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## **CITIZENSHIP RELATED ISSUES AND THE CULTURAL POLICY IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The research on the citizenship and the national cultural policy in Nigeria, will utilize research conducted by the following researchers; Uzodike, and Mai angwa, (2012) *Terrorism in Nigeria: causal factors and central problematic African Renaissance*, Agbiboa, (2013) *Ethnoreligious conflicts and Elusive Quest for National identity in Nigeria* and Fatima, (2014) *Religious conflicts in Nigeria and their impacts on social life, to form the case studies of this research work. The researchers have identified ethnicity and identity, citizenship and the politics of belonging in Nigeria to be the causes of the crises in Nigeria, the researchers have employed the literature review method in collecting the datas for their research work.**

***Keywords:*** *Citizenship, Cultural policy and National Identity*

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### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDIES**

Nigeria was a colony under the British rule from 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Lagos, one of the Nigerian cities was annexed by the British and became a crown colony in 1861, the influence of British colonialist in the Niger area has increased in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when British occupied the northern part of Nigeria in 1885 after the Berlin conference. In the period between 1889 and 1899, major part of the present Nigeria was under the Royal Niger Company governed by George Goldie. In 1906 the southern protectorate and the colony of Lagos came under one administrative head as the southern protectorate. Subsequently, the northern and the southern protectorates were amalgamated in 1914 and became

one country known as Nigeria, the name which was coined from the name of a river known as river Niger. The division of the country into protectorates and its subsequent amalgamation in 1914 left an indelible mark in the history of Nigeria, this is because, the divide and rule tactics of Lord Lugard succeeded in dividing not only the country but also the people of Nigeria into different ethnicities and geo political zones who are today very hostile to each other and never in the history belong to the same political party since independence till date.

Recent research (Jinadu, 1986; Suberu, 1996; Iyoha and Oriokhi, 2008) shows that, the British policy of divide and rule tactics has not only divided the country but also succeeded in dividing the people into different ethnic groups who have never trusted each other, never belong to the same political parties and all their political parties are regionally formed.

Moreover, the three political parties formed in the first republic, were regionally formed, the Yoruba ethnic group of the southwest Nigeria formed the Action Group (AG) which was very strong in the southwest and headed by their leader chief Obafemi Awolowo; the southeastern Nigeria formed their political party called National council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) headed by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe who was the first Nigerian ceremonial president; while the northern part of the country formed the northern people's congress (NPC) headed by sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa who was the first prime minister.

Subsequently, in the second republic, political parties were formed but yet the parties were regionally formed as it was in the first republic. The united party of Nigeria (UPN) was the successor to the Action Group of the first republic, the party was formed and dominated by the Yoruba ethnic group of the southwestern Nigeria under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and the Igbo of the south eastern Nigeria formed the Nigerian people's party (NPP) headed by Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe while the northern part of the country formed the National Party of Nigeria, which inherited the position of the Northern people's congress though it differs a little bit with the Northern people's congress because it has some supporters from the south eastern region of the country but non from the south western region.

Furthermore, in the year 1999 when the country returned to democracy after so many years of military rule, political parties were formed by the military

government but the parties later took the style of the previous political parties, the All Nigerian people's party (ANPP) was dominated by the mostly northern people with no supporter from either southeast nor south west, though the strongest political party was the peoples' Democratic Party (PDP). The All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) was dominated by the people of the Eastern part of Nigeria and has influence only in the Eastern part of the country, while the people of the western part of Nigeria dominated the Alliance for Democracy (AD) and the party had influence throughout the southwestern Nigeria.

Nevertheless, in the fourth republic, the scenario was different because there was merging of political parties which was an agreement reached by the northern dominated political party, Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) a party that dominated and controlled by the south western Nigerian people mainly the Yoruba ethnic group. The merging of the parties resulted to the formation of one mega political party known as the All Progressive Change which eventually became very strong and took over power from the main ruling party, the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) which has been ruling the country since the returned of the country to democratic rule in 1999. While the people of the eastern Nigeria mainly Igbo still maintained their regional party the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA).

