Review

Intra-class struggle in Nigeria

Muhibbu-Din O. Mahmudat

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Fountain University, Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. E-mail: ajoocurrent@yahoo.com. Tel: +2348054317471.

The paper examines how elite competition for power and dominance resulted in the manipulation of ethnicity as a means of political mobilization to gain advantage to strategic position in competition with contending factions of the elite. Thus, the elites are engaged in intra-class struggle in order to access power and resources. The outcome of this reveals that the pursuit of parochial interests among the elites, on the one hand, and widening disparities in the life style of elites and the masses on the other hand generates crisis of legitimacy. Hence, the paper provides (1) a theoretical perspective which explains ethnicity as a social construction manipulated to serve elites interest eroding the basis of good governance and legitimacy; (2) examines the dialectics of ethnicity and intra-class struggle, (3) and suggest strategy of how overarching national integration will override elite centrifugal tendencies. Secondary data and evaluative methodology is used in data collection and analysis. Findings indicate that factional politics that erodes the bases of good governance, exploitation and crisis of legitimacy ensue. Conclusively, national interest, popular participation and empowerment is a desideratum to achieve national integration and legitimacy.

Key words: Elites, ethnicity, class struggle, legitimacy, postcolonial, national integration.

INTRODUCTION

Nigerian state, lacking autonomy is immersed in the class struggle and is conspicuously a state of the 'few against the many', because the Nigerian state tendentially appears irrelevant or hostile; a critical condition for the transfer of loyalties to ecumenical levels is removed. Nigerians embraced ethnic identity all the more (Ake, 1990) 'emphasis added'.

The above quotation from the work of Claude Ake perfectly captures the central thesis of this paper. Ethnicity is a by-product of the colonialist strategy to make the colonial natives inferior and the colonizers superior through the Eurocentric devaluation of colonized culture and corresponding glorification of the European of life. This was achieved through socialization into the colonialist world view and the colonized internalized this discriminatory classification.

As Britain began to devolve political authority to native politicians, the competition among educated elites who wanted the new positions of power and prestige increase. The elites constitute the few and they are reared by colonialism. They comprise essentially those in the professions, middle and upper sections of the civil service, the middle and upper ranks of the army, petty contractors and independent artisans. Just like their colonial predecessors, the elites manipulate ethnicity to forge seeming differences and raise fear of domination and marginalization by the other in their struggle for control over power and resources. The zeal for political dominance results in intra-class struggle and manipulating ethnic diversity for political mobilization to achieve class interest. This study has the following interrelated objectives:

(1) Examine the nature and character of the Nigerian elites;
(2) Investigate the strategy used in manipulating ethnicity to achieve class interest;
(3) Ascertain how intra-class struggle among elites generates legitimacy crisis;
(4) Provides a theoretical analysis for the work; and
(5) Suggest strategy of how overarching national integration will override elite centrifugal tendencies.

This study is organized around the following hypothesis stated below:

1. Ethnic diversity is a potent force in political mobilization to gain ascendancy to position of power by elites
2. Intra-class struggle intensify the crisis of legitimacy and

results in the irrelevance of the Nigerian state to populace.

Justification for the Study

Intra-class struggle among factions of Nigerian elites have manifested in the manipulation of ethnicity as a tool to advance parochial and sectional interests of the dominant ruling class. The resultant effect has been crisis of legitimacy to the detriment of good governance and national integration. Elites manipulation of ethnicity in Nigeria leaves much to be desired.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

The ways class interests are pursed have been shown to an important degree, emphasizing of ethnic symbols, boundaries in the struggle for wealth and power (Joseph, 1991: 5). Horowitz treats ethnicity as an ascriptive phenomenon based on myth of collective ancestry, which usually comes with traits believed to be innate, and which gives rise to a sense of group identity. The conception of ethnicity is appropriately, broadly inclusive of any type of ascriptive group identity, whether based on color,

appearance, language, some other indicator of common origin or some combination there of (Diamond, 1987:117). Ethnic group is essentially exclusive or ascriptive meaning that membership is confined to those who share certain inborn attributes (Kellas, 1991:4). Other conception emphasize shared commonness, group identity and cultural practices as a yardstick for defining ethnicity (Osaghae, 1992; Hylland, 1993:6; Omu, 1994:170; Parkin, 1978:4; Nnoli, 1978:5).

