POLITICAL CULTURE AND PARTICIPATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

E.K. ENOJO
Department of Political Science
Faculty of Social Sciences, Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria

Abstract
The broad aim of this paper is to explain the intrinsic factors or conditions that underline the complexity, elusiveness, fluidity and absurdity of political culture, socialization, and participation during elections for sustainable democratic governance and development, focusing essentially on the political parties and pressure groups as the engine and heart of politics. The specific objective however, is to analyze the organic linkage or nexus between political participation, culture, socialization on the one hand, and political violence, ethnic crisis and the issue of poverty, underdevelopment, break-down of law and order during elections, on the other hand. The theory adopted is the structural-functional model, and this is considered appropriate as the approach deals on information dissemination, in-puts and out-put analysis, and feedback mechanism within the environment. With all reasonable validity and without prejudice to any legal court or institution, it is imperative to assert that the role played by the Nigerian political parties, pressure groups and other political stakeholders regarding electioneering is ambivalent and it's nature and origin is deeply rooted in colonialism and imperialism. We need to reconstruct our political communication strategies for an effective ideologically rooted electioneering campaign and mobilization of electorate during elections through identifying new political culture, and socialization.

Keywords: Political participation socialization sustainable and democratic governance

Introduction
First and foremost, let us preface the discussion with an idle statement that in political terms, coming to grips with Nigeria is complicated by the lack of settled and predictable political system. Furthermore, that the unity of the Nigerian State is like a Catholic Church marriage, it may not be happy, but it does not break up. Consequently, the discussion about the volatile and fragile nature of the Nigerian State is closely related to ineptitude of the State to manage its political and social affairs. However, despite the complexity and elusiveness of undemocratic leadership, poor governance and regional politics for so many years, we can say that all Nigerian political decisions are based on some form of mistrust, mutual suspicion and pathological hatred or distrust (Larry, 1988:63). This has become a constant source of political violence, tension and conflicts for two reasons: Firstly; ethnic boundaries do not coincide with the geographical distribution of national wealth and consequently, the people were not bound to each other in a complex and cumbersome system of domination. The second point being that, the issue of political culture, socialization, representation, communication, and participation have not been taken seriously or given the attention they deserved. Beyond this, the system sense of nationhood is a
subjective thing. Perhaps, with all reasonable validity, and without prejudice to any legal court of institution, there exist strong connection between colonialism, imperialism and ethno-regional politics. Unfortunately, the dominant motives for political leadership in Nigeria over the years were not for national development but rather the quest for primitive accumulation of national wealth, glory, and bellicosity (Kukah, 1993:137). This resulted in the use of ethnic and regional politics as base for developmental reforms or programmes (Mackintosh, 1964:9). All these factors have created many unprecedented uncertainties and thereby limiting the democratic space, and devalued whatever national identity that was bequeathed us from generation past by our leaders. The summary is that politicians hide under the ideological covers of religion and ethnicity to perpetuate all kinds of crimes against all with levity and impunity uncensored.

The paper therefore notes that, there is a fundamental crisis of governance at all levels in Nigeria and the most graphic illustration of this is the tendency for the ruling elites at all levels to rule without some notion of governance as a social contract which is implicit in the mandate freely given during elections (Egwu and Jubril, 2006:1). The primary explanation for this is that, democratic governance and sustainable development in Nigeria has been treated with levity without due regards to an effective grass-root political communication and mobilization of the electorate. Consequently, the fundamental objectives and direct principles of state policies between 1999 and 2013 were a crude record, not of history, but of human fantasy arising from emotional need and desire for primitive accumulation of wealth and that the electoral, economic, political and social reforms had not been of historical achievement and ethics (Akpotor, 2010:4, Agarah, 2010:9, and Ojo, 2009:7). There is therefore, a direct nexus or connection between democratic governance, sustainable development and effective grass-root political communication and mobilization strategies by all participants during each election. The consequence will promote an effective electioneering campaign, the rule of law, and due process of one man, one vote policy of the present administration. Governance is simply explained to mean the process of collective formulation and implementation of policies that would bring desired development for the governed. Recently, the World Bank came up with certain principles, conditions and variables to be considered as regards good governance, these are as follows: Voices and accountability, government effectiveness, political stability and absence of terrorism, regulatory quality, the rule of law and finally, corruption control. No wonder good governance has become a matras for both politicians, beauracrants and Non-governmental organisations. No doubt, there has not been governance in Nigeria using the above indices. We have had series of kidnappings, politically motivated killings, armed bandits, terrorism, lack of social amenities. There has been failures in virtually everything and every spheres of lives. There has been institutional failures, and official corruption have been high, making corruption look like the way of our lives today. All these are consequences of lack of robust internal democracy, ideology and national interest on the one hand, and the structural violence occasioned by primodal interests.

