Fostering National Integration: A guide from Nyerere's Philosophy of *Ujamaa*

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Abstract
The recent surge of concern for national integration in Nigeria is not only apt, but timely given the negative turn of events after her centenary celebration as a nation. Time and again, the political culture, especially since independence from British colonial rule in 1960, has demonstrated what may justifiably be considered a failure at attempts in mobilizing its vast human and natural resources to form a unified entity. It has been a history replete with incessant conflicts ranging from ethnic rivalries, to religious bigotry, and to problems of identity resulting from the indigene / settler dichotomy. As a result, tens of thousands of lives have been lost and unquantifiable amount of naira worth of goods and property have perished. Today, the tension is so palpable that ordinary citizens feel constantly traumatized by the ghost of insecurity and mutual suspicion; and in consequence, the prospects for development have been drastically whittled down. This paper looked at these dire situations critically and proposed that taking a guide from Nyerere's philosophy of *Ujamaa* would go a long way to fostering peace and tolerance, and ultimately national integration.
Keywords: national integration, ujamaa, philosophy, tolerance, pan-national, ethnic.

1. Introduction

The issue of integration is of serious concern to all peoples living in multi-ethnic and multi-racial societies. Time and again, people of diverse cultures are brought together as a nation by some accidents of history; at other times, some, in search of economic, social and/or political security immigrate to other nations with completely different cultural beliefs and lifestyles. And so, today more than ever, leaders are faced with the increasing task of weaving divergent beliefs, attitudes and practices of peoples into a whole in order to enable their societies, as united entities, withstand the challenges of modern times.

The concern for national integration reflected in most subthemes of conferences this year is very apt and timely given the negative turn of events in the first one hundred year experiment of Nigeria as a nation. Since political independence from British colonial rule in 1960, the political class has demonstrated what may justifiably be considered a failure at attempts in mobilizing the nation's divergent and vast human and natural resources to form a unified entity. It has been a history of incessant conflicts ranging from ethnic rivalries, to religious bigotry, and to problems of identity resulting from the indigene / settler dichotomy espoused by political elites. As a result, tens of thousands of lives have been lost, and billions (if not trillions) of naira worth of goods and property have perished. Today, the tension is so palpable that ordinary citizens feel constantly traumatized by the ghost of insecurity and mutual suspicion; and in consequence, the prospects for development have been drastically whittled down. Onifade & Imhonopi (2013) articulated the situation thus:

> The status quo has convulsed the productive sector, limited the impact of government's economic programmes on the people, threatened food insecurity, complexified social insecurity, deepened the deterioration of physical and social infrastructures, distressed the living standards of a vast majority of Nigerians, militated against the educational system and resulted in the ostracisation of the generality of Nigerians and their exclusion from the political and economic space, among other glitches.

Besides, the mutual suspicion and subsequent discriminatory behaviour of component ethnic groups raise serious questions on the constitution and future direction of Nigeria as a single nation. For how long can people cope with these quandaries before the nation implodes? What, in analytical terms, can bring respite, if the multi-ethnic constituent groups must remain as parts of this (unholy) union? It is the belief of this paper that though different solutions may have been proffered without much result, taking a guide from Julius Nyerere's philosophy of *Ujamaa* would go a long way to fostering tolerance and peace amongst ethnic groups, and will ultimately lead to national integration. But first, let us examine the term – 'national integration'.

2. The National Integration Project

The question of national integration is an issue that is of paramount concern to virtually all nations of the world. From Africa to Europe, from the mainstream Asia to the Middle East, and from America to Australia, people are clamoring for cohesion, inclusiveness in the administration of their common good, and unity of purpose (at least in societal response to events) which are all ingredients for peace, stability and growth. Due to the seriousness of

this project, and the contentious situation its lack has created for many, we shall, first of all, address the notion of nationhood so as to have a clearer guide for our subsequent considerations.