Moreover, the very fact of participating within such boundaries means sharing certain pattern of interactions using specific channel of communication (Joseph, 1991:6). Ethnicity is therefore fundamentally a political and social phenomenon associated with interaction among members of different ethnic groups. It is a type of informal interest grouping which is called into being as a result of the intensive struggle between groups over new strategic positions within the structure of the new state (Cohen, 1974: 96-97). The cities are centres where competition for survival is intense over resources deepens (Nnoli, 1978; Young, 1982:89; Ake, 2000: 98) The vitality repose on the keen nature of the struggle for power and resources in a context of scarcity, insecurity and lack of confidence in the official norms and regulation (Joseph, 1991:71) According to Kellas (1991:160) Ethnicity often represent supreme loyalties overpowering other political divisions.

The analysis can be subsumed under the two schools of thought Primordialists and Instrumentalists. Primordialists defined as those who hold that members of the same ethnic group have a common primordial bond

that determines personal identity and turns the group into natural or community of a type that is older than modern nation or modern class system. The instrumentalists on the other hand see ethnicity essentially as a means for people especially leader to pursue their own purpose such as forming, mobilizing and manipulating groups of people for political ends. According to Ake (2000:94) this classification may be misleading. He suggests that it is better to think in terms of the Objectivists and the Constructionists. Ake criticizes the instrumentalist thus

"it suggests that ethnic group is an ephemeral phenomenon conjured up at will as an exploitative resource. It is misleading by virtue of the emphasis it places on the manipulative and exploitative aspect of ethnic construction for the simple reason that manipulability or exploitability is not and cannot be a useful definition of ethnicity".

Within the Objectivist literature, there is no consensus on the objective characteristics of ethnic groups. Ethnic group is defined by putative commonalities. They differ what this commonalities are. This varies across such attributes as blood, speech, custom (Geertz, 1963:109), myths and symbols (Smith, 1986:15) to beliefs in a common ancestry, history, heroes and enemies and historical attachment to particular territories (Horowitz, 1985: 139-149).

This paper adopts the Constructivists position The Constructionists belief that ethnicity is a figment of the human imagination and supported by how ethnic identities wax and wane, how ethnic boundaries are porous, shifting and unsustainable, however, ethnic workings are arbitrary and how the common past and traditional values on which members of ethnic groups anchor their identity may have very little to do with historical realities (Ake, 2000:95). Consequently, ethnicity contrary to the argument of some scholar is not primordial, but invented and sustained by the elites to keep the people divided for the sake of easy manipulation and dominance (Owolabi, 2003: 86).

POLITICS, ETHNICITY AND INTRA-CLASS STRUGGLE

The elites overriding concern was to preserve the postcolonial status quo with themselves in its commanding positions. The masses that had been mobilized and politicized on behalf of a universal goal now had to be depoliticized rapidly in the service of elite domination. Ethnic movements may be created and instigated to action by the new men of power in furtherance of their own special interests which are time and again constitutive interests of the emerging social classes. In this way, ethnicity becomes a mask for class privileges (Sklar 1967:6-7). The dominant classes unable intrinsically to increase production because of their dependent nature on the capitalist relation of production, this class depend on the device to increase their benefits from the society.

Part of the ethnic scheme is seen to be part of 'the mechanism through which the political elite maintains itself in power and exercises influences. It is the attribute of elite behavior… the educated elite become the chief proponents and purveyors of parochialism' (Dudley 1973: 41). This is necessary in a context of struggle for power. Mamdani (2002: 9) observes the transference of cultural identities to the political domain in necessary move by the political elites to hijack power by using identity as a basis for condemnation, discrimination and marginalization. Such segregation along ethnic division is employed to discriminate not because of the superiority of a particular ethnic group over another but in competition to control the economic spoil of the nation – state. In 1949, Azikiwe made a very dangerous ethnic remark:

It would appear that the God of Africa has specially created the Ibo nation to lead children of Africa from the bondage of the ages…the martial prowess of the Ibo nation at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the role of preserver. The Igbo nation can not shirk from its responsibility (Nnoli 1978:230).

