

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND NATION BUILDING: THE CASE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The thrust of the paper is to examine the relationship between political socialization and political culture in crystallizing the process of nation building in Nigerian society. The developmental implications of the synergy provided drive for the paper. The paper argued that nationalism encouraged national consciousness and unity that made it possible for the nationalist leaders to emancipate Nigerian society from the shackles of colonialism. Thus, their failure to sustain nationalism on attainment of political independence in 1960, accounted for the inability of the nationalist leaders to mobilize the citizenry through political socialization to evolve right political culture supportive of the political system. This phenomenon created the problem of nation building. The implication was the failure of Nigerian peoples regardless of their individual ethnic, class, religions or linguistic differences to come to identify with the symbols and institutions of the state and share a common sense of destiny. The paper contested that the class character and interests of the nationalist leaders were antithetical to national unity and progress. It was characterized by ethnicity, greed for political power and wealth to the detriment of survival of Nigerian society. These phenomena engendered unhealthy political rivalry among political parties already formed along ethnic cleavages. The paper concluded that given this state of affairs, it was difficult for the nationalist leaders to politically socialize Nigerians to evolve the right political culture necessary for nation building.

Keywords: Political Socialization, Political Culture, Nation Building, Development, Political System

Introduction

Socialization is “the process by which individuals learn the culture of their society” (Harambos and Holborn, 2000:4). Culture itself is “the totality of learned, socially transmitted customs, knowledge, material objects and behavior. It includes ideas, values and artifacts of groups of people” (Schaefer, 2010:53). Extrapolating from this definition, political socialization refers to “the process of induction into a political system” (Marshall, 1996:400). Ofoeze (2001:13) referred to political socialization inter- alia:

...the long development process by which an infant (even adult) citizen learns, imbibes and indeed internalizes the political culture (core political values, beliefs, norms and ideology) of his political system so as to make meaning of the world around him.

The implication of the above citation is that political socialization is a process by which political ideas of any given society are internalized and transmitted from one generation to the other. In other words, political socialization is the vehicle through which political culture emerges.

Modern use of the concept “political culture” is traceable to the work of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba (1963) titled “The Civic Culture”. The study represented a classic comparative analysis of political attitudes and democracy in five countries. The essence was to demonstrate how cultural development and political development move in tandem (Marshall 1996). Political culture according to Marshall refers to “the norms, values and symbols that help to legitimize the political power system of a society” (Marshall, 1996:398). McLean and McMillan (2009:400) defined political culture as:

The attitudes, beliefs and values, which underpin the operation of a particular political system. These were seen as including knowledge, and skill about the operation of the political system, positive and negative feelings towards it, and evaluative judgments about the system.

Political culture in the words of Rosenbaun (Cf. Ofoeze, 2001) is defined in two ways namely, at the levels of individual citizens and at the political system as a whole. On the individual level, political culture is defined as “all the important ways in which a person is subjectively oriented towards the essential element in the political system”. On the political system as a whole, political culture is referred to as “the collective orientation of a person towards the basic elements in their political system” (Cf. Ofoeze, 2001:16 – 17). The above

definitions emphasized the importance of orientation of members of society towards basic and essential element of the political system. Thus, positive orientations that generate norms, values, beliefs and attitudes that are supportive of the political power system is basic to political culture. In other words, effective political socialization breeds enduring political culture.

In the view of Almond and Bingham (in Ofoeze, 2001), Political socialization performs the following functions:

- Shapes and transmits a nation's political culture.
- Maintains society's political culture from one generation to the other.
- Has the capacity to transform the population or part of it, to view and experience politics in different dimensions.
- Rapid changes or extraordinary events have the capacity of generating political culture even where none existed (through cultural diffusion).

Political socialization process simply entails the inculcation of a society's political culture in members of society and the transmission of such from one generation to the other. Thus, individuals, groups or institutions that affect people's self-concepts, attitudes, behaviors or other orientations are referred to as agents of socialization. The political parties are the major agents of political socialization in modern democratic governance. The political party is defined as:

An organized group of citizens of a state with similar views, ideas and ideology which they consider to be fundamental to the political system and good governance. The main purpose of political party is to contest elective political offices with a view to form government.