At the core of the crisis of democratic governance in Nigeria Fourth Republic is the legacy of party system without ideologies, weak state, dysfunctional elites, externally designed political, economic and social reforms and of course, poverty,
injustice, unemployment, inflation and ethno-religion conflicts. Conservatively speaking therefore, all these promote underdevelopment and encourage anthropological parity among ethnic groups and nationalities (Henry, 1968:1). However, the cultures that compose it have ancient roots. That root is colonialism and imperialism. The country’s ethnic, regional and religious divides have been in sharp focus of important, making political actors and players to suggest the breaking up of the country into a weak federation if a way cannot be found to distribute political and economic power in a manner all can accept. It is against this stark reality that parties and policies must be viewed in Nigeria from 1999 to date with regards to an effective grass-root political communication and mobilization.

Egwu and Jubril (2006:9) argue, “In one sense, then, there are “many” Nigerians. That is, there are distinct political cultures with pre-colonial origins, and there are varied colonial experiences of North, East and West”. The pre-occupation of the World Bank with issues of good governance and a more accountable framework of democratic governance, which translates to a concern with sustainable development, is a positive response to the episodic history of development and democracy in post-independence Africa. The post-independence political leadership jettisoned democracy and resorted to the abuse of the public space. They observed the constitution only in breach and replaced a culture of plutocracy with a culture of prudence and frugality. In the process, they perverted and subverted the process of development, and resorted to the abuse of laid down procedures for personal gains. Thus, the World Bank itself, once a supporter of “strong” governments and dictatorial regimes on the continent made a volte face in the 1990s when it realized that the absence of democracy and a leadership that is accountable had robbed Africa of the opportunity to overcome the basic crisis of development (Egwu and Jubril, 2006:12, Akpotor, 2004:34, Nnoli 2003:45, Huntington, 1970:7-9, and Ake, 2002:22).

Sustainable development cannot be achieved without democratic governance, accountable, transparent leadership and a holistic effective political culture, socialization, communication, representation and participation. This is perhaps, predicated upon the assumption that the conscious management of regime structures enhances the legitimacy of the public realm, and generates trust for citizenry. Structurally speaking, in its formulation on governance, the World Bank tends to put more emphasis on the management of the country’s economic and social resources for development, and by so doing, divest the concept of its political overtones in favour of economic policy and management. The importance and strength of “good government” approach lies in the fact that it “promotes certain political factors, especially democracy, the rules of law, and human rights on the grounds that markets and government will only remain efficient if they are held to account by voters and consumers – the public. The global economic recession is an issue (Omoruyi, 2003:35-38).

