Citizenship, Statehood and the Problem of Democratization in Nigeria

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Résumé: *Des recherches ont été menées sur le renversement des gouvernements civils, la fréquence des coups d'Etat militaires, et le manque d'attachement à l'Etat nigérian. Ces questions, cependant, ne sont pas indépendantes les unes des autres. Ensemble, elles constituent le problème de la démocratisation au Nigéria. Cette étude constitue une revue méthodologique et une (re)classification des concepts de démocratisation et des explications avancées pour justifier son inexistence au Nigéria. L'étude soutient que la réussite ou l'échec de la démocratisation s'explique de manière plus pertinente, sous l'angle de l'histoire du Nigéria en tant que nation. Sur cette base, elle identifie la lutte menée pour contrôler le système des sous-Etats afin d'exploiter de manière exclusive leurs ressources. Une injustice qui explique les problèmes de citoyenneté, de statut d'Etat et de démocratisation que connaît ce pays.*

Introduction

The failure of Nigeria to establish and sustain a civil political order, otherwise democratic rule,[1] has become historic. The most prominent, predictable and arguably recurrent element in Nigeria's political history is the military coup. Between 1966 and 1995, there have been at least ten military coups, including two publicized stalled coup plans. Underpinning the explanations usually proffered is a covert comparative approach that tends to interpret the absence of civil political rule in Nigeria in terms of the social structure and values of successful democracies in Europe and North America.

The implied claims of this approach are 1) that democracy has already achieved a definite and final theoretical and historical form in the West, a finished product, and 2) for that democracy to be successfully exported to, and sustained in Africa, the conditions that guaranteed its success there must be replicated, in other words, elevated to the status of pre-conditions in the African context. These conditions were used to conceptualize the modern

1 It is not suggested that a civil political order is necessarily democratic. In Nigeria, however, there is an identity between civil rule and democratic government (i.e., elected government). Asika (1990:12), in fact, defines democracy as 'return to civility — a return to civil rule'.

society in Africa (Shils 1963:21). Modernization thinking, although laced with ethnocentrism, was an early expression of optimism in the impact of the colonial contact. But that was before the perception of the traditional obstacles to modernization.

Carter and Brown (1958:12-3) already observed that the working of the parliamentary system in Africa was different from its operation in Britain. In Africa, it tended toward 'unitary and centralized government', and the balancing forces against this tendency were not modern or social, but 'traditional and tribal'. What the foregoing suggests is that democracy in any environment is the product of historical developments, and not a simple implantation of theory, or simulation of European conditions in Africa. It is, therefore, on the basis of a country's history and society that the character of its practice or lack of democracy can be explained.

Based on these assumptions, as plausible as the adduced explanations for the patent absence of democracy are, they are considered probabilistic and apparent, the latter being rooted in more fundamental causes. Adopting a process definition, this study aims at reconceptualizing the problem of democracy in Nigeria, on the basis of which its absence is explained in terms of the problems of citizenship and statehood.

Democracy as Democratization: From Static to Process Definition

Two currents are discernible in the effort to derive a meaning for democracy. A theoretical and largely idealistic definition. diversely translatable, premised on the etymology of democracy (Thompson 1994; Ifidon 1994), and a pseudo-historical approach by which the current political practices of Euro-American states are abstracted and generalized as the features of democracy (Christenson *et al.*, 1972; Anyang' Nyong'o 1991; African Leadership Forum 1991). These currents, because they share the common assumptions that democracy is a definite and final state of political relations subsisted by corresponding and particular social and economic conditions, and that the abstracted features can be realized in any society whatever the character or level of development of the social and cultural usages, are static, that is, possess fixed-state attributes.

Yet, the empirical analysis of democracy cannot but be based on some basic theoretical assumptions. Herein lies the usefulness of the etymo-historical perspective, since it suggests a primary structure of state-citizen relations in a democratic context. A fruitful derivation, as in Chalfant (1959), is the social contract conception of democratic politics. The conception presupposes the existence of two categories — the state (or its government) and a citizenry, the former not only created by the latter, but remains so insofar as it is responsive and accountable to it.

Conversely, the elected is constrained to do the will of the elector by the employment of control devices (Thompson 1970:2-3). Democratic politics,

therefore, is not only activated by collective choice, but is the art of implementing that choice.