The term - 'nation' has had a variety of meanings over the passage of time. Etymologically, it has its roots from the Latin *natio* (*nātĭō*) literally meaning 'that which has been born' (Harper, 2010). To be born, of course, is to be given life into a specific situation, community, language, and culture; it is to be generated within a group with defined boundaries. It was in this sense that the term nation was understood to mean a large group of people who share a common language, culture, ethnicity, descent, or history (no name, 2014). This was the dominant assumption prior to the 18ᵗʰ and 19ᵗʰ centuries. But the onset of emancipation at the end of slave trade brought with it a different meaning to nationality. As the previously enslaved, whose identities were shaped by the colour of their skin, began to fight for their rights, they realized that national identity not only gave them access to vote and to hold offices, but guaranteed their integration with the White population of the New World. The New World then with a population of varied colour and descent was seen as a nation. Language and cultural background were no longer the only requirements, but the idea of an established government and physical boundaries equally shaped what it meant to be a nation (Manning, 2009). It was in line with this that the concept was then taken to mean 'a community of people composed of one or more nationalities and possessing a more or less defined territory and government' (Merriam Webster, 2003). That is, the usage of the term - nation was no longer restricted to people of common heritage or ethnic proclivities, but was expanded to include different ethnic groups under specific geographic boundaries, with defined leadership structure.

These varied perspectives led some social scientists in the late 20ᵗʰ century to distinguishing between two types of nations, viz: the *ethnic* nation and the *civic* nation. While the *ethnic* nation refers to people sharing a common language, distinctive culture, common descent, religion, history, and a sense of group solidarity, that differentiate them from people of other nations (Noiriel, 1992), the *civic* nation is understood as being centered in a willingness to 'live together'; a willingness that gives rise to a nation that results from an act of affirmation (Brubaker, 1992). It is in view of this second (civic) meaning that nation is understood as a cultural-political community that has become conscious of its coherence, unity, and particular interests (Smith, 1983).

The term 'nation' is sometimes used as synonym for state, or sovereign state, or country, with each depicting somewhat a specific territory with a government. Thus, one is inclined to accept that the sense of the term 'nation' prevalent in the contemporary era seems to align more with its *civic* than *ethnic* meaning; a characterization which in some quarters, is delineated from the *ethnic* correlate with the concept of a nation-state (Tishkov, 2000). As Manning (2009) insists, the 'nation' or the 'nation-state' began to emerge in the late 18th century as the leading form of government and social organization in the world.

Nigeria is a nation-state of multiple religions and diverse languages with a plethora of cultures and sometimes conflicting values among the inhabitants. The project of national integration then connotes, at first, the idea of eliminating subordinate parochial loyalties operative in this nation-state and creating a sense of territorial nationality. It is the integration of multi-ethnic groups into a larger *pan-national* identity to reflect the ideals of the affirmative action which, *ab initio* instigated the union. Awa (1983) sees it as a 'process by which hitherto distinctive and autonomous people and cultures incorporated into a multi-national state can achieve higher levels of mutual trust, cooperation and independence, shared values, common identity and national consciousness'.

Secondly, different individuals belonging to different social groups of historically distinct political units have their subjective feelings which could create tension between local authority and national leadership (as is the case between Rivers state and the Federal government). National integration in this sense will refer to the issue of establishing national central authority over subordinate political units, wherein special efforts are made to engender political cohesion and sentiments of loyalty towards central political institutions (Chizea, 1985). Such an effort is made through the objective control which the central government has over its acknowledged area of jurisdiction.

Again, a further use of the term national integration is applied to the relationship between the government and the governed; between the political elites and the rest of the masses. In Nigeria as in many nations of the world, the political elite / mass relationship has often been frosty, characterized by remarkable differences in values and objectives. While elites seek for political relevance in sponsoring bills that will enhance their statuses, the masses are interested in translating political actions into enhanced welfare for the common people. This often creates unsavory tensions which lead to civil disobedience that has reared its ugly head in incessant industrial actions and public protests. In this situation, integration can only occur through the constant reduction of the gap between the political elites and the masses in the process of evolving a unified political process that tolerates active participation of ordinary members of the society.

The concept of national integration therefore, connotes the idea that a society is constituted of multicultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-class structures with each using its special endowments to promote its cause(s) often at the expense of others; it means that the various component 'ethnic nations' and their political units engage in activities that fan the embers of hatred, suspicion and disunity, and in consequence

subvert the espoused aspirations and goals of the state. To be able to set the society back on track then, strong efforts must be made at the three levels of disintegration, namely: 1) to integrate the society's varied cultural loyalties and to develop a sense of nationality; 2) to integrate the citizens into a common political process; and 3) to integrate the political elites and the masses (rulers and the ruled) into having a common objective for the society.