Political parties apart from carrying on the task of political socialization also perform the functions of:

- Interest articulation
- Interest aggregation
- Building political culture
- Political education
- Political leadership recruitment etc

According to Ofoeze (2001), political parties perform the role of interest articulation by identifying and selecting from innumerable and often conflicting and confused mass of problems, opinions, ideas and interests considered as more pressing, urgent and more critical, analyzing them, thinking and fashioning out solutions and presenting them in forms of policy options to the people for consideration. Political parties perform interest aggregation through the filtering of divergent views and opinion of the people and articulating them in such a manner that they can be presented for consideration as public policy.

Another important function of the political parties is the use of political socialization and education to build enduring political culture. In Western advanced democracies, political parties encourage positive orientations that generate norms, values, beliefs and attitudes that are supportive of the political power system. Another crucial function of the political parties according to Ofoeze (2001:25) involves:

The identification, screening, selection and discovery of those citizens possessing the relevant leadership abilities and who then are pointed into formal political governmental positions to exercise general political or governmental leadership.

These and other functions of the political parties under normal situation, help to create a stable and enduring political system.

In Nigerian society as is the case with most African societies, political socialization is yet to reflect what is obtainable in Western advanced liberal democracies as typified by the United States of America (USA) or Britain. This is against the backdrop that political socialization by political parties has not encouraged public support for basic political structures, institutions and symbols of the political systems. It has also been argued that appropriate political culture (attitudes, beliefs, values etc.) supportive of Nigeria's political power system is yet to be evolved. Some have also argued that political parties in Nigerian society have "manifesto" that are not philosophically and ideologically tailored. This phenomenon has resulted to lack of sense of direction. Consequently, these phenomena are believed to be responsible for the problem of "Nation Building in Nigeria".

The questions that arise are:

- Could colonial encounter be responsible for the perceived absence of the right political culture associated with nation building?

- Are there ways in which the activities of the nationalist leaders have acted as a deterrent to the emergence of right political culture necessary for nation building?
- Are there some institutional means for building an appropriate political culture, necessary for nation building, yet untapped; if there are, to what extent have they been put to use by the political leadership?

Answers to these questions formed the basis for the analysis.

The thrust of this paper is to show that effective political socialization is a catalyst for the evolution of enduring political culture necessary for nation building in Nigeria. Thus, the paper argues that there is positive relationship between political socialization and Nation building. The paper adopted analytical approach and essentially relying on textbooks, journals, articles, magazines, newspaper publications and past researches. The paper is organized under the following sub-themes:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Nationalist leaders and Evolution of Political Culture in Nigeria
- Political socialization and Nation Building
- The Development Implications
- Conclusions

Nationalist Leaders And Evolution Of Political Culture In Nigeria

Nationalism manifested in different forms and phases. It represented the various strategies used by African nationalist leaders to emancipate their various societies from the shackles of imperialism and colonialism. As documented by Mutiso and Rohio (1987), cultural nationalism was the earliest form of nationalists' struggle pleading for acceptance by the colonizers as natural beings rather than as cultureless beasts. The second phase the plaintive arose when the colonized thought that the colonizers were sure of their positions as cultural beings. It was at this point in time that the plea for cultural rights started. This was characterized by formation of cultural and religious organizations during the period of inter-war years (World wars). Radical nationalism followed suit and entailed radical strategies to end imperialism and colonialism in African societies. It was also a rejection of African inferiority and white superiority. Other instruments of nationalism included Pan-African nationalism, Neo-colonial struggle, ideological and integral nationalism and African non-alignment.

From the above sketch, nationalist leaders, within African context and Nigeria in particular, were the indigenous political leaders who fought for the emancipation of their societies from imperialism and colonialism. The acquisition of Western form of education by the nationalist leaders equipped them to understand the dynamics of imperialism, colonialism and political power. This phenomenon provided the original initiative to agitate and demand for political freedom for African societies from the colonizers. To actualize the dream of freedom for African societies, nationalist parties were formed across the continent of Africa. Few examples of such nationalist leaders include Dr. Herbert Macaulay, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Nigeria), Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania) and Jomo Kenyetta (Kenya). Some of the nationalist parties were the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), the Convention Peoples' Party (CPP), Tanganyikan African National Union (TANU), Kenyan African Nationalist Union (KANU), among others.

