LEADERSHIP FAILURE AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR NATION BUILDING

Samuel B. Kalagbor, Ph.D & Deinibiteim M. Harry, Ph.D
Department of Public Administration,
Port Harcourt Polytechnic,
Rumuola, Port Harcourt
Email: macharryd@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: *The study explored the relationship between leadership failure and national integration in the nation building processes in Nigeria. As a nation composed of different ethnic groups, Nigeria has recently witnessed threats of disintegration more than ever before in her political history. This is largely attributed to leadership failure, particularly at the federal level. Successive governments have adopted various approaches to achieve national integration, such as state creation, quota system, federal character, etc. Yet, national integration remains elusive. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to demonstrate that the principal challenge to national integration in Nigeria is unethical leadership (bad governance). The study adopted the self-reliance theory as the theoretical framework of analysis, to explain the imperative of national integration in the nation building process. The study relied mainly on secondary data, focusing on the importance of ethical leadership in the unification of the country. The study revealed that efforts at national integration have not yielded positive outcomes because the nation's leaders at various times have not shown impartiality, fairness and justice to all ethnic groups in the country. Hence, the ever increasing agitation and clamour for independence/self-governance by different ethnic groups. The paper concluded that, for Nigeria to achieve seemly integration, our leaders must demonstrate obvious and sustainable capacity to de-emphasize ethno-religious cleavages in service to the nation. The study recommended, among other things, that leaders must stop trumping ethno-religious cards/biases, should sincerely and honestly see the entire country as one in the delivery of public goods and services, and the provision of public goods and services should be equitably distributed across the country in the general interest of Nigerians.*

KEYWORDS: leadership failure, national integration, nation building, quota system, secession, cleavages.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, like many other post-colonial states of Africa, Asia and Latin America, has witnessed perennial political instability occasioned by disharmony among the different ethnic nationalities in the country. The disharmony among the different ethnic nationalities is very visible in the manner different groups sing in discordant tunes about the future of the Nigerian nation-state. As Ojo (2009) puts it:
Nigeria has a unique problem not experienced by any state in the world past or present. The problem is that of achieving solidarity in action and purpose in the midst of hundreds of ethnic nationalities each exerting both centrifugal and centripetal forces on the central issue of "the nation, bound in freedom, peace and unity, where justice reigns".

Indeed, there is endless clamour for self-determination, greater autonomy, resource control and other separatist tendencies among the different ethnic groups thereby questioning the very existence of the Nigerian State, let alone the oneness of the country. Social Scientists have argued that for Nigeria, like most other post-colonial states, to achieve national unity, cohesion and political stability, concerted efforts must be made at national integration. Essentially, successive administrations have made various attempts at national integration such as the adoption a federal structure, introduction of quota system/federal character, national youth service corps, catchment area for tertiary institutions admission and unity schools, etc. However, as Ifeanacho and Nwagwu (2009) observed, Nigeria's efforts at achieving national integration have remained largely elusive and illusory.

The abysmal performance of the Nigerian state in the area of development and national integration since independence in 1960 has been largely attributed to the quality, nature and character of the nation's leaders during these six decades. Obviously, the effects of seemingly unethical and unaccountable political leadership or leadership failure in national integration and nation building anywhere in the world, and in Nigeria in particular, need not be overemphasized. Emelonye and Buergenthal (2011) cited in Onifade and Imhonopi (2013), asserted that, ineffective governance (leadership failure) in Nigeria today have greatly created ethnic divisions leading to misunderstanding, distrust among ethnic and religious groups who see themselves as rivals who must be subjugated or conquered by all means, thus hampering national integration and building a strong nation. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to demonstrate that the principal challenge to national integration and nation building in Nigeria is leadership failure, that is, unethical leadership or ineffective or bad governance. The paper contends that, for Nigeria to achieve national integration and building a virile and unified nation our leaders must demonstrate palpable capacity to uphold impartiality, fairness and justice to all ethnic groups as well as de-emphasize ethnic cleavages in service to the nation. The government must re-double its efforts through the different state institutions/ structures to ensure all inclusive governance.

Ethical Leadership
Ethical leadership has two critical words central to national development. Studies have shown that for a leader or leaders to positively affect their societies they necessarily should demonstrate high ethical standards. Ethics is concerned with the kinds of values and morals an individual or a society finds desirable or appropriate. Also, ethics is concerned with the virtuousness of individuals and their motives. Northouse (2016) observes that a leader's choices are largely influenced by his/her moral development; that is, the ethnical milieu within which such a leader was developed, which now serves as a guide. Leadership, on the other hand, is the action of leading a group of people or an organization, or a country. Chemers (1997) and Chin (2015) describe leadership as a process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid support of others in the accomplishment of a common task. This view of leadership is essentially related to that which occurs in an organization. A modified view of Investopedia (2018) sees leadership as the ability of a group of individuals (managers of a nation or the government) to set and achieve challenging goals, take swift and decisive action, and inspire others to perform well and achieve set objectives. Effective, purpose- driven and productive leadership shows optimism at all times, provides positive energy and impetus for other citizens to work towards set goals of the society. Essentially, some of the leadership qualities that differentiate good leaders from bad ones are: ability to inspire others, honesty and integrity, commitment and passion, decision-making capabilities, accountability, creativity and innovation and good communication skills, etc. No doubt,

leadership is a vast area of study in different disciplines, which has produced theories involving traits, vision, values, charisma and intelligence, and so on.