What this then suggests is that, regardless of reservation, which we have about the notion of governance, there are positive values in the governance discourse to be cultivated and engaged with, in creative manner, and this is only possible through grass-root political communication and mobilization that is deeply rooted in strong political culture and socialization. Thus, embedded in the notion of governance are the values of accountability, transparency, respect for rule of law, and
removing the culture of arbitrariness and crude impunity. The key elements of
democratic governance are: accountability, transparency, openness, answerability,
enforcement and responsiveness. It is within this meaning that democratic governance
promotes the core values of democracy, which among others, include the following:

- Separation of power between the three major branches of government, which is
  most pronounced in the presidential system, but not strictly based on water tight
  compartment;
- The rule of law by which ensures that every one is bound within the confines of
  the law irrespective of social standing places limit on the exercise of power by
  those in authority, and provides guarantee against all forms of arbitrariness;
- Accountability which requires that power holders and power spenders must
  account for their actions, and seeks to replace the culture of impunity in the
  public sphere;
- Independence and impartial judiciary, which gives the judicial arm the power of
  judicial review that could become the basis of enactment of new laws. But this
  requires that all citizens must have access and can find genuine avenues of
  seeking redress as a means of avoiding recourse to justice;
- The protection of the fundamental human rights of citizens such as the right to
  dignity of the human person, personal liberty, civil liberty and fair hearing;
- Political parties to advance the rights of citizens to make choices from exiting
  alternatives and as the infrastructure for competitive elections;
- Free mass media that disseminates information to the public based on some sense
  of social responsibility, supported by a legal environment that guarantees access
  to information;
- Constitutionalism; the requirement that all persons in a given state, especially,
  holders of public office, should adhere strictly to the spirit and letters of the law;
  (for instance, see Egwu and Jubril, 2006:17, Akpotor, 2004:41, Nnoli, 2003:56,
  Ojo, 2009:40).

Critically examined, the aforementioned are linked to the idea of the robust
Social Contract Theory as expounded by the early philosophers of the Modern society
and the State. Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau probably
provide clear ideas of the Social Contract as the moral basis of rule by which leaders
and followers are mutually involved in a system of reciprocity of obligations and
duties or what is referred to as a social construction of reality and a web of ideas. The
development of the theory of representative democracy, the centrality of elections as
the basis of conferring the mandated to rule disrespect the social contract the people
have the moral obligation to question and change them. In the Nigerian context, the
people can exercise this right at periodic elections and can recall representatives that
fail the people; after all periodic election is a political ritual. Here lie the
contradictions. One of such is the nature of political participation and representation
that exist in Nigerian fourth republic. The period witnessed so many crises relating to
elections. This situation made many analysts to question the importance of politics in
a democratic environment. Conflict and society are bound together in a complicated
political, economic, religion and social web and to separate them is empirically and

When we consider the postulation of Aristotle when he said, man is a political animal, and then we remember the various definitions given by so many scholars concerning the concept of politics in its true meaning, principle and value. For instance, Harold and Kaplan (1950:7) argue that politics is the process of making and execution of governmental decisions or policies. David (1957:383-400) sees politics as the authoritative allocation of values and resources within the political system. Peter (1967:13) defines politics as the quest for power, order and justice within any given human society. Politics is seen as the art of influencing, manipulation and controlling other (Quincy, 1955:130). Austin (1975:35-38) describes politics as the process of resolution of conflict in society. Vernom (1960:134) views politics as a struggle among actors pursuing conflicting desires on public issues. Politics means striving to shape power or striving to influence the distribution of power among individual and groups within a social state (Max, 1947:145-154).

Politics or a political event includes what happens around the decision-making central to government. Politics is the shaping and sharing of power and who gets what, when and how (Harold, 1950:74-75). What is central to this research is that politics arises to resolve contradictions and this can perhaps be achieved in democratic environment. Such democratic space must accommodate political parties, pressure groups and politically conscious citizens that would participate in the democratic process either as electorates or representatives. At the core of this activities are the roles of ideology and the level of political consciousness of citizens (TMG report, 2003:2-5).

The absence of the aforementioned creates crisis and one of such crisis is bad governance, leadership and lack of development. Development in human society is a many-sided process. Walter (1972:9-11) argues that at the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being. Some of these are difficult to evaluate – depending as they do on the age in which one lives, class origins, and one’s personal code of what is right and what is wrong. At the level of social groups, therefore, development implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relationship. The implication of the above statement is that without an effective grassroots political communication and mobilization during elections, there cannot be development.