The question of national integration in Nigeria is the question of the degree to which Nigerians appreciate Nigeria. It is the question of how the various subsystems of the society could blend with each other to form a macrocosm, wherein trust, justice and equity would be the order of the day. Most people seem to trace the integration problems in Nigeria to the 1914 amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates by British colonial masters. Some writers like Imhonopi & Urim (2012) have scathingly suggested that Nigeria is an accident of history, and that if she were historically and culturally homogenous, the myriad of problems that bedevil her currently could not have arisen. Much as I do respect these opinions, they do seem to provide an oversimplified view which might not have appreciated the full imports of what it means to have a nation.

A sarcastic suggestion (perhaps with an aura of ingenuity) that a nation is an *accident of history* is, to say the least, similar to claiming that the 'grass is green', which is common sense knowledge. I say this because in real life situation, there is no 'natural nation'. Nations emerge either through wars, or by some affirmative action, or through the formulation of binding narratives between micro segments of societies. Except perhaps Somalia (which presently is at its throes), virtually every nation is an *accident* of history in the sense of being composed of people with multi ethnic/religious affiliations. The solution to problems of integration does not lie in balkanizing nation-states into micro ethnic and religious strata, but in the conscious, purposive acts of people willing to construct a nation. Kuna (2005: 17-18) writes:

> The formation of political communities, far from being natural, is a process of construction, an invention. All nations are contingent, that is to say, they are constructed, invented, or imagined, through historical accidents, consciously through wars, or through the formulation of myths and meta-narratives.… When people speak of Nigeria derisively as an 'accident,' they could not, in some sense, have been more correct in their descriptions. All nations are in some sense '*accidents*' of history, 'imagined communities' that could potentially develop broad national spaces by subsuming sub-national spaces. The point thus is that nations neither drop from the sky, nor are they natural. People, through conscious, purposive activity construct nations; national integration is a conscious process of social engineering.

No matter how 'homogenous' a nation might seem to be, no peoples can live amicably together without conscious efforts of individuals to subsume personal and clannish interests to the national ideals. Even Somalia, widely acclaimed to have sprung from an ethnic group, is at the verge of being a failed state. As a process of construction then, the project of national integration has taken a variety of steps to cultivate *national*, as opposed to *sub-national* interest as the centre of political and economic organizations.

3. Programmes Aimed at Promoting National Integration in Nigeria

Nigeria as a nation was brought together by the British, as Ugwu (2010) would say, not out of cultural affinity, nor religious belief, nor even due to ethnic bondage, geographical location, economic development, administrative uniformity, social understanding, not due to tribal resemblances or identity, but merely due to political convenience. And ever since then, especially after the 1960 independence, Nigeria has experienced enormous social problems arising from mistrust and lack of unity among its component parts. This explains why all the constitutions drawn afterwards encouraged 'national integration', whilst at the same time prohibited all forms of discrimination based on sex, religion, place of origin, status, and ethnic or linguistic association. A policy which many administrations have pushed forward in promoting programmes like the land Use Act; constant revision of the revenue sharing formula; moving of the federal capital territory from Lagos to Abuja; the federal character principle; the National Youth Service Corps; support for religious bodies, etc., which are all aimed at providing equal development and national integration.

The unfortunate situation is that instead of promoting love and unity, most of these programmes have ended up as ploys to strengthen sectional/clannish interests over and above national ideals. The Land Use Act, for instance, devolves all lands to the Governor of the state to hold on trust, for the use and common benefit of all Nigerians. The rationale is to liberalize the process of land ownership and give Nigerians the opportunity to buy into and settle in any locality of their choice, thereby promoting national integration. But the practical outcome is a direct opposite of what was intended. The governors, who supposedly should be 'impartial' in allotting land to all applicants irrespective of their state of origin, are the very ones preventing Nigerians from buying certain pieces of land because of ethnic and religious considerations. They allot the choicest parts to their families and cronies, and even revoke that of their perceived political opponents, real or imaginary.

