

# Political Scientists and Nation-Building: The Nigerian Experience

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**Abstract:** Nation-building is so crucial a project that requires the services of many actors to achieve. It embodies such elements as national integration, poverty reduction through employment generation, robust economic development through industrialization, as well as infrastructural revolution through good governance. The actors involved in it have different and very important roles to play. Unfortunately, over the years, especially in Nigeria, the role of political scientists in nation-building has been surreptitiously scuffled through a deliberate constitutional design to permeate an unsavoury political exclusionism in addition to the crude stereotypic mentality built around them by Nigerians. Against this backdrop, the paper asked: what role(s) should political scientists play in the overall project of nation-building in Nigeria? Among other things, the work discovered that the role of political scientists in the project of nation-building is to offer genuine political leadership which remains the panacea for resolving other problems inherent in the society. Consequently, the study recommended that justice in Plato's sense be observed if nation-building would be made less difficult in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** nation-building, state-building, peace-building, role, political scientists.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Nation-building defines the progress of any country and this is why it is not taken for granted by those who hold development close to their hearts. Imperatively, once nation-building is compromised, development is also compromised. Unfortunately, while advanced countries like the United States and Israel have consistently and persistently pursued genuine nation-building designed to integrate their peoples, Nigeria continues to grope around the orbit of nation-building without a genuine attempt to rotate it. American experience has shown that political scientists and lawyers played significant roles in American nation-building. Such leaders like Abraham Lincoln, J.F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Woodrow Wilson and Barak Obama, to mention but few, remain outstanding not only because of their leadership exploits but also their intellectual erudition sustained through scholarly contribution to most social problems confronting man in his ecosystemic anthropocentrism.

Against this backdrop, the critical question to ask remains, what role(s) should political scientists play in the overall project of nation-building in Nigeria? This question was necessitated by two interrelated reasons: firstly, it does appear that the panacea for genuine nation-building relies on the crucial role of the political scientists. Secondly, it also appears that pure scientists in government see societal conflicts as an evil and so expect human beings to behave like organisms in the laboratories. These pure scientists do not see conflict as something inherent in the society which is healthy for its development. Indeed, it was John Allen Paulos who queried, 'why don't Americans elect scientists?' (Allen, 2012). He concluded that one reason responsible for such disinterestedness among Americans in electing pure scientists to occupy government positions is that an abstract scientific approach to problems and issues often leads to conclusions that are odds with religions and cultural beliefs and scientists (pure) are sometimes tone-deaf to the social environment in which they state their conclusions (Allen, 2012). The work has been partitioned into ten starting with this brief introduction, meaning and nature of nation-building, theoretical framework for understanding nation-building.

## II. MEANING AND NATURE OF NATION-BUILDING

To understand the idea of nation-building, exploring the meaning of a nation becomes important. Early definitions of nation conceived it as 'a group or race of people who shared history, traditions, and culture, sometimes religion, and usually language' (Carolyn, 2005). In this regard, the people of a nation generally shared a common national identity. Part of nation-building therefore becomes building of a common identity. Accordingly, distinction can be drawn between ethnic nation based in race or ethnicity and civic nation based in common identity and loyalty to a set of political ideas and institutions as well as the linkage of citizenship to nationality (Carolyn, 2005). However, the contemporary understanding and usage of the term nation is fast corroding the old order and is now synonymous with the state only that a state is more properly the governmental apparatus by which a nation governs itself.

In the context of this paper, a nation may be liken to an umbilical cord that joins the foetus with its mother thereby creating an everlasting bond that is sustained after delivery through breastfeeding. A state, on the other hand, is like an apparatus that makes or mar this bond. Nationhood gives the state the legitimacy to operate. Once a nation is built to an enviable standard, state failure becomes difficult and security guaranteed. With this in mind, a nation is here seen strictly in the civic sense which de-emphasizes ethnic monolithism in place of political commonality irrespective of the number of ethnic groups that make up the nation-state.

Having operationalized the concept of nation, it is therefore imperative to understand the meaning of nation-building. It was Carolyn, Stephenson who once noted that:

Nation-building is a normative concept that means different things to different people. The latest conceptualization is essentially that nation-building programs are those in which dysfunctional or unstable or "failed states" or economies are given assistance in the development of governmental infrastructure, civil society, dispute resolution mechanisms, as well as economic assistance, in order to increase stability (Carolyn, 2005).

