

Citizenship Status, Statehood Problems and Political Conflict: The Case of Nigeria

O. O. WILLIAM IDOWU

Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most enduring, even if not the most accurate, image of Africa in the seventies, eighties and nineties has been that of a continent of violence perennially on the edge of survival... Africa thus stands singled out as a continent of uniquely violent politics, a continent where force makes the everyday life of the people even more demeaning than in other poor parts of the world.¹

In a bid to demonstrate the root causes of crises and conflict in Africa's political economy, various explanations have been adduced by scholars both within and outside Africa. Such attempts doggedly describes conflicts and violence in Africa in the light of the resilient paradigm of ethnicity². Such analyses have often taken as their starting point the multi-ethnic nature of African countries and the competitive nature of contacts between these ethnic groups as a fruitful source of the inherent danger that eventually explodes into a horrid torrent of political violence.

In this paper, I wish to interrogate the macrocosm of political violence and conflict in Nigeria in the light of the problems of citizenship and the related component of statehood. Specifically, its central thesis is the view that political conflict in Nigeria's socio-political history is the outcome of disparate attitudes to the question of citizenship occasioned by the problems of statehood.

1. UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE

How conflicts and violence should be tagged is still an issue of debate and controversy. Ordinarily, a state of conflict is said to exist where there is interaction between at least two individuals or groups whose ultimate objectives differ (Nicholson 1971). In the case of violence, Girvetz (1974: 185) has defined violence as "harm perpetrated on persons or property ranging, in the case of persons, from restraining their freedom of movement to torture and death, and, in the case of

¹ See Chabal (1990: 179). For a contrary view, see Laitin (1986: ix).

² Ethnicity is about the most adduced factor for the occurrence of conflict in Africa. See Nnoli (1978 and 1995).

property, from simple fine or damage to complete expropriation or total destruction."

It must be understood, however, that the concept of conflict is multi-dimensional; it envelopes a family of forms. We select one depending on our analytical framework, purposes and practical problems. Since theoretical constructs are normally appropriated from everyday life before being given their specialised and technical meanings, such analytical specificity not only aid our thinking, it also gives it direction. Moreover, it creates room for a correct application of our theoretical concept in an analyses of the causes of the peculiar patterns of conflicts, given certain social condition. An attempt will be made to centre attention on the concept of political conflict.

1.1 CONFLICTS AND THEIR POLITICAL DIMENSION

Conflicts that exert an effect, directly or indirectly, on the direction and content of public policy are political conflicts. In essence, political conflict is ultimately about publicly determined access to public goods and services. It is about the distribution of the rights and privileges available in the public domain. "The key to understanding political violence and conflict", argues Neiburg (1969), "must be found in the dynamics of bargaining relationships rather than in the chance issues of the conflict." The nature of political conflict, therefore, resides or is situated in the structure of power and the various attitudes or social behaviours that spell or dictate access to it.

It is against this background that Miall suggested four criteria as useful in describing a conflict situation with its attendant political dimension. According to Miall:

1. A conflict can only exist where the participants perceive it as such;
2. A clear difference of opinion regarding values, interests, aims, or relations must lie at the root of a political conflict;
3. The parties in a conflict may be either states or significant elements of the population within the state;
4. The outcome of the conflict must be considered extremely important by the parties (Miall 1992).

Political conflict, however, does not lie in mere difference of opinion, values, etc. It is the desire to resolve those differences of opinion and interests, that denote or describe, the conflictuality. It is to this end that Lewis Coser (1956: 8) describes political conflict as a "struggle over values, claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the 'opposing' parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralise, injure or eliminate rivals." Conflict may suggest to us an idea of struggle, but then it is not in every case that opponents are eliminated, if we take the notion of elimination literally. For instance, someone may lose the

position of dominance but may not be totally denied or bereft of status, power or resources nor eliminated in the sense in which it is couched above.

Descriptively, political conflict can be seen as a situation of interaction involving two or more parties in which actions in pursuit of incompatible objectives, or interests, result in discord of varying degrees (Deng 1996: 220). It is claimed that conflict is the normal state of human interaction. In the larger realm of politics, the opinion is expressed so loud that politics is intrinsically related to, or better still, generates conflict. This is due to the fact that the quintessence of politics is power, and where there is the talk of power, there is bound to be the generation of conflict and compulsion.