Central to this assumption also, is the core value of personal achievement and development in a holistic formation. What is indisputable is that the achievement of any of those aspects (Walter Rodney mentioned is) of personal development is very much tied in with the state of the society as a whole. From earlier times, man found it convenient and necessary to come together in groups to hunt and for the sake of survival. The relations whom develop within any given social group are crucial to an understanding of the society as a whole. Freedom, responsibility, skill, etc have real meaning only in terms of the relations of men in society. Of course, each social group comes into contact with others. The relations between individuals in any two
societies are regulated by the form of the two societies. Their respective political structures are important because the ruling elements within each group are the ones that begin to dialogue, trade or fight, as the case may be.

This study notes that, if we have learnt nothing about the development process, we have learnt that development cannot be imported. It is a process of deliberate change that must be sustained by the government and the people within each country, a process that should work to the benefit of all. Consequently, a country was said or considered to be engaged in development planning if the government made deliberate and continuous attempt to accelerate the rate of economic and social progress and to alter institutional arrangement which were considered to block its attainment of this goals and objectives (Bhatia 2004:56). This suggests that, without adopting a new strategy of effective grass-root political communication and mobilization during elections, we cannot continue to claim that Nigeria is the giant of Africa. The situation has also made democratic governance and the crisis of sustainable development in Nigerian Fourth Republic a disinterested examination of our political system even though it has been a period of robust democratization experiment and validation. The contradiction lies in the failure of our elected leaders at all levels to bring development starting from the grass-root through effective political communication and mobilization. This is because, the basic hypothesis and core assumption of democracy was that the richer and more prosperous development a country gets, the greater the chances of it will sustain human needs (Dudley, 1980:36, Godwin and Abubakar, 2005:19). The central focus of this work is to consider some of the psychological motives which have been put forward as an explanation of unemployment, poverty and inequality in Nigerian Fourth Republic. While admitting that those factors might be relevant to the explanation of the crisis of governance especially as it relates to the management of elections, the study dismisses them as not constituting a major reason rather the dominant motive is not far from the primitive accumulation of national wealth, peace and bellicosity. This resulted in poverty and other social vices. The work considers colonialism, imperialism and privatization reform. Colonialism and African politics deeply centered on certain values that have intrinsic implications on personality of Africans. Though there exist some level of unity and harmony, it starts and ends as unity of race or pigmentation. Ethnicity and class have root in whatever anybody does. Perhaps, this explain why people voted the way they did in 1999, 2003 and 2007. Nigerians have achieved brilliance without conscience, high moral and ethical values. All these are only a flagrant demonstration of the most galling aspect of colonialism, imperialism, ethnicity and religions due to lack of effective grass-root communication, mobilization, political culture, representation, participation and socialization. All these have direct link with colonialism and imperialism which introduced different modes of production.

The African socio-economic formation is different from that of the advanced industrial capitalist societies of Europe and America. The African socio-economic formation is characterized by uneven and combined development of the different modes of production. There is the capitalist sector, which exists in combination with the pre capitalist sector at various stages of disintegration (Nnoli, 2003:45). Ake, (1989: 16) argues that while the capitalist enclaves (urban areas) is engaged in the
production of exchange values, the pre—capitalists formations are engaged in the production of raw materials. The relations among producers are mechanistic, while specialization in production is rudimentary. Consequently, exchange production and exchange relations are limited and market not fully developed.

The State in Africa, like in every other society is the organized instrument of the ruling class. However, the specific characteristics of the state in Africa are the result of the specific historical condition of emergence and development. The specific historical condition is colonialism (Offiong, 1980: 17). Colonialism shaped the nature of the state and society in Africa as well as the dynamics of the ruling class. The historical specificity of colonial States of Africa ruled out certain similarities between it and the state in the advanced capitalist societies of Europe, Asia and America.

In the advanced capitalist, societies of Europe, the State was the classic state in the sense that it was the instrument of the ruling capitalist class, which emerged with it from the feudal mode of production to maintain its domination over the other classes, in the capitalist society. On the other hand, the task of the colonial State was two told and different. The task of the colonial State was to:

1. Conquer and subdue the people of our African colonies in such a way as to make it easy and cheap to exploit their raw materials and human resources.

