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ABSTRACT

From the 1960s onwards until recent time, a number of African States across the various regions have been faced with differing challenges that confront either stability, sovereignty, and in some cases, their permanent existence as evident during the period 1960-70 which was widely referred to as the decade of optimism, and the period 1970-80 which was clearly referred to as the decade of pessimism due to the number of events that manifested. Clearly in the light of this, Nation-Building in Africa has experienced chequered fortune in the past half a century of independence, up to present times, and the challenge of Nation-Building remains one of Africa's most pertinent concern as different African leaders made efforts to achieve national integration but the challenge persists. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyze the concept and project of Nation-building in relation to Africa's development using the lens of history and philosophy. The objective of this paper is to provide a terse clarification of key concepts, examine the historical background of nation-building in Africa, assess the challenges of nation-building in Africa, and investigate Africa's post-independence political and economic developments. The aim of this analysis is proffer scholarly recommendation geared towards enhancing nation-building projects across Africa.

Keywords: *Nation, Nation-Building, External Influence, Neo-colonialism, National Integration*

INTRODUCTION

The understanding of the term 'Nation-Building' with respect to its accurate conceptual-theoretical analysis is a function of the contextual understanding of the term 'Nation'. This is due to the fact that, the concept of 'Nation-Building' is a normative term which has been analyzed by various scholars in such way that, its focal meaning is eroded (Grotenhius, 2016). In the light of this, the recurring idea in the submission of various scholars with respect to the term 'Nation' is that of;

> an ethnic or racial group of people with shared culture, tradition, history, language
> and to a large extent, religion (Cohen & Middleton, 1970).

The implication of the understanding of this definition is that, there are numerous States around the world with diverse ethnic and racial nationalities. In contemporary times, the term 'Nation' tends to be used interchangeably for 'State'. However, a clear understanding of the meaning of the concept 'Nation' reveals that both terms have differing conceptual and contextual structure. A State does not have to possess a population with shared culture, custom, history and language. Noted that, many States possess population and different groups with clearly differing languages, customs and culture. The most pertinent feature for a polity to be referred to as a State is the manifestation of population within a defined geographical boundary which is recognized by the global community, as well as a government that possess sovereignty (Cohen & Middleton, 1970).

The understanding of the meaning of the word 'Nation' is pertinent in the conceptualization of the word 'Nation-building'. In view of this, Deutsch & Folt (2010) explained that 'Nation-building' can simply be expressed as;

> the process by which various groups are brought together to achieve greater
> integration within a State, involving a wide range of activities aimed at creating
> national identity and greater cohesion among different elements that make up a
> State.

A key element in Nation-building is the deliberate efforts contributed towards promoting a higher level of Cohesion and a sense of identity among different groups within the State. It should be noted that, the activities of building a nation is as old as the evolution of the modern State system. However, in terms of analysis in the context of political, social and economic development by States, it was in the 1950s that a systematic studies and analysis was carried out (Deutsch & Folt, 2010).

This paper is analyzed in various sections, which include; nation-building as the fundamental challenge for African states; post-independence Africa political structures and patterns; post-independence Africa's economic development; the way forward, as well as conclusion.

NATION-BUILDING AS THE FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE FOR AFRICAN STATES

There are a number of countries in parts of the world where the nation approximates the state, in such countries the challenges of nation-building is usually less explosive. However, many of them embark on nation-building projects as well to create a greater sense of identity and promote nationalism. In the case of Africa, the project of nation-building has been a daunting task, mainly because of the nature of the evolution of African States which took place largely due to the forces of European imperialist intervention in the late 19th and 20th centuries. The resultant manifestation was the artificial demarcation of territories which split several nations between a number of States, with many African States becoming widely heterogenous in their ethnic and racial composition, and there are practically no African countries where the States approximate the Nation (Deutsch & Folt, 2010).

A number of scholars have explored the central theme as well as the key problems, specifically the influential factors and the appropriate policies and programmes to achieving effective Nation-Building. There are different perspectives that have been presented by scholars such as; Karl Deutsch and James Coleman. The analysis of their perspectives reveals a number of issues and activities that are regarded as central to the achievement of nation-building, such as; the promotion of political and social inclusion, democratization, the aggregation of the interest of different groups that makes a State, and taking measures to fulfil and enhance creating the condition for the protection of basic right and the promotion of fairness, equity and justice (Deutsch & Folt, 2010).

