



Citizenship and the Governance Imbroglia in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria is a state in dire need of good governance and development. Given the huge petrodollars accruing to the country yearly from crude oil exploration and exportation, Nigeria has no excuse for being under-developed. The narratives on Nigeria have harped on issues of corruption, godfatherism, ethnicity and most importantly leadership crisis as the major banes of governance and development in the country, with little attention paid to the issue of citizenship. Yet, there is a nexus between citizenship and good governance. The paper argues that governance in any society cannot be divorced from the dominant citizenship orientation in such society. The paper therefore historicises citizenship and links governance crisis in Nigeria to the citizenship crisis that emerged through the colonial and post-colonial experiences. The paper adopts a descriptive approach and utilises both primary and secondary data to analyse the issues of citizenship and governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The paper specifically examines citizens' perceptions on governance and how these perceptions enhance or constrain good and efficient governance under the current democratic governance. The paper concludes that good/responsible citizenship is a panacea for the governance and development crisis in Nigeria.

Keywords: Citizenship, Democracy, Development, Governance, Leadership, Political Culture.

Introduction

Nigeria is a postcolonial state struggling with the issues of governance and development. With the discovery and exploration of oil fields at the twilight of colonialism and huge petrodollars accruing yearly to the country, Nigeria was poised to become Africa's response to the 'Asian Tigers' in terms of rapid development. However, kamikaze plundering of the country's commonwealth "cripples and reduces the 'giant of Africa' to a comatose midget" (Ayittey, 2006; Osaghae, 1998). That is, instead of leading Nigeria to rapid development and greatness among the committee of nations, 'oil wealth' has not only become 'oil curse' (Karl, 1997), it has also created what Ibeanu (2005: 76) refers to as 'paradoxes of the petro-state'. First is the 'paradox of plenty' wherein 'petroleum wealth', instead of creating 'economic wealth' and greatest happiness for the critical mass of the citizens, tends to create enormous poverty. Second is the 'paradox of security', namely the tendency in a petro-state for national security to undermine the security of nationals. Third is the 'paradox of development', which is the tendency for the putative

development efforts of petro-state to generate underdevelopment. Put differently, the paradoxes clearly demonstrate how wealth, national security and development impoverish, assail and under develop the Nigerian people (Ibeanu, 2005).

Thus, in spite of its enormous petroleum wealth, Nigeria is trapped in the pond of grinding poverty, insecurity, and underdevelopment. To be sure, while Nigeria's economy is adjudged the biggest in Africa, 'the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing yearly' (Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, 2012: 11). In fact, the UNDP Human Development Report 2015 shows that 88.4 millions (50.4%) of Nigerian population live in multidimensional poverty (UNDP, 2015: 61). Similarly, the World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim, at the 2014 Spring Meetings of the IMF/World Bank, said Nigeria ranked third among the top five countries with the largest number of poor people (*Vanguard*, April 11, 2014). Furthermore, the National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS) states that the maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity in Nigeria is one of the highest in the world with an estimated 545 maternal deaths in every 100,000 live births, while 158 out of every 1,000 children of about five years of age die yearly of preventable diseases (*The Nigerian Tribune*, 2013). Similarly, Nigeria ranks sixth among the top 10 countries with highest number of out of school children in the world (UNICEF, 2016).

Moreover, Nigeria is heavily indebted both externally and internally with total public debt stock amounting to \$57.39 billion as at 31 December, 2016 (Debt Management Office, 2017). Also, the paradox of petro-state contributes to the insecurity of nationals in Nigeria, especially in the Niger Delta region of the country, as various actors and/or groups violently engage in witty politics of inclusion in or exclusion from an increasingly important source of rent-oil wealth (cf. Ikelegbe, 2005: 3). More still, the state of infrastructural development in Nigeria is generally poor. To be sure, public facilities such as education, health, roads, rail lines, electricity, portable water, etc are either nonexistence or in deplorable conditions.

In the main, the narratives on Nigeria have harped on issues of corruption, godfatherism, ethnicity, insecurity and most importantly leadership crisis as the major banes of governance and development in the country (Achebe, 1983; Agagu & Ola, 2007; Agbaje, Diamond & Onwudiwe, 2004; Odinkalu, 2010; Omotoso, Agagu & Abegunde, 2010; Omotoso & Kehinde, 2016; Osaghae, 1998; Otite, 2000; Mustapha, 2006; Suberu, 1996). For instance, Odinkalu (2010: 14) argues that "Nigeria faces an existential crisis located at the nexus of governance and corruption". Omotoso (2013: 127) contends that "one of those issues triggering governance crisis and development problems in Nigeria is corruption".

