

# **ETHNICITY, FEDERAL CHARACTER PRINCIPLE AND THE SEARCH FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA**

**Onwubiko, Obinna**

08037661529, 08055971854

E-mail:obinnaonwubiko@hotmail.com

Department of Public Administration,  
Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri, Imo State.

**&**

**Nwachukwu, Lambert Chidi**

08033618400,

Department of Public Administration,  
Madonna University Okija, Anambra State.

## **Abstract**

This paper examines the problems of ethnicity and how the federal character principle has been employed to manage it so as to ensure national integration in Nigeria. It is observed that the principle as implemented in the country at present has a lot of shortcomings, hence its inability to manage the problems of ethnicity and bring about national integration. This is why the principle has been severally criticized. It seems the federal character principle has come to stay. This is because, as long as Nigeria remains a federation with diverse cleavages, the need and clamour to balance these diverse interests in the country will always be there. There is therefore, the need to find ways and means of making the principle acceptable to all and sundry by dealing with the problems that comes with its implementation. This paper has accordingly, made some recommendations in this regard.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity, Federal Character Principle, National Integration.

## **Introduction**

Nigeria is a constructed state. The country is the product of British experiment in political colonization. Nigeria consists of a conglomeration of ethnic groups and fatherlands, which are heterogeneous in many respects. These according to Agbodike (2000:177-178) include the diversity

or pluralism of language, religion, socio-political and economic formation as well as administrative styles, social norms and personality types. There are also diversities among them resulting from factors of historical evolution, disproportionate population sizes, unequal economic resources and educational attainments. There are diversities, too, in social wants, needs

and preferences as well as in talents and opportunities. These differences among the diverse peoples or ethnic groups of Nigeria have tended to generate mutual suspicion and misunderstanding which in turn has given rise to acrimonious existence and conflicts in the country. These situations, no doubt, hamper political stability and efforts at national integration and the building of a nation-state out of the diverse ethnic, social, geographic, economic and religious elements in the country.

In an effort to address these issues and also ensure structural balance of claims and gains by the various groups and interests, the government formulated and put into use the federal character principle. This principle, which is now a directive principle of state policy, is also aimed at ensuring a peaceful, united, stable, prosperous and integrated Nigeria.

This paper takes a critical look at the concept of ethnicity, national integration and federal character in Nigeria. It observes that the federal character principle from the indications has come to stay. However, the formula as presently practiced has a lot of pitfalls hence its inability to tackle ethnicity and bring about national integration in the country. There is therefore the need to make the federal character principle a veritable instrument of national integration in the country. The way to go about this

enormous challenge or responsibility will be the task of this paper.

There are many theories of national integration, which would be suitable for studying or analyzing the Nigerian state. Some of these approaches include the functionalist, the federalist and the cybernetic. The functionalist approach requires the study of Nigeria within the primordial ethnic, cultural, economic, linguistic and religious heterogeneity and the need to drive the citizens into a homogenous unit, which may permit participatory government. This may be performed through the process of political socialization. The federalist approach extols the creation of a central government that coordinates the constituent units, while the cybernetic model emphasizes the establishment of contacts and promotion of interactions through which the component units would understand and appreciate themselves better. These approaches are said to contribute to effective national integration, which fosters political unification of the component parts into one whole unit. The ultimate goal of national integration as a process (irrespective of the preferred approach) is the political unification of the constituent units into one whole nation, the type of Plato's polis (city state) (Okoli et al, 2003:2).

## **Ethnicity**

The challenge or problem posed by ethnicity is inevitable in all plural societies. In Nigeria, the problem dates back to the colonial days. Writing of Nigeria in 1967, Richard Sklar had described ethnicity as a mask for class privilege (Sklar, 1967, 1967:6-8). So what really is ethnicity? Nnoli (1980:5) posed this same question and went on to provide the answer that "it is a social phenomenon associated with interaction among members of different ethnic groups". And ethnic groups are, according to him, social formations distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries. Relation between ethnic groups within the same political system according to Nnoli produce ethnicity. On his part, Wallerstein (1963), describes ethnicity as a redefinition of one's cultural identity through membership in a wider community, usually in the context of an urban situation. According to Elaigwu (1994:146), ethnicity is ethnic consciousness "acted out" in relations with others – individuals and groups – to maximize gains in situations of conflicting interests and claims over scarce resources (i.e. values, status, and /or goods).