The analysis of the presented perspectives reveals various issues and activities such as;

External Influences

Africa as a whole has interacted with various external groups and States for several centuries which paved way for different events from the informal iniquitous slave trade, legitimate trade and then the establishment of formal colonial rule followed by the independence of various African States in the 1960s. These influences on the structure of contemporary African States culminated in Nation-Building crisis with the Partitioning of the continent by the European Colonial Overlords due to their exigency at Berlin in November 1884 to Early 1885 with no African States represented (Heldring & Robinson, 2012). This resulted in merger of different ethnic groups in the same political structure and the creation of artificial States with artificial boundaries that faces the crisis of national integration. The resulting heterogeneity of ethnic and racial composition has been a major feature of most African States which has in turn created a problem of nation-building. There is the balkanization of ethnic groups into several polities continued in the post-independence period with what is called; neocolonialism, in the form of continuous manipulation of ethnic differences to their advantage thereby complicating efforts by the newly independent States to promote national integration. More so, the influence of Multinational Corporations in bid of maximizing profit and expanding their interest across Africa have encouraged ethnic divisions through the use of divide and rule, as well as taking sides in ethnic disagreement and exploited it to their advantage. For instance, Shell BP, Lonrho and De Beers have been involved in ethnic divisions on the Congo to South Africa and Nigeria, such that it has led to the complication of efforts to promote nation-building (Gareth, 2010).

Ethnicity

Over the years, a number of African States have made tangible attempts to create national identity and achieve unity, having realized its pertinence in promoting all-round stability and aggregate development. This process is varying based on the peculiarities in terms of structures and levels of cohesion or division within the State. The fragmented nature of African State mostly along ethnic lines has necessitated a wide range of programmes and activities aimed at promoting national integration. It is such that, a number of Africa's political instability and internal conflict arose from ethnic conflicts (Bradley, 2005).

Polarization

In addendum to the above scenario, the African continent has by far become the most polarized of all the continents of the world divided along ethnic, political, religious and racial lines. This polarization and the very large number of ethnic groups in Africa has created a condition for diversity in the 54 sovereign States, which has in turn necessitated the establishment of Nation-Building activities, policies and programmes (Abu Bakarr, 2004).

The Political System

Conflicts arising from racial, ethnic and religious differences became manifest during the colonial era, as new political structure emerged with the boundary established by the European colonial masters. This introduction and prescription of political system is influential such that, most African States inherited the political systems of their former colonial masters. This reality necessitated the adoption of political structures and principles appropriate to the promotion of national integration, which culminated in the introduction of the federal system and the Westminster Model of Parliamentary Democracy in the 1950s to various States across the regions of Africa. For instance, Nigeria in the West and Uganda in the East. Also, numerous States adopted the Unitary system despite the reality of heterogeneity of ethnic and racial composition, solely on the assumption that it is the best way to achieve national integration, hence becoming a one-party State (Deng, 1997).

Democratization

With respect to the advocacy for democracy, freedom and human rights, the Nation-Building in Africa has been influenced as external bodies present differing views. Also, granting of supports and economic gains has been anchored on the advancement of these ideals. In some cases, political exclusion, dictatorship, insecurity and tyranny characterized by the 1970s and early 1980s began to give way for stability due to the establishment of National Democratic Governments which allowed for a more inclusive government with popular participation. In some cases, external bodies do not advocate for the expansion of these ideals in an attempt to stultify the expansion of the ideals based on their interest. For instance, during the Cold War era the non-support for the liquidation of Apartheid in South Africa by both USA and UK who are referred to as the bastions of democracy, as well as the USA operation in the Congo which created condition for the emergence of one of Africa's worst dictators Mobutu Sesseseko. These experiences of Apartheid South Africa and Congo-Kinshasa during the cold war era which was characterized by ideological antagonism and political pactomenia made them to support different groups within Africa which complicated the process of national integration (Robinson, 1994).