The NPC prior to 1957, consistently opposed self rule for fear of South domination of the North

It is the southerner who have power in the North. They have control of the railway stations, of the Post Offices, of Government Hospitals, of the Canteens; the majority employed in the Kaduna secretariat and in Public Works Department are all southerners; in all the different Departments of Government it is the Southerner who has power (Coleman 1958:361)

With intensive competition among Nigerian elites for control of the spoils of office, politics become a winner-takes-all affair. The political parties in control in each region easily became weapons in the hands of major nationality groups for the continued marginalization of the minorities. Oppressed minorities began seeking succor and solace in the opposition parties with inevitable consequences of the politicization of ethnicity. The expulsion of Eyo Ita, a minority Efik, from the Igbo dominated National Council of Nigerian Citizen (NCNC) led by Nnamdi Azikiwe in 1952 resulted in Eastern Region minorities forming the rival National independent Party, with Eyo Ita as president (Ojo and Fawole 2004:146).

Similarly, the political quarrel between E.O. Eyo and Azikiwe in 1955 over the latter's handling of the Public Commission of Inquiry into Bribery and Corruption. Eyo accused Azikiwe of financial malfeasance in transferring massive public funds into the African Continental Bank, precipitating a tribunal of inquiry which found the NCNC leader guilty. Expelled from the NCNC because of this accusation he found a haven in the party for the ethnic minorities of the region (Nnoli 1978:169).

The implementation of the Macpherson constitution of 1951 accelerated the drift towards sub-group nationalism and tribalism. Educated Nigerians who aspire to fill new position of power and status opened up to Nigerians by that constitution realized that their most secure base of support would be the people of their own groups. The indirect electoral system strengthened this realization. Manipulation and exploitation of ethnicity became a veritable tool of political contest. Thus, a symbiotic relationship develops between politicians who wish to achieve their own positions, and their 'people', who fear political domination and economic exploitation by a culturally distinct group allegedly organized for these ends. A politician thus gains a tribal power by successfully manipulating the appropriate cultural symbols and by articulating and advancing his peoples collective and individual aspiration (which he himself probably helped to arouse) (Graft 1983:196).

The dominant class is a non-revolutionary class lacking a historical raison D'ETA. Consequently, it had to seek out and deploy ersatz ideologies in order to retain mass following and to forestall social reform. Primary among this was the ideology of ethnicity (Graft 1983:193). As an essentially un-productive successor elites removed from direct ownership of the means of production, it was not only compelled to look to the state apparatus as its primary sources of elite formation and consolidation but also emphasize relation of distribution against relation of production. With a weak economic base, Nigerian elite was rendered incapable of fulfilling the historical role played by its European counterpart i.e. the development of the forces of production. The dominant class at political independence was a pathetic parody of what a dominant class is (Ihonvbere 2001:4). They were merely recipient of a socio-economic system and state structure created by and for the metropolitan power. The elite seize control of the centre to redeploy it rather than transform it. They were unable to subordinate the relatively high developed state apparatus. According to Alavin (1972:39) the relatively autonomous role of the state apparatus allows the neocolonialist bourgeoisies pursue their class interest in the post colonial societies. Ake (1976:3) adds post colonial state continues to be deployed to extract surplus value from its subjects and facilitate exploitation by the dominant class. The state still serves as the instrument of accumulation of private fortunes and class consolidation for hegemonic classes.

Politics in the post independence years (1960-1965) was a triangular competition between the regions, championed by their hegemonic groups and carried out through the instrumentality of ethnically controlled parties. The 1964 general election was to introduce the second term of government of the newly independent country after the first term of 1960-1964. The election produced no absolute winner from among the major parties, Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), NCNC and Action Group (AG). This resulted in the NPC and NCNC coalition government, and the AG was in opposition. Distrust and dissatisfaction was the bane of the coalition government. NCNC became dissatisfied with the

allocation of portfolios in the new cabinet, the allocation of development projects as contained in 1962-68 First National Development Plan.

AG was embroiled in intra-party dispute at the Western Region which it controlled. The crisis that split the party into Obafemi Awolowo faction and S.L. Akintola led faction. The Akintola led faction formed, the Nigerian National Democracy Party which formed alliance with NPC to become Nigerian National Alliance (NNA). The AG formed an alliance with NCNC and some other minor parties to become the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) (Post and Vickers 1973; Dudley 1973).