Indeed, corruption has created a very tiny 'class of sudden billionaires', swollen bank accounts for *political entrepreneurs* and their hangers-on at the expense of the Nigerian masses who are left to reel in excruciating hunger and impoverishment. Related to the forgoing is the leadership crisis that has ravaged postcolonial Nigeria since independence. To be sure, a renowned novelist, Chinua Achebe, asserts that "the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (Achebe, 1983: 22). According to Anam-Ndu (1998: 15), "the commonest diagnosis of the Nigerian sickness is bad leadership".

The postcolonial Nigerian leaders not only personalized power, but also privatized the state for the purpose of primitive accumulation and clientelism (Abubakar, 2004). A corollary to the leadership crisis is the problem of godfatherism. According to Kolawole (2004 in Oluwatusin, 2008), “godfatherism is a form of disguised individual colonization whereby the political godfather, either by force of acquisition or conquest, colonizes the political son”. Thus, as the wheels of godfatherism rotate, the godfather stands to benefit extensively from the relationship through the godson’s control of public power and authoritative allocation of scarce values (Oluwatusin, 2008). Put differently, godfatherism is a convoluted system of *privatizing* the Nigerian state for resource extraction and does not answer to *governing well* to anyone’s standard except that of those involved in the extraction—the godfathers, godsons and their lumpens.

Furthermore, another issue, itself linked with leadership problem, that has been implicated in the literature as posing problems for governance and development is the divisive nature of politics and inter-group relations in Nigeria, which tends to polarise the state along ethno-regional fault lines. Indeed, there are an avalanche of works on the problems of ethnicity and governance in Nigeria (Ake, 1996; Animashaun, 2009; Osaghae, 1998, 2014; Suberu, 1996). A common denominator in the ethnicity literature is that because of the colonial origin of the Nigerian state and the centralization of the state’s resources, the state becomes a ‘political kingdom’ worth fighting to capture and rule. Much of the struggles to control the state are being done through the instrumentality of ethnicity. This is the case since any ethnic group or coalition of ethnic groups that control the state also control so much more— power, security, wealth and good life. Little wonder, political contestations (i.e. elections) soon assumed inter-group and/or inter-ethnic confrontations/war. Put differently, the post-colonial Nigerian state becomes a hegemonic vehicle for contending ethnic groups.

However, while the foregoing analyses on the problems of governance and development in Nigeria could be taken as sacrosanct, little or no attention is paid to the issue of citizenship. Yet, there is a nexus between citizenship and good governance. For instance, and as will be demonstrated later, leadership crisis, corruption, godfatherism and ethnicity and by extension governance and development problematique in Nigeria could be attributed to crisis of citizenship. As Aristotle puts it, “the salvation of the community is the common business of all members of the community.” Thus, there is a sense in which leaders are products of their socio-cultural milieu, since their thoughts, attitudes and behavioural patterns are profoundly shaped by the complex nature of the various social influences and forces to which they are exposed. To be sure, ‘bad citizenship’ (bad citizenship means unpatriotic citizen whose behaviour tends to undermine her/his community—the state) will breed corruption, godfatherism, ethnic chauvinism and most importantly bad leadership, since leaders are nothing but mirror image of their society. Furthermore, leadership is extracted from citizenship (followership) since no one can attain leadership position without first being a citizen-follower. Little wonder, Bill Clinton, after his terms of office as American President, remarked that “he was happy to return to the most important title his country could offer him, which is *Citizen Clinton*. He maintained that “to be citizen is more important than to be president because without the former he could never have been president” (cited in Adamu, 2002: 5).

Thus, and as will be demonstrated later, governance and development in every society cannot be delinked from the dominant citizenship orientation in such society. It is because of this that the paper seeks to investigate the implications of citizenship for good governance and development in Nigeria using the country's Fourth Republic as its analytical handle. In doing so, the paper historicises issues of citizenship and links governance crisis in Nigeria to hybrid-citizenship that emerged through the colonial and post-colonial experiences. Specifically, the paper examines citizens' attitudes towards and perceptions of governance and how these enhance or constrain good and efficient governance in Nigeria.

