

Identity and Cultural Communication in Nigerian Multiethnic Nationalism

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Abstract

This essay generally investigates identity and cultural communication in multiethnic nationalism. Specifically, it seems to investigate the reasons and effects of playing down on the native language and culture of any group. It construes *identity* as index of qualities, which makes a group different from others. Identity, here, ascertains to what extent an ethnic group showcases its cultural paraphernalia in multiethnic nationalism. Nationalism is an ideology in which patriotism is a central value and which espouses loyalty to an individual's ethnic stock. The study investigates the extent to which our various ethnic groups pride their identity by *communicating their cultural heritage* in the multiethnic Nigeria. The research is both qualitative and quantitative in the sense that both observation and library research are involved. The more any Nigerian ethnic group prides its identity, the more it exhibits its identity across cultures of the multiethnic nationality. Thus, the nationals of multiethnic Nigeria communicate their cultural heritage as they cooperate among themselves while still forging national unity. The study recommends that our various ethnic groups should not play down on their natural identity by relegating their language and culture to the background; conversely, no ethnic groups should promote theirs to negate the unity of the country, which is pivoted on diversity.

Keywords: identity, cultural communication, multiethnic nationalism, unity in diversity, personality

Introduction

Identity is a cultural, psychological and philosophic matter; it is unique to an individual or even a family, and it is pivoted on personality. To a race or ethnic group, identity and language are firmly rooted in culture. That is why it is vital that we communicate our culture by *living* it as we cooperate with other ethnic groups in multiethnic nationalism. A race that behaves in a certain way is consequent on the characteristics or qualities for which that race is known and which is unique to the people of that race. Nationalism, sociologically speaking, pertains to ideology in which patriotism is a central social value and which promotes loyalty to one's nation as a conscious emotion (Horgan, 2006, p. 256).

The preference of *espouses* to *promotes* in the corpus of the essay does in no way invalidate *promotion* of nationalism to Motherland in multiethnic state. Rather, promotion, as couched here, pertains to the negative usage of it such that it invalidates or negates the unity of the nation whose normative aphorism is *unity in diversity*. The varieties of the characteristics or

qualities, which are indices of identity, are not unusual to nature since variety and variation is the spice of life.

In this study of identity and cultural communication in multiethnic nationalism, an inquiry is made into certain concepts or issues that when improperly handled or exhibited by way of negative propaganda may ignite ethnic mistrust and overheat the polity; therefore, it promotes disunity in multiethnic nationality. Some of these issues include *ethnocentrism, religious bigotry, micro-nationalism and ethno - religious agenda*.

Literature Review

Identity. As admitted earlier, identity is a cultural, psychological and philosophic matter; it is unique to an individual and to some extent a family; it is pivoted on personality. The respective features of identity of families shape the identity of a nation. The identity of a nation, for instance, at times, is reflected on the philosophy of a nation. Pursuant to this, identity of Nigeria is encapsulated in the “philosophy of Nigeria”, which, according to Federal Government of Nigeria (2004, p. 6), is to:

- (a) live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice;
- (b) promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding.

The philosophy of Nigeria translates into “the five main *national goals* ... which have been endorsed as the necessary foundation for the National Policy on Education”; and they are, “the building of”:

- (a) a free and democratic society;
- (b) a just and egalitarian society;
- (c) a united, strong and self-reliant nation;
- (d) a great and dynamic economy;
- (e) a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (6).

This study, by its nature, investigates the extent to which the various ethnic groups of Nigeria have used their identity to achieve cultural communication in multiethnic nationalism. The good, the bad, the ugly and the sublime of the cultural, psychological and philosophic matter to build or mar the Nigeria project will be seen as they are.

Closely bound up with identity is personality. Beginning with individual personality makeup, an extrapolation is made to multiethnic Nigeria in our poise to ascertain how we use our identity to enhance cultural nationalism.