Udombana (2003:17) argues that while the State in Europe maintained domination over the non—capitalist classes of Europe, the State in Africa exercised domination over the African people as a whole and while the European state regulated the operation of the bourgeois class, the State in Africa had first to create the capitalist mode of production, make it dominant in the society and make it yield profits for European, change the character of the state and participate directly, activity and more extensively in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the people than was the situation or case in Europe. Furthermore, civil society assisted with their institution of state power and which support and reinforce these institutions had either not emerged or well developed. Thus, civil society in Africa is not attentive, assertive and focused. In Europe and America, Ake argues that civil society and the capitalist mode of production emerged before the capitalist State (Ake, 1989:18).

Akpotor (2005:15) argues that the State in Africa lacks legitimacy autonomy because its power base is not in the society. Thus, the state is not in a position to mediate class struggle, since it is itself involved in the struggle on the side of the domination faction of the ruling class. Here, classes in this content is explained to mean “a large group of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relations to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it” (Lenin, 1939: 45). In such a situation (as explained before defining classes), the realization of the law of value is hampered and the development of productive forces is slowed and primitive accumulation reins with massive intervention of force in the labour process. This situation affects democratic sustainable governance and development.
At the political level, the struggle for the control of state power becomes warfare. Power is overvalued and security lies only in getting more political and economic power. Might is co-existence with right (Anifowose, 2002:7, and Smith, 2006:56). The implication of all these for democratic governance and sustainable development is obvious. The struggle of the ruling class in Nigeria from 1999 to 2010 to contain the crisis of legitimacy and revolutionary pressures took rather predictable forms. These forms are politically motivated killings, arson, assassination and destruction of lives and properties. This new form of ideological containment is itself pregnant with contradictions. However, class contradictions during these periods does not promote a new sense of common purpose, rather, political violence become the central ideology. It is therefore obvious that ineffective political culture, socialization and representation derail democratization process, breeding embers of political conflicts as agent of underdevelopment.

Effective Political Culture and socialization during Election

Culture refers to that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, custom and other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Culture is the total way of life of a people, the social legacy that the individual acquires from his group. It is part of the common orientation of two or more people. Political culture is part of the larger culture of a society. It is a differentiated part of general culture, a sub-culture influenced by the general culture.

The components of the culture are values, beliefs and emotional attitudes about how government ought to be conducted and also about what it should do.

Robert Dahl (1978:67) has singled out political culture as a factor explaining different patterns of political opposition. The salient elements of the culture for Dahl are:

1. **Orientations of Problem-Solving**: are the pragmatic or rationalistic?
2. **Orientations to collective action**: are they cooperative or non-cooperative?
3. **Orientations to the political system**: are they allegiant or alienated?
4. **Orientations to other people**: are they trustful or mistrustful? (See also Babawale, 1999:223-224 and Finer, 1962:72-79)

Lycian Pye (1978:8) conceives a nation’s political culture as "the set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provides the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system. It encompasses both the political ideals and the operating norms of the polity which revolves around the economic and religious culture of the people”.

Almond and Verba (1966:50) have classified political culture into three main types; the classifications are based upon whether members of society take an active role in the political process or whether they are inactive.

1. **The parochial political culture.** In this type, there are no specialized political roles. The political system is not differentiated from the socio-economic or religious system. People have little knowledge of the political system beyond what happens in their immediate local environment. Politics is permeated by ethnic loyalty and primordial sentiments. In addition, there is little expectation on the part of the members of the political community that
significant changes in their lives can be made through politics. A parochial citizen does not expect anything from the political system; he makes no demand on it. This type is found in many traditional societies in Nigeria, including the Ibaji native political setting in Kogi State.