Thomson, (2000) notes that, in the long run no powerful nationwide political party or constituency emerged. Instead, local considerations dominated, and issues of ethnicity became increasingly politicized. Each region was governed by a political party that identified with one ethnic group .Hausa-Fulani governed the northern part of Nigeria and the Yoruba governed the west while the Igbo ruled the eastern Nigeria.

In addition, the syndromes of the British divide and rule tactics and the policy of indirect rule system adopted by the British colonialist in Nigeria, has played a vital role in dividing the people of Nigeria based on ethnicity. The ethnic differences installed by the British colonial masters through their policies that was designed only to suit their interest in the country, has contributed tremendously in dividing the people of Nigeria into different ethnic and religious groups that are always very hostile to each other.

Jinadu,(1989). Noted that, there are three major ethnic groups in Nigeria; Igbo in the southeast, Yoruba in the southwest and the Hausa/Fulani in the north. These three ethnic groups have dominated the political affairs of the country since independence in 1960, the Hausa/Fulani consist of thirty percent (30%), the Yoruba twenty percent (20%), while Igbos seventeen percent (17%) with the rest being so called minorities.

Going by the above explanation therefore, it may interest you to know that because of the division of the country into regions based on ethnicity and religious differences, almost everything in the country is been done base on the formula of ethnicity and religion difference. Employments, government projects and other essential basic amenities are being sited and done only in those areas dominated by the major ethnic groups. The minority groups are denied their fundamental rights to contest for elective positions by the major ethnic groups no matter their experience and knowledge no one will vote for them, they prefer to vote for their kinsman who has little or no experience than to vote for the person that is not their kinsman. In terms of performance in office by the people who are not among the major ethnic groups, they tend not to appreciate what ever achievements recorded by any one that is not among the majority ethnic group.

Fatima, (2014) in her research paper on enthno religious violence in Nigeria, identified the following as notable ethno religious conflicts that occurred in various parts of Nigeria,she used the literature review method in collecting data for her research and subsequently she was able to identify ethnicity, identity, citizenship and the politics of belonging to be the major causes of the crisis in the country. The crises include the following; Maitatsine riot in Kano, Kano state in (1980, 1982); Maitatsine crisis in Bulumkutu in Borno state in (1982); Maitatsine crisis in Jimeta Adamawa state (1984); Maitatsine Gombe, Gombe state (1985, 1991); Ilorin, Kwara state religious conflict (1986); Jalingo, Taraba state religious crisis (1992, 2009); Shagamu, Lagos state crisis (1999); Kafanchan, Kaduna state ethnoreligious crisis (1987); Tafawa Balewa, Bauchi state ethno religious crisis ( 1991,1995, and 2001); Zango Kataf, Kaduna state ethno religious crisis(1992); Tiv-Jukun and Tiv- Kuteb crisis(1992,1993); potiskum, Yobe state ethno religious crisis (1994, 2009); Chamba-Kuteb crisis in Takum, Taraba state (1997,1998); Igbira-Bassa crisis Kogi state (1986,

2000); Tiv and other tribes crisis in Nassarawa (2001); Moon eclipse crisis in Borno state (1996); Jos ethno religious crisis (1994,2000,2001,2003,2008,2009,2010); Ikilu-Bajju (2001); Yeiwa –Shandam crisis (2002,2004); Mangu-Bokkos crisis (1992,1995);Bukuru-Gyero crisis (1997); Maiduguri ethno religious crisis (2006,2009); Iggah-Oyikwa crisis (2002); Kano religious crisis (2004); Numan religious crisis (2004); Azare religious crisis (2001); Bauchi religious crisis (2010); Ibadan religious crisis (2010); Wukari religious crisis (2010,2011,2012,2013,2014,2015,2016). Suberu, (1996) insist that minority problem are deeply rooted in complex historical and structural processes of pre colonial and colonial in corporation and consolidation of diverse ethnic segments, federal territorial evolution and re organization, revenue, political competition and representation.

