

# THEY ARE NOT FROM OUR STATE: THE POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP; A POLITICAL PARALYSIS TO NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Citizenship no doubt is an important ingredient in the integration of groups in a multiethnic state which requires a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to the country with rights protected by a common law. Citizenship question in Nigeria as laid on the altar of ethnicity and other primordial factors heightens sentiments among groups thereby depriving the country of the needed loyalty; thus jeopardizing national integration. This work investigates the uncivil systemic prejudiced policies; motivated by ethnic consciousness used by different states in the country to protect the socio-political and economic rights of their citizens in contemporary Nigeria.*

*Keywords: Citizenship, Regionalism, Development, Politics, Constitution, Integration*

## INTRODUCTION

One contentious phenomenon in the Nigerian polity today is the uncivil systemic prejudiced policies; motivated by ethnic and primordial consciousness and used by different states in the country (Nigeria) to protect the socio-economic and political rights of their citizens. Jinadu (2002) called it the '*son of the soil syndrome*' (he is our son; we must support him) a situation where states in the country pursue policies of preferential treatment to favor their citizens over the purported non-citizens. The adoption of this system negates the principle of citizenship of the Nigerian state, and has made ethnic conflict persist in the country. Compounding this problem is the fragmentation of the country into several states, which invariably brings conflict between the indigenes and the non-citizens within these states. This is manifested at several levels of the social-political and economic life of Nigerians.

The foundation for many of Nigeria's ethnic crises can be traced to this false contradiction in Nigerian citizenship. Nigerian citizenship appears to always plummet in value as a Nigerian citizen chooses a preferred place of residence or domicile or as such Nigerian travels from one part of Nigeria to another across local government areas, states and regions etc. Therefore for most Nigerians, it seems their primary allegiance and loyalty is never to Nigeria, but to divisive appellations and self-limiting denominators, such as ethnic, religious, state, regional, linguistic

groups. There are always unconstitutional and systemic socio-political and economic discriminatory practices meted out to the perceived non-citizen in the state (ethnic/region) where they reside through subjective parameters, such as place of birth, state of origin, and sometimes religious affiliations. This situation in effect has produced two Nigerians with ethnic citizenship having a devastating effect on national interests. What this translates to mean is that the constitutional value placed on Nigerian citizenship is different. The effect of this on national integration in the country is the inability of Nigeria state to create an overlapping national interest disregarding parochial and group interest even after many years of independence. The question therefore is whether citizenship in Nigeria is ethnically valued above national citizenship.

Considering the socio-political and economic problem confronting Nigeria as orchestrated by the colonial engineering in 1914 amalgamation, this work has adopted historical approach on the basis that the question of citizenship threatening the unity of the country can best be understood within the frame work of a historically constituted context. This work is organized as follows: the next section provided a glance at Nigeria history. Section three defines and explain citizenship, section four explain politics of citizenship in Nigeria with section five concluding that citizenship in its national dimension is a vehicle of national integration as well as socio-political and economic development.

## **HISTORY OF NIGERIA AT A GLANCE**

Nigeria is the most densely inhabited country in Africa. Nigeria accounts for approximately one sixth of African population (or one fifth of Sub-Saharan African population). Approximately Nigeria population is about 174.5 million (CIA-The World factbook, 2013). Nigeria is deeply divided in terms of its ethnic composition and confronted with myriads of socio-political and economic problems among which are the acrimonious existence among the different ethnic groups that make up the country, fear of domination of one group or section of the country by another and most importantly the question of citizenship. These problems have resulted in mutual distrust and inter-community conflicts which have hampered efforts at national integration and development.

Nigeria has a total of 923,770 square km, 13,000 square km of which is covered by water. The boundaries of Nigeria extended for 4,047 km and countries with co-joining borders include; the Benin Republic (in the South West), Cameroon (in the South South), the Republic of Chad (in the North East) and Niger Republic (in the North West) (Ijeoma, 2010). The Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo constitutes the major ethnic groups with other sizable ethnic groups which include Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, Ogoni, Igbira, Jukun, Tiv, Edo, Akoko etc. Nigeria can therefore be described as an assemblage of independent native states. As a result of the British colonization that lasted for almost a century, the official language is English; whereas, the other language peculiar to the three major ethnics groups are Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo.