Citizenship and Participatory Governance: Conceptual Analysis

In its classical sense, citizenship could be likened to an umbilical cord that connects the citizen and state. It involves reciprocity of relationship between the modern state and individual wherein the individual offers her/his loyalty/duty in exchange for state's protection. That is, while the state is expected to protect citizens' rights (civil, political and social rights), a citizen in return owes the state certain duties and obligations, which include tax payment, obedience to the law, voting during elections, defence of the sovereignty of the state, respect the rights of other citizens, etc. In the main, the concept of citizenship has developed around three theories or traditions of *liberalism*, *communitarianism* and *civic republicanism* (Kymlicka and Norman 1994; Kabeer 2002; Jones and Gaventa 2002; Gibney 2006). McGregor (1999) explains the liberal notion of citizenship as "individualism and the central idea that all individuals are equal and have inalienable rights that cannot be revoked by the state or any social institution." Thus, citizenship from the liberalists' point of view is a legal-judicial and passive status equally enjoyed by rational, self-interested individuals, granted and protected by the state (Jones and Gaventa, 2002).

To the communitarians, citizenship centres on a notion of *socially-embedded* status, community belonging and priority of the common good (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994; Isin & Wood, 1999; Georgina, 2003). Here, citizenship is not just an expression of one's membership in a political community (state), but is also a status built upon solidarity between individual and the community. Indeed, the communitarians' definition of citizenship is based on the development of 'specific virtues', such as respect for others and recognition of the importance of public service (Smith, 1998). On the other hand, the civic republican notion of citizenship emphasizes the importance of community to individual identity and the obligation of citizens to participate in communal affairs (Georgina, 2003). Central to the analysis of the civic republicans is the notion that citizenship should be understood as "a common identity, shaped by a common public culture" (Jones & Gaventa, 2002: 5). Indeed, civic republicanism promotes deliberative and participatory forms of governance, in contrast to the liberalists' emphasis on representative governance. Thus, citizenship in the republican sense implies an 'active role' of individual in relation to her/his political community; citizenship means 'practice' (Kabeer, 2002). As *practice*, citizenship is not just reciprocity of rights and duties, but a capability to participate in the activities of *ruling* and *being ruled* as fundamental to a full human life. That is, citizenship refers to the individual capacity for influencing politics and/or governance.

Little wonder, the last two decades or so have witnessed increased interests in citizenship as an emerging area in governance and development studies. During this period, the long standing

domain of ‘community participation/development’ transformed into ‘participatory governance’, which is the process of ‘direct involvement/participation’ of citizens in the wider public policy making and implementation processes especially in issues that have direct bearings on their lives (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001; Davies & Simon, 2012; Gaventa & Valderrama, 1999). Thus, mostly as response to international donor agencies pressure, governments tend to adopt participatory approaches to governance as means of influencing policy, and for planning purposes at multiple levels (Holland & Blackburn, 1998). Given this context and the increased recognition of the benefits of citizens’ participation, direct democratic mechanisms are increasingly being used as vehicles through which citizens can take active roles in the policy decisions that affect their lives, and the states can increase their responsiveness to citizens (Cornwall & Gaventa, 2001).

Increasingly, ‘citizen participation’ is promoted as a right. Indeed, Lister (1998: 228) argues that “citizenship as participation represents an expression of human agency in the political arena.” In this context, Lister assumes a notion of human agency located in dialectical relationships with social structures (simple agency) and embedded in social relations (citizenship agency) (Jones & Gaventa, 2002). Here, governance presupposes direct involvement of service users in the policy-formulation processes that produce public goods they consume. Thus, public goods consumers (citizens) rather than being passive consumers became ‘active agents’ in providing the services they receive. The assumption here is that citizens’ participation not only legitimises governance, it also fosters good governance by promoting transparency, accountability and acceptability of public policies. Little wonder that government programmes or development projects that do not include “a participatory element are frequently seen as unethical or invalid” (Davies & Simon, 2012).