Conflicts in plural societies such as Nigeria most often arise when people from different ethnic groups decide to employ their ethnic differences in pursuing competing interests. Although ethnicity has

always been seen as having a negative impact on national integration, studies have revealed that there are a lot of positive attributes of ethnicity. Nnoli (1994:12) has outlined these positive impacts thus:

1. First, the political demands of many ethnic movements concern liberty and justice. They express fears about the oppression of their members by other groups and about the nepotistic distribution of public service jobs and social amenities, and the imposition of the culture of the dominant ethnic group on the others. In this way, ethnicity contributed to democratic practice by its emphasis on equity and justice in socio-political relations.
2. Second, it leads to the appreciation of one's own social roots in a community and cultural group which is essential not only for the stability of the individual and ethnic group but that of the country as a whole.
3. Third, it provides a sense of belonging as part of an intermediate layer of social relations between the individual and the state.
4. Fourth, ethnicity provided a local mobilizational base for the anti-colonial movement for national freedom.

5. Fifth, ethnic identity has been instrumental in the promotion of community development in the rural areas.
6. Sixth, the mobilization of the various ethnic groups behind the various factions of a nations ruling class contributes to the decentralization of power in the country, which is healthy for democratic freedoms.

Similarly, Obasi (2001:239) agrees that ethnicity has its positive sides. According to him, ethnicity aids national integration in the sense that ethnic groups serve as a mechanism of re-socialization by recruiting individuals into many non-ethnic nationalist groupings. Secondly, members of ethnic groups seek to raise the status of the whole group thereby engendering mobility and social contact. Thirdly, ethnic groups help keep the class structures fluid and so prevent the emergence of castes. This is because by encouraging social mobility, it minimizes any tendency towards caste formation. Finally, ethnic groups serve as an outlet for political tensions. It helps for instance, to divert expectations from the state to other social groups.

Despite the above positive side of ethnicity, it has been generally agreed that ethnicity constitutes one of the biggest problems of national integration in all plural societies. This is why most countries have fashioned

out various mechanisms to manage it. The emphasis on managing ethnicity, instead of eradicating it, is borne out of the realization that it cannot be eradicated. This is a result of the fact that ethnic cleavages do not die. Ethnic cleavages cannot be extinguished through force or repression but they can be managed so that they do not threaten civil peace while allowing people of different groupings to live in harmony (Diamond, 1988; Osaghae, 1994; Obi and Abonyi, 2004). Countries that have tried to embark on the fruitless strategy of eliminating ethnicity like Netherlands and Switzerland, have ended up exacerbating ethnic conflicts and even making it more obvious and dangerous. Accordingly, Sithole (1995) has advised that:

If ethnicity is legitimated, then it can be diffused, controlled and managed better than approaching it as if it were an illegitimate social phenomenon. I have given up on the idea that ethnicity can be eliminated altogether.

According to Ake (1996:24), another major reason why ethnicity cannot be eradicated in Nigeria and Africa in general is as a result of Africa's communal lifestyle. He writes that, "Some of us, perhaps, most of us are prone to giving loyalty to the community, the ethnic or national group. We tend to define ourselves in terms of these identities and it is in our oneness with them that we become intelligible to ourselves, enjoy

freedom, pursue interests and actualize our potentials". Nnoli (1994:18) supports this view when he asserts that in Africa,

Individuals do not have any claims, which may over-ride those of the collectivity. Harmony and cooperation rather than divergence of interest, competition and conflict characterize social life. People are more inclined to think of their obligation to other members of the group than their rights. In addition, feelings of kinship pervade social relations. However, hospitality towards peaceful foreigners is strongly valued. Even in the urban areas, a feeling of belongingness to a community is an important part of individual existence.