Charles Tilly has argued that political conflicts "seem to grow most directly from the struggles for established places in the structure of power" (Tilly 1969: 4-45). It is the struggle for access to opportunities, life chances - to the existing rights and privileges of society which define citizenship within the nation-state. The nature of the prevailing political order and the social morality it sponsors or promotes are crucial elements that go into the nature and pattern of political conflict that occurs in such polity. In Nigeria, however, the struggle for places of power appears to have evolved a peculiar pattern. Empirical evidence seems to demonstrate the validity of the view that political conflict in Nigeria is about identity. The logic of political conflict seems to be rooted in the problem of identity. In what follows, I shall attempt to establish the relation between the problem of statehood and citizenship, and their effects on the generation of political conflict and violence in Nigeria.

2. STATE FORMATION, STATE FAILURE AND POLITICAL CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

Undoubtedly, the concept of the state attracts a significant portion of analysis on the nature and pattern of political conflict in Nigeria. Developing countries who have problems with growth are often confronted with enormous problems of an internal dimension which, most often, break out into actual violent conflicts. Such causes of violence which are of an internal dimension have been found to be intimately connected with the problems of state formation and the consequent problem of effective statehood. But then, how do we conceptualise the state? And, what accounts for its ineffectiveness?

2.1 CONCEPTION AND THEORIES OF THE STATE

In the history of political and philosophical ideas, different theories of the state have been propounded. The fundamental assumption underlying such theoretical statements on the nature of the state is an attempt to establish the reality of the state through these theoretical concepts. In modern literatures, at least five theories of the

state have been developed³. In what follows, my treatment of these theories will be perfunctory. In the order of their priority, application and historical sequence, there are the absolutist, constitutional, ethical, class and pluralist theories of the state.

The absolutist theory of the state identifies the monarch as the embodiment of the state, and the person of the monarch was regarded as representing what the state is. The monarch is seen as the absolute sovereign, since the state, represented by and identified with the monarch, is absolutely sovereign. In the religious sense and condition in which the theory grew in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries, absolutist theory is akin to the divine rights of kings and the consequent divine purpose established in the nature of the state⁴. Arising from the theoretical absurdity and practical impossibility of the theory, it gave way to the constitutional theory.

The constitutional theory has to do with the imposition of limit on the scope of authority through the constitution. The key emphasis in the constitutional theory of the state is that the state is the guardian or upholder of the constitutional order, i.e. the body of rules it prescribes and the regulation, through that body of rules of the institutional structures thereby set up. On its own, the ethical theory approximates the idea of purpose which people strive to achieve by their communal engagement to pursue or achieve that purpose. Hegel saw the ethical state as having not only a purpose, but that normative and historical significance was grounded in the divine Mind or Will. According to him, "the state is the divine Will, in the sense that it is Mind present on earth, unfolding itself." It is a situation where the objective world of human institutions is rooted in the subjective world of human consciousness. This version of the state, especially Hegel's talk of a divine mind or spirit, has given rise to a host of interpretations.

The ambiguity inherent in Hegel's ethical theory and the historical incongruity that Marx located in his work, gave rise to Marx's treatment of the idea of historical materialism, hence a new description of the nature of the state. While Hegel located the historical significance of the state in the presence of the divine Mind, Marx located the historical significance of the state in terms of economic materialism. This led to his idea of the state as an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class. Though Marx did not, in concrete terms, develop and articulate a distinctive theory of the state, the class theory of the state came to be associated with him, due to the influence his idea of class conflict and antagonism had on latter Marxism. In a nutshell, the class theory expresses the view that the state is an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class, which is in control of the economic means of production. Hence, the state is the representative of a given and particular class.

³ For compendious treatment of these theories, see Vincent (1987). These theories must, however, be set against some conception and theories of the state in Africa. See Chabal (1990: 69-73).

⁴ The divine rights of kings and divine purposes that are purported to inhere in such rule are often backed up by the Holy Scriptures in Romans 13: 1-7.6

While the class theory of the state is explained in terms of its class composition, the pluralist theory rejects the absolute necessity that is often given as characterising the nature of the state in terms of its legal and political order. In place of this idea of 'absolute necessity', the pluralist theory emphasises that the individual's loyalty or allegiance is to the group he belongs. The idea of the state is often confused with the idea of a nation, especially when various individuals express their loyalty, consciously, to their nation. Possibly both terms are taken as meaning the same thing⁵. It is a fact of some interest, however, that what the pluralist theory reject is the inherent absolutism or unlimited sovereignty that is thought to inhere in the idea of the state.