Religious Differences

From colonial era, African States were supported by external movements on the basis of religious persuasion which has created a condition for the intensification of disagreement among African States, and has serious implication for national integration. In other cases, African leaders have personally attempted to utilize their position to expand their religious leanings. The resultant effects of religion are that, a number of terrorist groups have been enabled to flourish with the aim to establish a religious State through the supports amassed from other sympathetic groups. For instance, Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab whose activities has been detrimental to the Nation-Building process in Africa as conflicts emerged continuously as in the case of Somalia and Mali in recent times (Gareth, 2010).

Post-Independence Africa Political Structures and Patterns

It is pertinent to establish the fact that the post-independence Africa era is widely characterized by both democratic governance and military dictatorship and autocratic regimes spreading across various African States. Specifically, the period 1990-2005 is widely referred to as the era of democratic revival as the continent witnessed 18 changes of government. This was such that, there were nine (9) new regimes with the other nine (9) who elongated their regimes. This era was clearly marred by personalization of political powers, patrimonialism and prebendalism – as there were large scale appropriation of the States resources for personal use with the inclined negative implication by many African leaders (Meredith, 2006).

The analysis of the nature of the aforementioned patterns of governance reveals why and how the State of nation-building in Africa since independence have been less than the present. The basic features for a successful nation-building process are lacking in the prevailing patterns and structures of governance in the half a century of post-independence Africa. Indeed, many of the features of military dictatorship, neo-patrimonialism and prebendalism are antithetical to effective nation-building process. For instance; the experiences of D.R. Congo, Uganda, Liberia, Nigeria, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo Brazzaville, Sudan and most recently Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe testified to the reality of dictatorship, repression and undemocratic government as negative issues and developments in the nation-building process in Africa (Legum, 1999).

Nation-building in Africa has experienced chequered fortune since the past half century of Africa's independence until present times as the problem of the structure and pattern across the continent needs to be addressed as they reflect exclusively, injustice and the abuse of basic rights. It is imperative for a sustenance and strengthening of the recent democratic revival across Africa for genuine national integration to be achieved (July, 1970).

Post-Independence Africa's Economic Development

It should be noted that, Africa has recorded a very low level of economic development since the end of the European colonial domination since the end of 1960. In the past half a century in Africa, the continent experienced a measure of economic growth for only a short period notably 1060-65 and since the year 2000. For much of the period, Africa economic growth stagnated and indeed for some time, growth rate was necessary. For instance, between 1990-2003 the war that broke out in Liberia affected the country's economic development. Africa's level of economic development followed a pattern similar too what obtained from 1960-80 and from 1981-2015. Africa's economic prospect worsened intensely especially in 1982-83 when drought compounded the economic recession and the continent experienced extensive food shortage, leading to malnutrition in the Northeast region – notably; Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea culminating in the decline of the level of growth up to the 1990s (Meredith, 2006).

At the beginning of the new millennium, Africa experience a sort of renaissance which was accompany by greater political stability and less violent conflict than the two previous decades. The new pattern that became manifest in Africa's political process and social progress led to an overall focus on the improvement of the quality of life of the people, as well as, socio-economic progress. The impact was clearly reflected in the level of economic growth recorded between 2000-08 and 2010-15. It is pertinent to say that the conclusion of many wars in Africa, between 2000-07, many of which arose largely from the inability to forge national integration, contributed tremendously to the high level of economic growth, that Africa experienced from 2000-16, for instance, there was an average of about 14wars fought each year in Africa in the 1990s but this reduced by more than half from 2006-2015. Undoubtedly, there is an interlocking relationship between political stability in Africa and economic development. What the data choose is that the level of economic development in Africa has been always higher during periods of political stability and few violent conflicts (Legum, 1999).

The nexus between the forging of national integration which influences political stability and the level of economic development is clear from the consideration of the economic growth of African country that has been at wars compared with those that have not. For instance, Liberia experienced economic growth that averaged about 2% for much of the period from 1960-89, however, following the outbreak of war in the country in 1990, the country had a growth rate of -25.7% during the 1990s. The same pattern manifested in the rate of economic growth of D.R. Congo in the period of 1960-2010. The tragic experiences of these 2 countries in economic growth reflects the pattern in other African States, that experienced Civil wars and political instability in the post-independence period. This trend contrast on trend that centers on political stability and cohesion from 1960-2015 such as Botswana which recorded a consistent 11% economic growth from the 1970s to the early 2000s. It is for this reasons that scholars have emphasize the need for political stability, good governance and effective nation-building as factors in Africa's overall development (Meredith, 2006).