Personality. This term straddles philosophy, psychology, and cultural details of an individual, and by extension, a nation. As a psychological matter, Colman (2003, p. 547), in his *Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*, describes personality as: “The sum total of the behavioral and mental

characteristics that are distinctive of an individual.” From this exposition, we can delineate personality constructs into character, behavior and attitude. Character as used refers to the intelligent level of performance of an individual when assigned a piece of task to carry out, which may be inside and outside classroom experience. Behavior pertains to morality. Here ethical consciousness comes into play. It is part and parcel of a person’s personality to use his education to build up and not to tear down a nation. An educated scientist does not evoke his cognitive arsenal to produce chemical weapons of mass destruction to decimate a people, even when they are his enemies. He rationalizes that you don’t throw a stone in the marketplace, for if it does not fall on your father, it falls on your mother. For instance, when a private Ghanaian firm destroyed part of Nigerian Embassy in Ghana, to demonstrate her filial kinship, the Ghanaian Government not only passionately and profusely apologized to her sister Nigeria, but went ahead to accept the rebuilding of the destroyed building, and added that the unpatriotic breach committed by the private firm of Ghana is against Vienna Convention. This is sterling personality worthy of emulation. In further condemning the dastardly act that could tarnish the image of Ghana, the Ghanaian Government traced the brotherly relationship Ghana had enjoyed with Nigeria to be as old as pre colonial West Africa. The laudable position of Ghana is antithetical to that of South Africa, whose government security agencies and peoples went berserk to perpetuate xenophobia against Nigerian nationals, who are resident in their country, forgetting in a hurry that Nigeria was West African Frontline State against racist Apartheid White Minority Government in the dark days of Apartheid against the majority Blacks in their home land. That was unpalatable personality, a reflection of South Africa’s low character and behavior rating.

The attitude construct of personality unveils the manner a person employs in approaching matters. Does the manner reveal smartness, hard work, lackadaisicality, laziness, promptness, hesitance, dilly-dallying, lethargy, apathy, lack of commitment, agility, etc.? The West African sister of Ghana passed this test of *attitude*, whereas Cape Town is found wanting.

Personality domiciles in superego, which “is translated as conscience, a construct that judges whether an action is right or wrong according to standards of society (Anusiem, 1987: 8).” Nurturing a God-fearing superego begins from infancy, from the family, the minuscule of human society. Anusiem believes that superego develops in response to parental reward and punishment. He adds that the conscience or superego “punishes by making the person feel guilty, and the ego-ideal rewards by making the individual feel proud of himself.” Anusiem goes further to spell out the functions of superego. According to him, superego strives or seeks to:

- (i) inhibit the impulses of Id particularly those that society prohibits such as uncontrolled sex, moral decadence and aggression.
- (ii) persuade the ego to substitute moralistic goals for realistic ones. (and)
- (iii) strive for perfection.

Since personality development begins from an individual’s family, Nigerian parents owe it as a duty to “train a child in the way he should go such that even when he grows old he will not depart from it (*Proverbs 22:6, NW*).” This means that parents should instill and

inculcate fear of God in their children whom God has entrusted to their care so that they may grow up with desirable identity and personality necessary for healthy *cultural communication in multiethnic Nigeria of their Motherland*. The classroom teacher and loco parentis, the school representative, equally has a good role to play. With proper curricular planning, the teacher should discern at what age, in keeping with maturation, of intellectual development, to inculcate the indices of personality as well as psychology and philosophy in the children. Maturation is important because it aligns with the law of readiness. According to Onibokun, Okoye, Alao, and Onwuchekwa (1982: 39), cited in Anyachonkeya and Anyachonkeya (2018: 560), maturation “is the attainment of a particular level of functional ability which makes possible the achievement of a certain pattern of behavior.”

Still as a psychological matter, Durojaiye (1984: 244) sees personality as “the sum total of what a person really is; it is being a particular person.”Durojaiye explains that personality implies the following characteristics:

- (i) Personality is a dynamic, growing and changing entity.
- (ii) It starts with heredity.
- (iii) It involves the capacity for the maturation of physical and intellectual potential, provided the environmental factors are right.
- (iv) It includes what we can see and what we cannot see.
- (v) It includes behavioural as well as physical attributes.
- (vi) It is capable of numerous modifications throughout life.
- (vii) It grows, changes and manifests itself in the social surroundings of human group relations.