Nigerian society as presently constituted is a colonial creation precipitated by the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 by Lord Lugard. The implication is that culturally incompatible ethnic groups are lumped together to form a nation-state. Colonial encounter, gave rise to the introduction of the capitalist mode of production. Capitalism emphasizes private ownership of the means of production, profit maximization, division of labor, specialization of labor, production is market oriented, among others. These capitalist ethos is at variance with the African traditional communal mode of production. Communal mode of production is a welfarist in nature and context. The inevitable implication is that traditional Nigerian society's economy is destabilized as well as other basic institutions of society. These situations brought serious hardship and misery as well as cultural disorientation in all its ramifications. The experiences of African societies with colonial encounter are captured by Ofuebe (in Olisa and Obiukwu, 1992: 233 – 234) in the following words:

Africa's penetration of capitalism therefore precipitated a large scale cultural encounter between two sets of contradictory value systems, and initiated a relentless and multi-faceted assault upon Africa's non-capitalist values.

The nationalist leaders in Nigeria formed political parties to mobilize the support of the people to fight British colonization of Nigeria. Some of these political parties include the National Congress of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC), the Action Group (AG), the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), among others. Thus, nationalism was geared towards creating a

common sense of destiny and national unity necessary for agitation for political freedom from British colonial administration. As Almond and Powell (cf Ofoeze, 2001) argued, national integration oriented political parties have the primary objective of ensuring unity in diversity. This they do by creating a common sense of identity among the diverse ethno-linguistic groups. In Nigeria, this is important because most of the ethnic groups have been forced to live together due to colonial encounter.

In 1960 Nigeria gained her political independence. The political leaders instead of dissipating energy on how to weld the numerous culturally incompatible ethnic groups into united entity; were more concerned with acquiring absolute power, silencing their political opponents and using political offices to amass wealth for themselves. The 1962 – 63 census crises, the crises ridden 1964 general election, outright display of ethnic politics, among others stimulated attempt by the nationalist political leaders to manipulate the electoral process. Thus, thuggery, assassination, arson, election malpractices, among other anti-social vices became the order of the day. These situations partly accounted for military involvement in Nigeria's politics. This argument is supported by Nnoli (1980:145) when he asserted that:

The class character and interests of the nationalist parties were glaringly reflected in their activities when Nigerians assumed political positions of authority. They immediately embarked on the use of political machinery to pursue their class interests of amassing wealth and privileges against the interest of the majority of the country, the workers and peasantry.

Given the class, character and interests of the nationalist leaders before and after Nigeria gained her political independence in 1960; the paper maintained that evolution of right political culture supportive of the nation's political system remained illusive. For example, in advanced societies like Britain or United States of America (USA), political parties are known to be agents of national integration and nation building. Thus, these political parties inculcate in the citizenry core national political values, norms and beliefs supportive of the nation-state and its socio-political and economic institutions, structures and symbols (Ofoeze, 2001). In contrast, political parties in Nigerian society were not able to use political socialization as a veritable instrument of crystallizing appropriate political culture necessary for national integration and nation building.

Another factor that inhibited the crystallization of right political culture in Nigerian society by the nationalist leaders, was the formation of political parties along ethnic

cleavages. For example, the National Congress of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) formed in 1944 was regarded as an Ibo Political Party. The Action Group (AG) formed in 1948 was an offshoot of the Yoruba cultural organization known as Egbe Omo Oduduwa. The party's aim was solely to fight for the interests of the Yoruba's. Similarly, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was formed in 1951 and was also a political wing of cultural association called the Islamiyya Mutanen Arewa – the association of the peoples of the North. Other later political parties also had ethnic affiliations despite attempts by government to create political parties with national outlook. This situation tallies with Nnoli (1980:157) observation that:

By 1953 the major political parties in the country, the NCNC, AG, and NPC had become associated with the three major ethnic groups, Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa and the three regions of the country, East, West and North respectively.

Nationalist leaders failed to evolve right political culture necessary for the development of the nation's political power system partly, because of ethnicity. Ethnicity is the manipulation of ethnic sentiments in competitive struggles or interaction involving different ethnic groups. Thus, ethnicity has meaning only within the context of competitive interaction among member of different ethnic groups in a plural society (Obu, in Tamuno et al, 1999). On attainment of political independence, nationalist leaders became ethnic champions who must depend on ethnicity to sustain their political powers and advantages. In the words, of Nnoli (1995 cf Eno in Tamuno et al, 1999:117):

The awesome power of African state impels individual and ethnic groups to seek to control the state or at least, to have some access to it as a matter of security. Each ethnic group mobilizes its people in order to ensure this access. Such mobilization inevitably heightens ethnicity and ethnic consciousness.