These re-alliances prepared the stage for the 1964 general election. The election was massively rigged by both NNA and UPGA (Post and Vickers 1973; Dudley 1973). However, UPGA protested NNA's electoral malpractices, and boycotted the election.

There was a stalemate because of the dispute and loss of confidence in the election results, and apparent sympathy for the UPGA, Zik vacillated in calling Sir Abubakar whose party won more seats to form the government (Post AND Vickers 1973; Dudley 1973). The nation had no government for four days. The political power bloc took position of peached battle, refusing to accept the election results. The control of the federal state by NPC (Hausa-Fulani dominant party) had demonstrated to NCNC (Igbo dominant party) and AG (Yoruba dominant party) what it is to be in opposition; and so they were prepared to stage a total battle to avoid being in opposition. With the party in control of state machine, power, authority, primitive accumulation and resource allocation could be guaranteed for the party and its power bloc in a situation of winner take all. Thus, the attitude was, either the party wins or the system destabilized.

The January 15 1966 coup toppled the civilian government of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was motivated, planned and executed by mostly Igbo officers. The politicians and military officers killed in the event were mainly of Northern and Western origins. This engendered the feelings that the coup was an Igbo plot to wrest power and control from Hausa/ Fulani in order to entrench Igbo hegemony. A counter-coup was staged six months later to avenge the death of Northern political and military leaders. The coup was a bloody putsch in which the casualties were mostly Igbo officer and soldiers. At the end, not only had a substantial number of Igbo officers been eliminated, but more importantly Northern hegemony in governance and control of the armed forces had been restored. This status quo remained from 1966 till 1999, the number of military coup not withstanding.

The second republic (1979-1983) was not markedly different. It was a continuation of the same crude contest for supremacy by the former monolithic regions, especially as old foes and contests in the 1960s re-surfaced. The political parties that emerged in spite of the effort to make them truly national parties were facsimile of the pre-civil war parties. They had their heartland in the home state of their founders or leaders just as in the pre-military period. Just as in the 1960, political contest assumed extremely violent dimensions with neither magnanimous victors nor gallant losers as the victorious Northern dominated National Party of Nigeria (NPN) employed state apparatus to wreck opposition parties and enfeeble rival hegemonic ethnic groups (Ojo and Fawole 2004). Instead of breaking down existing prejudices and barriers among the groups, politics in the opinion of the Political Bureau was largely a resurrection of old leadership, schooled in the politics of intrigue, insincerity, deceit and the manipulation of ethnic and regional sentiments to sustain themselves in power (The Report of the Political Bureau 1987).

The aborted third republic in which two parties of Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) were allowed to exist were created to streamline ethnic politics and promote unity. The tendency to hold on to power by the military truncated the Third Republic democratic experiment. Contest for political supremacy has been seen as a means of gaining access to the national wealth. Nigeria's brand of prebendal politics is "an unremitting and unconstrained struggle for possession and access to state offices, with the chief aim of procuring direct communal or other sectional group (Joseph 1991:75)

Consequently, the sharing of the federal revenue has been contentious political issue. With the windfall from oil revenue this contention has become increasingly marked between the federal, state, and local governments on the one hand and by inference, between the different ethnic groups on the other. There has been a dozen revenue allocation since 1946 and none has found a lasting and acceptable formula. By far the most contentions issue today between the federal and the states are on the issue of revenue allocation, resource control and the on-shore and off-shore oil revenues. (Ojo ad Fawole 2004:148)

The struggle for political power became interpreted in ethnic terms. It became a struggle for the hegemony of the various factions of the ruling class. Intra-class struggle, the hegemonic regional factions of these privileged classes paid lip services to national unity and condemned ethnic parochialism but simultaneously institutionalized thekm by making them the basis for economic participation and to a lesser extent, political participation at regional and national levels (Nnoli 1978:158). Ethnic politics thus utilized by the political class to conceal other intra class societal antagonism.