Having summarily explained the meaning of the words "ethics" and "leadership", what then is "ethical Leadership"? Ethical leadership is leadership that is directed by respect for ethical beliefs and values and for the dignity and rights of others (Watts, 2008). It follows that ethical leaders apply the rule of law in all their endeavours, especially in decision making. Brown, et al (2005) opined that ethical leadership is strongly related to concepts such as trust, honesty, integrity, consideration, charisma and fairness. In this connection, such leaders, for all intents and purposes, are expected to be above board in the discharge of their responsibilities individually and collectively and in whatever capacity.

To this end, ethical leadership means guiding your people, leading by example and doing the "right thing" without abandoning your personal or individual idiosyncrasies, beliefs and values. Similarly, Bisk (2018) describes ethical leadership as a form of leadership in which individuals demonstrate conduct for the common good that is acceptable and appropriate in every area of their life. This position is in tandem with the views of a renowned classical political philosopher, Plato, who argued that for the "common good" of all in the polity only the philosophers should be in leadership positions (particularly political/administrative leadership positions). This is because only the philosophers have the wisdom and knowledge, can identify the "Good" and "external truth" upon which society's peace, progress and development as well as better life for all citizens is anchored (Harry, 2017). Simply put, ethical leaders do the right thing, at the right time and for the right reasons, in the interest of all and sundry.

Bill Grace developed what she called the 4-V Model of Ethical-Leadership, which is a framework that helps to align the internal (beliefs and values) with the external (behaviours and actions) for the purpose of advancing the common good (Kar, 2014). The 4-Vs stand for values, vision, voice and virtue, which are the characteristics that help create a strong ethical leader. The main goal of an ethical leader is to create a world in which the future is positive, inclusive and allows the potentials for all individuals to pursue and fulfill their needs and meet their highest potentials (Kar, 2014).

Characteristics of Ethical Leadership

Scouts (2017) proffered ten characteristics of ethical leadership. Some of these characteristics, attributes and traits are:

1.   **Justice**: An ethical leader is always fair and just. He/she has no favourites, and treat everyone equally. Under an ethical leader, no individual has any reason to fear biased treatment on the basis of gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc.

2.   **Respect for Others**:   One of the most important traits of ethical leadership is the respect that is given to followers. An ethical leaders shows respect to all members of the nation by listening to them, valuing their contributions, being compassionate, generous and appreciates opposing viewpoints (dissenting views).

3.   **Honesty**:   It goes without saying that anyone who is ethical will also be honest and loyal. This is particularly important as it makes for effective governance and followers trust honest and dependable leaders. Such leaders convey facts transparently no matter how unpopular they may be.

4.   **Humane**:   Being humane is one of the most revealing traits of a leader who is ethical and moral. Ethical leaders place importance in being kind and act in a manner that is always beneficial to all.

5.   **Value driven decision-making:** In ethical leadership, all decisions are first checked to ensure that they are in accordance with the overall national value. Only decisions which meet this criterion are implemented.

6.   **Leadership by example**: Ethical leadership is not just about talking the walk; this type of leader also walks the talk (i.e. walk the talk leadership).

7.   **No tolerance for ethical violations**:   An ethical leader requires all citizens to do the right thing at all times, not just when it is convenient for them. Do not expect a leader of such high values to overlook or tolerate ethical violations.

Leadership Failure

The term leadership failure is used to describe all the opposite tendencies of ethical leadership. For the avoidance of doubt, these tendencies include, but not limited to, unpatriotic, primordial, nepotic, unjust, unfair and dishonest dispositions in leadership position. Other terminologies that could be used for leadership failure are unethical leadership, bad leadership and ineffective leadership.

According to Patterson (2016), leadership failure refers to a situation of negative unintended consequences resulting from mistakes, errors, ignorance, lack of expertise, flawed communication and inability to lead. Patterson further notes that such unintended consequences could have little or huge effect on the organization being led, the public being served and the surrounding internal and external environments. In addition, Cole and Seaman (2005) posit that leadership failure implies a leader who fails to provide true and proper command, inspiration and strategic vision for their organization which results in disaster. To them, such leadership delude themselves and mislead others within a losing legacy. No doubt, when leadership failure occurs in a political system, that is, a nation, such failure could result in death and have far-reaching catastrophic impact on the country and its citizens. As Joseph (2018) has argued, "Leadership failure is the reason for all the ills that are obvious in our society today".