What emerged from the foregoing analysis is that citizens’ engagement or participation is not just a right, but it is seen to promote good governance. However, while it may be possible at the grassroots level to directly involve citizens in governance, it may be problematic at the state and national levels. Also, there is little emphasis on the type of citizens’ engagements. To be sure, little attention is paid to the issues of citizen’s responsibility/duty to the state, which in itself is a form of citizen participation. That is, how citizens engage/participate in governance is of little importance to the participatory apologists. For instance, while it is important to involve citizens in the decision-making and implementation processes in policies that directly affect their lives, this engagement will not automatically translate to good governance. To be sure, where average citizens have been socialised into believing that the state and its properties belong to nobody and that it could be plundered for selfish and limited group nourishments, participatory governance could be counterproductive. Furthermore, there is too much emphasis on direct participation as if this is the only way citizens could engage in or influence governance. No attention is paid to subtle/ indirect influences/pressures citizens may bring to bear on those occupying political or bureaucratic offices, which could affect how they perform in such offices. For instance, in Nigeria it is not uncommon for relations and/or kinsmen to exert pressure on their kith and kin in government to use ‘your position wisely’! In Nigerian parlance, to use ‘one’s position wisely’ would mean to enrich oneself and/or one’s relatives/friends either through hook or crook at the expense of the state.

Moreover, participatory governance theorists assume different *moral* standings for the political class (politicians and bureaucrats) and the rest of the population (ordinary citizens) as though political leaders are not extracted from among the citizens and could possibly have been socialised the same way as ordinary citizens. In fact, ‘good follower’ will, to all intent and purposes, become a ‘good leader’ and vice versa. Thus, how citizens perceive government/governance could have implications for how they engage/participate in the governing processes. That is, the dominant citizenship orientation/culture (good or bad citizenship) in a society would determine whether citizen participation would result in good governance or not. To be sure, and as will be demonstrated later, in Nigeria, given the duality of the public space, most citizens will likely see a call to participate in governance as ‘our turn to get own slice of the national pie’ instead of an opportunity to serve the community. But, how did this individualistic and materialistic citizenship culture emerge in Nigeria? The next section will answer this question by showing how, through the instrumentality of colonialism, Nigeria developed hybrid citizenship—one that is neither African nor European; primordial nor civic; but one that is selfish and believes in gluttonous plundering of the state for personal and limited group aggrandisements and one that will still eulogise those plundering the state at its expense as ‘being very wise’!.

Colonialism and the Emergence of Hybrid Citizenship in Nigeria

The emergence of modern state system in Africa and Europe did not follow the same historical path. While the modern state emerged in medieval Europe from the debris of the collapsed feudal state and accompanying absolute monarchies (Mozaffar, 1987), in Africa, it was externally determined and imposed through the instrumentality of colonialism. That is, unlike in Europe, the modern state and civil society in Africa evolved independently of each other. Thus, given the colonial origin of the state and failure to properly graft or adapt the ‘migrated state structures’ (Ekeh, 1983) to the African traditional societies, there is a disjunctive duality between the state and civil society in Africa with the state suspended above society like a balloon (Hyden, 1980).

Indeed, colonialism, is not just an episode in the history of Africa, has deep-seated and disruptive consequences for Africa and Africans. Its impacts still haunt many African states (Nigeria as a prime example) several years after the actual colonial situation had ended. The most significant of such disruptions would be the ‘duality of the public realm’ with different moral codes. Indeed, the problem of the public realm in postcolonial Africa has been critically engaged in the literature (Ekeh, 1975; Lawuyi, 2012; Mbembe, 2001). However, for the purpose in this paper, I will focus on Peter Ekeh’s analysis of colonialism and it created the problem of citizenship in Africa nay Nigeria. In a classic essay, *Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: a Theoretical Statement*, Ekeh (1975) clearly demonstrates how colonialism resulted in the creation of two public realms—civic public and primordial public—with different moral linkages to the private realm in postcolonial Africa. According to Ekeh, because of ‘ideologies of legitimation’ deployed by the European bourgeois colonizers and their emergent African bourgeois as strategies for the control of the colonial state, postcolonial Nigerian nay African state developed a bifurcated public realm. In the ‘primordial public’, individual behaviour is influenced and determined by her/his primordial groupings, ties and sentiments. Also, the primordial public is moral and operates on the same moral standings as the private realm. On the other hand, the *civicpublic* is based on civil

structures (state and its bureaucratic institutions), which is amoral and lacks the generalised moral imperatives operative in the private realm and in the primordial public (Ekeh, 1975: 92).