POSTCOLONIAL POLITICS, ETHNICITY AND THE CRISES OF LEGITIMACY

To Zartman, loss of political legitimacy is a crucial indication of state failure and collapse (Murunga 2004:181). The incidents of vested interests, conflict and

crisis of legitimation have been attributed to the configuration of the dynamics of social class. Ninalowo (1999:3, 9) argues that for society not to be propelled toward self annihilation through intra-class and interclass struggle over mutually contradictory vested interests, it become historically incumbent on the state to bring about orderliness via the abiding interests of legitimation. Habermas (1986: 371) points out "the acquisition of legitimacy (through manipulation) it self destructive as soon as the mode of acquisition is exposed. Bates (1981:81-82) argues that although coercion is the ultimate basis of power, it is not a sufficient basis of governance. While force and manipulation can sustain a government, voluntary acceptance is more enduring, stable and reliable basis of governance (Osaghae, Isumonah and Albert 1998:11).

Legitimacy crisis occurs when citizenship rights and benefits are largely denied, and the states seems out of reach, sub-national identities then form basic source of support and the individual may constitute a platform of resistance against the state. In this context, transformation of ethnic groups from group in themselves to group for themselves is more likely (Adejumo 2001: 156). In a situation of loss of legitimacy, the state loses the willing allegiance and legitimizing support of its population giving way to alternative centre of power within the territorial space of the nation – state. A discrepancy in invested interest of the elites and general interest and value deepens the crisis of legitimacy. Ninalowo (1999:11) purports the ultimate test of the legitimation resides in people's fulfillment of their needs, aspirations, value and interest.

Widening disparities in access and opportunities, socio-economic insecurity, corruption, politics of exclusion of the vast majority of the populace from the state and increasing enrichment of the few, politicization of ethnicity has led to loss of confidence among many Nigerians in the Nigerian state. Babawale (2006:23) writes 'the level of pillage that goes on within the state apparatus is reflective of the elites' loss of confidence in the Nigerian project'. Similarly, Ihonvbere (2001:3-4) adds without a veneer of legitimacy, the government is delinked from the society and alienated from it. This makes mobilization of the society for development impossible; the parasitic elite preoccupation is primitive accumulation and not welfare and satisfaction of the governed (Onuoha, 1999:40).

Exploitative elite that did not meet the aspirations or expectations of the people give rise to legitimacy crisis. Such unproductive elites whip up ethnic sentiments and emotions to enhance their strategic positions in the scheme of things. According to a Northern politician 'we had to teach the people to hate southerners; to look on them as people depriving them of their rights, in order to win them over" (Theen and Wilson 2001:488). Politics in Nigeria is conceptualized by various factions of the elites as a competition for crude accumulation for personal wealth but it portrayed as a mean of enhancing ethnic interest. Thus political competition has fuelled ethnic conflicts, instability and violence (Ojo and Fawole 2004:143).

Politics among the ethnic-based parties in the post independence years was dominated by competition for hegemony among the dominant ruling class. According to Theen and Wilson (2001:487) since the parties were closely tied to particular ethnic groups, their electoral strategies focused not so much on broadening their base to include new social categories but rather on how to mobilize the seemingly fixed group of supporters in order maximize turnout. For instance, it was not likely that the Ibo-led NCNC could attract many Yoruba votes so they worked instead to increase voter turnout among the Ibos and minority groups hostile to the Yorubas. Often the best way to increase turnout was to heighten the fear of electoral defeat by warning their voters about the consequences should the other party or ethnic group win the election. In the extreme, it meant telling your supporters that the other side's victory would mean genocide. Obviously, such electoral appeals increased tension among ethnic groups and often led to violence. Federal election of 1964 and western regional election of 1965 are major instances that posed serious challenge to the nation as a whole and contributed to the collapse of the First Republic and military intervention of 1966. One of the first acts of the military government after the coup of January 1966 was to disband the parties.

However, the military elites were not exorcised from ethnic sentiments and the military power bloc has been largely dominated by the Hausa – Fulani ethnic bloc. In fact, argument has been advanced that most of the time; the political – military bloc intervenes to save power balance tilting away from whichever bloc was controlling it at the time or a power bloc wanting to control state power (Onuoha 1999:51).