National Integration

The significant task confronted by the leaders of most multi-ethnic nation-states is to generate national identity and unify the state out of the existing differences in language, culture, etc; among the people. This challenge necessitated the articulation by Social Scientists, that leaders of pluralist societies or multi-ethnic countries must necessarily embark on national integration to create a harmonious relationship among the diverse groups. The question here is: what is national integration? Like many other concepts in the Social Sciences, it is difficult, if not impossible, to proffer a straight jacket or one-fit-all definition of the concept, national integration. Rather, in this section attempt would be made to present some articulations to explain what national integration is all about. Duverger in Ojo (2009) sees national integration as the process of unifying a society which tends to make it a harmonious city, based upon an order its members regard as equitably harmonious." Similarly, Jacob and Tenue, cited in Ojo (2009) refer to it as "a relationship of community among people within the same political entity... a state of mind or disposition to be cohesive, to act together, to be committed to mutual programmes." In his own view, Ojo (2009) describes national integration as a process in which "members of the social system develop an escalating sequence of contact, cooperation, consensus and community". Essentially, national integration is examined from the standpoint of the extent to which different parts of a society interact and complement each other in order to constitute viable whole. National integration is often considered to be a broad and all encompassing process and activity of achieving peace and

stability as well as socio-economic development in a polity. Hence, Onifade and Imhonopi (2013) wrote:

National Integration is seen as a process that produces an omnibus of initiatives put in place by a state, its representatives or institutions guided by respect for the unique traditions and cultural background of ethnicities sharing the same polity with the goal of harmonising all interests through a form of dialogue and representation and adores sing differences that may be divisive and conflictual using the instrument of fairness, justices and equity in the sharing of resources, benefits, opportunities and responsibilities in order to guarantee stability, longevity and prosperity of the polity as long as the inhabitants decide to remain within the polity.

Indeed, national integration is a conscious and deliberate effort towards attainment of coordination and harmony within a state. To this end, Usara (2001) cited in Bakari (2017) defines national integration as "the unity of the various ethnic groups in the country or nation in such a way that they see one another as brothers and sisters devoid of tribal sentiments, nepotism and all other vices that bring polarization of the people." As Shah and Ishaque (2017) assert, it is "a consistent development in which diverse sections of society are provided with identical prospects and equal rights to enjoy several amenities devoid of any discrimination". It is important to note that the oneness, unity and harmony among the diverse ethnic groups do not mean that such differences no longer exist, but they are not emphasized in service delivery and development processes, rather all segments of the society/state are viewed through the prism of national identity (that is, Nigerianness of all). Simply put, national integration is a situation whereby citizens of a country, both majority and minority ethnic groups, are deliberately and consciously made to participate in the state processes, especially governance, without prejudice to their ethnic origin. It implies willful acceptance and submission to state structures and institutions by a great majority of the people from both majority and minority ethnic groups.

While it is true that integration is necessary in pluralist or multi-ethnic states, it is hardly absolute. However, it is argued that strong states only developed into nation-states where social and cultural integration occurred within their boundaries. Grillo (1980) cited in Moore (2001) opines that, there are few, if any, states in Western Europe where integration is absolute or complete, and therefore finds the "European repertoire" from which the idea of nation is constructed to be arbitrary. In the words of Rogers (1991) cited in Moore (2001),"even in France, the archetypical case of homogenous, integrated nation, enormous local and regional socio cultural differences persist late in the 20th century".

Approaches to National Integration: An Overview
There are different approaches or models of national integration in literature. Some of these approaches or models are:
Assimilation: In this approach, different cultures are blended to be incorporated into one national culture. Most often the minority ethnic groups are encouraged to adopt the culture of the majority ethnic groups which then becomes the national culture. As Shah and Ishaque (2017) observed, "assimilation can be accomplished through socialization and abandoning of socio-political cultural loyalties of various small ethnic groups with their absorption into the major/dominant group". Assimilation policy to national integration is usually pursued when the minority ethnic groups do not seek to change the status quo; that is when the minority ethnic groups do not challenge the domination of the majority

ethnic groups. Thus, Mylonas (2007) asserts, "if the non-core group (that is minority) has no competing claim at all, then the core group (that is majority) will follow nation-wide assimilation policies."

Exclusion: This occurs when members of minority ethnic groups seek to change the status quo and challenge the dominance of the majority ethnic groups. It takes the form of subjugation, deportation, intimidation and even killing of members of the minority ethnic groups that are resistant to the domination of the majority groups. In such state a policy of segregation is enforced as was seen in the United States of America, against African Americans. It is also called the differentialist model.

Federalism: This approach to national integration appreciates and encourages "unity in diversity", within the polity. The component units or federating units (usually created along ethnic lines) are recognised and constitutionally empowered to administer themselves under the same central government. Many pluralist societies adopt the federalism model in governing their states or nation-states. Some examples of states with the federal structure are Canada, USA, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, etc.

Factors Affecting National Integration

These are the issues that must be handled with utmost care in order to accommodate the different groups in a polity so as to achieve the most desired peace, stability and harmonious relationship. The first factor considered in this paper is culture. Culture is the totality of way of life of a people, which includes their beliefs, customs, traditions, norms and mores. Multi-cultural societies are usually fragmented along cultural lines. Nonetheless, as Shah and Ishaqaue (2017) have noted, "national integration in multi-cultural societies has been an attempt to forge "unity in diversity", pursuing to reduce to the bearest minimum socio-cultural distinctions and implementing uniformity not minding the cultural differences of even a complex nature. Such efforts enhance oneness of purpose of the state and accelerate development.