In the main, the dialectic relationship between the two publics results in citizenship crisis in postcolonial Africa. Ekeh argues that “the political problems of the age as well as the historical context of politics determine to a large extent the aspects and issues of citizenship that are sorted out for emphasis in a given society” (Ekeh, 1975: 106). Thus, given the historical evolution of modern state in Europe, the two elements of citizenship (rights and duties) developed interdependently in a transactional manner. That is, ‘the demand for rights implies willingness to perform the concomitant duties, and vice versa.’ However, because of the colonial origin of the Nigerian nay African state, especially the type of socialization process (ideologies of legitimation) during the colonial situation, citizenship in postcolonial Nigeria is hybridised depending on whether it is conceived in terms of the primordial public or the civic public. To be sure, the citizenship in the primordial public is structured such that emphasis is more on duties than rights. That is, while an individual sees his duties as moral and strives to fulfil his obligations (undue favour to co-members, monetary benefits, etc) to benefit and sustain the primordial public, what he gets in return are mostly intangibles-identity or psychological security (Ekeh, 1975).

On the other hand, citizenship in the civic public is such that rights are demanded and squeezed out by citizens at all cost, while the moral urge to give back (duties) to the civic public is at best queasy or in abeyance. That is, while most Nigerians find it more convenient to benefit and sustain their primordial publics, they seek to gain only from the civic public. In fact, as a result of the socialising roles of the ideologies of legitimation, there is the myth among postcolonial Nigerian citizens to see the civic public as *sancta claus* that cannot be impoverished and that must be robbed to take care of the needful primordial public. It is the dialectic of belonging to the amoral civic public and the *moral* primordial public that could be implicated for ‘hybridised citizenship’ and governance problematique in postcolonial Nigeria. To be sure, while “a *good* citizen of the primordial public gives out and asks for nothing in return, a *lucky* citizen of the civic public gains from the civic public but enjoys escaping giving anything in return to the civic public” (Ekeh, 1975: 108).

Thus, while public finance and citizenship are mutually and historically linked in western liberal democracies, the same could not be said of Nigeria. According to Ekeh (1994: 236), “public finance in liberal democratic theory is conceived and run as [an] aspect of the theory of citizenship and of the public domain. Individuals pay taxes as part of their duties to the state from which they will receive several benefits.” However, this is not the case in Nigeria nay Africa where the state is regarded as alien to the society and not being owned by anybody. Little wonder that citizens find it hard to pay taxes and perform duties to the state. Indeed, and as argued before, the alien nature and the bifurcated citizenship nature make it more convenient for public officials in Nigeria to divert public resources and funds of the inclusive civic public for primitive personal and/or clientele networks benefits. Put differently, the dialectic of the colonial experience has generated a morality that legitimizes the use of civic public office and funds for the benefit of the individual or his primordial group.

However, several arguments have been put forward to challenge Ekeh's two publics theory (see Osaghae, 2006: 240). For instance, bribery and corruption in the civic public has little to do with constitutive primordial interests. If this were so, virtually all hometowns of Nigeria's billionaire current and former military and civilian political leaders would have become models of cities and towns (Aiyede, n.d). But, while it is true that Ekeh's assumption that the civic public is plundered mostly for the benefit and development of the primordial public may no longer be sustained, it is however helpful in explaining the emergence of hybrid citizenship in postcolonial Nigeria. That is, while the loots from the civic public no longer flow substantially to the wider bases of the primordial public, the colonial experience, especially the ideologies of legitimation had disproportionate impact on citizenship development and behavioural pattern in Nigeria. It is thus the case that citizenship in postcolonial Nigeria exhibits neither what existed prior to colonialism nor that which underpinned liberal democracy in Europe from where the Nigerian state was imported.

To be sure, to delegitimize colonial rule, emerging Nigerian bourgeois class embarked upon various anti-colonial ideologies, which include telling the African 'natives' that the colonial state is alien to Africa, must be disobeyed and if possible plundered. The strategies also involve encouraging Nigerians to shirk their responsibilities to the colonial state (e.g. evade tax) while at the same time demanding for their rights in excess of what the state can provide (Ekeh, 1975: 103). More to it, African natives witnessed the gluttonous extraction of resources from the colony by the colonialists, which also informed the anti-colonial ideology of the African bourgeois to replace the colonialists. Clearly, there is transfer effect from colonialism to postcolonial politics and governance. To be sure, as will be discussed more in the next section, the state is still being regarded by many Nigerians-both in government and out of it-as an alien institution that must be disobeyed and if possible robbed.