Again, the relocation of the Federal Capital Territory from Lagos to Abuja was understood as an integrative policy of government to further unite Nigerians. In 1975, the Hon. Justice Akinola Aguda Committee was set up by the administration of General Murtala Mohammed to examine the suitability of the dual role of Lagos as a state and Federal Capital. In their recommendations, the Justice Aguda panel cited congestion, pollution and insufficient infrastructure in Lagos, coupled with the fact that it was coastline and therefore open to attack, as proximate reasons to relocate the Federal Capital Territory to the geographic centre of the country, at Abuja. But their sufficient reason, among others, was that since Nigeria is a federation, consisting of a large number of ethnic and language groups with differing culture and traditions, and since Lagos is within an area traditionally belonging to one of the major ethnic groups, namely, the Yoruba, it was not fitting to continue housing the Federal Capital in Lagos. In the committee's view, the circumstances of Nigeria demand that the capital be not situated within a city the type of Lagos with strong connection with one of the major ethnic groups. Rather in order to forge unity and integration, the new capital must be built at the geographic center of the country where every Nigerian will rest assured that he has an opportunity to live in parity with every other Nigerian, and where no Nigerian will be regarded either in law or in fact as a 'native foreigner' (see 'The Founding of Abuja, Nigeria', no date; Bulama, 2013).

The General Murtala Mohammed led administration accepted the recommendation in the committee's report; General Obasanjo set out the preliminary works, and today we have a new Federal Capital Territory at Abuja. But the politics and administration of the new federal capital territory seem to have jettisoned the reason behind its establishment. The situation got so bad quickly that Justice Aguda and some of his colleagues in the panel openly bemoaned how a beautiful concept that should have been a symbol of unity and nationhood has turned out a charade, with the city run as if it is a 'revenge project', and some northern folks claiming it belong to the north.

Furthermore, the Federal Character Principle was another integrative policy initiated by the government. Its aim, as was enshrined in the 1979 Constitution, was to accommodate the different ethnic, religious, linguistic and geographic groups in the decision-making, and socio- economic structures of the nation-state, by assigning specific quotas of job opportunities and political offices to the various geo-political zones. The goal was to ensure that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in government or any of its agencies, achieve a fair representation of the various components of the federation in the country's position of power, status and influence and thereby foster unity, peace, equal access to state resources and promote the integration of the minorities for better improvement and good conditions of living in the country (The Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979).

However, the actual implementation of this policy is a far cry to its intents. Public service spaces are now competed for not on the basis of competency but on one's ethnic origin; proficiency is sacrificed at the altar of zonal quotas, with the resultant enthronement of mediocrity into the public service. Today Nigeria could be adjudged as parading the most unproductive civil service in the world, with weak institutions that promote ethnicity and cronyism which are ingredients for corruption. The policy is so fraudulent that political elites use it to incite people against perceived marginalization, while lying in wait to grab every opportunity that comes from it for the enhancement of their families and cronies. This is another white-wash policy that has been counterproductive to national unity.

Another nation-building policy is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). Created by Decree No. 24 of May 22, 1973 by the General Gowon's military administration, the aim was to enhance interactions among the young educated Nigerians by providing them with the opportunity to live and serve in some ways in states other than their places of origin, in order to facilitate their understanding of the norms, values and perhaps, language and general lifestyle of their host communities. The overriding long-term motif was to create a new nation where everyone will be at ease to live and work in any place without let or hindrance. But 41years afterwards, the scheme is mired in the murky waters of bribery, favouritism and nepotism in its postings; and undue exposure to security risks to the corps members. 'Corpers' have become soft targets in times of crises. Today, parents and family members are still reeling in the trauma of the massacre of many Corps members of Southern origin by some angry northern youths after the 2011 general elections.

Further to corruption and security risks is the problem of citizenship arising from the indigene / settler dichotomy. After their service year, the youth are often forced back to their states of origin for employment opportunities because they are regarded as aliens / non-indigenes in their places of service, and are never afforded equal opportunities with their indigenous peers. This form of discrimination has destroyed the overall motif of the NYSC scheme, and has led to youths' frustration rather than integration.