It is in an effort to manage ethnicity in heterogeneous societies as opposed to the futile exercise of eliminating it that Lijphart (1991:486-487) suggested a multi-party, consociational democracy in such societies. Consociational democracy involves an elaborate arrangement to ensure minority representation. It is regarded particularly suitable for the governance of the societies which are deeply divided by religious, ideological, linguistic, regional, cultural, racial or ethnic differences. Consociational democracy has been tried in many parts of the world. For instance, in Austria Catholic and Socialist parties formed a coalition from 1945 to 1966; in Netherlands this

principle was adopted from 1917 to 1967; and in Lebanon Consociational democracy remained operative from 1943 to 1957. In fact Consociational democracy provides for a working government in a society sharply divided by multifarious interests.

On the other hand, under majoritarian system, a candidate is usually required to obtain an absolute majority, that is, more than 50% of the valid votes cast, to win the election. If there are only two candidates in the field for one seat, there will be no problem in deciding the winner. But when there are three or more contestants in a single-member constituency, and no candidate wins an absolute majority, some method must be evolved to decide the winner.

Therefore, Lijphart suggestions are as follows:

1. Broad coalition cabinets instead of one-party bare majority cabinets;
2. A balanced power relationship between the cabinet and the legislative instead of cabinet predominance;
3. A bicameral legislature, particularly one in which the two chambers have roughly equal powers and are differently constituted, instead of unicameralism;
4. A federal and decentralized structure instead of a unitary and centralized government;

5. A rigid constitution that can only be amended by extra-ordinary majorities, instead of a "flexible" written or unwritten constitution.
6. Judicial review of the constitutionality of legislation;
7. A multi-dimensional party system in which parties differ on more issue dimensions in addition to socio-economic issues, as for instance along religious, cultural, urban-rural or foreign policy dimensions; and
8. Elections by proportional representation instead of by plurality.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that Nigeria is somehow in tune with consociationalism as advocated by Lijphart. However, Nnoli (1994:24) has argued that plural societies that have adopted consociationalism have experienced a lot of problems. Citing Nigeria as an example, he observed that the various consociational policies designed to check ethnicity have led to the politicization of the state bureaucracy and the retention of ethnicity into its activities. This has accordingly resulted in the loss of professionalism, lack of merit and excellence and a consequent loss of innovative capacity. Whatever the argument, some other consociational policies and programmes have been implemented over the years in Nigeria to help contain the problems of ethnicity and further the goals of national

integration. These include the National Youth Service Corps Scheme, State/Local Government Creation exercises, the unity schools, the federal character principle, etc. This paper will however limit itself to the federal character principle.

### **National Integration**

The concept of national integration is one that is popular among scholars, politicians and statesmen alike. Although, the concept does not enjoy a universally accepted definition, its exact meaning is not in doubt. National integration is one among the five types of integration identified by Weiner Myron. The others are: territorial, value, elite-mass and integrative behaviour (Weiner, 1965:52-64). According to Weiner, national integration refers specifically to the problem of creating a sense of territorial nationality, which overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties. This integration involves amalgamation of disparate social, economic, religious, ethnic and geographic elements into a single nation-state, a homogenous entity, the like of Plato's polis, the city-state. This kind of integration implies both the capacity of government to control the territory under its jurisdiction as well as to stimulate a set of popular attitudes described as loyalty, obligation, allegiance, patriotism and willingness by the people to place national interest above local or parochial concern towards the nation generally.

It is in the light of the foregoing that Ogunojemite (1987:224) defines national integration as "a process leading to political cohesion and sentiments of loyalty toward a central political authority and institutions by individuals belonging to different social groups or...political units". Similarly, Bamiseye (1998) sees national integration as referring to "the means of uniting all component parts of a country into one and the process of bringing together culturally and socially disparate groups into a single territorial unit and the establishment of a national identity".

From all the foregoing, it is now obvious that the central theme or desire in national integration is the need to achieve unity, patriotism and progress among multi-ethnic groups that make up a particular state. In a state where national integration thrives, the individuals realize their rights and privileges, identify fully with the state and owe allegiance to it, because they see themselves as standing in direct relation with it. It has been agreed that ethnicity is one of the major problems or bottlenecks, which hinders the process of national integration in plural societies such as Nigeria. As we observed earlier, the Nigerian government has among other measures introduced the federal character principles as a means of tackling ethnicity, and to ensure national integration in the country. But how effective has the federal character principles been in this direction? The

next section of this paper will examine this.