This argument can be advanced for the coup of that of January 1966, July 1975, December 1983, August 1985 and November 1993. Except for the January 1966 coup which was orchestrated to shift the political power base from Northern political bloc to the Ibo power bloc. The rest of the military coups tilt in favor of the Hausa-Fulani political power bloc and the coups were plotted and designed to retain power in the hands of the Hausa-Fulani political power bloc (Onuoha 1999). To justify this assertion, of the 49 years of political independence, 29 years was under military dominance. It is thus a "political army" belonging to a power bloc, either completely of its own and on its own, or in coalition with other bloc or blocs (Onuoha1999:49). Furthermore, scholars are agreed on the civilian-military coalition in government and politics in Nigeria (Onimode 1983; Turner 1978). Similarly, of the 11 Heads of State, 7 are from the North (Gowon, 1966 to 1975; Murtala-Obasanjo, 1975-1979; Alhaji Shehu Shagari, 1979-1983; Buhari-Idiagbon, 1984-1985; Ibrahim Babangida, 1985-1993; General Sanni Abacha, 1993-1998; Abdulsalam Abubakar, 1998-1999; and Musa

Yar'dua, May1999- May 5, 2010. While 4 are from the South namely Nnamdi Azikiwe 1960-1965; Aguyi Ironsi, January-July 1966; Obasanjo-Atiku, 1999-2007; Goodluck Jonathan May 6, 2010 till date. The handling over of power to a "Transitional Government" headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan in 1993 by Ibrahim Babangida was considered invalid and lacked legitimacy. The law court asserts this based on the ground that the decree setting up the government was signed a day after the authority setting up the Transitional Government had left office (Onuoha 1999:55).

In 1993 when the political tradition of the consistent northern "victory" was broken by the winner, Chief M.K.O. Abiola, the election was annulled by the incumbent Ibrahim Gbadamosi Babangida. Therefore no doubt that in the politics of Nigeria, ethnicity is both a potent factor and a tool used by the dominant elite to secure for themselves strategic advantage in the competition for political power and resource. The status quo remains, is sustained and there is nothing to suggest a change in the political order. The hue and cry of political marginalization and exclusion by the southerners influence the 'installation' of the Obasanjo led Administration since the return to democratic rule in 1999 (Babawale 1999; Onuoha 1999).

From the foregoing, it can be argued that the Northern elites have dominated politics in Nigeria. Regardless of which faction of the elites is in power, the state has not been transformed from the "relative autonomous status" rather it has been preserved and perpetuated to serve the interest of the ruling class precipitating intra-class struggle for control over the spoils of office. In fact, the position of Goffredo Caccia (1983:9) is compelling "not only does theft go in the state apparatus, but the state is itself the main apparatus of theft. In Nigeria, not only do officials steal, but stealing is official, it is the very principle of Nigerian class rule and subservient to the west".

Elite mobilization is possible in the context of fertile group of citizenship exclusion of a group. (Adejumobi 2001:156). Invariably political exclusion, inequalities in opportunities and marginalization provides the necessary condition for elite manipulation of ethnicity in the contest for power and dominance. Lack of social welfare wane the relevance of the state to its people. Linguistic cultural groups provide their members with rudimentary social welfare system and hence this solidarity groups overrode the state as the primary focus of political allegiance (Ake 2000:98).

Also "a great number of people sink into a misery, … the unscrupulous and corrupt find new ways to exploit the crises to their own advantage" (Babawale 1999:118). In addition when the elites get to power, this parasitic class emphasizes the exclusion of their counterpart from the other parts of the country and the contending faction create legitimacy crises for the dominant ruling class. Consequently, the particularistic interests have proved to be a veritable source of friction and intra bourgeois class

conflicts (Jega 1997: 558). Nevertheless, the elite are united in the pursuit of their common interest in expanding the horizon of their accumulation through political and state power, class solidarity has been manipulated under the guise of ethnic diversity to achieve selfish and parochial ends (Aluko 2003:81).