Significantly these socio-cultural differences have consequently separated Nigerians from each other apart from constituting one of the main factors militating against national integration and development (Adetiba, 2013). Nigeria like India, Canada, Malaysia, Ghana, Gambia; today is one of the countries in Africa who owe its existentiality to the imperialistic activities of Britain. The British government in pursuit of their economic ambition in 1914 amalgamated people from diverse culture, traditions and ethnic nationalities and organized them to construct the Nigerian state. Adeosun (2012) described this union as a forced brotherhood and sisterhood. Nigeria has since been bedeviled with the challenges of accommodating diversity, and promoting national unity among these diverse ethnic groups that make up the country.

The amalgamation in effect, produces two Nigeria with different social, political, economic and cultural background and development within the country. Some of the independent nation-states, kingdoms and communities that were thus combined included Kanem Bornu, the Sokoto caliphate, all in the present day northern Nigeria; the city states of Niger-Delta; the largely decentralized Igbo-speaking people of the south east; the old Benin Empire as well as the Yoruba Empire of Oyo, which had once been one of the most powerful states on the West African Coast (Adetiba, 2013). The artificial origin of Nigeria, combined with other socio-political and economic factors, had bequeathed it a number of fundamental problems, which has turned to be a challenge to national integration as well as its socio-political and economic development, hence the question of citizenship rocking the unity of the country. These are subsumed in the national question, and social groups of varying ideological leanings cohere on the central issues linked to national unity, local autonomy and self-determination, equitable distribution of revenue, rewards, opportunities and power observe, Anifowose and Seteolu (cited in Oshewolo, 2011:1).

The post-independence Nigeria was marked by a succession of socio-political crisis as parties and each ethnic group violently struggled for political power and resources of the center; embroiling the institution of the state in the battle against each other. One factor that contributed to this was the unequal division of the country into three regions in 1946 by colonial administration under Sir Arthur Richards. The first phase of government under the leadership of the then Head of State, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa was prematurely brought to an unexpected end in 1966 when the military assumed control of governance through a coup.

The first military government was headed by late General Aguiyi Ironsi and lasted for six months before it was abruptly sacked by another military coup that brought Gen. Yakubu Gowon to power whose administration transformed Nigeria from four regions to twelve states. Nigeria unity came under a serious threat with the outbreak of the civil war that lasted for thirty months following the declaration of the Republic of Biafra led by late Colonel Ojukwu. In 1976, Gen. Murtala Mohammed became the head of state after ousting Gen. Gowon from office palace coup. In his (Murtala Mohammed) short stay in office, Nigeria was further divided into nineteen states. Military interregnum came briefly to an end in 1979 following the return of the country to civil rule by the military government under Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo; with constitutional provision for

American model of presidential system of government – a system of government where an executive branch is led by a president who serves as both head of state and head of government. In 1984 the military again under Gen. Buhari (1984-1985) came in. For another period of 15 years, the country witnessed the military governments of Gen. Babangida (1985-1993) Gen. Sanni Abacha (1993-1997) Gen. Abubakar Abdusalami (1997-1999) as well as a brief period of Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan (August-November 1993). It is on record that this period, 1985-1999 witnessed the process of fragmenting the country into smaller units all in an attempt to ensure a conflict free political system.

Nigeria today is made up of 36 states and 774 local governments' areas (LGA) with Abuja as the federal capital (1999 constitution of Nigeria, first schedule Part 1). For administrative expediency and the sharing of political offices, the country is sub-divided into six geopolitical zones namely: South West, South East, South, North West, North East, and North Central. A good observation of 36 states in the country and the geopolitical zones shows that these states are made up of different ethnic groups where the citizens seems to be more loyal to their states rather than their commitment to national unity. These and other ethnic cleavages and overlapping affiliations of religion has undermined prospects for national integration and socio-political and economic development of Nigeria. The prevailing ethnic situation in Nigeria seems to have shown that the country is yet to be a united one because of the prevailing inter-ethnic skepticism and destructive enmity among the various ethnic group on one hand and between north and south on the other hand.

Adetiba (2013) observes that some of the communal conflicts in some parts of the country are proxy wars engineered and executed by the political class to divide and rule the people. This type of ethnic engineering means: allocating opportunities in employment, education and other life chances to citizens from their states or regions. Such policies have undermined political, economic and administrative authorities that manage the country's socio-political affairs at all levels. Therefore the decline in social, political and economic growth of Nigeria in the last decade despite its enormous human and natural resources can be traced to political actions often dominated by ethnic interests.