The implication is that under these conditions of mutual distrust and suspicion, the nationalist leaders found it practically impossible to mobilize Nigerians through political parties for effective political socialization desirable for incubation of the enduring political culture. More worrisome is the fact that, Nigerians have come to view politics as a dirty game unfit for men and women of integrity. Consequently such words like bribery, corruption, rigging, arson, assassination, thuggery, among others are viewed as tools of winning elections in the Nigerian political system. Internalization of this view by the new crops of politicians

has become a serious obstacle towards the evolution of appropriate political culture supportive of the political system in Nigeria.

Political Socialization And Nation Building

According to the Utilitarian School of Thought, a state exists primarily for the promotion of the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people (Appadorai, 2004:42). In a similar vein, a state is organized to enable the masses realize social good on the largest possible scale (Laski '52:200).

As a corollary to these two approaches, therefore, government's basic functions revolve around the following:

- (1) Provision of Security
- (2) Provision of infrastructure
- (3) Provision of Social Amenities

The effective and efficient performance of these functions by the government always impacts positively or negatively on citizen's views about the government.

Where government meets the role expectations of citizens – provides security, builds and maintains infrastructures and provides all necessary social amenities, government gains credibility and citizens tend to align their individual goals with those of the state or government harmoniously. Ordinarily though, the goals of the State should take precedence over individual goals and this is why a Chinese couple for instance is expected to have not more than one child, in spite, perhaps of their individual preferences for a larger family.

In the developed polities of the world, (Britain, the USA, France etc.) agents of the state – the police, fire fighters, paramedics etc., put their own lives on the line to achieve state goals because their governments have earned their trust. These agents are certain that if peradventure they die in the course of their duties, their benefits and all other entitlements would be paid on time to their families. They are certain that members of their families would continue to have access to quality education, quality health care, good housing, among others.

Political orientation is continuously strengthened or undercut through personal experiences as well as those images presented by government agents. Are citizens safe in their homes? Are the Highways safe? Do government officials respond to citizen complaints? Does the government create jobs? Are the unemployed aided by social benefits? No matter how positive the view of the political system individuals held as children or adolescents, those of them who subsequently faces a different reality with their governments in their everyday lives in adulthood are likely to change their previously held views. As a matter of

fact, the contradictions between ideology and reality proved to be the Achilles' heel of the Communist State (Almond, 2008:56).

In Nigeria, government's desperate effort to brainwash the citizens with propaganda through the media and other agents of political socialization to love and trust their leaders is an exercise in futility because of citizens continuous negative experiences with government and her agents – the police, the teacher, the health official, the council boss etc. Added to these negative feedbacks are images of fractured infrastructures, high crime rate, teeming unemployed youths, excessively corrupt and gluttonous leadership in all tiers and organs of government.

Like individuals, a government as an entity must earn a good name before it can lay claim to one. It is insensitive and irresponsible to decree a pass mark for an ailing state despite citizen's unpalatable encounters with the same government in their everyday life. Such an approach is not only an affront to the intelligence of the generality of Nigerians, but also a mark of lack of self awareness on the part of government.

When members of a given political system are given effective and sustained political socialization, the inevitable result is that over time an identifiable political behavior emerges. Political behavior expresses the behavioral patterns of political actors like politicians, lobbyists, voters, among others (McLean and McMillan, 2009). This phenomenon gives rise to the crystallization of right political culture. Political culture refers to “the norms, values and symbols that help to legitimate the political power system of a society” (Marshall, 1996:390). For example, the political power system in the United States of America (USA) is legitimated by the constitution, democracy, equality, and the flag among others. The implication is that when the political culture of any society collapses or suffers from cultural disorientation crisis of legitimacy results. A typical instance is the case of Central Europe and the former USSR between 1989 and 1991 – the collapse of socialism and a change to capitalism.

Distilled from the above discourse is that there is a relationship between political socialization and the process of nation building. This is anchored on the fact that political socialization (effective or not) gives rise to political culture. Thus, enduring political culture encourages the process of nation building. Nation building refers to the process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from small tribe, village or petty principalities to the larger central system (Almond and Powell, cf. Obu in Tamuno et al, 1999:61). Nation building according to Magstadt (2009:299) refers to:

The process which all the inhabitants of a given territory, regardless of individual ethnic, tribal, religious or linguistic differences, come to identify with the symbols and institutions of the state and share a common sense of destiny.

The above definitions imply that nation building is a process. Process connotes the element of continuity in generating the forces necessary for nation building. This phenomenon necessitates that all the component elements of the nation state must in their mutual interest, come to identify with the symbols and institutions of the state. Identification with the symbols and institutions of the state enables the composing elements to share a common sense of belonging. It is this common sense of belonging that propels members to act in the best interest of their political system. This situation inevitably precipitates nation building as well as state building.