The implication of the foregoing is that, nation-building generally assumes that someone is doing the building intentionally and consciously. The building must be planned and properly defined if the structure were to reflect the choice of the builders. The concept of nation-building has been seen as 'the use of armed forces in the aftermath of a conflict to underpin an ending transition to democracy' (Robbins, 2003 cited in Carolyn, 2005). Accordingly, Alesina and Reich (2013) conceive nation-building as 'a process which leads to the formation of countries in which citizens feel a sufficient amount of commonality of interests, goals and preferences so that they do not wish to separate from each other' (Alesina and Reich, 2012). In line with Karl and William (1966) conceptualization of nation-building (Karl and William, 1966), in the context of this paper, nation-building can be seen as a process of constructing or structuring a national identity using the state power which aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run.

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING NATION-BUILDING

The paper adopted the theory of state-planned nation-building strategies as developed by Harris (2007). State-planned nation-building entails a parallel process where the ruling political elites maintain and reinforce differences with "nations" in surrounding states and eliminate differences within their own boundaries (Harris, 2007). Although people have been conscious of national or ethnic differences for many centuries, with the advent of modernity, this consciousness is becoming intertwined with the political programmes of self-determination. Citing Max Weber, Harris (2007) defined the state as 'the organization that has the monopoly of legitimate use of force and extraction within a clearly defined territory'. He therefore opined that the ultimate goal of the ruling political elite of every modern state is to master the loyalty of its population and remain sovereign. This political elite group controls the coercive apparatus of the state and can use it to make or mar the progress and development of the state. A government is therefore considered legitimate when it enjoys the consent of the citizens. Accordingly, Harris noted that, 'legitimate rule enhances the taxing abilities of a state, facilitates conscription to the army, fosters compliance to the laws, and prevents separatist movements. Troubles ensue when a section of the population does not consider the government legitimate' (Harris, 2007).

Consequently, the following deductions can be made from the theory of state-planned nation-building:

- The existence of a culturally distinct group does not necessarily involve a competing claim to the political loyalty of this population in modern nation-state.

- Cultural distinctiveness is politically irrelevant unless there is a group-formation process to turn it into a social identity; only then can membership be drawn
- The non-core groups (the minorities in a very narrower sense) are often territorially dispersed and are likely to quickly assimilate into a higher status group in order to maximize their self-esteem. This has led to the absorption of these non-core groups by their surrounding core group(s). However, certain variations may occur where some non-core groups who are territorially concentrated become politically conscious and begin to espouse distinctive political identity (this is usually the case in countries whose nation-building is still in doubt).

On the basis of the foregoing, the study assumes that:

- States with ethnic and religious conscious political elite group will have more problems of nation-building than those with less ethnic and religious conscious political elites.
- Ethnic and religious consciousness creates divisiveness and corrodes national consciousness that breeds common political and national identity.
- Many factors, such as prior democratic experience, level of economic development, and social homogeneity, can influence the ease or difficulty of nation-building, but the single most important controllable determinant seems to be the level of effort, as measured in troops, money, and time.
- Finally, there is no quick fix for nation-building. The hard way is the only way.

#### **IV. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR NATION-BUILDING**

Nation-building has been identified as a political engineering on a grand scale (Pie and Kasper, 2003). Pie and Kasper (2013) also conceived three critical variables responsible for nation-building. These include:

- The internal characteristics of states
- Convergence of geopolitical interests and
- Commitment to economic development by the political elite group

##### **The Internal Characteristics of States**

This is one of the most critical factors that virtually defines the success of other variables. Ethnically fragmented states will have more difficulty in nation-building than a more ethnically cohesive one. The defining factor among the ethnic groups may not necessarily be heterogeneity or homogeneity; though the fragmentation and cohesion may be implicated on the either respectively. Ethnically fragmented states suffer high degree of ethnic fissures, inequalities, and in most cases religious animosities. These factors are inherently resistant to political and national cohesion which breeds nation-building.

Undoubtedly, building a nation in an ethnically heterogeneously divided state will face stiffer challenges compared to ethnically homogeneously cohesive ones. This is why nation-building in states like Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, among others with varying degrees of fragmented and heterogeneous ethnic groups has been very difficult unlike those of Japan, Germany, Israel among others with a more homogeneous and cohesive ethnic arrangement. In building a nation therefore, the builders must take cognizance of the character of the states involved. It is imperative to note that there is no uniform and straight-jacketed means of building a nation, and that high ethnic homogeneity and relative socio-economic equality are more suitable targets for nation-building than high ethnic heterogeneity and socio-economic inequality.