A close observation of Nigeria since the inception of the current political system shows that democratization seems to have rejuvenated long suppressed feelings for far long among the hundreds of ethnic nationalities in the country. Some are pushing for greater participation in the running of the affairs of the Nigeria state, while others are clamoring for greater autonomy. This has given birth to the emergence of ethnic militias all over the country. For example Odua People's Congress (OPC) for the Yoruba nationality, Arewa People's Congress (APC) for the Hausa/Fulani nationality, and Bakassi Boys for the Igbo nationality and Egbesu Boys for the Ijaw nationality. The emergence of these ethnic militias translates to lack of commitment to national integration with its attendant effects on development. One can therefore conclude that the demands of ethnic nationalities for political participation and increasing economic freedom as the basic ideal for

development has led to the promotion of ethnic citizenship of which effect has paralyzed national identity.

## CITIZENSHIP DEFINED

Citizenship, it is said, is the hallmark of the modern nation state. But in most of the so called new states of Africa, Asia and Latin America, citizenship is quite a problematic issue, partly because most of these states are artificial colonial creations, and partly because they are bedeviled by enormous conflicts arising from the mosaics of centrifugal forces which separate them (Osaghae, 1990: 593). Citizenship has been given various connotations by scholars. Citizenship is a phenomenon associated with the state. It involves a strong identification with the state Lenshie and Johnson (2012) sees it as a status that is applied to a person endowed with full political and civil rights in the state. Alubo (2009) conceives citizenship as a relationship between the individual and the state in relation to mutual rights, duties and obligations. Citizenship is also a form of participation in the running of the state and society, and in this sense an agency and subject.

According to Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2006) the concept of citizenship is composed of three main elements, the first is citizenship as legal status of a person in his/her country, defined by civil, political and social rights. Here, the citizen is the legal person free to act according to the law and having the right to claim the law's protection. The second considers citizens specifically as political agents; actively participating in a society's political institutions and the third refers to citizenship as membership in a political community that furnishes a distinct source of identity. Therefore the institution of citizenship is the political product through which the state constitutes and perpetually reproduces itself as a form of social organization. Citizenship is an instrument of social closure through which the state lay claim to and defines its sovereignty, authority, legitimacy and identity. It is the means through which the modern nation state made of various nationalities seeks to forge a common identity and collective experience for its people.

Marshall (1992) sees citizenship as a status bestowed on those who are perceived to be full members of a community and that all who possess this status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is bestowed. What this translates to mean is that citizenship is a principle of equality and, in theory, capable of enjoying socio-economic and political rights. The way, the idea of citizenship is perceived in Nigeria in relation to the protection of socio-economic and political rights of citizens are different from how it is seen and practiced elsewhere.

Citizenship has an integrating effect; or, at least an important ingredient in the integrating process that requires a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilization which is a common possession, with rights and protected by a common law. Contrary to this principle the state of Nigeria seem to have shifted from this reality which has made citizens, particularly those from the minority ethnic groups, believe that the state does not see them as relevant to national



integration. This explains why the ethnic minorities of the Niger-Delta always feel neglected, hence their agitation for national recognition.

In a given state every citizen owes a duty to that state and the same state has a duty to protect the socio-economic and political rights of such citizens. Conceptually citizenship is mostly used in relation to the modern state. Structurally, citizenship involves what (Obianyo, 2007) referred to as a reciprocal relationship between the individual's rights that is the benefits which his membership of the state entitles him to including the popular fundamental human rights and duties which the individual owes the state for the enjoyment of his rights. For example, it is obligatory for every citizen to pay his/ her taxes and the government in return ensures adequate provision of socio-economic and political goods. It does avail the state to provide rights equally for all its citizens who must, in turn, reciprocate by performing their civic duties.

Citizenship bestows equality of all citizens. Significantly this point of equality featured in the Nigerian constitutions of 1979 section 39(1) and (2) as well as section 42 (1) and (2) of the 1999 constitution. It is provided that national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religions, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited. What this mean in essence is that citizenship in Nigeria refers to equality of socio-political and economic rights bequeathed to all who are Nigerian citizens. In other words, all Nigerian citizens are equal not minding the place of their birth (state of origin) or where they reside.

In many ways, the identity dimension is the least straightforward of the three. Scholars tend to include under this heading many different things related to identity, both individual and collective, and social integration. Arguably, this is inescapable since citizens' subjective sense of belonging, sometimes called the psychological dimension of citizenship necessarily affects the strength of the political community's collective identity. This translates to mean that if citizens display a strong sense of belonging to the same political community, social cohesion is obviously strengthened. However, since many other factors can impede or encourage it, socio-political integration should be seen as an important goal that citizenship aims to accomplish rather than as one of its elements.