Agbiboa (2013) on his research paper “ Ethnoreligious conflicts and Elusive Quest for National identity in Nigeria” in that research he employed the literature review method to collect data and subsequently he discovered that sectionalism,sectional differences and the politics of belonging to be the major causes of crisis in the country he further stressed that, sectionalism and sectional differences among Nigerians was so pronounced immediately after the first military coup that took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> January 1966, in which officers predominantly Igbo of the eastern Nigeria planned and executed the first military coup and those killed during the coup were predominantly people from the northern region and only few from the western region. Those killed in the military coup include the prime minister sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, defence minister Mohammadu RIBadu, Premier of northern region Ahmadu Bello, the Premier of the western region Samuel Akintola but no one was killed among the people of eastern Nigeria who were serving under the government at that time,though the president by then was an Igbo man from the eastern region but he was not killed. The northern people and their allies from the western region planned a counter coup on 28<sup>th</sup> July 1966 in that counter coup, the military head of state Johnson Ironsi was killed and his government was overthrown, Lt col.Yakubu Gowon from the northern part of the country was installed as the military head of state, the Igbo ethnic group of the eastern region were not happy with the manner at which the counter coup was carried out more especially with the installation of Lt col. Gowon who was a junior officer to Ojukwu who was

from the eastern region. Ojukwu felt dissatisfied with his junior as the commander in chief of the arm forces , he then mobilized some ethnic groups from the eastern Nigeria to break away and form their own country a declaration that resulted to the first Nigerian civil war that lasted for thirty months (30 months) from 1967 to 1970. The civil war ended with a declaration by the Nigerian government that there was “no victor no vanquish” meaning, no winner no loser, since then there were series of agitations and protests by the Igbo ethnic group agitating for self government by bodies known as the “movement for the emancipation of the sovereign nation of Biafra” and the “Indigenous people of Biafra” these two groups had been in the fore front masterminding civil unrest in the southeastern region of Nigeria.

Bevan et al, (1992) noted that, after six years of independence (1960-1966), regional tensions pushed the country into chaos; political stability was eroded when the federal government dominated by the numerical superior north formed an alliance with the west in elections which later resulted to the first military coup and subsequently the civil war that lasted for about thirty months.

## **BACKGROUND TO CITIZENSHIP IN NIGERIA**

Citizenship is a very ambiguous and sensitive more especially in Nigeria, because most of the internal crisis in the country are linked either directly or indirectly to it, citizens pay more loyalty and allegiance to their states or regions more than to the federal republic of Nigeria, the impression has gained rooted into the minds of so many Nigerians and has been the major cause of so many crisis in the country. It may also interest you to know that citizens of the same country are regarded strangers in another state or region of the country as a result of that, crisis do erupt in the process and many lives and valuable properties are lost. A typical example could be seen between the Jukun tribe of Wukari , a town in Tabara state northeastern Nigeria who are frequently in conflict with the Tiv ethnic group who settled in that area for decades but are still being regarded as strangers by the Jukun in the area. The scenario on several occasions leads to crisis between the Jukun and the Tiv.

Best et al, (1999) points out that, the political reversals suffered by the Jukun at different times not only woke them up from their slumber but made them to be

rigid in refusing or denying the Tiv access, relevance, entitlements, political participation and power on the ground that they were strangers.

Fatimah (2014) on her research paper titled “ Religious conflicts in Nigeria and their Impact on social life” revealed that, in Jos, Plateau state capital, north central Nigeria that, the persistent crisis between Birom ethnic group who are the native of the town and the Hausa/ Fulani who settled in the town for decades was as a result of religious differences and the politics of belonging by the two ethnic groups, the Birom tribe regarded the Hausa/ Fulani as strangers after spending so many years in that area, the Hausa/ Fulani were frequently denied the opportunity to contest for elective positions, hold any public office or to build houses in some new government layout as a result of that, the area is widely known as a flash point for crisis.