Equally important in the internal characteristics of states is the organizational effectiveness and discipline of the military, bureaucracy and the judiciary (Pie and Kasper, 2003). Where these institutions are strong, nation-building becomes a less difficult task but where they are weaker than the individuals, nation-building becomes extremely difficult. However, evolution of states with strong institutions is often organically linked to the social structure, cultural norms and distribution of political power of a given society (Pie and Kasper, 2003). In ethnically fragmented and heterogeneous societies, distribution of political power often assumes a rotational arrangement among the ethnic groups and with the conviction of non-exclusionism in the power equation by the ethnic groups, tension would be lessened and nation-building gradually begins.

### **Convergence of Geopolitical Interests**

It is not so difficult building a nation if there is convergence of geopolitical interests. Geopolitical interests here must not be international or intercontinental. It can be domestic among the different ethnic groups that make up the nation-state. Nation-building of one state must not be a security threat to other state(s) especially within the international arena. For instance, building a nation in Iraq, must not be a security threat to the United States, Kuwait, or the rest of the states in the international system. So it is with nation-building in Iran, Syria, Libya, Russia, Israel, United States and the United Kingdom, among others. Domestically, nation-building must be all encompassing; embodying a varying degree of convergence of interests among the ethnic groups. Once any group feels isolated in the process, separatist movement becomes inevitable.

Consequently, if nation-building of a state overlaps into a security threat of another, there appears divergence of interests and allied forces are likely to be deployed in defeating such nation-building. This was the case with Iraq under Saddam Hussein and Libya under Muammar Gaddafi. If freedom were to be the yardstick for measuring nation-building and democracy the motor that drives it, then non-democratic states are likely to face stiffer challenges in nation-building because there would always be collusion of interests in a monumental proportion compared with democratic states (Democracy as used here may not necessarily translate to western type of democracy. However, western type of democracy appears to be more amenable to majority participation. Democracy within this context is taken to be a form of rule that gives credence to mass participation, freedom of expression, and protection of the fundamental human rights. Whatever name given to such democracy is immaterial to us so long as the above variables are incorporated). It is easier to build a nation in states where the interests of the component elements are in convergence with one another. In the case of Nigeria, it would be easier to build the nation if the interests of the six geopolitical zones were in agreement.

### **Commitment to Economic Development by the Political Elite Group**

Like we stated in the introduction, economy lays the foundation for successful nation-building. This is another crucial area where the political leadership plays significant role. The political elite group that controls the machineries of the state must be able to launch a self-sustaining economic development process that de-emphasizes greater reliance on external help for economic recovery. It is only when the political leadership of a country has evolved a self-sustaining economic development strategies that foreign aid would make meaning. While we agree that there is no uniform pattern of nation-building, what remains incontestable to us is the conviction that these three factors must be properly harnessed before nation-building becomes possible.

## **V. UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AND AMONG NATION-BUILDING, STATE-BUILDING AND PEACE-BUILDING**

The term nation-building is often used simultaneously with state-building, democratization, modernization, political development, post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building (Carolyn, 2005). The concept of nation-building was used especially by American political scientists after World War II to describe the greater integration of state and society, as citizenship brought loyalty to the modern nation-state with it. On a similar note, Alesina and Reich (2013) stated that:

Recently, state-building and nation-building have sometimes been used interchangeable; however, state-building generally refers to the construction of infrastructure for a functioning state, while nation-building is the construction of national identity, also for a functioning state (Alesina and Reich, 2012).

As a corollary, state-building has been used to refer to interventionist strategies to restore and rebuild the institutions and apparatus of the state; for example, the bureaucracy, and nation-building refers to the creation of cultural identity that relates to the particular territory of the state (Scott, 2007). Consequently, Ottawa (1999) observed that, while current foreign policy and popular culture tend to conflate state- and nation-buildings, it is also possible to argue that state-building and nation-building are opposing forces (Ottawa, 1999 cited in Scott, 2007). Against this backdrop, whilst state-building focuses on creating a homogeneous nation-state, a nation-building approach emphasizes the importance of cultural identity which may ultimately lead to calls for self-determination. Understood in this perspective, nation-building becomes antithetical to state-building which otherwise it is not.