## **POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP IN NIGERIA**

Citizenship no doubt is a term that defines a citizen as one who, by birth or naturalization, belongs to a state. Theoretically this is a problematic issue, what makes it a problem is in its practicability in assigning equal status both in theory and in practice to all citizens. Nigeria though has since been divided into states but there are still manifestations of ethnicism in the polity, no thanks to uncivil systemic prejudiced policies; motivated by ethnic consciousness and used by different states in the country. Nearly most of the states in Nigeria exhibit the culture of majority wanting to sniff life out of the minorities in these states. As it were, while the state provides that all citizens are equal and should be treated equally, the centrifugal forces of ethnicity and regionalism among

others produce discriminatory socio-political practices in the subunits of the state which of course contradict the constitutional provisions, by treating citizens unequally. One of the greatest problems states are facing particularly multi ethnic state like Nigeria in their search for national cohesion is the sociological component of citizenship defined by differentiation.

Taken as a whole it thus means that these inequitable policies and practices fundamentally will relegate non-citizens to the status of second class citizens in their own country; a status that can only be changed or escaped by the relocation of the affected citizen back to their state /community of origin. This phenomenon manifests at three levels; state and Local Government levels and at the worst at federal level where it is manifested as ethnicity.

States (ethnic groups) see this practice as a means of exerting their hegemonic control of their states on one hand and their ethnic groups on the other hand, thus preventing the incursion of other ethnic groups seen as socio-economic and political parasites. In the northern part of the country it is very difficult for a non-citizen to be employed in the state civil service. Where the person is employed, it will be on contract basis and with the understanding that if they have a qualify citizen, the non-citizen will be asked to give the so called citizen a place. Sometimes it may be an outright dismissal of non-citizens. For example the indigenes of were sacked from the neighboring Abia state to accommodate their indigenes in 2011 (Nkwopara, 2011). There is, therefore, preferential treatment given to citizens over those perceived as non-citizens in the appointment and promotion of public servants to protect the socio-economic rights of the citizens. This is however, not peculiar to the states in the north but also occurs in the states in the south.

Arguably, the reason why non-citizens may not be promoted to higher positions, particularly very sensitive ones is the belief that if, a non-indigene is promoted to such a position, there is the probability the person would bring people from his/her state and eventually dominate such ministry/department. Thus, the lack of reciprocity in extending normal citizenship rights to non-indigenes in states other than their own has continued to make ethnic conflicts a recurring phenomenon in the polity.

Politically, a non-citizen cannot be allowed to represent a state where the person is adjudged to be a non-indigene in any elective and public political office. In essence, a citizen of Ogun state who has long been in Edo state may not likely be allowed to stand for a political office in order for the person to represent a constituency in Edo state at federal or state level. If by chance the person scales the hurdle of the party nomination process, the probability is high that their non-citizenship status will be used against them.

One fact that has emerged from this situation is that a woman who becomes a citizen of another state by marriage would not be allowed to represent that state because she is not an indigene. For example, the former speaker of the House of Representatives, Mrs. Patricia Ette who is married to an Akwa-Ibomite represented Osun state her indigenous state and not Akwa-Ibom where her

husband comes from. The only state that has appointed a non-indigene to occupy a political post is Lagos state. For example the present Osun state governor has been a commissioner in Lagos state, but it should be noted that he is a Yoruba man and Lagos state is one of the states in south western Nigeria.

Unlike most federal systems such as the United State of America, where there is common citizenship. Ethnicity is put in the driver's seat as a means of identifying Nigerian. This has shown that Nigerian states have not been able to transcend old ethnic cleavages. It does not matter how long a Nigerian has lived in a state, as long as he is not a citizen of that state by birth he cannot enjoy the right to fully participate in the public life of his state of residence.

Virtually all the states of the federation have their own institutions of higher learning ranging from Colleges of Education, Polytechnics to Universities. What has led to this is the politicization of educational policies of the states even at federal level where preference is given to the citizens of the state the school is located in admission and school fees. In the appointment of Principal Officers of these institutions, the position of a Vice Chancellor, for example, cannot be given to a non-citizen no matter how long the person has been there and neither person's year of professorship matter. A new trend that has been added to this disintegrative system is the role being played by the federal government. For example during the military era, all the federal Universities were given the autonomy to elect their own Vice Chancellors but this policy was overturned where the supposed Vice Chancellor was not an indigene of the state where the University is located. Thus putting a question on the role of national unity and social integration these institutions would have facilitated. In a country like South Africa for example there is no such discrimination because citizenship is considered to be the legal connection between a state and the person considered to be its nationals which entitles the person to socio-political and economic goods of the state irrespective of where the person comes from.

