaders constitute another obstacle to the tasks of nation building and integration in Nigeria. As

<sup>21</sup> Sklar, *op.cit.*, p.36

<sup>22</sup> Godfrey, N. Uzoigwe, “The History of Ethnic/Religious Relations,” in Ernest E. Uwazie, et al (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 8-9

<sup>23</sup> Olukoju, *op.cit.*, p. 32

<sup>24</sup> Uzoigwe, *op.cit.*, p.14

<sup>25</sup> See Benard Nkemdirim, *Social Change and Political Violence*, Devon: Arthur Stockwell Ltd., 1975, pp. 68-69. For other remarks betraying the primacy of sectional interests in the endeavors of the nationalist elites in Nigeria, see Uzoigwe, *op.cit.*, pp.13-14

they competed for power, prestige and associated benefits, nationalist elites sought support from members of their own ethnic groups by accentuating ethnic differences and demonizing members of other groups. D.T Dent reported that a prominent Northern political leader confessed “they had to teach the people to hate the Southerners; to look at them as people depriving them of their rights, in order to win them over.”<sup>26</sup> It was the anxiety and fear by the Northern nationalist leaders that they would lose out in the struggle for power and prestige, when in 1947 the Richard Constitution compelled the peoples of the Northern and the Southern protectorates of Nigeria to work together under the same legislative system, that made them appeal to religious and ethnic sentiments to unite the Hausa-Fulani constituency against the Southern people.<sup>27</sup> Their effort was quite successful; until today, they have been able to dominate the political landscape of the country. However, it took ethnic hostility to a new level, and Nigeria has not been able to get out of its debilitating effects. It has greatly hindered the chances of Nigeria becoming a nation in the true sense.

Indeed, practically all nationalist leaders from other parts of the country did the same, teaching members of their ethnic groups to see members of other groups as significantly different and as people against whom they must strive in an effort to achieve their own sectional interests. They never encouraged their followers to develop a sense of commitment to the Nigerian nation nor sought for the proper integration of the diverse ethnic entities in the country. Rather, they continued to encourage their followers to define themselves along ethnic lines. For instance, in 1948, Sir Ademola Alakija, the then president of the Egbe Omo Oduduwa stated “this big tomorrow for the Yoruba is the future of our children...how they will hold their own among other tribes of Nigeria.”<sup>28</sup>

However, beneath the façade of commitment to ethnic interests, a primary motivation for many of the nationalist elites was a deep hunger for power and prestige. The nature of the postcolonial state that emerged after independence remains an unassailable testimony to this fact. It turned out to be as exploitative as its colonial precursor, serving

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<sup>26</sup> P.J Dent, “Tarka and the Tiv: A Perspective on Nigerian Federation,” in R. Melson and H. Wolpe (eds.), *Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism*, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1971, p.452

<sup>27</sup> Isaac O Albert, “Communication in the Escalation of Ethnic and Religious Conflict” in Ernest E. Uwazie, et al (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp. 8-9

<sup>28</sup> James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, Benin City: Broubung and Wistrom, 1986, p. 346

as an avenue for capital accumulation and status by political leaders,<sup>29</sup> many of whom were only interested in “replacing Europeans in leading positions of power and privileges.”<sup>30</sup> Hence, the political arena in Nigeria since pre-independence days has been characterized by a struggle to control and exploit the offices of the state by all means. The fact that the nationalist elites had other interests apart from those of the nation or even their ethnic nationalities was corroborated by the report of a panel that probed the activities of Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, which I believe describe many of the other nationalist leaders and also contemporary politicians:

His scheme was to build around him with money, an empire financially formidable both in Nigeria and abroad, an empire in which dominance would be maintained by him, by the power of money which he has given out.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Colonial Legacy**

To objectively evaluate the colonial rule in Nigeria in relation to the task of national integration and nation building, it is crucial that we begin with a clear understanding of the goals of the colonialists. When the British colonialists, through the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates, created Nigeria in 1914, their objective was not to establish a nation-state, but simply to demarcate one of their areas of influence from those of other European colonialists.<sup>32</sup> They wanted to “ensure that colonial control and dispossession could be achieved without undue rivalry among the colonizers and at minimum cost to them.”<sup>33</sup> As such, the primary objective of the colonialists in creating Nigeria was to enhance their own economic interests rather than the interests of the colonized people: certainly not the construction of a new national identity, loyalty, unity of purpose and convergence of interests that would cut across the nationalities now lumped together under British rule.