It is our candid view that the burden of developing the worthwhile personality of a child should not be left with parents alone; the school, the government, religion and the media, these agencies of socialization, must provide the much needed scaffold of personality to build the Nigerian children as our future leaders so that they will be properly equipped to communicate their culture in multiethnic nation of Nigeria.

Since personality attributes or characteristics of an individual encompass a person’s *individuality (cognitive, affective and psychomotor)* learning taxonomies, scholars in the discipline of psychology advance certain areas that are often employed to ascertain a person’s personality makeup. Durojaiye (1984: 245) has the following list of the “broad areas that are often used in describing” an individual’s personality:

- (i) Physical characteristics – body structure, complexion, height, weight.
- (ii) Temperament – typical emotional behavior and characteristic mood.
- (iii) Intelligence – skills, information storing and retrieval system, creativity, competencies.
- (iv) Interests – likes and dislikes.
- (v) Morals and values – character.
- (vi) Social attitudes, prejudices and attitudes towards democracy, socialism,

authoritarianism.

- (vii) Egalitarianism and dogmatism and suchlike.
- (viii) Aptitude – potential for doing well in particular areas of activity.
- (ix) Expressive and stylistic traits – habitual behavior, e.g. politeness, bossiness, submissiveness, talkativeness, sociability, shyness, consistency, hesitancy.

Durojaiye rightly points out that apart from the descriptions of the body build and intelligence, African cultural patterns are bound to lead to distinctly African personality traits. From the broad areas isolated by Durojaiye, we can assess an individual's personality attributes to incorporate "persistence, energy, politeness, stability, self-concept, honesty, sociability, cheerfulness, cooperation", hard word, etc. (Akinboye, Fagbami, Majekodunmi, Okafor, Esezobor, 1985, p. 137).

Enquiring into philosophical component of personality, one rationalizes the need for a meaningful life as purposed by God, a purposeful life that is relevant to us as individuals, families, immediate environment of the society, the state, the nation and the global community in that expanding horizon approach. By this statement, we have crisscrossed the very essence of philosophy as a discipline and man as a rational being. It does mean that we should be conscious of the obligations we owe to ourselves and our communities, the state and our creator. A continuous interrogation of the structure of being or reality naturally evokes the power to know by breaking through the shackles of ignorance, which constitutes blight of disease. In definition and explication, therefore, it can be seen as rational investigation of certain fundamental problems about the nature of man and the world in which he lives (Anyachonkeya, 2007, p. 148). As this is relentlessly done, it naturally contributes to the building of desirable personality that will add to a blissful human society we live in, that is our nation and the international community.

The philosophic personality we espouse here is attainable or achievable only through sound education, well founded on rock, as it were. By means of education, we are exposed to and inculcated in a good dose of philosophy as a discipline, its metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, its logic (Ome and Okoro, 2004; Ekezie, 1986; Okoro, 2002). When the nation's education system is built on sand, figuratively speaking, we do not hope to produce future God-fearing citizens with desirable personality. That is the unfortunate situation that has befallen our contemporary education system. You don't have your cake and eat it neither do you eat your cake and have it. The well-packaged children of Nigeria should be acquainted with these core values of our cultural heritage, and the acquisition of which will enable them to build positive cultural personality and who in return will be able to communicate their cultural treasures in multiethnic Nigeria. It is not contestable that the race or nation whose identity and personality is not well-rooted in its culture is bound to disintegrate and go into oblivion.

Positive and Negative Application of Identity in Cultural Communication

Having done a modest treat on identity in cultural communication in multiethnic nationalism such as Nigeria, there is need to examine the positive and negative ways individuals and ethnic groups may apply or communicate their culture in multiethnic Nigeria. By purposive sampling,

Nigeria's three major ethnic groups are isolated to show how they may do these, using the following cultural details or features: dress, food, language and speech act. Of course, occasional references will be made to other ethnic groups of Nigeria; and what we observe to the three ethnic groups we generalize or apply to multiethnic Nigerian peoples.