Similarly, in Lagos southwestern Nigeria, there were somany crisis between the northern people who settled there for decades and the Yoruba ethnic group who happened to be the indigenes of the area. The Yaruba people, on several occasions do regards the northern people who settled in that region for decades as strangers and never allow them to contest for elective positions, work in their state civil service, or federal government establishments through the quota of the state, this scenario on different occasion result to a very serious crisis which sometimes lives and properties are lost.

Nevertheless, the southeastern Nigeria happened to be the region dominated by Igbo ethnic group, in this part of the country, just like any other region, settlers remained strangers no matter the number years they live in that place, their entire generation will forever remained strangers no one among them will be allow to contest or hold any public office in that region.

Going by the above analysis it is very clear to note that contrary to the provisions of the Nigerian constitution section 42 subsection (1), paragraph a,b,c and subsections (2) and (3) of 1999 as amended states that, every Nigerian have the right to live in every part of the country without any victimization, segregation or discrimination on the basis of regionalism, ethnicity, and religious background.

(Mailer, 2000; Smyth and Robinson, 2001; Osaghae and Suberu, 2005) observed that, the country Nigeria has already been divided either regionally,

religiously or ethnically, the loyalty and allegiance that supposed to be to the nation state are now redirected to either region or state.

## **WHO ARE THE CITIZENS OF NIGERIA**

Citizens by definition are people who have political and legal rights in a country. The process of acquiring citizenship of Nigeria has been clearly stated in the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended. The constitution clearly stipulates that no one can be a citizen of Nigeria except through the process mentioned in chapter three of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria as amended.

According to the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended, the following people are citizens of Nigeria;

- Citizens by birth
- Citizens by registration
- Citizens by naturalization

## **CITIZENS BY BIRTH**

Under section 25 subsection ( 1) the following people are citizens of Nigeria by birth namely;

- a. all those who were born in the country before 1960, whose either of the parents or grandparents belongs or belonged to a community indigenous to Nigeria those people are citizens of Nigeria by virtue of the provision of this section of the constitution;

Provided that those people shall not become citizens of Nigeria by virtue of this section if neither of their parents nor any of their grandparents was born in Nigeria;

- b. all those who were born in Nigeria after the country has gained independence in 1960 by parents or either of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria that person is a citizen of Nigeria by birth;
- c. under this paragraph of the constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria, the paragraph states clearly that all those people who were born outside Nigeria by parents or grand parents who are citizens of Nigeria those people are also citizens of Nigeria by

virtue of either of the parents or grand parents being indigenous to a community in Nigeria.

Subsection (2) of section 25 clearly explained that , the date of independence as it is been used in this constitution means the 1<sup>st</sup> day of October 1960.

### **CITIZENS BY REGISTRATION**

Under section 26 subsection (1) subject to the provisions of section 28 of the constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria as amended stated clearly that, a person to whom the provisions of this section apply may be registered as a citizen of country, if the president is convinced that;

- a. that the person is someone of good character,
- b. he has exhibited a clear intention and rediness to be domicile in Nigeria ; and
- c. he has sworn to an oath of allegiance prescribed in the seventh schedule of the constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria.

subsection(2) of section 26 states that the provision of this section shall apply to;

- a. any woman who is or has been married to a citizen of Nigeria; or
- b. all individuals of full age and capacity born outside Nigeria any of whose grandparents is a citizen of Nigeria.

### **CITIZENS BY NATURALISATION**

Under section 27 subsection (1) subject to the provisions of section 28 of the constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 states that, any person who is qualified in accordance with the provisions of this section may apply to the president for a certificate of naturalization.

(2) No person shall be qualified to apply for a certificate of naturalization, unless he satisfied the president that;

- a. he is a person of full age and capacity;
- b. he has a good character;
- c. he has indicated a clear interest to be domiciled in Nigeria;

- d. he has done the application through the Governor of the state where he intends or he proposes to be resident, acceptable to the local community in which he is to live permanently, and has been assimilated into the way of life of Nigerians in that of the federation;
- e. he has made or is capable of making useful contribution to the advancement; progress and wellbeing of Nigerians;
- f. he has sworn to an oath of allegiance stipulated in the seventh schedule of the constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria; and
- g. he has, immediately preceding the date of his application, either;
  - i. resided in Nigeria for a steady period fifteen years; or
  - ii. resided in Nigeria continuously for a period of twelve months, and during the period of twelve years immediately preceding that period of twelve months has resided in Nigeria for periods amounting in the aggregate to not less than fifteen years.