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<sup>29</sup> Olusegun Oladipo, “Modernization and the Search for Community in Africa: Crisis and Conditions of Change” in Olusegun Oladipo (ed.), *Remaking Africa: Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Ibadan: Hope Publications, 1998, p.113

<sup>30</sup> J. Nzogola-Ntalaja, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Africa: Essays in Contemporary Politics*. London: Institute of African Alternatives with Zed Books Ltd., 1987.p. 76

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> See J.F Ajayi, “The National Question in Historical Perspective”, The Fifth Guardian Newspapers Lecture, delivered at the NIIA on Wednesday, November 4 1992, p.8, cited in Oladipo, *op.cit.*, p.108

<sup>33</sup> Oladipo, *Ibid.*

Hence, while some saw this as motivated by a desire not to interfere too drastically in the traditional cultures of the various nationalities, there can be little doubt that the British colonial powers sought to exploit the mineral resources of the colony, and as such they were content to ensure that the various peoples in the new territories remained disunited. Avoidance of any attempt to integrate the diverse ethnic groups became public policy, whether as a moral virtue, as a policy involving the least political effort, or as a technique of “divide and rule.”<sup>34</sup> This, in the final analysis, greatly conditioned the nature of the nationalist movements in Nigeria, giving them a very distinct ethnic coloration. Sadly, the same divide and rule policy was later modified and adopted by the indigenous nationalists as they struggled among themselves for power and prestige, resulting in ethnic nationalism as against true nationalism geared toward the integration of the different ethnic elements in the country.

#### **A Renewed Quest for National Integration:**

##### **The Possibility of Change Through Social Mobilization**

It is tempting to blame the colonialists, as many do, for the woes of the country. However, this is not right for a number of reasons. For one, the colonialists, given their imperialistic objectives were committed to their own economic interests with no responsibility to develop new nation-states in Africa. Secondly, the Nigerian leaders who gained power after independence had an opportunity to promote the integration of the diverse ethnic groups. But rather than do this, they utilized the established colonial administrative structure to achieve their own personal and elitist ends.

If Nigerians wish to preserve Nigeria as a viable state they must learn from past mistakes, identify and pursue policies that would effectively promote integration. Ethnic tensions between the diverse ethnic nationalities in Nigeria are pointing towards the fragmentation of the country. This was recently confirmed by an intelligence report from the United States of America, which warned that Nigeria might disintegrate within the next 15 years.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the country is witnessing an increase in violence along ethnic lines.

Previous attempts to facilitate unity in the country have been largely constitutional and structural. With the adoption of federalism, various

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> See <http://allafrica.com/stories/200508020001> or Ekpunobi Cosmas, “Senate, U.S Military Chief Discuss Intelligence Report, *Daily Champion*, August 2, 2005

constitutional provisions have been put in place to guarantee the federal character of the Nigerian state, with the conviction that these would promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion that may exist.<sup>36</sup> These provisions have not recorded the expected level of success, as some of them tend to jeopardize national interests in the quest for ethnic balance. Besides, it is observed that much of these constitutional provisions have not been respected in the history of the country. Political elites and the same officials who are supposed to guarantee the sanctity of the constitution have consistently violated them.<sup>37</sup>

One of the reasons often identified for this noxious feature of the Nigerian political arena is the dearth of effective structures and procedures to legally enforce the implementation and strict compliance with these provisions.<sup>38</sup> However, while the evolution of structures to enforce compliance with laws and policies designed to promote national integration may be helpful, they are not sufficient for a significant integration of the ethnic entities in Nigeria. That would require a prior change in the socio-political consciousness of her general citizenry.

We disagree with the Marxist's materialist interpretation of history, which suggests that social consciousness is strictly determined by prevailing material conditions in society.<sup>39</sup> Neither do we agree with the Hegelians that social and material conditions are absolute products of consciousness. An examination of how significant changes are brought about in society suggests that there is an interlocking influence between consciousness or thought and prevalent social, cultural and economic conditions. Each helps to shape and change the other. There can be no significant change in the socio-political condition of a society through structural and constitutional transformation without a considerable change in the views of its members and especially the key players in society. Similarly, transforming the attitudes of a people would also require some changes in their material conditions.

What factors will serve to prevent the further fragmentation of Nigeria? Because attempts to promote unification by structural means

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<sup>36</sup> See J. Ademola Yakubu, "Ethnicity and the Nigerian Constitutions" in Ernest E. Uwazie, et al (eds.), *op.cit.*, p. 40

<sup>37</sup> Albert, *op.cit.*, p.70

<sup>38</sup> Yakubu, *op.cit.*, p. 41

<sup>39</sup> Robert L. Heilbroner, *Marxism: For and Against*, New York: W.W Norton & Company, 1980: pp. 62-63

have largely failed, an alternative and more effective approach seem to be necessary. As Kwame Nkuruma posited, what is first required for any fundamental change in the character of the society we have inherited is a body of connected thought that will determine the general nature of our actions and social structure.<sup>40</sup> Hence, the kind of significant social change desired in Nigeria, requires a radical intellectual transformation in which our thinking and philosophy are directed toward the redemption of our society.