In Nigerian society the national anthem, the pledge, the national flag, the national coat of arms and the constitution are some of the symbols of national unity. The present National Anthem was adopted on October 1, 1978. Mr. Ben Odiase who was then the Director of Music Nigerian Police Band composed the music (SPDC, Diary 2011).

The First stanza of the National Anthem reads:

*Arise, O Compatriots,
Nigeria's Call Obey
To serve our Fatherland
With love and strength and faith.
The labor of our heroes past
Shall never be in vain,
To serve with heart and might
One nation bound in freedom, peace and unity.*

The first stanza of the National Anthem calls for obedience, service to fatherland with love, strength and faith. It reminds Nigerians that the labor of their past heroes should never be in vain. The National Anthem therefore urges Nigerian peoples to serve with dedication and commitment to create one nation bound in freedom, peace and unity.

The Second Stanza reads:

*O God of all Creation,
Direct our noble cause;
Guide our Leaders right:*

*Help our Youth the truth to know,
In love and honesty to grow,
And living just and true,
Great lofty heights attain,
To build a nation where peace and justice reign*

The Second Stanza of the National Anthem calls on God the creator to direct the good intentions of the people of Nigeria and more importantly, to guide the political leaders right. Help the future leaders (the youth) to know the truth and in love and honesty attain maturity. The stanza concludes that living just and true, Nigeria state will attain great lofty heights.

The National pledge is another instrument of nation building. It is a pledge by Nigerians to their fatherland:

*To be faithful, loyal and honest,
To serve Nigeria with all my strength,
To defend her unity,
And uphold her honor and glory,
So help me God.*

The implication of the National Pledge is that Nigerians whose socioeconomic and political activities are inimical to the growth, peace and unity of Nigerian society have violated the pledge. Political leaders who manifest greed, ethnicity, bribery, corruption, looting of the nation's treasury, abuse of office, incompetence, amongst others are guilty of the violation of the National Pledge. Consequently, both leaders and the led are to respect their National Pledge in the interest of nation building, peace and unity necessary for socioeconomic and political development of Nigerian society.

The National Flag is symbolic and encapsulates the idea of nation building. Nigeria's flag is a rectangular strip segmented into three equal parts namely, green, white and green. The green color represents the Nigerian society's land and agricultural potentials while the white depicts peace and unity. The National Flag is expected to be mounted in every corporate office, federal, state and local government offices as well as important public recreation arena like stadia, civic centers, and the independence square etc. The National Flag is inspirational and draws Nigerians' attention to the fact that Nigeria's vast agricultural land (creeks, streams, rivers, lakes, seas) is capable of meeting their food requirements as well as for export. Consequently, well-fed society is a happy society where peace and unity reign supreme.

The constitution is another symbol of nation building. It is a set of fundamental rules governing the politics of a nation or sub-national body (McLean and Mcmillan:116). According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, constitution refers to, "a system of laws and principles according to which a state or other organizations are governed. The constitution protects the interest of all the component elements in a nation state like Nigeria. It is therefore a symbol of national unity. The preamble of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 reads inter alia:

*We the People of the Federal Republic of Nigeria:
HAVING firmly and solemnly resolved: To LIVE in
unity and harmony as one indivisible sovereign Nation
under God dedicated to the promotion of Inter-African
Solidarity, World Peace, International Co-operation
and understanding: AND TO PROVIDE for a
constitution for the purpose of promoting the good
government and welfare of all persons in our country
on the principle of Freedom , Equity Justice, and for the
purpose of consolidating the Unity of our people:
DO HEREBY MAKE, ENACT AND GIVE TO
OURSELVES the following constitution:*

The Development Implications

Rodney (1972:9-37) posited that:

*Development in human society is a many sided process. At
the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and
capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline,
responsibility and mental well-being. At the level of
society, development means increasing capacity to
regulate both internal and external relationships.*

The World Development Report (1991) also asserts that the challenge of development is to improve the quality of life. This according to the report is more important in the world's poor countries. It posits that a better quality of life calls for higher incomes, better education, higher standard of health and nutrition, less poverty, a cleaner environment, more equality of opportunity, greater individual freedom and a richer cultural life (cf. Thomas, 2010).