> Political institutions process citizen preferences in order to determine courses of action for the collectivity. Those institutions and their personnel find citizen acceptance, and hence loyalty and allegiance, to the extent that the outcomes their policies produce are compatible with the preference of citizens (Rabushka and Shepsle 1972:31).

The problem of democracy has never really been that of grasping the essence of the concept, but of delineating actualizable and spatio-temporally determined criteria of popular participation. Thompson (1994:14), although noted the manifold cultural manifestations of the rendering of democracy as 'sovereignty of the people', concludes that 'the absence of basic human rights in a given society clearly signals the absence of democracy in that society'.[2] If ancient Greek culture did not recognize the political equality of the sexes and yet Athenian political culture was characterized as democratic, then the democratic credentials of the Islamic theocracies should be indubitable.

This Thompson (1994:5) agrees with. But how is the acceptance of the criterion of 'basic human rights' to be reconciled with the belief in cultural relativism? 'If a given culture (ancient or modern) similarly excludes adult females from 'the people' that exclusion does not *per se* eliminate the society's democratic credentials. It all depends on the prevailing cultural realities...'. The key appears to be the identification of those called 'the people'. However, if the conception of the people is culturally determined, then there could not be the possibility of universal criteria for democracy.

If 'the people' to the Greeks meant a few people, the modern conception certainly goes beyond this. Hence, the problem of the meaning of 'sovereignty of the people' is not that of determining who 'the people' are but of creating structures and practices that give expression to this sovereignty. Because of the colonial political antecedents of contemporary world political culture, the structures and practices developed in Euro-America, abstractions from a particular stage of its history, have been recommended as the criteria for and pre-conditions of democracy. Such a fixed-state analysis is unhistorical because it presents democracy as having achieved a final form.

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2   The human rights approach to democracy has its limitations. If such rights are conceded by an authoritarian regime, is the regime thereby democratic? The same applies to the reduction of democracy to electoralism. Should democracy consist only in 'free, competitive (multi-party) elections'? (Alesina and Perotti 1994:352-3; Ifidon 1994:261-2).

Democracy has also been defined from the point of view of the rulership. Oyovbaire (1987:6) has offered what is but a 'political class' definition of democracy in Nigeria by construing it as 'a system in which public policies emerge from an elite who openly compete for power in organised formations'. Apart from its antilogical character, the definition in the context of Nigerian politics has obvious limitations. The use of the concepts of 'elite' and 'political class' presupposes some level of group autonomy, but this cannot be demonstrated. It is the contention of this paper that the Nigerian political class, to use an imprecise term, is a dependent aggregate that derives and sustains acceptance through traditional political residua in a lop-sided but mutually beneficial relationship.

Although democracy is invalidly reduced to mere competition for power, yet election, or the exercise of the right of choice, is a primary feature of democracy in Nigeria. However, this could not be said for 'organised formations' or political parties, since power has been competed for without parties, in the Local Government elections of December 1987, for example. Any analysis of democracy that takes as its starting-point the generated structures, and not the process and impact of their generation is bound to be limited.

Certainly, democratic culture has witnessed an expanding arena for the expression of popular sovereignty, even where authoritarian practices exist. To be sure, in some societies the arena has shrunk significantly. If democracy is not just an ideal or a cultural variable but the reality of social and political interaction, then it must be portrayed as non-existent in any fixed and immutable form. It must be portrayed as a process, an unfolding process, as democratization. The larger the area of popular control and sovereignty, the more democratic a system.

The Problem of Democratization: The State of Analysis

Oyovbaire (1987:7) has classified the explanations for the problem of democratization in Nigeria into three types. The first, which could be tagged 'economic explanations', attributes the problem to the absence of its economic prerequisites, and 'misallocation of scarce resources' and 'stymied economic growth', consequences of 'corruption of the political class'. Also included under this category are explanations which root the problem in intra- and inter-class struggle.

The second type sources failure in the absence in Nigeria of pro-democratic attitudes as 'consensus on certain fundamentals of the political system' and the existence of political participants that were 'communal, parochial and traditional in their conception and activation of politics rather than being civil and national' (Oyovbaire 1987:8).

The third group of explanations emphasizes the negative consequences of 'elements of social and political structure' on political behaviour. Such

elements include federalism, political party and authority in social groups (Oyovbaire 1987:9). This typology, in spite of the criticism of its components, has been adopted, embellished and eclectically transformed into a causal explanation for the problem of democratization in Nigeria.