On a more concrete and empirical pontification, nation-building is a term that dominated political literature around 1950s and 60s during the Cold War and it carried, according to Scott (2007), 'a strong conceptual link to modernization theories of development'. Both the United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) used it as a tactic to limit the reach of their enemies. State-building on the other hand, became more pronounced during the 1970s to justify American invasion and involvement in wars of some foreign countries. Accordingly, Pie and Kasper (2003) noted that, 'since the end of the Cold War, the United States seems to be more willing to assemble multilateral support in humanitarian interventions and the rebuilding of failed states'. This however, limits the understanding of state-building as a foreign and exogenous project (which serves the purpose of this paper) rather than domestic and endogenous affair (which nation-building is known for) which has resulted to such thing as rebuilding the states of Iraq and Libya by the United States or protecting the state of Syria by Russia. Synthetically, if nation-building is seen as the antithesis of state-building, then peace-building becomes the result of their reconciliation. In fact, what people call state-building or nation-building, the UN prefers to call "peace-building" (Goldberg, 2006).

Interestingly, both nation-building and state-building aim to achieve a functioning state system, but while nation-building emphasizes the cohesion of internal mechanisms of the state from within, state-building does same from without. The resultant implication of the foregoing is that state-building without nation-building will achieve little or no result. For instance, notwithstanding the American efforts at building the states of Iraq and Afghanistan; because the internal characteristics and forces of the states are relatively irreconcilable (at least to the type the US would have wanted), the efforts have been very futile. It therefore means that state-building is more of an external complement of nation-building and the complementarities of the two give rise to peace-building. This is why the UN recognizes more of peace-building rather than state- or nation-buildings. Indeed, the sale of western democracy and strangulation of authoritarian regimes especially by the United States are pointers to state-building. Like Pie and Kasper (2003) noted, 'the use of American military and civilian personnel in the political administration of the target countries (state-building) is the quintessential features of nation-building'. To this end, Reimer (2005) identified crisis prevention (peace-building) as the overall framework for state-building, nation-building and society-building. The table below represents the US attempt at state-building across the globe; some of which were done in collaboration with the United Nations or local administrations of the target countries.

**Table 1: some instances of US state-building around the world**

Target country	Population	Years	Duration (years)	Multilateral or Unilateral	Interim Administration	Democracy after 10 years?
1. Afghanistan	26.8 million	2001-present	2+	Multilateral	UN Administration	?
2. Haiti	7.0 million	1994-1996	2	Multilateral	Local Administration	No
3. Panama	2.3 million	1989	<1	Unilateral	Local Administration	Yes
4. Grenada	92,000	1983	<1	Unilateral	Local Administration	Yes
5. Cambodia	7 million	1970-73	3	Unilateral	US Surrogate Regime	No
6. South Vietnam	19 million	1964-73	9	Unilateral	US Surrogate Regime	No
7. Dominican Republic	3.8 million	1965-66	1	Unilateral	US Surrogate Regime	No
8. Japan	72 million	1945-52	7	Multi-unilateral	US Direct Administration	Yes
9. West Germany	46 million	1945-49	4	Multilateral	Multilateral Administration	Yes
10. Dominican Republic	895,000	1916-24	8	Unilateral	US Direct Administration	No
11. Cuba	2.8 million	1917-22	5	Unilateral	US Surrogate Regime	No
12. Haiti	2 million	1915-34	19	Unilateral	US Surrogate Regime	No
13. Nicaragua	620,000	1909-27	18	Unilateral	US Surrogate Regime	No

Source: Pie, Minxin and Kasper, Sara. Lessons from the Past: The American Record in Nation-Building (2003). Culled from <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/nation-building> on 17 July 2014

Some of the important US involvements in state-building which are missing in the above table are those of Iraq (2003-2011), Libya (2011) and Syria (2013 till date). It suffices to note here that, state-building, according to Boutros-Ghali (1992), does not automatically guarantee peace-building, a term denoting actions that identify and support structures that strengthen and solidify peace in order to prevent a relapse into conflict (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Indeed, Boutros further observed that, 'due to the inherently political nature of state-building, interventions to build the state can hinder peace, increasing group tensions and sparking off further conflict's. This becomes worse especially if the state-building turns predatory and rapacious. According to Stephenson Carolyn (2005), nation-building is more than state-building; and to be a sustainable force for peace-building, it must incorporate more than just the Western appendages of democracy. Voting systems and free market development and increasing the GNP per capita are not likely to bring stable peace (Carolyn, 2005).