Dress identifies a people. It is a salient technological feature of culture that identifies a people. In other words, dress is identity. When, for instance, the Yoruba, Hausa or Igbo person is fully dressed in distinctive agbada and ishi agu with okpu agu or okpummee onye eze at national gatherings or events, it adds beauty to Nigeria's multiethnic nationality and in turn glamorizes us as a people. We groom in our diverse dress codes, yet we are one united entity.

Worthy of commendation are the Yoruba and Hausa ethnic groups, who rate highly on the scoreboard in showcasing their dress cultural dresses at national events. Their Igbo brothers lag behind. Ndi Igbo (we mean the Igbo people) are best known for diminishing their cultural dressing. During national festivals and national meetings of who-is-who, *Ndi* Igbo seldom appear in their Igbo national dress of *Ishi agu cum George* wrapper along with long *okpu agu*, *okpu mme* or even Biafran Safari, among others. Instead you see them appear in the dress codes of their neighbours or dress in European suit. It is difficult to recognize an Igbo person via his national dress that identifies him as Igbo born; he is rather inclined to disguise himself as a Yoruba or Hausa person. This action is a sheer negation of his essence. The Igbo people are hereby enjoined to reverse this ugly show by making their minds over and begin to *live out* their culture.

Food is another prominent feature of culture. "A thing of beauty", says John Keats, in Abrams, et al (1962: 640), "is a joy forever." We logically apply the corpus and beauty of this platitude, to the consumption of cultural food, which, sadly, the present generation disdainfully refers to as "old food"! Apart from the very high nutritious content of the so-called old food, over the junk and synthetic and chemically packaged western foods, our cultural foods are a symbol of our identity, our personality. Those foods are rich in local content amenable to our environment. People that are conscious of their worth pride their cultural foods with which they are known; they will not only eat them with relish but display and exhibit them anywhere on planet earth. But, unfortunately, we watch in dismay as the present-day generation of our youths prefer the concocted western foods to the foods of their heritage.

Very important is the need to take pride and eat such cultural foods of ours as *amala*, *tuwon masara*, *tuwon shinkafa*, *tuwon dawa*, *akidi*, *abacha*, *ukwa*, *ofe akwu*, *ofe-achara*, *ofe-onugbu*, *ofe-egusi*, *egwere-egwe*, *utara-akpu*, *utara ji*, *utara-edede*, *garri*, etc. The first person to recognize and demonstrate interest in you is *you*. Sharing Orabueze's (2008:27-29) pessimism by reading relevant stanzas of her poem entitled "The Fouled Land."

Tomorrow makes itself a foe
Yet faded today begets tomorrow
As rosy yesterday begot today.
As our ancients depart,
The youths pray for death....

Chijioke, this new craze of confusion
Has swept men and women like wildfire
Everything is fixed: fixed weavon, fixed toenails,
Fixed fingernails, fixed marriage and fixed life.

Oh, everything around us is barbarous.
Amadioha, the god of thunder, is forsaken,
Agbala, the farm god, abandoned,
Ala, the goddess of fertility, deserted,
The famished priests of the dethroned gods,
Mourn the demise of the lost generation.

Our ancestors covered in funeral garbs,
As we caged the sacred pythons
Set the *ikengaon* fire
Massacre the dedicated cows
Desecrate the holy shrines
And genuflect to foreign gods.

Chijioke, what has happened to our *akidi*, *ukwaand abacha*,
The nourishers of our beautiful black bodies
Like the ocean nourishes the sharks?
Timidly the child opens his toothless mouth,
Tastes but yearning for white-washed food:
Chicken noodles, spaghetti pasta and ice-cream.
Why the catastrophic waves of fashion?
Our *uhie*, *ulian* and *jigidaburled* in masquerade hues?
The damsels embrace borrowed whiteness
Which like gilded iron must rust....
Ewooh! What has happened to our way?
Maiden given out to men with strong sinews
Warm blood racing through their wiry tendons.
The thrilling drums of marriage flutes
The chattering voices of bride and groom
Amid dances, cheers and ululation.