2.2 THE NATURE OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

It is an interesting academic and intellectual argument that none of these theories, in one full swing, approximates the nature of the Nigerian state. A quick reflection will show this: the Nigerian state does not bear the nature of the absolutist theory because there is no such absolutism that identifies the monarch with the state. The constitutional theory does not fit into the complicated web of politics witnessed in Nigeria during the first and second Republic. In fact the crisis witnessed then was that of the state in so far as it could not recognise and regulate its action by the constitutional limit it imposed on itself. Moreover, in as much as the major part of politics in Nigeria can be explained in terms of the Military rule it has had to go through, the idea of a constitutional state at such periods is at best queasy. Neither is the ethical theory applicable either. The practical implication of Hegel's theory is still not feasible even in distant Europe.

What may happen to approximate the Nigerian state are the class⁶ and the pluralist theories but with some limitations. Take, for example, the class theory. Though it considers the state as an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class, i.e. at understanding the nature of the Nigerian state. Such class relations are determined by the relation of power, which, contrary to the thesis of Marx are used to acquire economic riches and prominence. Neither is the pluralist theory solely enough to define the nature of the Nigerian state. It is true that individual loyalty is defined in the Nigerian predicament by one's nationhood, i.e. the Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo nations etc., but then, what this tendency has given birth to

⁵ A lot of intellectual energy has gone into attempts to make a distinction between the state and the nation. Buzan (1991), for instance, defines a nation as "A large group of people sharing the same cultural and possibly the ethnic or racial heritage". The state, on the other hand, can be defined in terms of the territories over which institutional authorities exercise legitimate control.

⁶ There is this dispute among scholars that politics in Nigeria is not a class affair because, it is not a Marxist state, or put the other way round, since the Nigerian state is not a Marxist state, politics is not a class affair. This is, however, fallacious. It does not follow that since the state is not Marxist, then there is no class politics.

is the existence and prolonged persistence of a plural citizenship in Nigeria's political system. The emerging fact in such a political condition may be the existence of a state that has succeeded in being controlled by the dominant group who feel safest when in control of power. The state that emerges is not one that is plural although by its overall nature it has succeeded in alienating the citizens who, in turn, direct their loyalty to their respective groups.

2.3 THE HISTORY OF THE NIGERIAN STATE

Across Africa, a common experience is the exposure to years of colonial rule. During and after the expiration of colonial rule, the colonial powers imposed nation-states on societies with a large number of ethnic groups. Clearly, each ethnic group was not sufficiently large to achieve its own state, so groups within states were subsequently ranked according to whether they were a nation, a national minority, or a tribe. Hence, the construction of the post-colonial nationality started from colonial premises. Colonial premises, however, had largely been built on the ruins of pre-colonial African nations. Evidently, a preponderant feature of pre-colonial and post-colonial African states is the existence of large groups, hence the formation that resulted from the combination of these ethnic groups are often called nation-states⁷.

The colonial state imposed nation-state on the newly independent Nigeria. After six years of independence and the establishment of internal rule which eventually resulted in the dislimbering crises that the purported federal system of Nigeria was said to have adopted in 1947 under the Richard's constitution, was not only a loose one but one that defied the very heart, substance and logic of a true federation. According to Mark Anikpo, "the division of the country into three Regions by the 1947 Richard's constitution and the internal class conflicts of the emerging political leaders as they struggled for the privileged class positions to be vacated by the British, gave rise to class induced ethnic confrontations and fragmentation expressed structurally in ethnic political parties..." (Anikpo 1985: 45).

After the period of decolonization, evidence of wide range problems of assimilative and integrative nationhood began to emerge. Many reasons account for these tendencies. First, the colonial history of the newly independent Nigeria revealed that the country was not in any sense a united country. Today, many Nigerians still refer, in the light of the problem of national integration and unity, to the entity of Nigeria as the mistake of 1914 when Lord Lugard amalgamated the southern and northern protectorates. Second, the political leaders and the

⁷ The term nation-states must be distinguished from national states. The distinction has been highlighted by Charles Tilly. The former he referred to as those "whose peoples share a strong linguistic, religious, and symbolic identity" while national states he classified as "relatively centralized, differentiated, and autonomous organizations successfully claiming priority in the use of force within large, contiguous, and clearly bounded territories" (Tilly 1969: 3, 43).

government of the newly independent country failed to convince the citizens that there was a common goal to achieve and a common culture to build. The sentiments that accompanied independence were rather overwhelming at first but were found to be superficial, what Buzan described as a 'bond of xenophobia' and negative group unity (Buzan 1991).