> Institutional weakness and psycho-cultural dissonance in the practice of liberal democracy, coupled with a fundamental and enduring ethno-structural problem in the federal arrangement, were critical factors in the collapse of both republics (Olagunju *et al.*, 1993:33, 34-43).

Of course, the typology does not exhibit neat and self-contained classes; they overlap. Thus, although the materialist explanations, for example, are grouped under the 'economic explanations', such explanations are also attitudinal, and their prescription — a socialist society, the basis of 'elements of social and political structure'. A significant limitation of the typology is, however, the emphasis placed on the descriptive content of the explanations, ignoring their structure.

Structurally, all the explanation types could be reduced to one: the absence of democratic behaviour.

A more fruitful basis for the classification of proffered explanations and that satisfies the test of relevance is the methodological, a classification into probabilistic and apparent causal explanations. Essentially, a probabilistic explanation indicates the general conditions that could make probable the failure of democratization, conditions that have a generalizable character (O'Kane 1993), and infers on the basis of the identification of such conditions in an environment. This type emphasizes the logical structure of the relationship between a phenomenon and its explanation.

> The probability for states with/without a,b,c,..., conditions to sustain a democratic political regime is/is not high; these conditions are/are not present in Nigeria; *no wonder* Nigeria has succeeded/failed at sustaining a democratic regime (cf. Hempel, 1966:58-9).

Most materialist explanations are probabilistic, and with almost predictable trajectory. Two tendencies are noticeable in the materialistic analysis of the failure of democratization in Nigeria. The first explains democratic instability as the outcome of class struggle, particularly intra-bourgeois conflict (Nnoli 1978; Tyoden 1989), and the second of the structure of underdevelopment (Falola and Ihonvbere 1985; Dibua 1988; Kieh and Agbese 1993). Underpinning such explanations are the assumptions that capitalism or its underdeveloped form encourages political instability, that states with a socialist system enjoy socialist democratic stability and growth, and since Nigeria is in the capitalist periphery, *no wonder* it is unstable and underdeveloped.

Non-materialist explanations also exhibit this structure. O'Kane's (1993) model linking international economic conditions with coup d'etat is typical. And specifically for Nigeria:

> Whenever the middle class constitutes a substantial part of the nation, Western democracy attains a secure foundation. Unfortunately, in Nigeria as in most of the developing countries, owing to the poor economic base, the middle class is a very small minority of the population. Western democracy is therefore not securely founded ... (Akintunde 1967:6-7).

Kindred generalized features in the Nigerian context include the absence of pro-democratic 'attitudinal traits' (Oyewole 1987:23) and 'values and norms' (Adamolekun 1985:9).

Apparent causal explanations, on the other hand, are more empirical. They are non-primary and dependent explanations because they identify features that are manifestations and consequences of more fundamental causes. The adduction of such factors as the absence of 'a sense of a Nigerian community and commitment to that community' (Olagunju 1987:36), 'disunity of the political elite' (Adamolekun 1985:11), and the capability of Nigerians to respond only to 'ethnic or religious mobilization ... a citizenry that was not yet aware of its right' (Abati 1994) for the problem of democratization reflect this tendency. But analysis must go beyond these.

Pre-Colonial African Democracy: The Myth and Reality

General inquiries into traditional political systems have 'discovered' the existence of democracy in pre-colonial Africa. Thus, if democracy presupposes 'some degree of equality and freedom', then 'democracy was native to the traditional African political system' (Awogu 1975:55); 'discussion until people arrive at a consensus or in terms of the principle of constitutionalism', then democracy is 'not new to Nigeria' (Oyewole 1987:27); and 'balance between power and authority ..., and service and accountability', 'consultation and consensus of the people', and 'the promotion of the welfare of the populace', therefore, the pre-colonial systems were democratic (Political Bureau 1987:2.004).

More authoritative case-studies seem to confirm such a conclusion. From a study of the Ijebu, for example, Atanda (1973:4) has claimed that although the selection of chiefs was by 'cult or association members', they nevertheless rendered account of their conduct in government to these 'electors'.

Thus, while there was no formal representative election, the council of chiefs in any Yoruba community could, in a sense, be called the people's government.

Even more significant claims have been made for the political systems of the Igbo. Afigbo (1973) has characterized features of the systems as debate,

consultation and consensus usually operational in the lineage and sub-lineage assemblies. Therefore,

> Igbo government at the levels of sub-lineage, lineage and the village depended on direct democracy, while at the level of the village-group it depended on representative democracy (Afigbo 1973:15; Sklar 1983:14).