The argument here is that government policies, be it the Federal, State or Local Government, place the interests of indigenes above the so called unwanted citizens in order to maintain the domination of socio-economic power. This action has created the impression that Nigeria is not actually united in the real sense. More so it has deepened ethnic cleavages in Nigeria and creates a situation where future generations would find it difficult to believe in one indivisible Nigeria.

In Nigeria, citizenship is still largely a (primordial) group phenomenon rather than an attribute of individual political actors (Osaghae 1990: 597). Reinhard Bendix cited in Osaghae (1990) distinguish between the functional representation principle and the plebiscitarian principle of citizenship. Under the functional representation principle, there is no direct relationship between the individual and the state; the individual is a citizen because the group (ethnic) to which he belongs is a part of the state, and he is represented by those who rule or lead his group. Under the plebiscitarian principle however, all powers intervening between the individual and the state must



be destroyed so that all citizens, as individuals possess equal rights before the sovereign national authority.

If the above assertion is applied to Nigerian citizenship, the constitutional provision which assumes that all citizens are equal is plebiscitarian, while that which requires belonging to a group indigenous to Nigeria is functional. Ekeh cited in Osaghae (1990) believes the first is civic citizenship and, the second, primordial citizenship. The (Nigerian) effort to integrate these two types citizenship is more or less the basis of the problems of citizenship in Nigeria. Accordingly, it means that there are two levels of citizenship. The one state (ethnic) citizenship, meaning that one is an indigene of a particular state, and the other, national (civic) citizenship, meaning that, at a larger level one belongs to Nigeria. While the first is mutually exclusively, preventing non-indigenes of a state from citizenship where non indigenes and indigenes are treated differently, the other is all-inclusive, and provides that all citizens are equal.

The implication of this is that a Yoruba person can only belong to one group and it is the status of the person's group that boosts his/her own status. Put in another word as a Yoruba person he is from the majority and if he belongs to Ijaw that makes him a minority person. Explaining further it means all groups as well as all Nigerians are not equal in terms of national relevance and access to political power. According to Osaghae (1990) to emphasize the facts that there are two levels of citizenship in Nigeria and that while every Nigerian is a citizen of the Nigerian state, they could lose their citizenship statuses in state other than those of their origin.

Observably, state (ethnic) citizenship contradicts the constitutional provisions on national citizenship. As Osoba and Usman (1976) put it, this dubious notion of state citizenship is even stricter and biologically determined than national citizenship, in the sense that it does not make on state citizenship comparable provisions to those on national citizenship by registration or naturalization. In spite of the rhetorical and platitudinous pronouncements on the duty of the state to encourage free mobility of people throughout the country and to secure full residence rights for every citizen in all parts of the country a culpable implication of its definition of state citizenship is that no matter for how long a Nigerian has resided in a state of Nigeria of which none of his parents is an indigene, such a Nigerian cannot enjoy the right to participate fully in the public life of that state.

Clearly defined under state (ethnic) citizenship, the individual cannot belong to all the thirty six states – these states have been grouped into six geo-political zones with each of these zones having major and minority ethnic groups – or all the ethnic groups which make up the Nigerian federation which alone can guarantee that he is not discriminated against in any part of the federation. Logically the implication of this is that though one is a Nigerian citizen, arguably, outside one's state (ethnic) of origin, one is not a citizen.

One phenomenon that will help us understand citizenship (ethnic and civic) is the need to look at how colonialism created a split in the personality of average Nigerian under colonial rule. Until recently, engagement with state – society relations in Nigeria has been dominated by the idea of a divided society. Colonialism worked to set state and society apart in Nigeria. The forces of the colonial state alienated the individual and led to the emergence of two domains; the primordial (ethnic) domain, which is the domain of modern social formations associated with ancient structures of kinship, and the civic domain, which is the political space within which the formal state operates Ekeh (cited in Aiyede, 2009). This division no doubt has created a dilemma for public accountability and collective action. This is because people seemed to be more attached and committed to the primordial domain against the civic public realm. Predatory rule reflects the underlying illegitimacy of the civic realm. Morality holds sway in the primordial realm, but the civic realm is amoral. Politicians are inclined to steal from the civic realm for personal benefit and for the benefit of the primordial realm.

One of the most noticeable features of British colonial rule from the very beginning was the divide and rule style of administration of the northern and southern parts of the country. While Western education, mainly sponsored by the missionaries, thrived in the south and was fully embraced by southerners, British officials, especially in the north, were opposed to missionary penetration of the north, apparently to protect the Islamic north from the debasement of missionaries and Western education. The result was a southern lead in Western education and other so-called modernizing forces, such as urbanization, schools and commercial enterprise.