Third, the state was used as an instrument of political domination by the majority group that succeeded in controlling state power at independence. This is what Myron Weiner tagged the development of a 'mono-ethnic tendency'. He argued that:

In country after country, a single ethnic group has taken control over the state and used its powers to exercise control over and used its power to exercise control over others... In retrospect there has been far less 'nation-building' than many analysts had expected or hoped, for the process of state-building has rendered many ethnic groups devoid of power or influence. (Weiner 1987)

Fourth, the emergent state not only was dominated by a single ethnic group, it had the problem of lack of autonomy to dissociate itself from the ruling, dominant class and, hence, the inability to mediate between contending social forces. Claude Ake tagged such a state "a specific modality of class domination" (Ake 1985: 1).

Finally, the notion of legitimacy for the post-colonial state became suspect. The state legitimacy became defined not by the role of the state in the political community but by the successful capture of power. Moreover, the state became legitimated by the nation that has control over it. "The nation", says Young, "has in fact become the body which legitimizes the state" (Young 1993: 3-35).

3. STATEHOOD PROBLEMS AND CITIZENSHIP CRISES

Jack Snyder has provided the link between statehood problems and citizenship crises. This is what he referred to as the revival of ethno-nationalism. According to Snyder, ethno-nationalism "predominates when institutions collapse, when existing institutions are not fulfilling people's basic needs and when satisfactory alternatives structures are not readily available" (Snyder 1993: 12). Again, the praetorian nature of the state, argues Dipo Irele, accounts for the difficulty in eliciting the loyalty of the people. This is due to the alienating nature of the social system where people do not seem to be deriving any benefit from the state (Irele 1993: 7). Ayoob describes such a state as the emergence of the problem or "lack of effective statehood" (Ayoob 1996: 80). Such a sense of statehood problem is what Robert Jackson (1990) classifies as the precursor to 'quasi-states' in the Third World countries.

Thus conceived, such states have one of two options: either to continue to revel in anarchy and a prolonged period of chaos, crises or to splinter into a number of mini-states carved out mainly around temporarily self-defined dominant ethnic groups in particular regions of the failed states. Curiously, this is where the pluralist theory appears particularly related simply because when the first option seem to be

in check through the intervention of the military, what normally results is the second option.

Necessarily, the vitiation of the rational capacity of the state to mediate and control the state of inter-group relations amongst existing ethnic groups, such that none is alienated nor dominated, often leads to the problem of ethno-nationalism. Generally, whenever the state is subject to the control and domination by a single ethnic group, it often renders other groups weak, fragile and excluded. Such exclusionary policies are the very stuff or push factors which revives ethno-nationalism in a multi-ethnic setting. Given this state of things, the process of state-formation becomes increasingly difficult since the primary allegiance and loyalty that ought to be transferred from the nation, i.e. ethnic groups, to the state becomes unsuccessful. On the one hand, the state calls for the transfer of primary allegiance from the nation to the state. On the other hand, the state policies are policies of cultural and political domination by the ethnic group in control of the state. In this sense, the state is not a neutral actor nor is it autonomous. This mono-ethnic tendency, occasioned by the problem of ineffective statehood, has resulted not only in the weakening of the state. It also results in the resurgence of ethno-national consciousness, what Hurst Hannum calls the "full exercise of ethnic self-determination." The outcome is the creation and existence of independent states which define themselves primarily in ethnic, religious or linguistic terms (Hannum 1990: 454-455). The sense of citizenship status that was initially defined at the state level then turns out to be defined at the substate level. The predominant national consciousness or identity becomes evanescent with the resurgence of citizenship consciousness and sentiments at the level of one's nation. The whole programme of ineffective statehood and cultural and political dominance by a group over others results in the emergence of a citizenship problem i.e. a set of first class and second-class citizens. The history of conflict in Nigeria can be summarised in the various reactions to this pattern of citizenship.

4. CITIZENSHIP PROBLEMS AND POLITICAL CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

An understanding of the intellectual history of socio-political development and attitude in Nigeria reveals an interesting dimension which the concept of conflict has assumed. It seems to me a proposition too plain to be contested that in the light of crucial elements (see chapter 2.3) in the historical development of social and political forces in Nigeria, a candid opinion and interpretation of conflict must start with comprehending the problematic nature of the Nigerian identity. What constitutes and who defines the Nigerian identity is now of utmost importance, and attempt over the years to define, and perhaps, draw a line of distinction between various elements that constitute Nigerian citizenship have led to a persistent state of conflict especially at the national level. But then, what is the nature and pattern of citizenship in Nigeria? And how does it account for the existence of political conflicts in Nigeria?