Closely related to the first is language, which is also a form of identity of a people and unites them. In a multi-lingual society, a common language is an absolute necessity to serve as a unifying factor. Without such, it is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve national integration. In most nation-states that are multi-lingual in nature a "Lingual Franca" is developed or adopted to enhance national integration. Another factor that affects national integration is religion. Multi-religious societies are usually divided along religious lines in their World View and it creates disharmony in the polity. Shah and Ishaque (2017) posit that, "religious harmony with interfaith dialogue and accommodation is an essential requirement for furthering national integration." They argue that religious freedom is the right of every citizen and earnest obligation of every government. Indeed, religious intolerance creates anger, hatred, and other tendencies towards violence, thus, harmful to national integration.

Lastly, the issue of ethnicity vs new national identity. Ethnicity is a factor that tends to divide people rather than unite them, particularly when people cling to their ethnic cleavages and claim superiority over others. Ethno-centricism creates disharmony and causes national dis-integration. However, it is possible to create a new identity for all the people in a nation-state irrespective of their ethnic differences. The United States of America is a melting-pot of different ethnic groups of the world, nonetheless, they all have come together for the American identity and shared values of enjoying equal democratic rights.

Nation Building

The idea of nation building has long existed in history, but was reinforced in the mid 19th Century when the cultivation of nationalistic sentiments became a vital component or statements repertoire to set up legitimate order and secure the allegiance of the population within territories of states in Western Europe (Myloans, 2007). For better understanding of the concept of nation building, it is imperative to examine a key concept, which is nation. A nation, according to Salmond, in Babalola (2001) is "a group of people bound together by common history, common sentiments, and tradition and usually (though not always as, for example, Belgium or Switzerland) by common heritage". Similarly, Ezegbe (1994) defines a nation as people living in the same and sharing the same territory values, resources and psychic energy for the common good of its members and for their general development. A description of the term nation by the Webster Dictionary (2013) sees it as a people of an organized body politic, usually associated with particular territory and possessing a distinctive cultural and social way of life. What is clear from all the views is the idea of homogeneity and oneness of the people in common identity, culture and civilisation. Then, what is nation building?

Dinnen (2006), posits that the term nation building does not have precise meaning or one-fit-all definition. Consequently, two closely related concepts, nation building and state building, are used interchangeably by scholars. To him, "state-building involve the task of building functioning states capable of fulfilling the essential attributes of modern statehood, while nation-building refers to more abstract process of developing a shared sense of identity or community among the different groups making up the population of a particular state." He added that, while state-building is geared toward "the practical task of building or strengthening state institutions," nation-building, on the other hand, is "more concerned with the character of relations between citizens and their state". To this end, nation-building implies creating harmony and oneness among diverse people co-existing in a state/society. It is a process that focuses more on the citizens living in a particular country, thus external involvement or assistance is very limited.

Nation building is the constructing or structuring of a national identity using the power of the state (Wimmer, 2018). To Wimmer, nation-building is "aimed at the unification of the people without the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run." Three factors for the enhancement of nation building, Wimmer (2018) considered important are: (1) the early development of civil society organizations; this is closely related to the view of Dinnen (2006) where he asserts that, "active citizenship is a vital ingredient for building a coherent national community; (2) the rise of a state capable of providing public goods evenly across a territory; and (3) the emergence of a shared medium of communication. Similarly, three elements considered critical to nation-building are ideological legitimization, social integration and the development of stable and functional state apparatus.
Nation building is a well thought out process of bringing together for harmonious relationship of fragmented groups of a state/polity. Thus, it is an evolutionary social process, rather than a revolutionary once. Nation building is a deliberate process of creating national identity for the citizens of a country. Hence, Dinnen (2006) wrote:

nation-building referred to the self conscious production and dissemination of national consciousness and sentiment – of a felt sense of national identity. This task was to be undertaken by a small minority of intellectuals and state officials. Nation building in this sense effectively denoted the cultural and psychological dimensions of the transition to modernity.

In other words, when nation building has been effectively done, though it is an ongoing process, the citizens are to have national outlook and interests in their dispositions rather than pander to ethnic cleavages and interests at the expense of national development and support. Dinnen (2006) proffered ten key messages worthy of note in the nation building process. Some of which are:

(i)   For all practical purposes, most international assistance undertaken under the auspices of nation building today is, in fact, primarily directed at state-building. Few donors or other development agencies use the term nation-building in its literal sense of building a unified national society.

(ii)   Many of the challenges facing fragile state derive from both the absence of an effective state and the lack of a shared sense of identity and community among the local population. State weakness and the relative absence of nationhood are mutually reinforcing conditions.

(iii)   The construction and reproduction of national identities is a continuous and on-going process in all countries.

(iv)   The role of external assistance in nation building in the literal sense is necessarily a modest one; and,

(v)   Building functioning states is a pre-requisite, though not the only one, for effective nationhood.