What this has resulted to was a state of mutual suspicions and hostilities occasioned by fears that the more advanced groups could dominate the less advanced ones. This fear was particularly rife in the north because, as the nationalist movement gathered momentum, the eastern and western educated elites emerged as champions of self-government (the eastern and western Nigeria attained self-governing status in 1957 and north in 1959). The emergence of regions in the mid-forties precisely 1946 with the introduction of Arthur Richards constitution; therefore gave the ethnic leaders an avenue for protecting their interests and averting foreign (non-indigenes) domination. The emergent political class in the regional parties therefore advocates for regional protectionism because; to belong to the national league of political class at the center they had to have control of regional homelands. Any threats to their control were repelled by threats of secession or calls for confederation. For example the north threatened to secede in 1953, the southeast called for a confederal system in 1967 and their attempt to secede finally led to the civil war of 1967-1970 (Crowder, 1978).

Under the circumstances, it was inevitable that the regions which formed the federation in 1954 would be very powerful and to a large extent, autonomous. The push for regional autonomy was enhanced by the creation of regional legislative houses, public services, judiciary to mention the most significant ones. The end was regionalism, a principle which seeks to attribute to a unit within a federation a distinct individuality, with a claim upon the loyalty of its inhabitants competing

with, if not overriding, loyalty to the federal state. What this translates to mean is that in practice, the north existed only for northerners, the east for easterners, and the western for westerners.

Dudley cited in Osaghae (1990: 604) comments that in many different ways, the Nigerian citizen now found he had to live with the fact of regionalism. The regionalization of the bureaucracy meant that the civil servant no longer had a choice of what region he could serve or, for the prospective civil servant, a choice of where to seek employment. The regionalization of the public service meant that the civil servant could now work or seek employment only in his region of origin. Easterners working in the west had to move to the east or face the loss of employment and what applied to the west applied equally to the other regions.

Simply put regionalism under this system meant that a region (west, east or north) existed only for its citizens as all non-citizens were discriminated against virtually in all spheres of socio-political and economic life. Within the regions, the ethnic majorities (Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo) never give the ethnic minorities the chance to enjoy socio-political and economic rights like the majority. Although they belonged to the regions as well as to the federation, the minorities could never hope to rule both in the regions and at the center. The implication of this is that if the institutions of a state favour one ethnic group among its citizenry, the only members of that of that group will feel themselves fully a part of the life of the state. True equality, therefore, is only realizable in a state that is based on civic peoplehood observed Levine (2013). Hence, their agitation for separate states, and more so foremost advocates of a strong federal system which, they reckoned could chunk the oppression of the majority-dominated regions.

Therefore it is not surprising that during colonial administration the anti-colonial political struggle in Nigeria was couched in the language of citizenship. Ethnic expressions gained meaning as the independent movements sought to mobilize the rural population in the liberation struggle. There are three major political parties in the era of decolonization; the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG) and the National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC); these political parties reflected ethnic configurations in their origin and character. Arguably the interaction of the twin-factors of the colonial antecedent and the direction of state policy combined to shape the nature of the post-colonial identity of Nigeria.

What the above portends is that post-colonial politics was destined to be ethnic because the mainstream of the nationalists mediated the link between the people and the post-colonial state through political ethnicities. For example when the country returned to civil rule 1979, all the political parties were ethnically inclined in their policies and programs, the states became separatist in character, placing primary emphasis on the welfare of their citizens against non-citizens. In the West where the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) under the leadership of late Obafemi Awolowo controlled five states – old Oyo, Ondo, Bendel, Ogun and Lagos – non citizens were excluded from enjoying the party's free education programme while, in many of the states, discriminatory fees were introduced for indigenes and non-indigenes. As it was in the regions, it became

increasingly difficult for people to get employed in states other than their own and, where they got, they were in some cases given contract appointments.

Significantly the colonial policy of indirect rule under the native authority system which divided African society into two namely civic and native (ethnic) formed the basis for the creation of ethnic citizenship. The bifurcated native of African society created by colonial policy of divide and rule and the fact that ethnic identity formed the basis of a person's participation in the colonial society helped to create and sustain ethnic citizenship. This makes conflict resolution difficult and citizenship within the nation almost unmanageable. More importantly, the British Indirect Rule froze and conserved each group culturally and technically following the triumph of colonialism in 1900.