4.1 CITIZENSHIP STATUS IN NIGERIA

Citizenship as a concept in political and philosophical theories is not subject to a single, universally acceptable definition. Citizenship, in its modern form, consists of three essential and central propositions: the notion of individual and human rights, the idea of political participation, and the principles of socio-economic welfare. The main significance of the concept of citizenship is its relation with the conferring of rights and duties. Hence, structurally defined, citizenship consists of rights and duties. According to T.H. Marshall, "citizenship is a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (Marshall 1949: 87).

In intellectual discussions on the concept of citizenship, the recurrent theme has always been the distinction between the political and legal component, and the social component. The former refers to the political and legal standing of an individual in a particular country that entitles him, from the constitutional position, to an array of rights such as the right to participate in the exercise of public power, political decision making, right to life, to fair hearing etc⁸. The latter refers to a person's right to "share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of civilised being" (Marshall 1949: 74). According to Ifidon, the social conception of citizenship is "usually the product of history and culture... an outgrowth from inter-personal relations" (Ifidon 1996: 102).

In a catchy and classic essay, Femi Taiwo provides a critical insight on the nature of citizenship in Nigeria. According to him, the existence of the legal cum political conception of citizenship in Nigeria is queasy. In his words, "beyond phrase-mongering, there are no citizens in Nigeria, only citizens of Nigeria... That is, Nigerian citizenship is merely geographical, it is without moral-ideological content... part of what typifies citizenship, especially in the modern state, is the de-emphasising of geography and other natural facts in its composition... the freedom to locate anywhere within the boundaries of the relevant geo-polity is non-existent in Nigeria" (Taiwo 1996: 15-16).

The social conception, being an outgrowth of culture and history, becomes relevant in understanding the nature of citizenship in Nigeria. In fact, John Scott has provided a very apt theoretical division of citizenship in the light of both perspectives, into the first-order and second order construct. The essence, argues Scott, is to transcend the limitation of the first-order construct which neglects the

⁸ John Scott (1994: 61) has argued that this cluster of civil political rights and their corresponding obligations, "need not involve a system of full political 'democracy'... but it does imply a certain degree of democracy among those who are accorded the status of citizenship." It is, however, doubtful whether such rights are granted in a military set up, for instance, where the constitution and its provision, especially those that touch on the basis or legitimacy of such regimes, are outrightly suspended.

social conditions that establishes the contradictory conventions and practices that define the boundaries of citizenship. According to Scott, the second-order construct, i.e. sociological conception, helps us understand the idea of citizenship which is found preponderant in people's mental awareness and acceptance. This conception identifies the idea of citizenship as a whole complex of institutions, practices, and conventions that are embodied, in often contradictory ways, in the cultural and sub-cultural perspectives of a society and which informs its political and ideological struggles (Scott 1994: 46).

As a product of history and culture, citizenship in Nigeria is social, involving contradictory patterns and conventions. The contradictions inherent in citizenship in Nigeria can be found validated in the terse but profound conclusion that while a Nigerian nationality is non-existent, citizenship is operative at the homeland level (Ifidon 1996: 103).

4.2 CONTRADICTIONS IN CITIZENSHIP STATUS AND THEIR CONFLICTUAL TENDENCIES ON THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN NIGERIA

Put simply, the idea of political conflict in Nigeria's political system can be understood in the light of this contradictory pattern and problematic nature of citizenship. Empirically, national citizenship in Nigeria is far from being resolved, and the inability is due to the fact that various ethnic groups that compose the Nigerian nation-state⁹ have conceived different attitudes to Nigerian citizenship. Such identity differences have heightened, to the point of political significance, the incidence and outbreak of conflicts in Nigeria.

The struggle over power and resources in Nigeria has not only generated conflict, it is also exacerbated by the existence of a contradiction in the mental awareness and cognition of citizenship status in the Nigerian state. In Nigeria today, the success of an ethnic group, due to an illusory belief in the strength of geographical and numerical size, to hold unto power since independence has succeeded in generating a sense and feeling of alienation and marginalization on the part of other major ethnic groups. The existence of such an overriding philosophy with respect to power has enabled the dominant, alienating group to define citizenship status as that of a first class citizens and others to a set of second-class citizens within the same geographical boundary¹⁰. Over the years, successive

⁹ There are two categories of nation-states: those where there are dominant (ethnic, racial, or religious) group and those where there are not (Young 1993: 3-35). Clearly, the Nigerian case is the former. The bogus claim to dominance has been used for political advantage by a section of the country.