## VI. COMPARATIVE CASE-STUDIES OF NATION-BUILDING: THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAELI EXPERIENCES

The choice of the United States and Israel as the comparative case-studies of nation-building is very spectacular by virtue of representing the success of nation-building in heterogeneously and homogeneously ethnically divided and cohesive societies respectively. The condition of nation-building in the two countries is suggestive of the fact that it is possible to build a nation in societies divided along not just ethnicity but race as well as societies with homogeneous ethnic group(s). Both countries also represent classic examples of how secularism and religion can play instrumental role in nation-building respectively

### The United States Experience

Nation-building in the United States has largely remained a continuous process. In view of this, Jeremi Suri (2011) argued that, 'not only that Americans have engaged in nation-building throughout their history, but that their impulse to do so springs naturally and inevitably from their character and experience as a people' (cited Robert, 2011). Indeed, America has not only built an enviable nation-state, but is also exporting its brand of nationhood to other states through state-building, democratization and peace-keeping. Accordingly, Suri identified six episodes in the United States nation-building. These include:

- The founding of the American nation
- The period of Reconstruction following the civil war
- The long occupation of the Philippines after the Spanish-American war
- The occupation of Germany following the Second World War
- The failed attempt at nation-building in Vietnam and
- The continuing effort in Afghanistan (Suri, 2011 cited in Robert, 2011).

Most important to us in the context of this paper are the first two. This is because Nigeria has a lot to learn from America having passed through similar experiences. Both countries were colonized by Britain but while the US fought and won its independence, Nigeria secured its own devoid of bloodletting. Civil war was fought in America between the North and the South (April 12, 1861-May 9, 1865) and so it was with Nigeria and Biafra (July 6, 1967-January 10, 1970). Very important outcome of the civil wars (Nigeria and United States alike) was the reconstruction era. In the history of the United States, the term Reconstruction Era has two senses: the first covers the complete history of the entire country from 1865 to 1877 following the civil war; the second sense focuses on the transformation of the Southern United States from 1863 to 1877, as directed by the Congress, with the reconstruction of state and society ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/reconstruction\\_era\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/reconstruction_era_of_the_United_States)).

Consequently, from 1863 to 1865, Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson took moderate positions designed to bringing the south back to normal as quickly as possible. The period of reconstruction in the United States led to radical policy changes that ended up enfranchising the freedmen (former slaves) and removing the former confederates (who were seen to be the cause of the war) from power. The removal of the barriers that hitherto isolated some elements mostly

from the south led to migration of missionaries, teachers, politicians and businessmen from the north to the south for massive infrastructural development ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/reconstruction\\_era\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/reconstruction_era_of_the_United_States), retrieved on 25 July 2014). This process led to proper integration of the American citizens (both those from the north and south) into a unified nation-state. Other factors of isolation and disenfranchisement especially against the blacks were achieved much later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the result of which is evident in the ascension of a black man to the position of US President in the person of Barrack Obama. This remains a genuine reconstruction agenda characteristic of the US nation-building which laid the foundation for US development. It is also imperative to note that upon founding the American nation, the founding fathers moved to re-write American history by upturning all that were British and assuming a separate American identity which is today celebrated all over the world.

On the contrary to the US post-war reconstruction, the 3Rs – reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation – characteristic of Nigeria's post-war reintegration agenda was by no means a match. The entire process in Nigeria appeared dubious and deceitful. Firstly, all properties belonging to Biafrans especially the Igbos outside the Biafran territory were revoked; secondly, all Biafrans who hitherto had money in the banks were ordered to be given 20 Pounds irrespective of the amount he/she had in the banks before the war, and thirdly, there was no genuine effort to integrate the Biafrans into the mainstream Nigerian political process since the end of the war despite the 3Rs and the aphorism of 'No Victor, No Vanquished' policy.

Consequent upon the foregoing, while America has continued to learn from its past mistakes and has also continued to work assiduously to avert a possible reoccurrence, Nigeria has learnt nothing. This seems to be why separatist groups like the Boko Haram sect, Odua People's Congress (OPC), Movement for the Emancipation of Niger-Delta (MEND), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB); among others, have continued to threaten the unity and corporate existence of the country and thereby making the task of nation-building difficult.

### **The Israeli Experience**

Since the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948, examinations of its history have usually emphasized its wars, the Arab-Israeli conflict and diplomatic negotiations. Israel has built a fully realized – though not perfect or completed – political system, economy, society and culture. It is also noted that:

Although modern Israel grew from one of the world's oldest societies and cultures, its ancient heritage has not necessarily made the task of nation-building easier. On the contrary, religion and secularism, multiple languages, varying levels of economic development within its population, and its citizens' often different historical experiences, among other factors, made its nation-building process exceptionally complex and challenging. Add to this a land with few natural resources surrounded by hostile neighbours, and the relative success story of Israel becomes even more remarkable ([http://www.yalepress.yale.edu/./rubin\\_israel.pdf](http://www.yalepress.yale.edu/./rubin_israel.pdf)).