If there was so much democracy in pre-colonial Nigeria, why the current difficulty with democratization? What created the conflict between 'the state and the people'? For proponents of indigenous African democratic tradition, the critical response is colonialism, and the 'colonial structure' of the Nigerian state, 'which is at once oppressive and anti-democratic' (Abati 1994).

Drake (1963:11-2) has questioned the possibility of pre-colonial African democracy on account of the existence of male dominance, subject groups and classes, the age qualification for holding office and absence of capitalist individualism. Such an analysis, however, suffers from the problem of uncritical cultural transference already highlighted.

All the abstracted features certainly exclude the exercise of choice in selecting leaders, since heredity and age [3] were the determining criteria. Such concomitants as checks to abuse of power, consensus and republicanism have been made the most primary components of democracy. Another already implied element — service (and curiously equality and freedom) has also been credited to these systems. The possibility of a pre-colonial traditional (monarchical) nobility necessarily accountable to 'the people' is puzzling. A gerontocratic system could not have, at the same time, been democratic.

In demonstrating that Africa, before the encounter with Europe, was not as dark as advertized, key institutions and values of Western culture, and of an acceptable utopia, have been 'discovered' by African scholars. Lloyd (1967:279-80) has described these as 'myths of traditional society'. Africa may have had governments with their own internal dynamics, even consensual, but to therefore qualify them as democratic is to suggest, by the popular definition, that Africans willingly chose those that ruled them. That they did not always rebel does not imply acceptance or exercise of choice. Africa's history must be appreciated on its own terms.

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3   The reference to age does not merely imply age qualification, since in modern democracies. this is a criterion for political participation. It is intended to draw attention to the linkage made between age and sagacity, to the tyranny of age.

Ethnic Plurality, Citizenship and Statehood:
The Problem of Democratization

The perception of the nature of the problem of democratization has varied. Before 1950, for example, it was the problem of achieving significant African rule, and after it, of creating an equitable ethno-regional balance and minority representation. With military rule, the emphasis has shifted to the civilianization of governance. The equation of democratization with demilitarization (Olagunju *et al.*, 1993:17) suggests that military rule is immune to the difficulties that beset civil political regimes in Nigeria. But this is not so.

The problem of democratization in Nigeria is not the consequence of the absence of democratic norms and values, or of the preponderance of capitalist relations and the concomitant struggles. Its components are the related problems of citizenship and statehood, consequences of not merely ethnic plurality, but, tentatively put, the state of ethnic relations characterized by intense unequal competition for the resources of the state, the most sought after being the appropriation of state power, particularly its coercive and resource-allocating elements.

Although Joseph (1991:4) has attributed the compulsive pursuit of democratization in Nigeria to the fear of the consequences of non-representation in government by component groups, that there is a problem of democratization should mean that the condition of equitable representation has not been achieved. Yet, Joseph's explanation for the collapse of the 1979-1983 civil government, in terms of prebendalism,[4] is the transference by elected state officials of anti-democratic behavioural patterns generated by 'the Nigerian social context' into democratic governance (Joseph 1991:171).

Generally, studies that perceive a negative relationship between democracy and multi-ethnicity rely essentially on the assumed natural conflict-generating property of ethnic plurality. Thus, Lijphart (1977:16, 18) explains this relationship by reference to 'the deep divisions between segments ... and the absence of a unifying consensus'. Rabushka and Shepsle (1972:86) emphasize the 'salience of primordial sentiments, and the politics of outbidding' which 'weaken commitment to national values'. But

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4   That Nigerians seek elective or ministerial positions in order to acquire state resources for themselves and 'their support groups' is a correct observation. But this is explained by ethnicity since these groups are defined in ethnic terms. The novel element in Joseph's prebendalism, in relation to the description of political behaviour of Nigerian state officials, will be the discovery that the beneficiaries of this spoliatory process are cross-ethnic.

in linking these to relative access to state resources and exclusion of less mobilized groups, they link plurality with democratic instability via inequity.