## **HOW CAN YOU ENJOY DUAL CITIZENSHIP AS A CITIZEN OF NIGERIA**

Dual citizenship means a situation whereby a citizen of Nigeria is enjoying the citizenship of two countries at the same time. The process and ways of acquiring the dual citizenship is explicitly explained in the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended, under section 28 subsection (1) subject to the other provisions of this section, a person shall forfeit forthwith his Nigerian citizenship if, not being a citizen of Nigeria by birth, he acquire or retains the citizenship or nationality of a country, other than Nigeria, of which he is not a citizen by birth.

Moreover, subsection (2) of section 28 of the 1999 constitution as amended clearly states that, any registration of a person as a citizen of Nigeria or the grant of a certificate of naturalization to a person who is a citizen of a country other than Nigeria at the time of such registration or grant shall, if he is not a citizen by birth of that other country, be conditional upon effective renunciation of the

citizenship or nationality of that other country within a period of not more than five months from the date of such registration or grant.

## **THE PROCESSES AND CONDITIONS OF CITIZENSHIP RENUNCIATION IN NIGERIA**

The process and conditions attached to the renunciation of the Nigerian citizenship has been clearly stated in the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended. The constitution states as follows;

Under section 29 sub section (1) of the Nigerian constitution 1999 as amended in 2011 states that, any citizen of Nigeria of full age who wishes to renounce his Nigerian citizenship shall make a declaration in the prescribed manner for the renunciation.

Under subsection (2) of the above section, it further states that the president shall cause the declaration made under subsection (1) of this section to be registered and upon such registration, the person who made the declaration shall cease to be a citizen of Nigeria.

Subsection (3) of section 29 maintained that the president may withhold the registration of any declaration made under subsection (1) of this section if;

- a. the declaration is made during any war in which Nigeria is physically involved; or
- b. in his opinion, it is otherwise contrary to public policy.

Subsection (4) explains that, for the purpose of subsection (1) of this section.

- a. "full age" means the age of eighteen years and above;
- b. any woman who is married shall be deemed to of full age.

## **REASONS FOR LAWFUL DEPRIVATION OF THE NIGERIAN CITIZENSHIP**

The concept deprivation of citizenship means a situation whereby a legal member of the Nigerian state would lose his citizenship status as a result of violating the conditions and the constitutional provisions upon which the citizenship status was granted to him. The issue of deprivation of citizenship is only applicable to those who acquired the citizenship status by naturalization while those who are Nigerians by birth or registration are exempted from being

deprived of their citizenship no matter the gravity of the offence they have committed, they can only be tried in a court of law and appropriate punishment would be meted against them if found guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction but not to be deprived of their citizenship as the case of those who are citizens by naturalization.

Under section 30 subsection (1) the president may deprive a person, other than a person who is a citizen of Nigeria by birth or by registration, of his citizenship, if he is satisfied that such a person has, within a period of seven years after becoming naturalized, been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than three years.

Subsequently, under subsection (2) of the same section says that, the president shall deprive a person other than a person who is a citizen of Nigeria by birth, of his citizenship, if he is satisfied from the records of proceedings of a court of law or tribunal or after due inquiring in accordance with regulations made by him that;

- a. the person has shown himself by act or speech to be disloyal towards the federal Republic of Nigeria; or
- b. the person has during any war in which Nigeria was engaged, unlawfully traded with the enemy or been engaged in or associated with any business that was in the opinion of the president carried on in such a manner as to assist the enemy of Nigeria in that war, or unlawfully communicated with such to the detriment of or with intent to cause damage to the interest of Nigeria.