¹⁰ This is referred to as the "principle of northern primacy." A classic instance is the following statement credited to Malam Maitama Sule that "...everyone has a gift from God. The Northerners are endowed by God with leadership qualities. The Yoruba man knows how to earn a living and

governments and regimes are often defined in the sense of a dominant ruling group and subjected, excluded groups. This consistent pattern in the nature of governance and rule and the inordinate, unbridled ambition to perpetually dominate others, coupled with the struggle to monopolize the resource allocating elements of the state are the factors that account for the problems of citizenship, statehood and their effects on the incidence of political conflict.

Citizenship in Nigeria is now defined as an exclusion, not inclusion. Presently, political interaction entails a level of awareness and consciousness defined in one's identity. Citizenship entails an identity and such an identity can be defined in multiple terms. It may be defined as a member of a nation-state, a member of an ethnic group, as a member of a communal group within an ethnic group. In Nigeria's political history and development, the level of identity awareness and consciousness spells a lot of the nature of political interaction and attitude that is prevalent in our political order. The existence of the problem of national identity will, in turn, mean the existence of the politics of alienation. This is the precipitant to conflict in Nigeria.

The politics of alienation and domination and their general effects on the outbreak of political conflict can be clearly illustrated in two prominent aspects of Nigeria's history. In the first instance, the Nigerian civil war 1967-1970 can be understood in the light of the effects of alienation and citizenship problems. The second instance consists in the crisis and conflict that erupted in Nigeria in the wake of the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. Briefly, I examine in turn the salient elements of both events and how they compel us to point to an existent citizenship and statehood problems in their outbreak. The victims in both episodes were and are still the object of exclusion and marginalization by a common enemy, or less euphemistically, a common opponent.

4.2.1 Citizenship Problems and the Nigerian Civil War

Okwudiba Nnoli has preserved valid historical interpretations and analysis of the events that led to the war. According to Nnoli, the historical background of events included: (a) the insecurity of the Igbo ethnic group throughout the socio-economic and political competition with other ethnic groups, (b) the politicisation of the army and the militarisation of politics, (c) threats by various ethnic groups to secede, (d) the increased importance of oil production, and (e) the jumbled nature of the national economy. (Nnoli 1995: 121)

It is no doubt a truism that when one group seems to dominate access to land, job or public office and power, then the defining characteristics of the excluded group becomes a more important basis for mobilising solidarity. Aside from the fact that the Nigerian identity is fast becoming evanescent, it is a fact of persistent empirical knowledge that the Nigerian identity has not been able to meet any

has diplomatic qualities. The Igbo is gifted in commerce, trade and technological innovation." This is no doubt the material for the theology of domination.

specific need or circumstance of major importance. Hence, the recourse to primordial, ethnic identities within the same territory¹¹. And where these inequalities are sharp, the outcome has always been the outbreak of civil, political conflict and violence.

The causes and consequences of the civil war pointed to the presence of citizenship problems occasioned by political and cultural domination, economic inequity and inequality, increasing alienation, deprivation and, of course, the lack of effective statehood. According to Nnoli, "the overall effect of the war was twofold: the strengthening of the country's territorial integrity and the intensification of ethnicity. Inter-ethnic violence is a pernicious contributor to the growth of ethnicity ...the individual's identity and sense of exclusiveness are vividly defined as each set of violence reinforces his feeling of being different and of being able to count only on members of his group for action, security and welfare... " (Nnoli 1995: 141).

4.2.2 June 12th 1993 - Crises and Citizenship Question

After the civil war on January 10th 1970, Nigeria embarked on a programme of rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation. However, the feeling of alienation of groups became intense. Such a feeling of alienation made it possible for individuals in the country to still feel that they do not belong to the federal, central state. At the onset of the second Republic, the Constitution Drafting Committee had, at the beginning of its reports, the observation that "as a general rule, every Nigerian owes or is expected to owe some loyalty to his community and /or sub-community." Further, it resolved that "the State shall foster a feeling of belonging and of involvement among the various sections of the country, to the end that loyalty to the nation shall override sectional loyalties."¹²