The government's active support for religious bodies is a further means of engendering peace and unity. Religion, of course, entails a system of beliefs that gives meaning to life and the acknowledgment of the existence of supernatural beings. In the sense that it is a unified system of beliefs that gives an 'anchor' to human life, religion, for Durkheim (1965), becomes 'an important signifier, a framework for identification, a basis of membership, and a potent tool for mobilization'. This perhaps, explains the multiplicity of churches and

religious bodies in the country today that seek for government attention. But rather than just being a set of rules guiding private life, religion has become an intensely political phenomenon and in this logic, has had dramatic impact on the formation of ideologies that are sometimes destructive to human race. Consequently, as Kuna (2010) pointed out, it has become 'commonplace to characterize religion in contemporary international politics as a hugely disintegrating force in a world in which some of the major non-religion based mobilizing frameworks for articulating and extracting political claims/demands have either collapsed or are collapsing'. Instead of being an instrument for unity, religion has become a tool for division and derision; instead of engendering love and understanding, it has fostered hatred and antagonism among the diverse cultures in Nigeria. Virtually, the entire North East of the country has imploded with the scourge of the Islamic sect - Boko Haram, and politicians are rather busy rolling out their religious drums to fan the ambers of hatred and division in order to score cheap political points for the forthcoming 2015 general elections. What a show of shame?

4. The Model of *Ujamaa* from Nyerere's Philosophy

The term *Ujamaa* is a Swahili word for extended family or 'familyhood'. It connotes the idea of 'unity', 'oneness', or 'uniting with your countrymen as one extended family', and is distinguished by one key characteristic, namely that a person becomes a person *through the people* or community (see 'Ujamaa', no date). The community *per se*, in the African spirit, is built on the principles of family-hood, team work, sharing, and togetherness, known in the East Africa as *Ujamaa* (Onwubiko, 1991). From its Arabic root - *jama'a,* the term means to gather, to unite, and to bring parts into a whole. With reference to persons, it means: 'to pull people together into unity'; with reference to the harmony that exists between husband and wife, it means 'to have sexual intercourse'*,* etc (Milton, 1979).

Ujamaa was the concept at the heart of Julius Nyerere's social and economic development policies in Tanzania after her independence from Britain in 1961. On the 5th of February 1967, President Nyerere published his development blueprint, which was titled the *Arusha Declaration*, in which he expressed the need for an African model of development centered on collective agriculture, under a process called villagization. *Ujamaa* sought for nationalization of banks and industries, and for an increased level of self-reliance at both individual and national levels. In this sense, it became the basis for African socialism.

In general, Nyerere's translation of the *Ujamaa* theory into a politico-economic management module included:

a) The creation of a one-party system under the leadership of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) in order to help solidify the cohesion of the newly independent nation.

b) The institutionalization of social, economic, and political equality through the creation of a central democracy; the abolition of discrimination based on ascribed status; and the nationalization of the economy's key sectors.

c) The villagization of production, which essentially collectivized all forms of local productive capacity.

d) The fostering of Tanzanian self-reliance through two dimensions: the transformation of economic and cultural attitudes. Economically, everyone would work for both the group and for themselves; culturally, Tanzanians must learn to free themselves from dependence on European powers by being satisfied with what they could achieve as an independent state.

e) The implementation of free and compulsory education for all Tanzanians in order to sensitize them to the principles of *Ujamaa*, and

f) The creation of a Tanzanian rather than tribal identity through means such as the use of Swahili (Pratt, 1999).

Nyerere's scheme made giant strides in some areas of public life. In his essay "Nyerere's Social and Economic Policy in Tanzania in the 1960s and 70s" (no date), Boddy-Evans identified key specific projects the *Ujamaa* blueprint enabled Nyerere to achieve well ahead of his colleagues in Africa at his time, as: a) the creation of high literacy rate in Tanzania: the adult literacy rate rose from 17% in 1960 to 63% by 1975 (much higher than the other African countries) and continued to rise; b) the reduction of infant mortality through access to medical facilities and education; c) the unification of Tanzanians across ethnic lines; and d) the insulation of Tanzania from the 'tribal' and political tensions which affected the rest of newly independent Africa nations. In his *Stability and Change in Africa* speech given at the University of Toronto, Canada, 2 October 1969, Nyerere stated: "In Tanzania, it was more than one hundred tribal units which lost their freedom; it was one nation that regained it". Nyerere's *Ujamaa* engendered the integration of Tanzanian tribes.   Even though the programme was fraught with problems which led to its collapse in the early 80s, it had a remarkable success at its initial stage. Nyerere's overall philosophy, it must be noted, attracted international respect, especially for insisting that ethical principles should form the basis for all practical policies.