Nature and Character of Nigerian Leadership

The nature and character of Nigeria's political leadership are widely documented in a plethora of literature. The leadership question in Nigeria among observers, analysts and academics is an endless one, with a great majority, holding the view that "leadership" is the major problem of Nigeria. Considering the nature and character of the Nigerian political leadership since independence, Ogunmilade, Nwoko and Akhigbe (2017) opined that, "the perception rating of the ruling elites is jaundiced by intense power struggle to access statist structure, private economic resources, repressive tendencies and the preoccupation with political struggle to the neglect of critical development issues." Utomi (2020) described the Nigeria's political system and its leadership as one in which those who are out for "greater plunder" mobilise to push out the "lesser plunderers". To him, the arena of public life in Nigeria is an arena of plunder, thus there is a disconnect between the leaders and the led.

As Okadigbo (1987) has observed, political leadership in the country is merely focused on sharing state resources rather than improving the living conditions and well-being of the people. Therefore, what is of utmost importance to the leadership is "state capture and the control of the state resources and institutions. Consequently, there is palpable absence of rigour in dealing with problems in the country. Similarly, Chiamogu and Okafor (2014) argued that the leaders of Nigeria do not have the culture or belief of common good for all the people. This has necessitated the migration of young Nigerians overseas in huge numbers seeking for greener pastures elsewhere, thereby creating the brain-drain situation witnessed in the country, depriving the nation on the much needed human resource for development.

The trouble with Nigeria as Achebe (1983) rightly noted in simply and squarely a failure of leadership. The bulk of leaders in Nigeria are certificated but do not have theknowledge and capacity to lead or govern. It is important to note that since the emergence of political community there has been the debate as to who should govern for the "common good" of all the people of the society. While there are many philosophical interventions from a number of thinkers, Plato's Republic dwelt more richly on this. The leadership situation in Nigeria fits into the situation Plato described as "Prisoners in the temple". In

other words, misfits have found themselves in governance positions. As Plato argued, in this kind of circumstances, where those who are not specially trained to identify the "form of the Good", which in this case is the interest of all, in position of public office, it is not possible for those in authority to govern in the interest of all or for the common good of all.

The incompetence of the ruling class in Nigeria is most visible in its management of the nation's resources, security, inter-ethnic relationship, etc. One major evidence of leadership failure in Nigeria, according to Ochulor (2011) is the fact that as the seventh largest producer of crude oil in the world Nigeria imports fuel for its local consumption. On the other hand, other oil producing nations like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, etc, do not import fuel, but rather, export refined petrol and petroleum products and had invested their resources to massively improve on the living conditions of their citizenry, while Nigeria is now the "Poverty Capital of the World." The state institutions and structures of government are not functional because of the low capacity and leadership weaknesses of the people manning them. For instance, the parliamentary system of government adopted at independence in 1960 did not work in Nigeria, while it is working well in UK, India, Canada, etc; so also, has the presidential system from 1979-1983, and uptil date, yet it is working in USA, etc. This is so because the operators of the system lack adequate knowledge and skills to make them work optimally. As Ochulor (2011) has observed, the leadership of Nigeria suffers from intellectual incapacity, lack of discipline and political inexperience. To him, "intellectual incapacity, lack of discipline and political inexperience on the part of our leaders lead to venality of office". Indeed, it is common knowledge that in Nigeria people bribe their way into public offices in the executive, legislature and judiciary.

The tendency to grab power at all cost by political elites in Nigeria is to have access to the so-called "National Cake", of which no one is prepared to bake the cake. Hence, there is unnecessary ethnic, religious and political violence to grab political power in the country. Interestingly, because of the ethnic cleavages of leaders in public offices most people in power tend to focus on developing their region, communities and giving appointments to people of their ethnic extraction. This explains the agitation by every region/ethnic group to produce the president or governor at the federal and state levels.

Commenting on the nature and character of political leadership in Nigeria Oni and Excellence-Oliye (2016), assert that, Nigeria's leaders lack foresight, are reactionary, dwell on falsehood to deceive the people, capitalizing on their ignorance and illiteracy and lack ideas, creativity and innovation. All of these go a long way to impoverish the people and underdevelop the nation. Obviously, in spite of the enormous blessing of the nation in terms of human and material resources, particularly oil mineral resource, because of the nature and character of the leadership of the country, the nation has remained underdeveloped. All of these make the governance/administration of the country highly inefficient.

Also, commenting on the inefficiency of the processes of governance in the country, in and epochal speech on the floor of the National Assembly, in the House of Representative, Honourable Patrick Obahiagbon in 2009, asserted that, because of mismanagement, highhandedness, directionlessness, consciouslessness, purposelessness and planlessness by the nation's leaders, a vast majority of the Nigerian people are living in squalor and hopelessness, while the very few that find themselves in leadership positions continue to loot the nation's treasury.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This work is anchored mainly on the Self-reliance Theory. The Self-reliance Theory was propounded by Lowe John in 1988 and reinforced by Ukeje C. in 1992. Self-reliance is a concept within the Charokee holistic world view where all things are believed to come together to form a whole. The theory postulates that individuals, communities, institutions, organizations, groups, government organs and agencies are all endowed with potentials, resources and capabilities that are to be harnessed for the survival of the whole. As Bakari (2017) noted, all the groups are to rise up and contribute their quota to ensure collectivity and productivity for self-reliance in all spheres of national integration, nation building and development. According to Lowe (2012), to achieve integration groups must be true to themselves and have the drive to be connected. This would involve being responsible (i.e. caring for self and caring for others), being disciplined (i.e. setting goals and pursuing goals) and being confident (i.e. having a sense of identity and a sense of self-worth).