Israel is a state that is made up of virtually only Jews. In fact, it can be called a Jewish nation. But most striking is the idea that Jews are a religious group rather than an ethnic group. This idea of not seeing the Jews as a separatist people with different cultures, languages and identity was a strategy for trying to gain equality and diminish anti-Semitism. In this regard, the concept of "Jews" becomes a bond that unites the entire Jewish nations which invariably would have been seen as different peoples. Perhaps, what gives impetus to the concept and bond is religion. Jews before the modern state of Israel (1948) constituted of a separatist people with their own non-state government institutions, unique language, special customs, distinct ideas, and different culture; such words like, the Hebrew and Israelites were more commonly used than the word 'Jews'. Religion became only one maker of Jewish identity which corresponds to national identity ([http://www.yalepress.yale.edu/./rubin\\_israel.pdf](http://www.yalepress.yale.edu/./rubin_israel.pdf)). The state of Israel is an example of how religion can give rise to nation-building. However, Israel has demonstrated that mere existence of religion and proto-Zionist sentiments in Jewish societies would have amounted to nothing without an organized movement. Vanguard thinkers in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century – Moses Hess, Leon Pinsker, and others – provided glimpses of the idea of a Jewish State especially following the persecution of the Jews around the world and Theodor Herzl brought the movement into existence in the 1890s. The movement required complementary action in the land of Israel itself and young Russian Jews acting on their own in the 1880s began that work and they were thereafter supported by the Zionist Movement. Similarly, the physical movement of people to the land of Israel to join the traditional religious community already present brought about the Yishuv. This was the community of Jews in the land of Israel between the 1880s and 1948, when Israel became an independent state. Interestingly, while Jewish tradition and history laid the foundation for shaping the modern state of Israel, the Yishuv

complemented it. Cultural attributes and political-economic structure created during the Yishuv era became the basic attributes of Israeli state and society.

## VII. NIGERIA AND THE TASK OF NATION-BUILDING

Nigeria since independence has made some efforts targeted at nation-building. Some of these efforts came after the civil war which understandably was an ample time to engineer nation-building to enhance proper integration of the warring elements. Among the efforts are: the institution of the policy of 'No Victor, No Vanquished' with its attendant 3Rs mechanism, the establishment of the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) scheme, the convocation of political reform conferences including the ongoing one, among others.

The 'no victor, no vanquished' policy which gave rise to the 3Rs of Reconstruction, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation was initiated to demobilize the Biafrans and reintegrate them into the national life. While the objectives of this policy were laudable, actual implementation was deceitful. However, the policy remained a nation-building effort in Nigeria whether or not it yielded meaningful result(s).

Similar effort was made through the establishment of the NYSC scheme. The National Youths Service Corps scheme was created by decree No. 24 of 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1973 in a bid to reconstruct, reconcile and rebuild Nigeria after the civil war. The core objectives of the scheme include: to foster encouragement and development of common ties among the youths of Nigeria and promotion of national unity. This scheme involves posting of young graduates of thirty years and below to different parts of the country distinct from their states of origin and probably regions. This was to enable them learn and appreciate the cultures of the people in their places of primary assignment. Whilst this scheme has recorded a lot of achievements, recent developments in the polity where corps members become easy preys in times of crisis and where the well-connected graduates are posted to their choice and juicy places irrespective of their geographical contiguities (always blamed on corruption) are some of the challenges confronting the scheme and undermining the national integration efforts.

More importantly, the convocation of national political reform conferences over the years in Nigeria has remained an attempt at nation-building. These conferences were often mandated to draw the way forward for Nigeria but each time, failures have continued to be recorded; either as a result of the character of the delegates or the convocation and selection processes of members. And where the delegates succeeded at reaching a genuine and feasible conclusion, their recommendations are often not binding and are therefore confined to the dustbin of history. This is why people are increasingly becoming jittery with political reform conferences in Nigeria especially as they have turned into avenues for political settlements.

Unfortunately, the only huge success of nation-building recorded in Nigeria is adorning our public institutions with the national symbols like flag, coat-of-arm, and pictures of the Nigerian President, Governors (within their respective states) as well as the recitation of the National Anthem in official gatherings which in effect, does not guarantee oneness but at least, it is a sign of togetherness. However, while this effort is not bad because it reminds us of our national identity, it is not sufficient to guarantee genuine nation-building which issues from personal conviction and patriotic stand.