### **The Federal Character Principle**

The Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) inaugurated by the Late General Murtala Mohammed on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1975 coined the term, federal character. It was the CDC that drafted the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The term gained wide currency and usage after it was embodied in that constitution. The CDC defines federal character as:

The distinctive desire of the people of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CDC Report, 1977:x).

The term was later enshrined in section 14 (3) of the 1979 constitution. This section states that:

The composition of the government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and to command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no

predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or sectional groups, in that government or any of its agencies.

The principle was further extended to the states and local government councils through section 14 (4) of the same constitution:

Thus composition of the government of a state, a local government council or any of the agencies of such government or council and the conduct of the affairs of the government or council or such agencies shall be carried out in such manner as to recognize the diversity of the people within its area of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the people of the federation.

These constitutional provisions were respectively repeated verbatim in sections 15(3) and 15 (4) of the 1989 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. These provisions are also contained in sections 14 (3) and 14 (4) of the present 1999 constitution of the country.

From the foregoing, one can see that the federal character principle is basically aimed at preventing the domination of government and its resources by people from only one group or a few groups and at guaranteeing to every group, access to power, opportunities and resources. It is in essence a variant of the consociational principle of

proportionality and it is also called quota system or ethnic arithmetic formula elsewhere. The federal character principle, which is contained under the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy in the constitution has been a very contentious issue in the government and politics of Nigeria.

No doubt, the federal character principle has its merit. First, the formula satisfies the quest for representation and proportionality in allocating resources and making appointments among the various groups in the country. In other words, it makes for representative bureaucracy, creates supports for government policies and also provides a mechanism for the government party to distribute patronage. According to Krislov (1974:4-5), "No matter how brilliantly conceived, no matter how artfully contrived, government action usually also requires societal support". Such support is normally guaranteed by drawing a wide segment of society into the government "to convey and merchandize a policy". The argument being made here is that by ensuring the representation and participation of the diverse groups that make up the country in the conduct of public affairs, the federal character principles as well helps to mobilize public support, which is necessary for the successful implementation of government policies.

Second, the federal character principle has helped in ethnic



balancing as a necessity in the evolution of Nigerian citizenship and for ensuring less acrimonious relationships among the various peoples or groups of Nigeria. The formula has made for a more equal federation where more peoples or groups owe loyalty to the nation because they see themselves represented meaningfully therein.

Third, it has been argued that the federal character principle is neither immoral nor unjust. Rather, it should be seen as a variant of distributive justice (Agbodike, 2000:185). Ohanbamu (1968:130) and Kirk-Greene (1971:186) have variously argued that if the merit criterion were the only one used, most jobs would naturally go to the most enterprising and/or educationally advanced of the Nigeria ethnic groups. Thus, to ensure that the others do not feel deprived, the principle of federal character should be used to give them a sense of belonging. And as Lawson (1985:61) has reasoned "The standards that enable this sense of belonging to be achieved are not necessarily the highest obtainable or available".

It has also been argued by Alhaji Bargudu Shettima, a one-time chairman of the Federal Public Service Commission, that the federal character principle can enhance the efficiency of the public service. Gboyega (1989:182) believes this can be achieved through fair representation on the basis of the federal character principle, which would command

public confidence and greater cooperation, mutual trust and mutual respect among the public servants themselves. This will accordingly increase the capacity of the public service.

Despite the foregoing, the federal character principle has been severally criticized. First, it has always been argued by critics of the principle that its fundamental weakness is that it tends to enthrone mediocrity in the public sector at the expense of merit, standard and professionalism. By eschewing meritocracy and professionalism without recourse to standards, the federal character principle becomes morally reprehensible and an act of injustice. Viewed from this perspective, the quota factors in the federal character principle become not only counter-productive but also divisive, and as such constitute a cog in the wheel of the peaceful and orderly progress and development of Nigeria (Agbodike, 2000:185).