(2) The second type is a subject political culture. A subject orientation is essentially a passive one. The citizen is aware of the outputs of the government welfare programmes, coercive measures or tax legislation, but he plays no part in the inputs. He does not participate and believes he has no influence on the government. In this kind of political culture, the government expects obedience from the people and conformity to its directives without questioning.

(3) The third type is a participant political culture. This type is characterized by a citizenry which is aware of both the inputs and outputs of government. The citizens believe in their ability to influence their governed. They manifest attitudes of personal political competence. Examples are the United States of America and British.

Finally, no political culture fits perfectly into any of these three types. Rather, each is mixed, made up of different proportions of parochial, subject and participant attitudes. The relative prevalence of each type determines the kind of political culture which exists in a nation. In traditional political system of Nigeria in general, and, the rural villages of Kogi State in particular, dominant values may indicate that the majority of people are unable or incompetent to participate in politics. Government may be treated as a mystery, understandable only by the high-born, the highly educated. In a developed democratic political system of the USA, Britain and even Ghana or South Africa, dominant values may emphasize participation, the idea that common people are rational and intelligent enough to participate, that they can trust other citizens (tribes or nationality of the Ebira, Igala, or Okun), that interest groups are legitimate and that governors gain their privilege of governing and decision making only from the consent of the governed. Any contrary opinion or imputation to these values will certainly derail the wheels of democratic principles. Further more, these kind of negative values sets limits to government’s programme and spell out strain relations between the governed and the governor, thereby limiting democratic space.

Political socialization, in a broadest sense refers to the way society transmits its political culture from generation to generation. It is a process, mediated through various agencies of society, by which an individual learns political relevant attitudinal dispositions and behavior patterns. These include attitude and behavior related to political legitimacy, electoral behavior, interest articulation, decision-making which affects the authoritative allocation of values in the system, feelings of personal competence to influence decision-ns affecting the allocation of values, attitudes toward authority. These agents are the family, the school, the peer group, religious institutions such as the Mosque/Church, and finally, the mass media.

**Theoretical Framework: Structural-functional approach**

Structural functionalism has been found particularly useful in the comparison of political systems. According to Gabriel Almond, one of the chief proponents of the
approach in political science, every political system performs certain functions. Taking David Easton's systems analysis as a starting point, Almond looks for the functions which could be included among the input and output functions of all political systems. On the input side are the functions of (1) interest articulation and (2) interest aggregation. Second, on the output side are the functions of (3) rule making, (4) rule-application and (5) rule adjudication. The functions of (6) political communication is undertaken to inform all within the political system and outside of these diverse activities. Additionally, every system performs (7) systems maintenance and adaptation functions through political socialization and recruitment of people.

According to Almond, the functioning of any political system may also be viewed in terms of its capabilities defined as 'the way it performs as a unit in its environment.' The concepts of regulative, extractive, distributive and responsive capability are employed as criteria to assess how a system is performing within its environment, how it is shaping its environment and how it is being shaped by it. Like every other theory, there is an inherent weaknesses and strengths in the adoption of structural-functional model. However, this does not limits it's meaningfulness to the understanding and analysis of the issue under discussion.

Consequently, Almond's formulations have been faulted on three grounds. First, it has been noted that it is not easy to distinguish between the 'deliberate aims of the participants and what takes place because the system seemed to achieve certain aims.' Second, the identification of functions is alleged to rest on the interpretation the analyst places on observed developments. Thus there cannot be complete objectivity. In effect, the number of the identified functions can be more or less than the seven listed by Almond. Third, the approach has been seen as culture-bound since the functions attributed to the political system are too closely modeled on Western political systems. However, Almond's structural-functional approach has been recognized as the major existing tool for genuine comparative analysis of political systems and has been described as a 'fairly realistic interpretation of the nature of political life.' There is therefore the need to recognize the central roles of political culture, socialization and participation as far as credible, free, fair and accountable elections are concerned. More importantly, is the issue of ideology. Ideology is very imperative to the study of participation. Participation here is all inclusive, that is, voting in an election and contesting in an election.