Citizenship and Governance Crisis in Nigeria: 1999-2016

Undoubtedly, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, democracy has become a global hype and every individual, group, nation and all regime types, even the worst dictators, want to be dressed in democratic toga. The rising profile of democracy is not unconnected with its inherent potential to protect and promote the dignity of human persons, promote individual's liberty, retard the frontiers of poverty and misery through negotiated consensus and transparent policy processes, which ensure accountability in governance. Put differently, democracy is often perceived as synonymous with good and efficient governance in that it does not just promote critical mass participation in policy process, but it also makes the policies so made people oriented. Little wonder, when Nigeria re-democratised in 1999, it was perceived "as the much-awaited people oriented mechanism, capable of resolving the ... social, economic and political mal-development" (Adeyemi, 2004: 160).

Today, these hopes are better imagined as realities on ground betray people's expectations of democratic governance. To be sure, since Nigeria returned to democracy, the country has been witnessing high incidences of inter-group/ethnic conflicts, corruption and other social vices, which exacerbate rather than alleviate poverty. As noted earlier in this paper, most analysts of Nigerian government and politics tend to see the governance problem in Nigeria as that of

leadership crisis. However, it is our position in this paper that the so called leadership problem is nothing but citizenship problem. As pointed out above, the colonial origin of the Nigerian state results in a bifurcated public realm and citizenship in postcolonial Nigeria. This hybrid citizenship culture has great impact on how Nigerians-leaders and ordinary citizens-relate with the state and/or participate in governance. With the state still being regarded majorly as a Father Christmas, everybody tends to want to participate in governance-directly or indirectly-“as an expression of the will to survive” (Ake, 1992, cited in Abubakar, 2004: 156) rather than a contribution to good governance and the development of the state. Thus, the postcolonial Nigerian citizens saw the state and its agents as enemies to be evaded, cheated and defeated if possible, but never as partners (Ake, 1991: 13). The implications of this bad citizenship behaviour for governance in Nigeria are thematically examined in what follows.

Electoral Politics: Why do we vote on the basis of ethnicity, religion, region or how much we can get? Why do we elect people with track records of criminality to occupy positions of power? Why is electoral politics in Nigeria characterised by violence, intolerance, intimidation, thuggery, assassination, bitterness, rigging and political apathy? The answer lies in the lack of citizenship. That is, for the success of any electoral system, the citizens must be able to understand the interest of the community, to subordinate his own will to the general will and must feel his responsibility to the community and be prepared to serve it (Appadorai, 2004). However, because of the materialistic and individualistic culture that permeates the Nigerian landscape, both the contestants and the electorates see elections as another opportunity to gain materially from the state.

It is not uncommon in Nigeria for electorates to receive gratifications before voting. Indeed, it can be argued that voting in Nigeria has been commodified and the highest bidder/spender will always win elections (see Adetula, 2008). While there is no clear answer as to how the commodification/monetization of electoral politics affects policy preferences of a state, what we do know for certain is that it hinders the three legitimacy pillars of democratic governance-it damages input legitimacy by reducing the act of voting to a quid pro quo exchange and by barring or limiting access to government to those individuals with sufficient social capital to make their problems/needs heard; it damages throughput legitimacy because it perverts the rules of the game in a non-transparent way to favour the interests of clientele; it damages output legitimacy because it leads to irresponsible and unaccountable public spending (De Sousa, 2008).

Corruption: It is a social fact that corruption is widespread and entrenched in Nigeria. Indeed, virtually all Nigerian citizens speak against corruption and its effects on governance in Nigeria. To be sure, corruption is mostly seen as the *burden* of the politicians and/or bureaucrats and that it is their corrupt ways that is responsible for the corruption of the society. But corruption stars one in the face everywhere you go in Nigeria-faith-based organizations, civil societies, hometown associations, in our universities/schools, etc. Thus, how many of us can absolve her/himself of corruption? Or how many of us are willing to help the state in fighting a successful war against corruption? How many Nigerians are prepared to ostracise and/or expose corrupt elements among us? It must be stated that neither laws nor governments on their own can defeat corruption without collaborative efforts of the citizens. In fact, lack of responsible citizenship contributes to the spread and entrenchment of corruption. To be sure, it is common in Nigeria for

known criminals to be conferred with titles in their communities, even in their places of worship. In fact, so many corrupt politicians now found solace and haven in worship centres.