The gap between that stage of preparation for the second Republic and the occurrence of the June 12th crisis was a period of 15 years. In between these years, were the second Republic which lasted for only four years, and two military governments. The June 12th crisis was the aftermath of an aborted Third Republic. The presidential election that was meant to usher in the much awaited Republic of civil, democratic rule was annulled by the erstwhile Head of state and budding dictator, General Babangida. The character of the crisis and conflict that attended the annulment and the whole socio-political atmosphere that prevailed had the tendency of altering the content and context of Nigerian politics permanently. The

¹¹ A classic example of the disappointing nature of Nigerian citizenship is contained in the following vitriolic vituperation by Jagun (1994). According to him, "I am asked to love Nigeria, to want Nigeria, to perforce remain Nigerian. What would be my gain if I so remain, I could not fathom. For if I so do, I shall forever lose the surest thing I could hold unto, my heritage, the one my community gave me. And yet I shall get nothing in return from Nigeria. Nothing except shattered hopes, battered dreams, Nothing except a citizenship derided, defied and defiled... Is this Nigeria to me?"

¹² See p.8 of The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979.

present call for secession by the Yoruba ethnic group from the Nigerian federation to form the Oduduwa Republic coupled with the on-going debate and counter debate for shift of power to the south is an important evidence of the presence and pressure of citizenship claims in Nigeria. While the Igbo ethnic group had the sense of being alienated in the case of the civil war, the turn of the Yoruba ethnic group has come to suffer its turn of exclusion, alienation and outright denial of the right to rule. In such a state of political interaction, conflict is inevitable. The crisis was due to the fact that the Northern traditional elite could not imagine the shift of power to the south particularly the West. Such an occurrence was counted contrary to an existing philosophy among these elites: the position of primacy in any national government. Since the north has indeed been in charge of power in the country since independence, it was rather easy for them to enforce and nurse that principle and philosophy. The victory of Moshood Abiola and impliedly of his Yoruba ethnic group was unwelcome hence the annulment. The citizenship implication can be found appropriately described, by a scholar in the following words:

The result of the June 12th election had the potential of altering the current structure of access to, and exclusion from state resources. It is within this framework that Balarabe Musa's (**The African Guardian**, November 20th 1993) crediting of the northern traditional elite with engineering the annulment of the election must be situated. It is the struggle to exclusively dominate and exploit the system that generates the inequity which accounts for the problems of citizenship and statehood, and ultimately for democratic instability (Ifidon 1996: 104-105).

5. CONCLUSION

One of the fundamentals of citizenship in the modern world is the freedom to locate anywhere, enjoy the rights and privileges of a citizen, and the freedom to hold any post in the political realm of that country. According to Taiwo (1996: 16), "part of what typifies citizenship, especially in the modern state, is the de-emphasizing of geography and other natural facts in its composition." However, the basis of citizenship in Nigeria is the emphasis on geography and location. Since citizenship is defined at the sub-state level, a Nigerian is an alien in another state. In Nigeria today, the fact of belonging to an ethnic group is used for political advantage. The politicisation of one's ethnic origin is framed towards the practice of exclusive politics on others while it counts some others as real citizens with people from that region having unfettered access to land, economic benefits, privileges and advantages, and ultimately control of power. One ethnic group becomes the national group while others are classified as marginal groups. "Right now", echoes Joe Igbokwe, "the East, the West, the Minorities and the Middle Belt share a common problem, which is marginalization and oppression by the Hausa-Fulani clique sustained by the Army. The only option left for these people to free themselves is to present a common front. Once there is unity among these

oppressed people of Nigeria, our new colonial masters will be forced to negotiate political power..." (Igbokwe 1995). In the same vein, Obadare states that "the Northern elites refusal to share power is the single most important reason why tribes have been resurgent and ethno national consciousness has come to override overall Nigerian nationalism" (Obadare 1996: 10).

Citizenship problems at the national level are still far from being resolved. The state of the country now is one of an ethnic nation legitimising the state. The existence of such a state of things has dubbed the problem of ethnicity. However, it indeed is the problem of absence of genuine citizenship sentiments at the national level. "The absence of genuine citizenship is not unconnected with the dominance of ethnic politics driven by the requirements of rootedness in physical space" (Taiwo 1996: 19).

The occurrence of conflicts, especially political ones, in Nigeria is the expression of citizenship and statehood problems, and of alienation and domination. Where there is the problem of ineffective statehood evidenced by the lack of autonomy on the part of the state, the problem of citizenship pressure and claims arises. Such a state is prone to lingering crises, conflict and ultimately violence. Talk of integration can only have meaning when conscious efforts are made to reflect the historical experiences, social structures and cultural uniqueness of groups.

REFERENCES

Ake, C. (ed.) 1985.