Even Karl Marx, in spite of his hard-core materialist position, recognized the interplay of several objective and subjective (psychological) factors as indispensable for the success of a social revolution that would usher in significant changes in society.<sup>41</sup> These vital psychological factors, according to Marx, include the revolutionary consciousness of the masses and their readiness and determination to carry their struggle through to the end. Likewise, Stephen Toulmin identified the development of an attitude that insists on rationality for the radical transformation witnessed in European life and society about the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>42</sup> More specifically, this change in attitude is believed to account for the scientific and industrial revolution that started around this period and that, in turn, is responsible for the incredible transformations recorded in every sphere of social existence.

Within the context of the debate on how to attain an enduring social peace, Irving L. Horowitz similarly contends that a lasting social peace could only be attained if there is a fundamental change in the attitudes and values of members of society, from those that are predisposed to war and violence to those that are productive of peace.<sup>43</sup> Likewise, the integration of the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria requires a transformation of attitudes and values.

This would entail a process of social mobilization to teach and persuade members of different nationalities to see one another as people with whom they must rise and fall together, and bring them to a belief that their destinies are inextricably knit together in such a way that they either win together or lose together. It would require a massive

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<sup>40</sup> Kwame Nkurumah, "Consciencism" in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, (ed.), *African Philosophy*, Massachusetts, 1998, p.81

<sup>41</sup> F.V Konstantinov (ed.), *The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy*, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1979, pp. 322-327

<sup>42</sup> Stephen Toulmin, *The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989, p. 14

<sup>43</sup> Irving Louis Horowitz, *War and Peace in Contemporary Social and Philosophical Theory*, London: Souvenir press, 1957, p. 182.

educational enterprise to reduce the importance of kinship and ethnic identity. Also, the general citizenry must learn to consistently demand transparency and accountability from their leaders and also to ostracize leaders who are found to be wanting. Advocating for a similar transformation of attitudes as against structural transformation. In Kenya, Ali Mwitani Masero argues that both leaders and ordinary citizens must be counseled and persuaded to embrace objectivity and fairness in relationships if the task of nation building and national integration would ever be achieved.<sup>44</sup> But who will do all this?

It is only when efforts to effect the kind of change in attitude requisite for a positive change in the ethnic relations in Nigeria has begun to yield positive results that structures, laws and policies designed to engender unity could be effective. This would constitute the political aspect of the proposed social mobilization.

The third aspect would be economic. One of the most pressing of these is the problem of unemployment, which has grave repercussions for the prospects of nation building: the bulk of the unemployed see their plight as a consequence of the inefficient running of the state and therefore seek solace and security in their immediate families and ethnic associations. This intensifies ethnic loyalty at the expense of the ideal of Nigerian unity. The incumbent government under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo is taking some steps in this regard, considering the efforts at privatization, commercialization, liberalization as well as the capitalization project in the banking sector. These are measures designed to revive the economy and place it on a path of development. However, the extent to which these are effective begs for analysis.

Having identified a change in values and attitudes as indispensable for national integration, the all-important issue to address is: who is likely to bring about such policies? Our political elites are not ideal for this task, given their past contributions to the polarization of the state along ethnic lines coupled with the consistent demonstration of their inability to sacrifice their personal ambitions for national interests. Besides, since they are the primary agent and beneficiary of ethnic politics, it is very unlikely that they would be willing to work for the dismantling of an arrangement they built and from which they have benefited for years.

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<sup>44</sup> See Gail Presbey, "Philosophic Sages in Kenya Debate Ethnicity's Role in Politics" in Deirdre Carabine and Lawrence L. Ssmusu (eds.), *Ethnicity in an Age of Globalization*, Kampala: Uganda Martyrs University Press, 2002, pp. 173-183

Apart from the fact that increasing urbanization tends to reduce the vitality of kinship and family ties, thus preparing the ground for a more potential Nigerian nationalism, further progress toward the unification rather than fragmentation of Nigeria will come about from a change in personal attitudes through the dissemination of the Nigerian ideal via the educational sector. It would also help if this pattern of civic education could be taken to the grassroots and penetrate all the diverse sections of society to change the attitudes of all the stakeholders in the country. To achieve the desired end, the cooperation of non-governmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations as well as individuals committed to the survival of Nigeria would be required. This is a very large challenge, but it would seem to be a necessary prerequisite if the diverse nationalities that live within the territorial boundaries of Nigeria are to develop a new pan-Nigerian consciousness.