A major issue that would need to be addressed for a more rapid growth rate and overall development as the 21st century progresses would be the promotion of national integration, the forging of national cohesion and the achievement of political stability, which makes it possible to harness national resources for development (July, 1970).

THE WAY FORWARD
A number of African States have made attempts through various approaches in addressing the nature of, and promoting the Nation-Building process within their polity. These efforts are reflected in the following ways;

Leadership Style
Evidently, able leadership is very crucial to the success of any country. And as such, there are number of States that have projected themselves out of proportion of their level within the global system on the account of able leadership. For instance; Menelik II and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and John Kennedy of the United States, Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom and Lula Da Silva of Brazil has moved their respective States from low levels to great and super power status as a result of the possession of able leadership. It is pertinent that, for African States to prosper beyond the continent, the leaders must reflect inclusive tendencies rather than exclusion (Alumona, 2017).

Adoption of a suitable Political system of Governance and Party system
The manifestation of conflicts arising from racial, ethnic and religious differences during the colonial era due to the emergence of new political structures with the boundary set up by the European Colonial masters, culminating in the need to adopt key measures to promote national integration. This necessitated the introduction of political structures and principles appropriate to the promotion of national integration. For instance, the introduction of the federal system to Nigeria and Uganda by the British in the course of the 1950s. It is crucial that, this established pattern be followed in the face of the current political instability and nation-building crisis by the various African States. It is logical that, African States with heterogeneity of ethnic and racial composition should adopt a Federal system so as to allow for initiatives and a measure of autonomy to different groups and regions. Similarly, a multi-party democratic system will be suitable in such structure so as avoid the 1980s inappropriate political undoing of many African leaders of heterogenous States who adopted a one-party system in an effort to integrate different groups that make up their States which was met with extensive rejection across the continent (Robinson, 1994).

Implementation of Policies and Programmes to promote Inclusion
All across Africa, the option of nation-building policies and programs has been a popular way of attempting to achieve national integration, as various government have introduced a number of programmes targeted at promoting mutual interdependence and cooperation among different ethnic and racial groups. These

policies have widely been aimed at correcting past errors and addressing feelings of exclusion while others have focused on promoting equity and justice as a way of achieving nation-building. For instance; the Federal Character Principle introduced in Nigeria in 1979, and the Black Economic Empowerment Programme introduced in South Africa in the aftermath of the 1994 elections, are examples of such policies and programmes (Alumona, 2017).

Establishment of Peace Building Process to ensure Reconciliation in conflicts aftermath

Many African countries have experienced civil wars, despite the efforts to achieve national integration at the end of such wars, peace building processes have always been established. For instance; the Policy of Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction introduced by the Gowon regime in 1970 shortly after the Nigerian Civil War is one of such policies. Also, other African States have opted for the establishment of a Truth Commission as a way of addressing past injustices and creating the commission for a harmonious relationship moving forward. For instance; South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 1996 which has been adjudged to be hugely successful and the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2009 which recorded much less success than the South Africa's example (Abu Bakarr, 2004).

Reconfiguration of the boundary and adoption of Pan-Africanism

It is critical to identify the efforts of earlier personalities who have sought to establish a political integrated Africa with the boundary established by the colonial masters rejected among other nations.

CONCLUSION

In more recent times, specifically in 2020, a number of African countries experienced a fallout in the ability to achieve cohesion and integration, thereby culminating in various political instabilities. For instance, Nigeria, Tanzania, Guinea, Ghana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Namibia and many others, experienced one form of instability or the other.

What is clear is that, different African States have adopted different policies of programmes in effort to promote National Integration with varying degree of success. A clear understanding of the nature and process of Nation-building in Africa is therefore pertinent for the achievement of stability and development of the entire continent to become a reality. The analysis of the aforementioned nature and dimensions of Nation-Building reveals that the process is crucial to the survival of many States in Africa which are largely composed of numerous ethnic, racial and religious groups. However, the effectiveness of the Nation-Building process is a function of the understanding of principles applicable to them. Unlike Africa, the Nation-Building project has remained a daunting task and potentially unattainable. It should be noted that, the commitment of the groups within the State and the effectiveness of the policies and programmes established by the government has been the most important determinant of the level of success or failure of Nation-Building.

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