Second, it is also argued that in the name of representation and national unity, the federal character principle allows ethno-regional patrons and their client to exploit and mismanage state resources without contributing to any meaningful development. In essence, the principle was formulated, adopted and channeled to serve the overall interest of the ruling class. Agbodike (2000:184) captures this situation better when he observed that:

Under the guise of the federal character principle, the members of the bourgeois class get themselves entrenched in power and exercise control over the machinery of state. Through the application of this principle, too, they strive to reconcile their class differences through the operation of acceptable formulae for the allocation, distribution and sharing of national resources and benefits among themselves. While they do this, they capitalize on, and fan the embers of the ethnic differences among the various Nigeria peoples to win the support of the masses in their areas. And in the course of this elite game, members of this class climb to positions, amass wealth and enrich themselves.

Third, it is argued that by focusing on regional and ethnic balancing or representation, the federal character principle exacerbates differentiation and ethnicity instead of enhancing mutual trust, accommodation and national unity. Also, the formula while stressing the imperative of ethnic balancing invariably de-emphasizes the nation. In the process, too, it strengthens the parochial, particularistic orientations and primordial ethnic sentiments of Nigerians. All these form the basis of disaffection among the various groups in the country. In addition, it is argued that the principle has not adequately addressed the problems of minorities especially in states made up of different and unequal ethnic groups.

All these appear to be the emergent paradoxes of the federal character principle, whereby, instead of achieving unity through balancing, the nation is further divided.

Fourth, it is also argued that the principle does nothing to address the more fundamental issue, which is the yawning gap between the rich, and the poor. This is why Gboyega (1989:183) sees it merely as "an elite ploy which would not materially improve the lot of the down trodden in whose name it is raised". Under these circumstances, there is bound to be acrimony and socio-economic conflict between the haves (represented by the ruling elite class) and the have nots (represented by the masses). Unless the interests of the masses are taken care of in the application of the federal character principle, in such a way that they have access to the basic necessities of life, the formula is bound to have little relevance to the integration problems of Nigeria. It will at best provide an ambiguous and deceitful recipe for welding the federation together (Agbodike, 2000:184).

Even in the public service of the federation, the principle is known to imbue public servants with constituency consciousness and mentality. This no doubt, frustrates the development of a national attitude and undermines their integrity and impartiality. It also removes the safeguards, which protects them from the ravages of politics. Above all, Agbodike (2000:185) write that the

principle creates tension and frustration among some public servants, particularly in the South, whose career expectations are adversely affected by the need to reflect the federal character and who see the measure as a ploy to deprive them of jobs for the benefit of the Northerners. All these make the service an arena of sectional struggles and competition and make people to lose confidence in the impartiality of the government and the neutrality of the service as an instrument of state policy.

From the foregoing, it is held that the federal character principle has heightened mutual suspicion and acrimonies among Nigerians, and has made them see themselves first as members of their primordial group before anything else. This is why at every available opportunity they demand for their own separate state. The reason here being that, one's state is where he really belongs. It is also argued that the principle runs counter even to some other provision of the 1979 constitution. For instance, section 15 (2) provides that. "discrimination on the ground of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic association or ties shall be prohibited". According to Unoh (2000:198), the federal character principle in fact emphasizes one's place of origin and discriminates against one on that ground. The result has been that sometime more qualified personnel are denied employment or promotion

mainly on the ground that the available position is not for their state or places of origin. Thus, the principle of federal character or quota system, contravenes the provision of section 17 (3) (a) of the 1979 constitution which requires that: "all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment".

All these has made critics of the principles to argue that the formula is unjustifiably discriminatory and that it weighs very low on the scale of social justice and fair play. Accordingly, instead of the principle bringing about the needed unity and integration of the diverse groups in the country, it has brought about divisiveness, mediocrity, ethnic tensions and suspicion, discrimination, societal retardation, corruption, inefficiency and other negative outcomes. All these might have informed Usman's (1977:46-48) assertion that the federal character principle is the solution that has deepened the problem it was devised to tackle.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In this paper, we have tried to look at the problems of ethnicity on how the federal character principle has been employed to manage it so as to make for national integration in Nigeria. From our discussions and

analyses, it is obvious that the federal character principle has a lot of shortcomings. This is why the formula has been severally attacked and criticized by scholars, public commentators, statesmen and politicians alike. However, as long as Nigeria remains a federation with diverse cleavages, the need and clamour to balance these diverse interests in the country will always be there. The federal character principle was therefore formulated to take care of these differing interests. In fact, the principle is now generally accepted as a normative expression of the equal rights of Nigerians to participate in the political, administrative, economic and other affairs of the country. And there is very evidence and indication that the principle has come to stay. This is in the unlikely event that the diverse cleavages in Nigeria will whither away, or that federalism will be abrogated in the country. What is therefore, necessary at this juncture is to find ways and means of making the principle acceptable to all and sundry by dealing with the rancour, ill-feelings and problems that come with its implementation so as to bring about the needed unity and national integration. It is in this direction that we make the following recommendations:

First, there is the need to balance representation brought about by the federal character formula with the principle of merit (see Gboyega, 1989:183; Agbodike, (2000:187). The

appointment or recruitment of persons should always be done from the best available in any section of the country. However, recruitment to positions that require specialist training such as pilots, architects, medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc, should strictly be based on merit. To do otherwise will be tantamount to exposing the citizens and the nation to great danger. Furthermore, there is the urgent need to enthrone merit by giving all Nigerians equal and affordable access to education and further training to serving staff. This will also help to bridge the educational gap between the North and the South.

Second, there is the need to remove the "indigene syndrome" and other discriminatory policies, laws and regulations brought about by the federal character principle. This can be done through appropriate legislation. According to Agbodike (2000:187), it is an aberration of nation building and national integration to see fellow Nigerians, some of whom were born and may have lived in a place all their lives, being thrown out of jobs and discriminated against because they are not indigenes of the area. We therefore join him and Osaghae (1989:453) in asking the government to see that every citizen of Nigeria who settles in any part of the country is treated as an indigene of the place and endowed with residency rights, as is the case, in the United States of America.

Third, there is the need for all concerned groups and interests to be

adequately consulted and taken into consideration in the course of implementing the federal character principle. Moreover, the principle should not be used as a punitive measure against any group or section of the country. This calls for the emergence of leaders with nationalistic attributes to help direct the affairs of the nation and also ensure the continued survival of the peace, unity, progress and stability of the country. This will no doubt be a good road map to national integration in the country.

Fourth, there is the need to restructure the present federal set up in the country by reducing the powers of the central government. The over-centralized federalism presently practised in the country whereby the centre has too much power and resources only fuels the struggle to capture the centre by the various contending groups and interests. They do this most often in the name of federal character or quota system. In a restructured federation, more powers and resources should reside with the constituents units who will be at liberty to develop at their own pace. If this is done, the struggle (via federal character and quota system) to control the centre will reduce and so will ethnicity. Also, the restructuring should be able to alter the asymmetrical political structure that has over the years impoverished the masses, thus allowing a few elite to corner state power and resources in the name of federal character. The masses

should therefore, be given opportunity to meet their basic needs, participate fully in decision-making, have equal opportunities for employment, education, access to goods and services provided by government and improved conditions of life. The restructured political system should therefore, arrest the exploitation of the masses by the elites and accordingly address their needs. It is through this process of tackling the peoples welfare needs that they can "develop a sense of national identity... transcending parochial loyalties of... ethnicity, religion, language and region" (Rosberg, 1971).

Lastly, we plead for democracy as a major panacea for managing ethnicity and bringing about national integration. The democracy we have in mind here is not the present charade masterminded by Professor Maurice Iwu's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), but the type that allows the people to choose their leaders and representatives in free and fair elections. Our reason for believing that genuine democracy will help tackle ethnicity and bring about national integration in the country is based on Claude Ake's assertion that:

Democratization is a solution to some of the problems which the manipulation of ethnicity has caused, especially the antipathies between ethnic groups, the violent intensity of political competition caused by fear of ethnic domination, the dissolution of political society

into ethnicities and the failure to crystallize a national identity arising from the tendency to be loyal to the ethnic group rather than the state... A democratized state would be responsive to social needs and thus reduce, if not eliminate, the need to seek safety and support in the ethnic group. In a truly democratized society, state power would not be privatized and used to

terrorize, exploit and oppress, as is currently the case in most of Africa. Ethnic groups would not be so desperate about avoiding domination and the premium on power would not be so high when there is rule of law, equality of opportunity and equitable sharing of the burdens and rewards of citizenship (Ake, 1996).

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