Explicit in the above citation is that development is man's conscious attempt to create and recreate his environment with a view to maximizing his quality of life. Thus, development be it economic, political or social is man-centered. For example, political development refers broadly to the development of institutions, attitudes and values that form the political power system of society (McLean and McMillan, 2009:410). The essence of such development is to ensure a stable political system that guarantees good governance. Without people, sharing a common sense of destiny and identifying with the symbols and institutions within the political system development is unthinkable (political development). In effect, there is a connection between nation building and development process in any society.

In Nigerian society the agencies of political socialization particularly, the political parties have not been effective in mobilizing the citizenry to identify with the symbols and institutions of the political system. The implication is that most Nigerians show greater sentiments, allegiance and loyalty to their ethnic groups, families, kinsmen or religious affiliations, rather than the state (country). This situation has given rise to counter political behaviour, which is inimical to socio-economic and political development of the nation. These counter political behaviours find expression in the words of Oddeh (2007:156) in which he asserted that:

Up till date, an electoral fraud arises from the desire to control resources at local, state and federal levels of governments. In effect, the incidence of manipulation of census figures, rigging of elections, siphoning of public funds and other anti-social vices associated with Nigeria's electoral processes are born out of the desire to have access and control over material resources.

The citation above shows that greed for political power, manipulation of census figures, electoral frauds, siphoning of public treasury, among others are visible manifestations that most Nigerians lack faith in Nigeria's socioeconomic and political systems. Put simply, such citizenry have not been mobilized by various agencies of socialization to be committed to the ideals of nation building. This situation accounts for why political leaders cannot deliver the dividends of democracy to Nigerian society. This is in spite of the fact that "Nigeria is the world's seventh largest producer of crude oil and in spite of the fact that she has four oil refineries, but imports 70% of its refined petroleum products. The refineries, which have the capacity to process 445,000 barrels of crude oil a day, are running at about

30% of installed capacity... about ₦700 billion is spent on petroleum subsidy annually (the Nation, Wednesday March 30, 2010:4).

Development, be it economic, social or political, will continue to be a mirage in Nigeria not until the people imbibe the ideals of nation building. A situation in which all members of the society regardless of ethnic, religious, class or linguistic difference comes to identify with the symbols and institutions of the Nigerian state and share common sentiments and common sense of destiny. Under this state of affairs, the government will be capable of exercising authority and rendering services that will actualize the Thomas Jefferson's concept of "getting the greatest good for the greatest number of the citizenry" (Magstadt, 2009).

Conclusion

Political socialization has been defined as "the long developmental process by which an infant (even an adult) citizen learns, imbibes and indeed internalizes the political culture (core political values, beliefs, norms and ideology) of his political system so as to make meaning of the world around him (Ofoaze, 2001:13). The implication is that political socialization is "the process of induction into a political system" (Marshall, 1996:400). Thus, the enduring norms, values, beliefs and attitudes that are supportive of the political power system and which are transmitted from one generation to the other is referred to as the political culture. One of the most important agencies of political socialization is the political party. Apart from carrying on the vital function of political socialization, the political parties also perform such functions like interest articulation, interest aggregation, building political culture, political education, and political leadership recruitment, among many other latent functions.

The paper has argued that political socialization in Nigerian society has not encouraged nation building. This situation resulted from the fact that the nationalist leaders only conceived nationalism as an instrument targeted at emancipating African societies from the shackles of imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism (Mutiso and Rohio, 1987). Consequently, immediately Nigeria gained her political independence from Britain (the colonizer) in 1960, nationalism ceased to play any significant role as a strategy of mobilizing the citizenry for national unity. The implication was that nationalist leaders and their political parties failed to create a common sense of identity, oneness and common destiny among the culturally incompatible diverse ethno-linguistic groups in Nigeria.

The class character and interests of the nationalist leaders and their parties acted as a clog to the evolution of right political culture necessary for nation building. Nation building is defined as "the process by which all the inhabitants of a given territory, regardless of

individual ethnic, tribal, religious or linguistic difference, come to identify with the symbols, and institutions of the state and share a common sense of destiny” (Magstadt, 2009:299). Thus, greed for political power and wealth, engendered unhealthy political rivalry among the various political parties, which were fashioned along ethnic lines (Nnoli, 1980). The implication was that Nigerian politics became characterized by rigging, bribery, assassination, arson, thuggery, amongst other anti-social vices.

Given these phenomena, the paper concluded that the inability of the nationalist leaders and their political parties, to use political socialization to crystallize right political culture supportive of the political power system is to a large extent responsible for the political crises in Nigeria. Under this situation, development be it social, political or economic will continue to remain marginal.

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