This theory is relevant to our present study and the Nigeria socio-political environment as there are so many agitations by different ethnic groups calling for equity, justice, fairness, resource control and self-determination, etc. Essentially, it shows that the different ethnic groups/regions are endowed with diverse resources, human and material, that could be harnessed to make Nigeria great. However, this is only possible if the ethnic groups would be responsible to care for themselves and others, create synergies that would reduce distrust, rivalry, mistrust, etc and increase oneness or greater unity of the nation.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted mainly library research approach in the collection of data and content analysis method of data analysis. This means that it was qualitative in nature. To this end, secondary data were drawn from textbooks, journals, articles, newspapers, magazines, archival materials, etc. These works were selected on the basis of their suitability and relevance to the topic under investigation. The content analysis method in a research work, as Hsieh and Shannon (2005) have argued, is "the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns. It is mainly inductive in application. In this study, content analysis was used to show the relationship between leadership failure and national integration in Nigeria and its implication for the national building process in multi-ethnic society like ours.

Leadership failure and National Integration in Nigeria

Nigeria has different ethnic nationalities in the length and breadth of its territory. Some account put the number of ethnic groups as over 250, while others put it at about 400 groups (Babalola, 2001). This suggests a huge difference in culture and civilization of the people of the country. The configuration of the groups revealed that there are three majority ethnic groups: Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba; while all others are classified as ethnic minorities. Also, the country is sharply divided into north and south, with the north hosting the Hausa/Fulani majority and other minorities, while the south is playing host to the Igbo and Yoruba majorities as well as other minorities. This, therefore, requires a reasonable balancing in the composition of the politico-socio-economic structures, that is, in the governance

processes, of the country. The question is: How have successive administrations handled this very important issue/concern to give all citizens, whether of the majority or minority, a sense of belonging? Similarly, how have successive administrations or leadership of the country made all citizens to feel a sense of ownership of the Nigerian enterprise? This is all about the issue of national integration and nation building.

Without any iota of doubt, successive administrations have made various efforts at national integration and nation building since the country's independence in 1960. For instance, in 1954, the Colonial Administration adopted the Federal system of government to accommodate the diverse ethnic nationalities in the principle of "unity in diversity". However, following the military intervention in 1966, the federal structure in operation in the country was adulterated leading to various dissatisfactions by different ethnic groups and upsurge of agitations. As Onifade and Imhonopi (2013) assert, "while federalism has been applauded as a silver bullet to the ethnicity problem in Nigeria, the skewnesss and pervasion of this typology of governance has frustrated the benefits it could have provided the nation." Other efforts at national integration and nation building since after the Civil War in 1970 are: the Unity School Scheme National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme, and Federal Character, enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Unity School Scheme intends to bring together young Nigeria children from different ethnic groups across the country to live together during their formative stages so as to appreciate and accommodate their differences as they turn adults. This scheme has been ongoing since the 1970s but has not had great impact because as the young Nigerians completed their secondary education and go back home to their older family members, they receive the teachings of ethnic bias, superiority and dominance. Similarly, the NYSC Scheme was introduced via Decree No. 24 of May 22, 1973, to enhance interaction among tertiary institutions graduates across the country. It is a one year compulsory national service of young graduates which takes individuals away from their state of origin to other states, thereby providing them the opportunity to live and serve in the states of their deployment for the period. It is expected that during the period, the young graduates (corps members) would learn to understand and appreciate the way of life and civilization of fellow Nigerians in their host communities. Nonetheless, the NYSC Scheme has failed to achieve the desired objective of national integration. It has the challenges of ethnic consideration, favouritism, and cronyism in posting of corps members to their places of primary assignment. In addition, Ojo (2009) cited in Onifade and Imhonopi (2013) observed that a major challenge of the Scheme is the problematic nature of citizenship, indigeneship and settler status in Nigeria. To them, these have made "many Nigerian youths experience more of frustration rather than integration because after serving in a particular state other than theirs, they do not expect to get jobs where they have "thanklessly" undergone the NYSC programme because in many cases, they would be tagged as non-indigenes and will be forced to go back to their states of origin to avoid being discriminated against".

Another effort by government at national integration and nation building was the introduction of the Federal Character principles, also known as the quota system approach. The Federal Character principle was first enshrined in the 1979 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria and subsequently the 1999 Constitution, as amended. Accordingly, S.14 (4) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) provided that:

The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or in any of its agencies.

Ugoh and Ukpere (2012) posit that the aim of the federal character principle is to achieve fairness, equity, justice and effective representation of the different components of the federation in the country's position of power, status and influence. Indeed, it is geared towards ensuring that appointments into public offices reflect the diversities in linguistics, culture, ethnic, religious and geographical groups in the country. However, the principle has been criticized for encouraging mediocrity in the Nigerian public service and over-politicization.