## VIII. CHALLENGES OF NATION-BUILDING IN NIGERIA

One of the reasons for the difficulties of what many consider "failed states" is that some people who had been integrated were taken apart by European colonialism; while others who were separate peoples were integrated together in new states not based in common identities (Carolyn, 2005). The foregoing represents the critical challenge faced by Nigeria in its nation-building efforts. Nigeria is a colonial creation foisted on the peoples without their consent. This faulty foundation laid by the Europeans was purely done to actualize their interests and not for any genuine development of the country. In fact, colonialism is a good example of how a country's nation-building can become a security threat to another. Nation-building in Europe which translated to predatory and rapacious state-building in Africa through colonialism got nation-building in Africa stunted. In Europe, nation-building preceded state-building but in Africa and other colonized countries, state-building preceded nation-building. Indeed, the aftermath of colonialism led to the need for nation-building.

In line with the above, Prof Ibrahim Gambari in a lecture delivered at the first year anniversary of Mustapha Akanbi Foundation in 2008 outlined the challenges before Nigerian nation-building as follows:



- The challenge of history
- The challenge of socio-economic inequalities
- The constitutional challenge
- The challenge of building institutions for democracy and development and
- The leadership challenge (Gambari, 2008).

In Gambari's own words:

The historical legacies of colonial rule create some challenges for nation-building in Nigeria. Colonial rule divided Nigeria into North and South with different land tenure systems, local government administration, educational systems, and judicial systems. While large British colonies like India and the Sudan had a single administrative system, Nigeria had two, one for the North and one for the South. It was almost as if these were two separate countries, held together only by a shared currency and transportation system (Gambari, 2008).

Beyond the challenges created by colonialism and its attendant innuendos, Nigerian political leadership since independence has contributed immensely in exacerbating the problem of nation-building. Unlike the Americans that fought and won their independence and subsequently set to draw and pursue vigorously the type of nation they wanted, Nigerians were simply engulfed by the joy of flag independence they got and made no attempt at defining the type of nation they desired let alone working for it. Therefore, among the five challenges mentioned by Gambari, aside the historical challenge, the challenge of political leadership remains the fulcrum around which other challenges revolve and this is where the role the political scientists is seriously needed.

## **IX. THE WAY FORWARD**

To build is a very critical and time consuming project because accurate measurement is involved, but to destroy is very easy because no established pattern is required. This is also applicable in nation-building. Building a nation requires that the actors otherwise the builders must perfectly have an idea of the type of a nation they desire and therefore work towards having it actualized. Just like the services of many actors are involved in building a house, the architect to draw the plan, the surveyor to take measurement, the brick layers to lay the blocks, the carpenters to fix the wooden works and do the roofing, and a host of others; so also it is in nation-building. Cartographers are required to draw the map and define the boundaries of the nation, economists are required to draw the economic plans that lay the foundation of the nation, lawyers are required to defend the sovereignty of the nation, and political scientists are needed to offer leadership that can lead to proper execution of the project of nation-building. This leadership role of the political scientists is one of the most critical aspects of human management that gives credence to nation-building and development; the reason being that it defines both the structure and architectural designs of the type of nation to be built. This by implication is a master role that harnesses all other roles required in having a just society. For this reason therefore, political science becomes a master science discipline and the political scientists, the master scientists. By virtue of being the master scientists, they are required to possess master knowledge of human problems both those relating to pure science and humanities as well as social relationships, and therefore use their administrative ingenuities to reconcile the contradictions arising from the antagonisms inherent therefrom.

As earlier stated, the role of the political scientists in nation-building is to offer a genuine political leadership that gives credence to building strong democratic institutions that would subsume individual egotisms. This was what Obama meant in Ghana when he said that the problem with Africa is the existence of weak political institutions and strong individuals. However, the critical task remains, how can the political scientists achieve this, given the type of Nigerian society where crude stereotypic mentality has been built around them as braggarts that are not worthy of administrative mandates? This is a task that must be achieved if leadership problems were to be solved in Nigeria.

It was by no mistake that political scientists are called juggernauts. Lest we forget, a juggernaut is an element with an overwhelming force which is usually articulated and does not move directionlessly. A political scientist in leadership position does not succumb to pressures designed to push him or her around because himself/herself is an overwhelming force. For a political scientist to be entrusted with power, the following two steps must be taken: first, he must as an

individual package himself for leadership and second, there must be social group formation, vanguard or movement to throw him up.

Leaders are groomed from family through the classroom and then to the larger society, and at the first step of packaging, the individual must exhibit qualities of a leader. Packaging is a very important aspect of leadership which must eschew all forms of braggadocio. He must exhibit more of the qualities of a fox than a lion. By implication therefore, he must be very cunning and not talk too much but when he does, it is very weighty.