5. A Guide for Action

No matter one's philosophical bent, there is overwhelming respect (among African scholars) for the positive ripples caused by the *Arusha Declaration*. Thanks to Nyerere, there is a documented blueprint for African

communitarian life, the abandonment of which, in my estimation, is the root cause of a myriad of socio-political malaise Nigeria, and indeed the continent faces today. *Ujamaa,* properly understood, has not just a socio-political connotation. It is an attitude of the mind, a socio-cultural principle and practice which encodes and expresses an African cultivated attitude that makes Africans care for one another, and makes it possible for all to be accommodated in the socio-economic elasticity of the community (Onwubiko, 2001). In the face of continual failure in application of most Western models, taking a guide from the admitted success story of three policies of *Ujamaa* (among others) would help Nigeria leapfrog out of communal crises and disintegration.

The first hurdle Nyerere's *Ujamaa* sought to crush was that of illiteracy. In this time and age, illiteracy is still the worst disease holding many Nigerians under bondage. Bacon earlier observed that 'knowledge is power'. And I could not agree less when in the epilogue to my *Philosophy: A Thematic Introduction* (2011: 187), I noted that 'knowledge saves, but ignorance entangles; knowledge liberates, but ignorance enslaves'. It was the quest to liberate Tanzanians from the shackles of ignorance, disease and death that led Nyerere to enshrine free and compulsory education as leading values of the *Ujamaa* programme. If we are to be sincere with the project of national integration then, the starting point must be in the proper education of the people.

As arising from the Latin – *educo*, *educare* – meaning 'to train', 'to lead forth' or 'to lead out', education entails a 'leading out of man's humanity so as to render ineffectual the forces of his animality' (Ogbujah, 2013). When people are educated, they will rely more on their powers in solving human problems than on spiritual and often tele-guided malevolent agencies; they will properly understand the dynamics of human interactions and seek for constructive means of resolving disputes; and they will be better equipped to fend for themselves even in the face of dire challenges. Education empowers an individual to be in control of his body, his mind, his life, his destiny and his world. It gives him the capacity to explore his talents, play an active role in political decisions, and contribute meaningfully to economic growth. Nyerere's *Ujamaa* understood these and embarked on free and compulsory education. Nigeria's leadership must make this a priority. Both federal and state governments should ensure that basic education is not only free but compulsory for everyone in order to rid communities of urchins that thrive on conflicts. With the national literary rate at 61.3%; 72.1% for males; 50.4% for females; and 51.1% for total adults, much still needs to be done so as to give people opportunity for a better life and peaceful coexistence (see 'list of countries by literacy rate', no date).

The second principle Nigeria can derive from *Ujamaa* is the institutionalization of social, economic, and political equality through the creation of a central democratic structure and abolishment of indigene / settler dichotomy. Nyerere achieved this through the creation of a one-party system under the leadership of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). Nigeria thus, can work towards socio-economic and political equity by reorganizing the multifarious political parties structured along ethnic divides into a compact and more manageable number with specific ideological bents. Even though it was eventually botched, the transitional programme of the Babangida administration that saw the formation and funding of two party structures – Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC) is what comes closest to this idea. Nigerians cannot forget so easily how those two parties (which followed the model of Nyerere's *Ujamaa*) divided them not along the lines of religious affiliations, or ethnic nationality, or language affinity, but on ideological planes. It was simply going to be a matter of time for socio-economic and political ideologies to overrun the more primitive indigene / settler dichotomy, but the greed of some political elites abetted Babangida's use of state apparatus to quash the dream.