In Nigeria, all the efforts at integration and nation building appear to have failed to achieve the desired results. The efforts failed largely because of leadership failure. Obviously, the nation's leaders' rights from independence are more inclined to pursuing their ethnic agenda rather than unite the country. Out of the three most notable nationalists in the country, namely: Sir Ahmadu Bello – north, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe – east, and Chief Obafemi Awolowo – west, two were championing regional/ethnic courses, while only Dr. Azikiwe was the one championing national unity. Specifically, in his book "Path to Nigeria Freedom, published in 1947, Chief Obafemi Awolowo express disbelieve in the Nigerian project and national unity. In fact, Chief Obafemi Awolowo had said that, "Nigeria is not a nation, it is a mere geographical expression. There are no Nigerians in the same sense as there are English or Welsh or France (French)". The implication of this assertion is that, the fact that different ethnic groups live in one national boundary called Nigeria, they can never have one national identity as "Nigerians". Thus, Nigeiranness of the people is impossibility. Rather we can only have Hausas, Fulanis, Igbos, Yorubas, Ijaws, etc. This ethnic and regional thinking by the leadership transcend the First Republic and is still with us up till day.

The issue of leadership failure in the Nigeria political system has become very troubling that it requires urgent redress. Certainly, leadership failure stems from the fact that the kind of leaders we have are not persons who are adequately knowledgeable with intellectual capacities to harness the numerous human and material resources of the different ethnic groups and regions to create huge wealth for the benefit of all. Instead, they are persons who are scrambling to grab a large chunk of the little wealth generated from one region of the country. It is not surprising, therefore, that Nigerians are poor in the midst of the huge resource potentials available in the nation. As Ochulor (2011) has observed, in Nigeria what matters to leaders is the politics of the national cake, and whoever has the national cake enjoys the support of the people, particularly those from the same ethnic groups, hence, leading to the marginalization of many other ethnic groups. Utomi (2020) noted that, the attempt to take over power for plunder without creating huge wealth for the benefit of all often leads to fight. Obviously, such disposition to leadership breeds inter-ethnic and religious rivalry, hatred, mistrust, distrust, violence, insecurity, etc.

Commenting on the cumulative effects of leadership failure in Nigeria and its impact on national integration and nation building, Babalola (2001) wrote:

The unfortunate events that led to the regrettable internecine civil war for about 30 months, the threat of annulations of the tribes in southern Zaria that are predominantly Christians, ZangoKatafs, the periodic uprisings in Kano and lately in Kaduna, the threat of civil unrest in Ilorin, the Mayhem that almost turned Modakeke and Ife into rubbles, the agitations for control of oil and mineral resources by the producing states, the underclared war between Jukuns and Tivs, the perennial Ijaw-Itshekiri and Urbobo clashes, the threat of Sharianisation of our legal system and the violent uprisings in reacting to failure to address the critical issue of how the numerous nations in Nigeria can live together as members of one and only one nation.

To him, it is the failure of leaders to govern the nation as one entity for all its citizens that has led to the apparent dissatisfaction, agitations and threat to national unity in the country. Parochialism, ethnic cleavages and chauvinism account for the widespread fear about the future of Nigeria. It is important to note that between 2010 and 2015 President Goodluck Jonathan's government attempted to create an environment in which "every Nigerian feel secured, where security implies freedom from fear, not just in terms of defending territory but more in protecting people and providing for their basic and essential needs" of life wherever they might be residing across the nation (Ogunmilade, Nwoko and Akhighe, 2017). This was done through the promotion of political and social structures in which all ethnic groups are fairly represented, as well as the protection of human rights, rule of law, minority rights and the encouragement of equity, fairness and social and economic justice. Though this act of trying to balance all the interests was not very successful and the approach made the government weak, it achieved relatively reasonable levels of national unity and integration. For example, since after the Civil War that was the first and only time a person from the Igbo extraction was appointed the Chief of Army Staff in the country. Lt General Azubuike Ihejirika was appointed Chief of Army Staff by President Jonathan on September 8, 2010, and indeed, he is the only Igbo man that has attained the rank of Lt. General in the Nigerian Army for 50 years. Thus, during this period agitations for resource control, restructuring and self-governance threats largely reduced. Unfortunately, such demands have heightened under the President Muhammadu Buhari's administration due to its highhandedness, violation of rule of law, and nepotic dispositions, especially on the appointment of public office holders in federal government ministries, departments and agencies.

Considering the effect of this sectional and nepotic disposition of the President Buhari's administration on national unity, integration, cohesion and nation building, Majeed (2019) asserts that equity, fairness and justice are the conditions precedent to national unity and development in anywhere in the world. It is important to note that the federal character principle is one of the tools employed by the government to enhance national integration and nation building. This principle has been violated repeatedly by the President Buhari's administration since its inception in 2015.