Corruption, social injustice, political marginalization and exclusion prevail. Disparities between the rich and poor widens by day as more Nigerian live below the poverty line, ethnic and religious violence is rife, electoral malpractices heightened and become more sophisticated, socio-economic insecurity is widespread, collapse and decay in infrastructural facilities, brain-drain in all sectors of the economy, loss of human and material resources is preponderant in the Nigeria polity. Educational system is dysfunctional while children of the elites school abroad, trafficking in human and drugs is gaining ascendancy, prostitution locally and internationally is pervasive, ritual killings, robbery and total insecurity of lives, job and lack of access and opportunities contracted the political space resulting in crisis of legitimacy. Violence becomes a veritable means of political expression. For example incessant kidnapping in the Niger-delta, vandalization of oil pipelines resulting in loss of many lives and properties, unending violence from time to time are attestation to this fact. According to Adejo (2000:249)

Ethnic elite willing to mobilize their kith and kin in response to changing political opportunities and resources compounded by structure of exclusion and privilege which they are not willing to change, so long will violence continue to be used as the final expression of frustration in the oppression.

CONCLUSION

In Nigeria dissatisfaction with government performance, dashed hopes, expectations and frustration has contributed in no small measure to the crises of legitimacy. This condition is aggravated by the desperate politician manipulating ethnicity to stir up violence and conflict in the polity to achieve selfish and parochial interest. When a faction of the elite conflicts with a dominant ruling class, the less dominant class instigate crisis of legitimacy for dominant ruling class resulting from conflicting of class interest. The masses bear the brunt of elite struggle for power and resources in Nigeria. The weak economic base of the elites make political struggle "a do or die affair". The elites need economic base to support their political power. This results in inversion of the Marxist superstructure determining the substructure. The situation is compounded by the lack of autonomy of the economy. The economy is bequeathed by British metropolitan bourgeois at independence. Hence, the elites have political power without economic independence. The relation of production is capitalist,

owned and controlled by the metropolitan bourgeois and serving the interest of the metropolitan economy. The elites depended on state for economic influence that is why Alavi (1972) notes that the relationship between metropolitan bourgeois and lumpen bourgeois is collaborative. The race to get to power, the elites result to ethnic exploitation. And in fact the emergence of electoral politics marked the beginning of ethnicity in Nigeria. The political elites mobilize the member of their ethnic group promising good life and improved standard of living in return. The reality shows that elites have betrayed the trust repose in them by members of their ethnic group. Elites living condition improve considerable while those of their ethnic group deteriorated. The frustration and dashed hope and hopelessness manifested in crisis of legitimacy expressed in form of violence, wanton destruction, migration, patronage system, corruption and insecurity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of ethnic base for political contests should be totally discouraged. It is time for Nigerian to reject the political elite who exploit the fact of ethnic diversity. These diversities are not themselves problem per se. the problem is with the elites who emphasize those factors that can disunite rather than unite us. Elite using ethnic sentiments should be rejected. Nigerians needs leaders who will put national interest above sectional and parochial considerations.

There should be greater devolution of power to component units in the Federation and possibly power relations should be establish along ethnic lines. People should organize themselves as they desire. Such devolution of authority power allows for greater checks and balances as people are the managers of their own affairs.

The national resources should be shared on the principle of equity and the principle of derivation should be considered. Emphasis should be placed on relation of production rather than distribution. Effort should be geared towards gaining complete control of the economy to provide the needed economic base need for political control.It is necessary to widen the political space to be inclusive of all views and perspectives. Political participation and interests adequately represented must be guaranteed and encouraged in the national politics. There must be a de-emphasis on politics as the gateway to success; politics must be conceived as a self-less service to the nation.

Economic growth and development must be prioritized. Nigeria is blessed with both natural and human resources. There is need for the emergence of crops of leaders that has the political will to stir the affairs of the nation to achieve our national goal. National integration through unifying factor must be emphasized. Disintegrative factors de-emphasis.
Public accountability and transparency in government must

be part and parcel of the political process. How public funds is generated, expended and distributed must be made known to the public and questions should be asked and answers provided. In fact sincerity, probity and patriotism must be infused into to political practice while insincerity, deceit, thuggery and gangsterism wither away. Legitimation exists when through conscious practical amelioration of human condition and the fulfillment of the aspirations, needs and values of citizenry, the government is accorded voluntary support by the citizenry widespread equitable opportunities and access to adequate nutrition, housing, formal education, transportation, communication, civil and political liberties that would enhance are produce by human centered development (Akinbobola, 1999:127).

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