Another highpoint of *Ujamaa* from which Nigeria's leadership can draw inspiration is the 'villagization' of production, which essentially collectivized all forms of local productive capacity. This scheme engendered the spirit of cooperation, togetherness and 'corporate responsibility' which are the hallmarks of African socialism. The collectivization of the local means of production is itself rooted in the communal conception of African personhood. Just as Mbiti (1990) would say: "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am", the communal ownership and cultivation of farmlands guaranteed the prosperity of the town which, in African sense, simultaneously guaranteed the prosperity of individuals within it. When a job needed to be done, the entire community turned out with supplies and music and went on to sing and dance its way through to the successful conclusion of each particular chore (Okafor, 1974). The proceeds were commonly shared according to 'family' structures, and each one had something to look on to. But the advent of wild capitalism and the attendant rapacious disposition have destroyed this integrating societal value and have pitched communities, one against another.

Even though urbanization is fast eating up the villages, a great number of the population residing in the rural areas is still engaged in subsistent farming. If the political leadership could adopt some sort of villagization policy, modifying issues to suit the realities of the time, it would not only go a long way to meaningfully engage these teaming idle youths, but would raise the living standard of bucolic dwellers, reduce rural – urban migration, and diminish restiveness among the populace. Without falling into the trap of modern socialism (which has failed in recent times), government's special intervention in forms of finance and logistics to whole villages

and/or co-operative societies in order to fast-track their ambitions for economic prosperity, is invaluable for peace and national integration.

6. Conclusion

In the preceding paragraphs, we have tried to step down the meaning of the term - nation; we saw that even though Nigeria is made up of many ethnic groups, with diverse religious and linguistic affiliations, it is still a nation. And we also saw that most nations on earth are *accidents of history* in the sense that they arose and are sustained by the affirmative and purposive will of a people: there is no big bang that throws a nation from nowhere into the world by some inexplicable explosive mechanism. These go on to confirm that the project of national integration is a tacit admission of plurality of membership, and the problems arising thereof cannot be solved by further dissolution but by the collective will of constituent members to accommodate one another.

Some scholars like Omo-Abu and Jonathan believe, and I do agree with them, that all the problems that plague Nigeria today, including political instability, lack of political and socio-economic development, nepotism, corruption, and all other vices stem from lack of integration. For Omo-Abu (2003), only very few Nigerians believe they have any stake in Nigeria, and as such there is need for all ethnic nationalities in Nigeria to confer and negotiate a mutual coexistence. In his turn, President Jonathan identified true patriotism as a catalyst for national progress. In the address presented at an international colloquium organized to mark the 80th birthday of Alex Ekwueme (a one-time Vice President of Nigeria), he urged Nigerians to promote national integration, as part of efforts to enhance national development. For him:

> Without national integration there will be mutual distrust and once there is
> mutual distrust nothing will work. We have to resolve first and foremost that
> we want Nigeria as the all and all for all of us; we must commit to it and
> patriotically nurture its progress….Without such resolution, there is no
> federal structure that can work, there is no democratic system that can work,
> national development will as well be missing (Chidiogo, 2012).

It was this passion for development hinged on national integration that propelled the Jonathan administration, even without legislative fiat, to organize the 2014 Sovereign National Conference, which (Omo-Abu clamoured for in 2003) examined and proffered solutions to nagging socio-economic and political problems. We hope the national Assembly would support the implementation of the resolutions so that this befitting centenary birthday gift to the nation would not be a waste.

The project of national integration cannot excel in the present without looking inwards to the past to revive some of those abiding structures that bonded our ancestors together. This was what led us to glean some principles from Nyerere's *Ujamaa* in spite of its eventual collapse in the early 80s, like most other collectivization projects. *Ujamaa* as a programme may have died, but its values are very much alive and active. In modern Tanzania, faced with years of corrupt political leadership after Nyerere, the values of *Ujamaa* have been resurrected by rappers and hip hop artists, using the themes of unity, family and equality. They use the principles of 'cooperative economics', that is, local people cooperating with each other to provide for the essentials of living, and encourage self-business / self-made identities in order to promote change in their society (Lemelle, 2006). This is exactly what this whole effort is all about. In this centennial celebration, Nigerians must resist the divisive tactics of the ruling class by imbibing the values of unity, equality and family-hood reminiscent of *Ujamaa*; by bonding together in cooperatives in order to fund projects that otherwise, would be impossible for individuals to execute; and by engaging in ventures that will positively impact their lives. If these *Ujamaa* principles united Tanzanians and created a Tanzanian rather than tribal identity, they can as well help unite us today, and create a Nigerian rather than ethnic identity for us.

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