What? Do I hear the funeral hearse?
The long mortuary cars and moneybags
Tickle ladies' ears stuffed with wool.
Ah, our tradition has been perverted!
Our *mmuodisdained*.
Legendary and mythic heroes despised.

Children imprisoned by starry-eyed daring demons,
As the moonlight dance flees
Giving way to jackknife and AK47.

Ewuuuuh, gone, all is gone with the wind!
Black children speaking tongue-twisters,
Respect for sages embarks on a journey long
Wisdom from the aged is an archaic model,
Fathers obey their sons' orders
As mothers wait on daughters.

Chijioke, we are a lost people!
Beaten by the rain
Scorched by the sun
Stricken by the angry gods
Floating with the winds.

No rest for the young and old
And we die like fowls felled by flu.

When shall we recover from this madness?
Our air is fouled
Our water is polluted
Our land is despoiled
Our culture defiled
Our children slaves to strange ways.

Weep, mother, weep!
For our dignity has gone with the cyclone!

Orabueze's voice, *our voice*; Our dignity has gone with the Harmattan, it rather appears. Trading with the treasures of our culture should not be encouraged anymore as they represent our identity and our personality.

Language, name or naming tells a person outside our cultural ambience who we are, by way of identity and personality. Nigerians of different ethnic groups should not conceal or hide their language as well as subordinate their ethnic names. Added to these are festivals that are cultural to them in multiethnic Nigeria. Our language as well as the native names we bear eloquently reveal our identity as a people; we should not joke with them. In fact, the language of any people is one of their determinants of progress; so playing down on their language is as good as playing down on their progress. It obviously appears erroneous to confer on a foreign language the position that makes it appear intimidating to our native language. Though the imposition of English language on Nigeria came as one of the consequences of colonialism

and imperialism, it would be better for it to run concurrently with the indigenous languages of the three major ethnic groups – Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. Incidentally some of our native kinsmen underplay native language and ethnic names, and this saddening behavior is common among the elite. Another funny development in this regard is that some of our folk who mix up with the white try to anglicize their names to make them sound like the white man’s name. A good instance is seen in the alterations that are evident in the spelling and meaning of the following Nigerian native names:

1. Emeka - Mikky
2. Itoro - Torrins
3. Abiodun - Biden
4. Ekaette - Kattey
5. Amanda - Mandy
6. Zaynab - Zanney
7. Tunde - Tudy
8. Funke - Funky
9. Okoli - Kolins, etc.

A disturbing scenario is one reported by *Okankuzi* (Professor) Pita Ejiofo, in his 2013 (68-69) *Odenigbo Lecture* which he presented at Obieri Odenigbo, Owerri. He told his startled audience of a lecturer who applied for a postgraduate programme in Law in one of the prestigious universities in Igbo land. Ironically, the candidate finished up in Second class, upper Division and holds a Master’s degree, all of the same university, which alumna she is. The very candidate was denied admission because the 5th subject she passed at credit level in her Ordinary Level Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) was Igbo Language! The matter raised a lot of dust. When the disturbing matter came to the open, the university authorities said that it was their policy for over five years not to accept credit pass in Igbo Language, our native language. Another ironic aspect of this damage to our language is that the same university advised the candidate to go to either University of Ibadan or University of Lagos, which accepts credit pass in “vernacular”! Our reading audience, you will no doubt concur with OkankuziEjiofo that: “*Aru emeela asusu Igbo n’ala Igbo* (Sacrilege has happened or been meted out to the Igbo language in Igbo land).”