Mamdani (2001: 654) made a very insightful analysis of the policy of divide and rule and how it was revolutionized in the post-colonial era. From his explanation, colonialism divided the population into races and ethnicities. Ethnicities were horizontally demarcated and governed by tradition. There was no sharp division between colonizers and the colonized but rather a nuance of relations; there were master races and subject races. Master races were the colonizers, subject races were middle men, and their position was marked by petty privilege economically and preferential treatment legally. Subject races could be non-indigenous migrants, such as Indians, or were constructed as non-indigenous by the colonial powers, like the Tutsi of Rwanda and Burundi. Ethnic groups were the colonized. While the rule of law circumscribed power, government by tradition used the language of custom and custom was enforced. It did not circumscribe power. The real institution for governing the African was therefore the native authority as the case in Nigeria. Therefore the colonial state was an ethnic federation of many native authorities.

Colonialism prevented mostly inter-regional co-operation between each group in regard to inter-group and cross-cultural leadership, hence, no mechanism for the making of socio-political development existed, these factors lead to the category of ethnicity based on inter-ethnic group rivalry. As matters turned out, ethnicity nurtures communal violence and ethno-religious conflicts in the country. Thus ethnic citizenship has its theoretical roots in cultural citizenship, and practically in colonial policy of divide and rule with each possessing a duality that is seemingly contradictory, universal citizenship emphasizing equality before the law, and cultural specificity which emphasizes socially constructed differences that can be used to claim distinct socio-political and economic rights.

In post-colonial Nigeria the forces of regionalism loomed larger than ever, producing in their wake, the series of events such as political cynicism and regionalism, exacerbated by the north having greater influence than the west and east combined. There were strikes, and political instability in the west. In January 1966 there was a coup headed by officers of eastern origin, followed by another coup staged by the northern officers, which eventually led to the collapse of the First Republic and the subsequent civil war. In an attempt to ensure peace and stability as well as

national unity the forces of regionalism was destroyed by dividing the country into states. Though, regionalism seems to have been destroyed with states creation but what has emerged today is as much force as regionalism had, and, in some cases, with greater force.

In a broad spectrum however, the emergence of states is as similar as regionalism this is because the states always ensure the full protection of their socio-political and economic interests, serving only their citizens. **This no doubt fans the embers of disunity amongst the ethnic groups in Nigeria.** As before, non-citizens are discriminated against and denied citizenship rights even though they – citizen of other ethnic group – perform duties required of them. This is the present threat to citizenship in Nigeria as well as socio-political development.

Citizenship principles as it applies to most states (ethnic groups in Nigeria) do not accord citizen equal rights in the state. This is because it also tends to exclude those who have not been endowed with full citizens' rights. The people that come under this category are often referred to as settlers or non-indigenes; as the case in Nigeria system. The categorization of citizenship on this paradigm is enhanced by status of birth (the law of blood), law of place, and naturalization Kazah-Toure (cited in Lenshie and Johnson 2012). The unequal treatment of ethnic groups on certain basis of identity is central to citizenship question. Citizenship question in Nigeria is a contested outcome of individual and group struggles for rights to participate and enjoy socio-economic and political welfare that would significantly enhance development.

From the frame work of this study one can also explain civic and ethnic citizenship in Nigerian within the background of her federal system this is because, it is the system that provides the institutional basis for states to exist separately at one level, and the federal government to exist at another. What this implies is that in a federal system, every citizen is subject to two levels of governments which both act directly upon him without interference on the activities of each other. As a result of this the notions of state (ethnic) citizenship and national (civic) citizenship, as they correspond to the two levels of government may be said to be necessary aides of a federal system. But this is not to suggest that before the eventual adoption of a federal system, there was no discriminatory system of differentiating between indigenes and non-indigenes in the provision of rights in Nigeria.

Osaghae (1990) comments that one phenomenon associated with citizenship in Nigeria as a result of the development of urban centers and opportunities for education, white collar jobs, business and other commercial enterprises, though largely because of the transformation of the economy marked by increasing competition for economic resources and its benefits was an indigeneity complex involving a "son of the soil" syndrome. The Yoruba of the West will say "Omo wa ni" (this person belongs to us). The major aim was to protect the interests and claims of indigenes to their homelands against all non-indigenes who were denied the basic socio-political and economic rights, notwithstanding the fact that they also contributed so much as the citizens did in terms of their duties to the communities. During the colonial era in the northern Nigeria Sabongaris were



created for non-citizens, to differentiate them from citizens. This has extended to the south even in post-colonial era, where the Hausas leaves and trade majorly in Sabongari markets.