Post and Vickers (1973:7) also associate democracy-weakening conflict with 'all aspects of conglomerate societies', but its most devastating potential is activated through the 'system of rewards' with the associated features of access and exclusion (Post and Vickers 1973:8, 232). In Nigeria, competition for control of state power is as much a source as it is a consequence of the failure of equitable government.[5] At the root of the problem of democratization, therefore, is not merely ethnic plurality but inequity. Inequity becomes a necessary feature of the relations among mobilized ethnic groups, and hence a multi-ethnic state is susceptible to democratic instability.

Existing within the Nigerian state is a system of inter-group relations that has not only determined the character of the state but the international expression of that statehood. To describe the system as simply inter-group underplays the fundamental nature of its impact. The ethnic groups, being mobilized and politically structured, have sub-state status. This status is cumulatively strengthened by every passing national conflict. The outcome is not just the existence of dual loyalty, but of a progressively shifting loyalty in favour of the sub-state, where every Nigerian experiences a fulfilling sense of belonging. From the local state to the federal government, Nigeria is an ethnocratic complex.

A visible consequence and expression of the problem of statehood is the vitiation of the enforcement capacity of the state, since rational laws perceived to be contrary to the economic and cultural practices of the group dominating the state or tier of government, or indulged by this domination, are allowed to lie dormant, and for the duration of the domination of that group are unenforceable. It is either a problematic selective enforcement, or no enforcement at all. Two areas with some currency are currency exchange laws and prohibitions against interment in residential buildings. There is, therefore, a direct relationship between the national power configuration (applicable also to component states) with the associated structure of domination, and the capacity of the state to make and enforce laws. A change in the former usually leads to a proportional change in the direction of state policy.

In *The Politics* (III.1), Aristotle had suggested the relativization of the conception of citizenship to the type of government or 'constitution'

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5   Bamishaiye's (1976) account of Nigeria's political history between 1960 and 1966 from this perspective is insightful. However, the emphasis is on the relationship between inequitable governance and unequal development, not the problems of citizenship and statehood.

(Lasswell and Kaplan 1950:218), on the basis of which he propounded a theory of democratic citizenship hinged on civic responsibility. Although the emphasis appears to be on the performance of duty — participation in the exercise of power, generally, however, a citizen's sustenance of the state or form of rule is to the extent that it continues to guarantee his citizenship (III.4). This reciprocity, as in Paine (1937:82), need not be inter-personal— 'do unto others as you ...'; the prominence of the 'impersonal' state has made the definition of its relationship with the individual equally necessary in terms of reciprocal rights and duties.[6]

For Nigeria, and generally for Africa, Ekeh (1978:315-9) has argued, only rights (benefits) are expected from the state by its citizens, who only owe duties (responsibilities) to a 'native sector'. The former forms the basis of an 'amoral civic public realm', and the latter a 'moral primordial public realm'. This split personality characterization of citizenship in Africa is explained as the mental response to the alienation of colonial citizens, and the minimization and understatement of their contribution to civilization and to colonial progress. Opata (1992:33-4), on the other hand, attributes the problem of dysfunctional citizenship, which he construes as the absence of 'primary attachment or the identification with the Nigerian state' to ethnic diversity and the 'prioritisation of the self in discourse'.

However, neither the impact of colonial ideologies, mere ethnic diversity, nor a linguistic habit could account for this duality. Although colonialism, in creating a Nigerian super-state and leaving significantly intact a defeated pre-existing order made up of parochial, more immediate authorities, created the basis for duality; although, the new political elite, in a bid to reach out to a largely rural electorate, relied on the brokerage of a traditional elite, thereby rehabilitating it and giving it current political relevance; yet, this latency was actuated in the competition-generated unequal access to, and inequitable distribution of state resources. Under such a regime, it becomes rational to expect that duties to the 'state' should come from those that benefit from it.

> When I became a man and developed myself through personal efforts, I placed myself at the full service of Nigeria. I am told many other millions did the same. Yet what is Nigeria to me? I am asked to love Nigeria, to want Nigeria, to perforce remain Nigerian. What would be my gain if I so remain, I could not fathom.
> For if I so do, I shall forever lose the surest thing I could hold on to, my heritage, the one my community gave me. And yet I shall get nothing in

6 Reference is not to the definition and criteria for citizenship usually prominent in written constitutions: this is a legal definition. Citizenship as construed here is social, and usually the product of history and culture. In this sense, it is an outgrowth from inter-personal relations.

> return from Nigeria. Nothing except shattered hopes, battered dreams. Nothing except a citizenship derided, defied and defiled by decent people the world over ... Is this Nigeria to me? (Jagun 1994).