In the same vein, Akinpelumi (in *Thisday*, April 21, 2016) contends that “every Nigerian is guilty for entrenching corruption.” He blames the entrenched culture of corruption in Nigeria on extravagant life styles, celebration of mediocrity and lack of patriotism among Nigerians.

Problem of Diversity: Undoubtedly, Nigeria is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse countries in the world. To be sure, it is estimated that Nigeria is home to over 374 ethnic groups, 400 distinct languages as against dialects, and at least three groups of belief-systems as well as diverse customs (Tamuno, 1998: 22). But instead of using the diversity as strength, the state often divides against itself along ethno-cultural-religious fault lines. While the role of elite in this division is huge, ordinary citizens are not better. It is not uncommon in Nigeria for a mere disagreement between two or more individuals from different ethnic groups to degenerate into inter-ethnic conflicts with wanton destruction of lives and properties. The recent fracas in Ife that led to the destruction of properties worth millions of Naira and killings of many innocent souls readily comes to mind here. The whole imbroglio was said to have started from an innocuous altercation between a Hausa man and a Yoruba woman (*Daily Trust*, March 15 2017). Thus, while ordinary citizens can be said to have been victims of ‘marginalization’, yet at the slightest provocation they take arms and kill themselves as if they are at war with other states. For instance, one wonders at times when you see an ordinary citizen who may gain nothing if someone from her/his ethnic group gains political power talking about ‘we have been marginalised for long and we must take back what rightfully belongs to us’ (Author Interview, July, 2016).

Indeed, one wonders why ordinary Nigerians do not cherish the ideals of equality and dignity, which are the constitutional guaranteed rights of every individual. Why can’t ordinary Nigerians understand that to achieve equality in an unequal society, there is need to take affirmative action in favour of disadvantaged sections and change inherited attitudes based on ethnicity, indigeneity, religion and regional belongings? Why is it impossible to see that discrimination and inequality continue it will be impossible for democracy and social solidarity to be maintained? In fact, it is high time Nigerians realised that flagrant disregard for good citizenship is what is promoting ethnic, religious and regional chauvinism and bad governance.

Conclusion

One of the promissory notes of democracy is the possibility of allowing citizens to participate in governance by electing those who govern them. Indeed, representative democracy is erected on the assumption that citizens possess and demonstrate some civic capacities namely intelligence, self-control and conscience (Falade, 2014) to influence governance positively. However in Nigeria, given the historical evolution of the state as a colonial creation, the citizens tend to exhibit bad attitudes towards governance. That is, the real problem of governance in Nigeria is not leadership per se, but the existence of a bifurcated/hybrid citizenship. The hybrid citizenship divorces citizens’ obligations from duties, creates representation without taxation and taxation without representation thus fuelling suspicion, distrust and disorganised society. In fact, it

undermines the moral fabric of the public realm by making the equality of citizens mute and thereby constituting the state system as unjust and discriminatory (Aiyede, n.d).

Without being unnecessarily romantic or philosophical, it can be argued that the constitution is the best mechanism to guarantee unity and progress in any state. Without it, a state becomes an aggregate of many nations and identities constantly in fear of open exploitations. Indeed, it is common citizenship, which bonds a people together under a constitution for meeting with destiny. Thus, citizenship becomes a bond, which links an individual to a state from birth and regulated by law. Although the bond is usually dormant and unnoticed in normal times, it becomes critical and decisive in times of emergency and need. If average Nigerian citizens become aware of it and behave accordingly, responsible citizenship will enable the state achieve its rightful place in the comity of nations. Such reconstructed citizenship is capable of rejuvenating the moral standings of the state and, in the de Tocquevillian sense, able to sustain action against state excesses and serve as a hedge against predatory rule. Indeed, good governance requires effective and responsible citizens, especially those who are committed to efficient and accountable government.

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