From the foregoing the constitutional provision of the principle of “Federal Character”, an ethnic formula for the allocation of public goods which was designed as a political technique for managing Nigeria’s federal system; of giving equal opportunities to all ethnic groups, has proved to be largely counter-productive, especially in respect to the idea of common nation identity and citizenship reward. The federal character clause was first instituted in the 1979 Constitution, section 14 (3), to ensure inclusiveness in government. In practice it is interpreted and operationalized as a means of distributing state amenities and opportunities, including public employment, on an equal basis among the states and localities of the federation. The principle seems to have placed ethnic identity as the primary identity for state entitlements and socio-political rights. The principle has de-individualized citizenship and made it more of a group phenomenon. Thus in attaining or gaining access to state socio-political and economic institutions, the individual does not relate with the state directly as citizen, but relates with the state as a member/representative of an ethnic group.

The deleterious effects of federal character itself could be attributed to the continuing unevenness in the rates of development among the states. If the states are not protective of their interests, it is possible that well qualified people from states whose federal quotas (allocations) are already saturated would migrate to states where low educational advancement has resulted in the inability to fill their quotas in many federal institutions. Even in the saturated states, it is apparently unwise to allow non-citizens to compete with citizens for the very few places available. Arguably then, for as long as development among states remains uneven, states would necessarily have to be protective of their interests.

This has made the central government a showground of ethnic competition with the more powerful ethnic groups excluding and submerging the minority ones and denying them the benefits of citizenship. For example whenever a Hausa, Yoruba or Igbo man is in power, other ethnic group are supposedly left out of the scheme of things. In essence the legacies of ethnicity speak of the failure of the Nigerian state to address popular demands for a more just and equitable form of citizenship. Significantly, the need to overcome the politics of exclusion, expressed within the dynamics of ethnicity, must be extended to the task of redefining the concepts of ethnicity and citizenship. The importance arises because the debate on citizenship brings forth the challenge of examining the tension between ethnic citizen and civic (national) citizen.

With regard to the institutional dimension, the logic of dualism in the state structure has not been obliterated. Rather it has reproduced and assumed a new dimension. The nature of the dichotomy between the central and local states, though reformed, still has implications for the issues of citizenship in the present day Nigeria. While national citizenship was liberalized with civil laws applicable to all, the state remains largely ethnicized (Awoshakin, 2002). For example the idea of

“One Indivisible Nigeria” notwithstanding contained in the anthem and pledge to give a sense of single national identity to every citizen, the definition of a citizen of Nigeria as stipulated in the 1999 constitution (section 25, 1a) is rooted largely in primordial origins. An individual’s membership or origin in an ethnic group or community is a major criterion for the qualification of citizenship. Thus citizenship gains expression more from the primordial, than the civic perspective in Nigeria. In fact the Nigerian legal concept of citizenship fosters communal violence and ethnic conflict.

## CONCLUSION

The greatness of any nation like Nigeria lies in its capability and ability to manage diversities putting into consideration the fact that a nation that place value on ethnicism to the detriment of national cohesion has gone several steps backward in its ability to work towards greatness, and maintenance of its integrity among committee of nations. Significantly citizenship question in Nigeria polity is invoked when there is an entrenchment of ethnicity and other primordial factors such as the manipulation of ethnicity by the political class and the monopoly of political power by a dominant ruling class from particular ethnic group while others are deprived of sharing power. The inability of the state to make adequate socio-political and economic provisioning heightens sentiments among ethnic groups directed against one another and the state, thereby depriving the state of the needed loyalty. The predominantly ethnic understanding of nationhood in Nigeria is very hard to reconcile with liberal-democratic politics because it implicitly recognizes full citizenship rights only for the majority ethnic group.

At the national level the logic of difference of an ethnic nature is factored into the rules, and norms of political interactions and the state system especially with regard to social rights. Ethnic citizenship as opposed to civic citizenship in Nigeria seems to be the determinant factor of who gets what, when, how, and how much in the state. Issues of employment, public appointments, education grants, scholarships, etc. are subjected to ethnic arithmetic by the central state. Unarguably ethnicity indirectly is an entrenched system of discrimination, a negation of the constitutional provisions on national citizenship in Nigeria because, it involves state citizenship which makes non-indigenes of a state in which they reside, non-citizens.

Any search for solutions to the problems of ethnic vis-à-vis civic citizenship must, of necessity, begin with recognition that, in new states bedeviled by centrifugal forces, citizenship in its national dimension is a vehicle of national integration as well as socio-political and economic development. What this means is that citizenship will almost certainly remain problematic for as long as the rates of development among the states are uneven.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article draws on my PhD research at University of Fort Hare, South Africa, funded by The Govan Mbeki Research and Development Center (GMRDC) (2010–2013), I am most grateful to Professor Aminur Rahim for his valuable contributions.

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