For instance, in the appointment of Commissioner for Police of the 36 States and FCT, it is expected that, in line with the federal character principle, every state would have one slot and one for the FCT but this was not the case. While Katsina State (that is, the President's home state) alone has four (4), Fourteen (14) other states, including Abia, Anambra, Bayelsa, Benue, Delta, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Enugu, Jigawa, Kogi, Nasarawa, Ondo, Oyo and Rivers had none (Nwezeh, 2019). To put it in geo-political zones context, out of the six zones, North west (the President's zone) had the highest with twelve (12) Commissioners of Police, North-East eight (8), South-West seven (7), South-South five (5), North-Central Four (4) and South-East one (1). Similarly, in the appointment of Security Chiefs, out of seven

(7) notable offices such as the Chief of Defence Staff, Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Naval Staff, Chief of Air Staff, Inspector General of Police, Director of State Security and Controller General of Customs, five (5) were Hausa/Fulani Muslim and two (2) were Christians from the South (one is Yoruba and one Ibibibo). All these and other acts of leadership recruitment create discontent, disaffection ethnic and sectional disloyalties in the Nigerian federation and has far-reaching implications for nation building, especially with respect to the emergence of national identity and cohesion in the country.

Implication for Nation Building
The isolation and marginalization of certain classes of citizens and ethnic groups from the processes of governance create discontent and disenchantments in the nation and have serious implications for nation building. First, it is extremely difficult for the citizens to see themselves as one and thereby create a sense of national identity. Obviously, with such fragmented and fractured relationships among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria it is very difficult, if not impossible, to have a national identity for the citizens. Hence, the difficulty of an individual relocating from his/her state of origin to settlements in some other states without discrimination and be accorded every social and economic rights available for others who are considered to be indigenes.

Second, is the challenge of unity of purpose in pursuit of a "national course." As it is often the case in Nigeria, on every national issue, the different ethnic groups sing in discordant tunes, with every group projecting their interest over and above others. For example, on the issue of state police, fiscal federalism, etc, the different regions/ethnic groups have different views despite the huge security challenge the nation is faced with.

Third, is the problem of inter-ethnic rivalry that has escalated to high heavens. One major implication of leadership failure in the nation building process is the inter-ethnic and inter-religious rivalry leading to secession threats that shake the very foundation of the federation. As Femi Fani-Kayode asserts, the desire for self-determination is very high in the south-west region today than it has ever being in history because of the policy of the Buhari's administration holding the Fulani race as superior to all others in the country (AIT, 2020). Similarly, Chief Goddy Uwazuruike has argued that many independent observers across the globe have noted with dismay that the conditions that caused the Civil War in July, 1967 are very evident in the present day Nigerian State (AIT, 2020). What this shows is that even after a bitter Civil War experience, successive leaderships of Nigeria have not been able to unify the different interests to build a stable nation-state.

Lastly, we have the issues of mistrust and distrust among Nigerians, particularly among the three major tribes: Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba. It is for the lack of trust that appointments are usually centered around members of the leaders" ethnic groups. Expressing his lack of trust for the Igbos, a notable Hausa/Fulani scholar and politician, Dr. Junaid Mohammed in an interview with Independent Newspaper, categorically declared that northerners will never endorse or vote any Igbo candidate for the office of the President of the Federation (Oyoyo, 2019). Such spectacular display of mistrust and distrust of an ethnic group by another is a recipe for disintegration and can never enhance national unity, integration and nation building.

CONCLUSION

The lack of conciliation among political elites across the federation has resulted in ethno-religious disharmony and rivalry since independence in 1960 and has not abated six decades after. This is largely due to their desire to grab power and appropriate state resources for their personal aids as well as, to some extent, improve the living conditions of members of their ethnic and religious affiliations through appointments, award of contract, etc. The implication of this is that, national integration and nation building have continued to suffer since independence. The inability or unwillingness of the political leaders of the country to unify and evenly develop the country is generally described as "leadership failure". No doubt, successive administrations have made various efforts at achieving national integration, however, these efforts have not yielded the expected outcomes, essentially due to insincerity and lack of the real political will to do so. This has often resulted in agitations for self-determination, resource control, restructuring, increase in opportunities in government, etc. Therefore, the conclusion of the paper is that for Nigeria to achieve nationhood, in the likes of England, France and Wales, our leaders must demonstrate obvious capacity to downplay ethno-religious biases, pursue the path of honour by making honest and sincere efforts to genuinely integrate the people from the different ethnic groups. One sure way to do this is to be fair, just and equitable in service to the nation at whatever level and in the distribution or allocation of public resources.

Recommendations
Consequent upon the foregoing, the following recommendations are consideration apposite:
(i)   leaders must stop trumping ethnic cards/biases in the governance processes, rather they should be accommodative of citizens from other ethnic groups and regions.
(ii)   they should honestly and sincerely see the entire country as their constituency in the delivery of public goods and services, and such provisions of public goods should be seen to be evenly and justly done across the country. This will enable states tap from the potentials/resources across the federation and enhance national development.
(iii)   place of residence and competence should be emphasized above indigeneship in appointments, recruitment, etc into public offices, access to state resources and privileges. This should be enshrined in the constitution to promote national integration and cohesion; and;
(iv)   strict adherence to constitutional provisions should be emphasised, especially with respect to the federal character principle and other extant laws.

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