Political Economy of Nigeria. New York: Longman Inc.

Anikpo, M. 1985.

Nigeria's Evolving Class Structure. In: *Political Economy of Nigeria*, C. Ake (ed.), pp. 33-52. New York: Longman Inc.

Ayoob, M. 1996.

State-Making, State-Breaking and State-Failure: Explaining the Roots of Third World Insecurity. In: *Between Development and Destruction- an Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post Colonial States*, Luc Van De Goor, Kumar Rupesinghe and Paul Sciarone (eds.), pp. 67-90. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

Buzan, B. 1991.

People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Ezn. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Chabal, P. 1990.

Power in Africa. London: Macmillan.

Coser, L. 1956.

The Functions of Social Conflict. Clencoe: Free Press.

- Deng, F. M. 1996.
Anatomy of Conflicts in Africa. In: *Between Development and Destruction-an Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post Colonial States*, Luc Van De Goor, Kumar Rupesinghe and Paul Sciarone (eds.), pp. 219-236. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Netherlands Institute of International Relations.
- Girvetz, H. 1974.
An Anatomy of Violence. In: *Reason and Violence*, S.M. Stanage (ed.), pp. 183-204. Little Field: Adams and Co.
- Graham, H. O. and Gurr, T. R. (eds.) 1969.
Violence in America. New York: Bantam.
- Hannum, H. 1990.
Autonomy, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination: The Accommodation of Conflicting Rights. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Ifidon, A. E. 1996.
Citizenship, Statehood and the Problem of Democratisation in Nigeria. **Africa Development** 4(21): 93-107.
- Igbokwe, J. 1995.
The Tempo, Lagos, November 9th 1995.
- Irele, D. 1993.
Alienation and the Problem of Loyalty in Africa. Ibadan: Options Book and Information Services.
- Jackson, R. 1990.
Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jagun, ?. 1994.
What is Nigeria to me? **The Guardian**, Lagos, January 24th 1994.
- Laitin, D. 1986.
Hegemony and Culture. Politics and Religious Change Among the Yoruba. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Marshall, T. H. 1949.
Citizenship and Social Class. In: *Class, Citizenship arld Social Development*, T. H. Marshall (ed.). New York: Double Day and Company. Reprinted 1964.
- Marshall, T. H. (ed.) 1949.
Class, Citizenship arld Social Development. New York: Double Day and Company. Reprinted 1964.
- Miall, H. 1992.
The Peace-Makers: Peaceful Settlements of Disputes Since 1945. London: Macmillan.
- Neiburg, H. L. 1969.
Political Violence. New York: St. Martins Press.
- Nicholson, M. 1971.
Conflict Analysis. London: English University Press.

Nnoli, O. 1978.

Ethnic Politics in Nigeria. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.

1995 *Ethnicity and National Development in Nigeria*. Aldershot: Avebury Ashgate Publishing Limited.

Obadare, E. 1996.

The Tempo. Lagos, May 16th 1996.

Scott, J. 1994.

Poverty, and Wealth, Citizenship, Deprivation and Privilege. London: Longman Group Limited.

Snyder, J. 1993.

Nationalism and the Crisis of the Post-Soviet State. **Survival** 35(1): 1-12.

Stanage, S. M. (ed.) 1974.

Reason and Violence. Little Field: Adams and Co.

Taiwo, O. 1996.

Of Citizens and Citizenship. **The Tempo**, Lagos, Sep.-Oct. 1996.

The African Guardian.

November 20th 1993.

Tilly, C. 1969.

Collective Violence in European Perspective. In: *Violence in America*, H. O. Graham and T. R. Gurr (eds.), pp. 4-45. New York: Bantam.

Van De Goor, L., Rupesinghe, K. and Sciarone, P. (eds.) 1996.

Between Development and Destruction- an Enquiry into the Causes of Conflict in Post Colonial States. The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Netherlands Institute of International Relations.

Vincent, A. 1987.

Theories of the State. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Weiner, M. 1987.

Political Change: Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In: *Understanding Political Development*, M. Weiner and S. P. Huntington (eds.). Boston, MA: Little Brown.

Weiner, M. and Huntington, S. P. (eds.) 1987.

Understanding Political Development. Boston, MA: Little Brown.

Young, C. 1993.

The Dialectics of Cultural Pluralism: Concept and Reality. In: *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-states at Bay?*, C. Young (ed.), pp. 3-35. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Young, C. (ed.) 1993.

The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism: The Nation-states at Bay?. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.