Closely related to our language is Ahiajoku Lecture series, which stands for Igbo essence and identity. Ahiajoku Lecture series that annually brought scholars of Igbo nation together on a seeming intellectual pilgrimage was jettisoned by a onetime governor of Imo state of the Igbo ethnic extraction. This is an intellectual Lecture series that has got a website in which eminent scholars across cultures visit as birds visit (female) *uruutree* to inquire into the ingenuity of *Ndi* Igbo and their civilization, but a claimed Igbo person rubbished it in the name of naked power. Some Igbo elite do not give Igbo names to their children, disregarding the cultural role which the African names play in the lives of Africans. African names are meaningful; that is why we do not give names to our children anyhow as name meanings are rooted in our world view. Achebe (1982, p. 96) tells us that Igbo name is a full-length philosophical statement. He explains:

If you want to know how life has treated an Igbo man, a good place to look is the names his children bear. His hopes, his fears, his joys and sorrows; his grievances against his fellows, or complaints about the way he has been used by fortune; even straight historical records, are all there. And because *chi* is so central to Igbo thought we will find much about it in proper names – more, I think, than from any other single source.

In the same vein, in faraway East Africa, our African kinsman, Ngugi wa Thiong’O (1984, p. 125) lambasts Africans who go to Europe to shop for European names:

It is not that I don’t believe in names. For what could be a more ridiculous caricature of self than those of our African brothers and sisters proudly calling themselves James Philipson, Rispa, Hottensiah, Ron Rodgerson, Richard Glucose, Charity, Honey Moonsnow, Ezekiel, Shiprah, Winterbottomson – all the collection of names and non-names from the Western world? What more evidence of self-hate than their throwing a tea-party for family and friends to bribe them never to call them by their African names? It is rather that I believe in the reality of what’s being named more than in the name itself.

We had better learn from our titan ancestors, who when they met the lethal blow of the Piano (New Order epitomized by pseudo Christianity of the Imperators), renounced their Christian names and made do with their African names, such ancestors of ours like Nnamdi Azikiwe, who let go *Benjamin*; Obafemi Awolowo, who dropped *Jeremiah*; Akanu Ibiam, who bade bye to both the Queen’s title of *Sir* and Christian appellation of *Francis*; our Kenyan East African brother and Vice President of JomoKenyata, Oginga Adinga, who jettisoned *Adonijah Obadiah* and our immortal son Chinua(lumogu) Achebe, who turned his back on *Albert*. Also our living kinsman Olusegun Obasanjo, who kept at the cooler his *Matthew*. Borrowing a leaf from these legends of Africa, the essayists have to say goodbye to *Eucharist-Nichollette* and *Emmanuel*.

Integrity demands that we should never be ashamed of our identity or denigrate our personality in any way. If we do, posterity will not forgive us and we no longer mean what we say of the slogan of unity in diversity.

Speech act as used here points to our pronouncements that can either build or derail Nigeria project. Unhealthy speech act is exacerbated by ethnocentrism, religious bigotry, micro-nationalism and ethno - religious agenda. All these put together are responsible for the prevalence of fake news and hate speech that dot the news platforms of conventional and social media. We must, therefore, wage relentless war to nip fake news and hate speech in the bud; we must remove the hand of a monkey from the soup pot before it turns to the hand of a human being. We call on all and sundry to showcase their identity in a positive way and communicate their culture so that thick sauce will be enough for our food. This paper, therefore, advocates

the need to eschew ethnocentrism, religious bigotry, micro-nationalism and ethno-religious agenda for the good of common Nigeria nation. We share Odunlami's anxiety (2017: 180), on the continual menace of Fulani herdsmen invaders, who declares:

The Nigerian political climate is often characterized by tensions arising from the consequences of ethnic, political, economic and religious distrusts among its various nationalities. For instance, the recent upsurge in ethnic crisis involving herdsmen and farmers across the country has raised a fresh security challenge for a country beleaguered with a seven-year *Boko Haram* insurgency in the North and the incessant belligerence of militants in the Niger-Delta. The herdsmen clashes, which were initially limited to a section in the North-Central region predominantly occupied by the Christian Berom farming community in Plateau State have spread across the country with disastrous consequences threatening the fragile unity that exists among the nation's diverse ethnic groups.