**Procedures for Political Communication during Elections**

Communication blends history and life, time and eternity, reality and legend into a significant mosaic to enhance human aspirations. It is a dynamic process that has assumed great responsibility in the political transformation of many countries. It animates culture. We can communicate through the following: The radio, Television, Telephone, Internet, Newspapers, Magazines, Bill Board, Posters and Pamphlets. However, all the aforementioned does not really convey the needed information required at the grass-root. The basic reason has to do with poverty and lack of education. There is also the problem of access. If the latter problem mentioned above is considered, we can conclude therefore that communication has not taken place. This is because; communication is all about targeted audience. It flows from this
standpoint that people can be mobilized if they understand your position or viewpoint.

Political culture affects politics, political communication and mobilization. There may be fragmentation in the political culture of a nation, that is, political culture may not be same throughout the population. No nation has a homogeneous political culture. There may exist different political sub-cultures alongside the dominant political culture. In short, most nations' political cultures are heterogeneous. Where differences between one group and others are marked, there is said to exist a political sub-culture. Thus, every nation has a number of political sub-cultures which must be identified and understood through effective communication and mobilization starting from the grass-root level. The consequence is the full understanding of the working of its political system. In Nigeria, for example, there is no predominant political culture.

The various ethnic nationalities or groups such as the Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Ebira, Igala, and Okun, inherently constitute different political sub-cultural groups. They all exhibit cohesive political cultures of their own which are very different from each other and which resist amalgamation into a Nigerian whole. The problem which leaders in such fragmented cultures face is how does a relatively homogeneous political culture evolve from such divergent ones? This is a fundamental problem of grass-root communication and mobilization on the one hand, and the problem of nation-building on the other hand in many new nations. The process of nation-building involves in some respect the dissemination of information about, and commitment to the national unit through the family, school, peer groups and the mass media (Babawale, 1999:213, and Huntington, 1968:28)

Summary and Conclusion

Political communication and mobilization is the acquisition by an individual of behavioural dispositions to political groups, political system and political processes. Grass-root political communication may therefore serve to preserve traditional political norms and institutions; on the other hand, when secondary socialization agencies (the family, school, peer-group, religious organization, and mass media) inculcate political values different from those of the past or when electorate are raised with political and social expectations different from those of their forebears, the grass-root political communication and mobilization can be a vehicle for positive social and political change.

Recommendations

Among the facilitators of change in the grass-root political communication and political culture of a nation are the processes of industrialization, urbanization, massive investment in education, the mass media, mass political mobilization (through political parties and democratization processes) as well as the creation of symbolic elements such as national heroes and political leadership, lingua franca, national flags and national anthems, national public events and popular national constitutions. All these foster the spirit of emotional attachment and loyalty to the nation thereby engendering national pride, unity, and the mobilization of the grass-root for political activities easy. The following are the recommendations:
- Political campaigns and electioneering should be issue based. Poverty, hunger, unemployment, injustice, insecurity, inflation, lack of social infrastructural development and amenities such as roads, water, electricity, hospitals, markets, telecommunications and clean environment should be the focus of interest through debate, dialogue, discussion and campaign. All these are problems that speak all languages, and do not respect the tribe or nationality of an Igala, Ebira, Okun, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. This strategy will afford the electorate the platform to make an alternative opinion and choice when voting in an election.

- Political parties should come up with manifesto that will be presented to the electorate. It should also be an article of faith when eventually elected into an office. It should also outline what their party should do when in power.

- Candidates seeking elective position should not resign their post when contesting; it reduces tension and give candidates some psychological lift and hope of livelihood.

- Grass root political communication is much more than giving food handouts to the electorate. All political stakeholders should be assertive, attentive and responsive to the immediate and basic needs of the grass – root electorate. This can only be achieved through campaign at the rural areas during election.

- Political office seekers or politicians especially should always prepare two speeches (victory and defeat speech). When you take politics as a game, the electorate will becalm and easy to control during an election. This is the America and British way.

- All stakeholders should be ideologically rooted during and after election.

References