The level at which citizenship is truly realized is not the mega-state, but the home state or primary group level, where the Nigerian is a subject. Beyond this, a Nigerian is an alien in another state, enduring self-imposed social passivity as a strategy of survival. Usually too, his perception of the host community is in terms of transferable benefits. Even the most metropolitan of Nigerian cities, Lagos, would be empty of its milling population should it become ethnically insecure, as during the annulment aftermath in August 1993. Every Nigerian, dead or living, does have a homeland to return to. While a Nigerian nationality is non-existent, properly speaking, citizenship is operative at the homeland level.

Conclusion: The June 12, 1993 Aftermath

By the annulment of the presidential election of June 12, 1993, Nigeria had suffered yet another failed attempt at democratization. This was after a long-drawn process of transition of over seven years supposed to guarantee the institution of the prerequisites of democracy. According to a pre-critical account,

> .ᴬ the Babangida Administration has pursued an integrated, multidimensional, bold and complex project of economic, cultural, political and social reconstruction as short-term strategies for the long-term objective of democratising the Nigerian polity and socio-economic structures (Olagunju *et al.*, 1993:20).

Yet, if failed.

A study of the economics of Babangida's transition insists that it was not 'people-oriented', and 'a subversion of the popular will' (Dibua 1994:191); and a socio-cultural analysis that the transition 'glossed over critical issues relating to the nature and character of the Nigerian State and the effect of this on the form and substance of government' (Amuwo 1993:97).

The most commonly adduced reason for this failure, however, is summarized as the resolve of the 'aristocratic' syndicate of Babangida to 'perpetuate itself in office' (Abati 1994). Less emphasized has been the complicity of members of the 'political class'. Although Abati has identified them as an 'opportunistic, nervy and indulgent elite' whose sole interest was 'to ensure its self-preservation by any means', and a limitation of the pro-democracy movement in the post-June 12 controversies, yet to discover a role for them would suggest a deeper level of group identity.

However, the 'political class' would not seem to enjoy much autonomy in the formulation and articulation of its interests. Its members belong first to homelands by virtues of which, and for which benefit they become members of that class. It is dependent on a homeland elite, which

103

importantly provides it with a bridge to the electorate. Although this elite is significantly non-expansive, as qualification for membership is lineal, there is a periphery composed of individuals in business, religion, labour, academia and importantly politics, descendants of erstwhile subject lineages.

Recruitment is by the conferment, on the basis of supposed contributions to the community, of the much sought-after semi-functional or honorific chieftaincy titles. Because these titles exist within an established traditional hierarchy, recipients are necessarily subordinated to their benefactors. Several leading members of the 'political class' were also titled individuals.

In a system of competing sub-state groups, structured by competition for the resources of the state, not to control the controlling power is to be under the control of another group, be unable to guarantee unfettered access particularly to the economic resources and coercive instruments of the state, be unable to practice exclusion, and be exposed to the possibility of exclusion.

All governments in Nigeria have generally been structured along the line of ruling (controlling) and subject (excluded) groups. This simple structure is evident when a majority group is in control of central executive power, and usually during civil political rule. Where control is by persons from a minority group, often during military rule, such control is only apparently so, for a majority group is usually being indulged. Whatever the form of rule, access to sensitive and influential administrative positions— in the oil sector, finance ministry, the military and the diplomatic service, and to revenue from oil export via contracts can only be secured through this central control.

The majority groups feel safest when they control central executive power. The elite of the Fulani-based ethnic complex, the most organized in Nigeria, could not afford not to control the government by accepting the victory of Moshood Abiola, and impliedly of his Yoruba ethnic support base (or of any other majority group for that matter). A driving force behind this rejection is the fear of what could be done with the executive power. Having held sway for such a long time, the economic and political consequences of not being in control could only be imagined.

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

instability.[7] Given such a state of ethnic relations, national integration as a policy of the state becomes an ideology of sectional political domination.

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7   There is also a relationship between this structure of competition and underdevelopment. In Nigeria, the state is the acknowledged agent of development. However, the competition among sub-state groups for the control of the state not only leads to the ethnicization of the state, but importantly of development. Underdevelopment in Nigeria is, therefore, significantly explained by the diversion of development fund from oil export to the graft-laden satisfaction of the non-rational needs of an ethnic support base, and of other groups to the extent that they do not challenge the existing order.

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106

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