## **DUTIES OF THE CITIZENS OF NIGERIA**

The duties of every citizen of a country is to think of what to do for his country not what his country will do for him, the following are the duties of the citizens of Nigeria stated by the constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended in 2011;

- (a) Abide by the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria, respect its ideals and its institutions, the National flag, the National Anthem, the National pledge, and legitimate authority;
- (b) Help to improve the power, prestige, and good name of Nigeria;
- (c) Defend Nigeria and render such national service as may be required;

- (d) Respect the dignity of other citizens and the rights and legitimate interest of others and live in unity and harmony and in the spirit of common brotherhood;
- (e) Make momentous and valuable contribution to the advancement, progress and welfare of the community where he resides;
- (f) provide assistance to appropriate and lawful agencies in the maintenance of law and order; and
- (g) Declare his income honestly to the appropriate and lawful agencies and his tax promptly.

One of the duties of the citizens of Nigeria as contained in chapter two of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended is that, all citizens of Nigeria of any category must have respects for the constitution of the country, abide by all provisions as contained in it and act not contrary to its provisions and similarly all citizens must have respect for the National Anthem, the National pledge and respect constituted authority.

Furthermore, it is mandatory for all Nigerians to help and enhance the power, prestige and the good name of the country by becoming law abiding so as to protect and preserve the good name and image of the country throughout the world.

It is also part of the duties of all Nigerians to defend the country from all kinds of aggressions and to also render selfless service as may be required to the progress and development of the nation.

Similarly, it is the duties of all citizens of Nigeria to respect the dignity of other citizens, their rights and the legitimate interest of others and live in unity, harmony and in the spirit of common brotherhood.

In addition, all citizens of Nigeria are expected as part of their duties to make positive and useful contribution to the advancement, progress and well being of the community where he reside in no account he should be engaged in anything that will jeopardize the progress and development of the community where he reside and the nation in general.

Moreover, it is the duties of the citizens of Nigeria to render assistance to the law enforcement agencies in their efforts to maintain law and order in the society and the country at large.

Nevertheless, it is paramount for all patriotic citizens of Nigeria to declare their assets honestly at the interval of time prescribed by the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria. The constitution made it mandatory for all civil servants, elected political office holders and all political appointees to declare their assets at the beginning of their tenure in office and at the end of their tenure in office and in the case of civil servants it is done after every four years.

### **THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE**

The concept “culture” has no single acceptable definition, the definition of it depends largely on the individual perception and understanding of what the concept really means.

Geert, (1984) defines culture as “the collective programming of the human mind that distinguished the member of one human group from those of another”.

Marshall, (2002) defines culture as “consistent ways in which people experience, interpret and respond the world around”.

Culture therefore, can be defined as the total way of life of the people of a particular community which is acceptable and adhere to by every member of that society or community and the defiance of that cultural norms may eventually attract sanctions on those that went against the culture of the society. Similarly, it may also interest you to know that culture differs from one society to another, what is considered a good standard of behavior in one society may be regarded as a repugnance in another society *visa viz*.

### **CULTURAL POLICY IN NIGERIA BASED ON THE PROVISIONS OF THE NIGERIAN CONSTITUTION 1999 AS AMENDED**

Section 21 paragraph (a) and (b) under directive on the Nigeria cultures, the provision stated clearly that the state shall do the following as part of its constitutional mandate to;

- a. protect Nigerian culture
- b. preserve the culture of the country
- c. promote the country’s culture
- d. encourage the development of technological and scientific studies with the aim of enhancing cultural values of the nation.

In conclusion, though the issue of citizenship has become a global phenomena not only in Nigeria however, from the research conducted it was revealed that the citizenship related cases in the country has its roots from the colonial policies. The country was divided into three regions with each dominated by a major ethnic group and a major religion, as a result of that they tend to be very hostile to each other more especially those that are not natives of that region contrary to the constitution of the federal Republic of Nigeria that says every Nigerian has the right to settle or live in every part of the country without any intimidation or harassment.

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