Even though mercenaries orchestrate unpleasant commissions via fake news and hate speech in order to score cheap political points, which are aspects of sensational news reportage; nevertheless, there are still some important details from their negative publications. The continued blood-thirsty activities of the herdsmen invaders adversely tell on national security; yet they are not proscribed as terrorist organization, simply because they belong to the same ethnic stock with the number one citizen, who's their patron; thus raising issues of religious bigotry, ethnocentrism, micro-nationalism and ethno - religious agenda. These developments reveal that all is not well with the nation; we call for urgent action to be taken or else national security will be seriously jeopardized or compromised. The tales of woes that assail the nation portend imminent danger. If we may underplay other multiplicity of social problems, such as cattle rustling, kidnap-for-ransom, rape mayhem, self-determination movements, armed banditry across the length and breadth of the North, lethal rampage of Fulani herders against farmers across the country, baby factories, among others, and beam our searchlight on the Boko Haram sectarian killings and pillaging, you will agree with us that the various ethnic groups have not managed the dark sides of their cultural heritage in multiethnic Nigeria well; so we find ourselves at crossroads. The political elite of certain ethnic stock, of course, is seriously reprehensible for all the woes that betide the nation. Owens-Ibie (2016: 69) adds the Civil War we came out from to the inventory of the crises and makes critical commentary on the death blows of Boko Haram insurgency:

While the Civil War was a milestone in the history of conflict in Nigeria, the Boko Haram is another milestone based on the level of destruction, dislocations, local and international focus. Media Review ... identified 173 different dates between January 20, 2012 and May 25, 2014, which marked incidents of attacks, reprisals, deaths, and breaches in security due directly or indirectly to the activities of the sect. Kolawole ... describes the conflict as "full blown terrorism" with signed threats to government, traditional authority and influential leaders.

Rather than rising to the occasion to correct the upsurge of the anomalies precipitated by bad governance of the political gladiators, which boarder on linguistic issues of action and inaction, the same leadership class turns round to cast aspersion on the media for being responsible for violating or “undermining”national security, when the same media are performing their professional duties of watchdog and vigilante, which constitute their major tripartite functions of “surveillance of the environment, correlation of the part of the society and the transmission of the social heritage from one generation to another (Ya’u, 2017: 136).” This makes a truism of the Igbo proverb of the fowl that has left the knife that killed it and turns round to bend its neck (as being blameworthy) to the pot; and typical of the kettle that calls the pot a black object. The micro nationalistic leaders must be on the vanguard to fix the problems they have precipitated. The problems are glaring, for it is their problems, as a matter of fact that undermine national security. They cooked the soup in which the dog and monkey licked and became lame, according to the Igbo proverbial genre.

Conclusion

This study highly reveals that we showcase our identity and communicate our cultural heritage aright in multiethnic Nigeria to our great advantage while we do otherwise to our detriment. Of course, we know that a people’s evaluation of their culture determines, to some reasonable extent, how they appreciate same. This is owing to the fact that a proper evaluation and appreciation of one’s culture provides one with a charter for action and a guide to behaviour. Since the multiplicity of our cultural attributes need to combine with the underlying thought – link to hold us together, we should be prepared, as people of the same multiethnic nationalism, to relate in brotherhood, and friendliness, eschewing all forms of deceit. Nigeria’s multiethnic diversity is her strength; in unity we stand. We must ponder on this informed opinion uttered some five decades ago by this concerned patriot of Nigeria:

Disappointment ... at the disintegration of Nigeria is not a virtue in itself.... UNITY is a sacred word in Africa, and for good reasons. Yet unity is not a miracle but the consequence of a specific human condition.... As President Houphouet-Boigny of Ivory Coast declared ... “Unity is the fruit of the common will to live together; it should not be imposed, by force, by one group upon another...” (Odumegwu-Ojukwu, 1969: 325).

On this premise, we draw the curtain to a close so that we decide whether to pound in the mortar or on the ground!

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