At the level of social group formation, vanguard or movement, it suffices to state that no individual achieves power by his effort(s) alone. He needs others and a platform to excel. Lawyers through the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) have remained vocal and their services sought by all and sundry. In fact, one can say that of all the professions in Nigeria, only two have their services not sought outside the country. These include: the law and the political leadership and they remain the only two professions whose constitutional provisions are unambiguous. Nigeria has not sought the services of foreign lawyers because they are not permitted to practise in the country without being called to the Nigerian Bar, and to be so called, the person must have gone through the law process in Nigeria and be willing to practice accordingly. So, constitutionally, embargo has been placed on seeking the services of foreign lawyers and jurisdictionally, cases involving Nigeria and Nigerians that have no international character cannot be instituted outside the country (Cases that have international character are those involving the services of International Court of Justice (ICJ) which is an umbrella judicial body of the United Nations and it is binding only on those who are signatories to it). On the other hand, political leadership is another profession whose services cannot be imported from outside the country; the reason being that constitutionally, foreigners are disqualified from holding elective positions in Nigeria (Sections 65, 66, 106, 107, 131, among others of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). However, while only lawyers are permitted to defend cases in the law courts (otherwise practise law), political leadership has become “all comers affair” with medical doctors, engineers, microbiologists, zoologists, among others, becoming more politicians than the political scientists. This is what is responsible for leadership failures in Nigeria and not until square pegs are put in square holes, the problem is bound to persist. When a country produces more political scientists as their leaders, radical transformation is bound to take place and what is nation-building without development? Have we wondered the reason for the failure of health and educational sectors in Nigeria? It is because people are constitutionally free to seek medical and educational services outside the country.

Consequent upon the foregoing, for the political scientists to create a formidable force capable of exerting an overwhelming influence, they must form and sustain a social movement. This social movement can be in the form of genuinely resuscitating the comatose Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA) or form another umbrella body that must champion the course of political scientists in Nigeria. No doubt and devoid of sentiments, lawyers are more involved in nation-building in Nigeria than the political scientists and the reason is not far-fetched. It is because their profession is protected by the Constitution and the umbrella body of lawyers – the NBA – sustains the protection. Left to them individually, either we would have been seeking the services of foreign lawyers or the law profession would have become “all comers affair”. Given such situation, even a microbiologist would have gone to court to defend his case instead of contracting the services of an advocate whose oratorical proficiency may be doubtful. However, it is noteworthy that lawyers have not fared much better than political scientists in nation-building beyond their primary constituency in the law profession. Also think of what social movement has done for many people, the Nigerian Bar Association, the Academic Staff Union of the Universities (ASUU), Nigerian Guild of Editors, among others. While the Nigerian Governors Forum waxed stronger than it is now, imagine the impact and the strength of its bargaining power. In fact, at a time, they were almost dictating to the Nigerian President and ‘a gentleman agreement’ was reached that the subsequent Nigerian Presidents must be selected from among them and even Obasanjo with his overwhelming leadership style could not do otherwise.

What political scientists must understand and put into practice is that power is not given, it is taken and they can only take it when they put their house in order and no outsider will do it for them. Once this is done, the chance of having a functional Constitution becomes possible. The point being made is that, with a functional Constitution where justice rules, nation-building in Nigeria becomes less difficult.

## X. CONCLUSION

The paper took us down memory lane; through the meaning of nation-building to the theoretical framework for understanding of it, among other captivating and inspiring sub-topics that formed the structure of the work. Interestingly, nation-building is not something that is achieved without planning which must be vigorously pursued. Comparative case-studies of nation-building in the United States and Israel have shown that it is not an easy task and it is achievable in both heterogeneous and homogeneous societies, either in terms of ethnicity or religion. It therefore means that cultural and religious differences cannot be a barrier to nation-building in Nigeria.

Accordingly, the paper also discovered that without an effective leadership provision, no nation-building is achievable and this is where the role of the political scientists is seriously needed. This is what has been lacking in Nigeria and the dysfunctional Constitution that is in operation is giving the system the enablement to truncate a genuine political process. Against this backdrop, any nation-building that takes this for granted is bound to fail and the ones that will likely contribute to stable national and international peace will need to emphasize the democratic participation of the people within the nation. It will need to build the society, economy and polity which will meet the basic needs of the people, so that they are not driven by poverty, inequality, unemployment, on the one hand, or by a desire to compete for resources and power either locally or internationally on the other hand.

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