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## Nation-Building and the Nigerian Nationhood: Exploring New Communication Dimensions

**Desmond Ekeh**
Ph.D. Student, School of Media and Communication, SMC,
Pan-Atlantic University, PAU, Lagos, Nigeria

*Abstract:*
*This paper argues that, nationalism and nation-building are different facets of the same coin in which nationalism, an ideologically driven process, served the pre-independent purpose of decolonization and the management of the colonial induced Nigerian nation-state; while as nation-building serves as a postcolonial effort to reconstruct the colonial created nation-state into a fresh aspiration that is the Nigerian nationhood. It posits that Nigeria has made progress in using the mass media to construct a national identity, but has failed to extend the construction of the Nigerian nation-state into a nationhood status due to a missing link in the internal communicative congruities needed in building Nigeria from a nation-state into nationhood. Using the analytical method, based on a critical literature review of extant studies, the paper proposes the exploration of the Burkean theory of Identification and the application of the intercultural communication paradigm, to fix the missing nexus obstructing, since 1960, the successful construction of the Nigerian nationhood.*

*Keywords: Nigeria, nation-building, nationhood, media, identification, intercultural communication*

## 1. Introduction

Research historian Mazrui (1982) asserts that, "Africa is caught between the birth of her modern nationalism and the quest for nationhood. Her nationalism is a reality that played a part in ending territorial colonialism but nationhood itself is an ambition rather than a reality" (p. 23).  It appears that this quest for nationhood through nation-building, which has been Africa's pain since the turn of the 20th century, emanates from what Mazrui refers to as the 'intermediacy' between her nationalism and nationhood – and Nigeria is not an exemption. Since 1960, Nigerian leaders have made efforts to manage first, the colonial established nation-state, then, secondly, to construct a cohesive Nigerian nation or nationhood.

This task has been arduous, considering the heterogeneous nature of Nigeria's about 400 ethnic nationalities. The differences in language, ethnicity, religion and culture have posed a major threat to the process of nation-building. This is even more problematic with Nigeria's postcolonial inheritance of ethnic mistrust and suspicion, resulting to among other things, the intense and fratricidal struggle for political power. Consequently, Nigeria continues to witness the establishment of politically motivated centers of opposition and resistance, which obstruct and inhibit her struggle for genuine nation-building. The recent re-emergence of the struggle and quest for the independent state of Biafra by the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra, MASSOB; the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra, IPOB; the Boko Haram insurgency; the incessant community attacks by the Fulani Herdsmen; the spate of pipeline vandalism by the Niger Delta militants, and other snowballing demand for the restructuring and regional independence from various sections of the Nigerian state is a pointer to the enormous challenges of nation-building in Nigeria.

Elgenius (2005) argues that, nationalism as a phenomenon operates at three key levels. First, as an ideology promoting the division of the world into various nations. Secondly, as a political movement advocating for the attainment of independence and autonomy. And thirdly, as a language of symbolism. This paper agrees with Elgenius and posits that the integration of the disparate precolonial ethnic-nations and the subsequent 1880s unmindful balkernisation of the African continent into various nation-states constitute the very first historical occurrence of nationalism, in this case, by the Western Imperialists and colonizers including Britain and France. The second level mentioned by Elgenius is colonialism as a political movement advocating for attainment of independence and autonomy. In Nigeria, this involved the struggle for Nigeria's independence from the British colonialists by the leaders including Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Alhaji Tafawa Balewa. After independence in 1960, it became necessary to work towards building a socially cohesive nation out of the colonialist political construction that is the Nigerian nation-state. This is the third level as mentioned by Elgenius and specifically the subject matter of this paper.

Scholars have studied how various activities and artefacts including symbols and ceremonies were (are) used to promote nation-building and national identity (Elgenius, 2005). In Nigeria, studies have also revealed how tools such as cultural festivals, sports, conflict resolutions mechanisms and political conferences have been used to sustain the nation-state and promote nation-building.  Nnaemeka, (1989) and Idemudia (2008) in different submissions implicated communication to be a fundamental tool for nation-building and for the construction of a viable Nigerian nation or

nationhood. But, not much research has been done in this area, especially in the application of the Burkean theory of Identification and the intercultural communication paradigms as effective tools for nation building and nationhood. If anything, research studies in this area have been disparate and few and have focused more on mass media and information dissemination. At a time when the centers of fissures and discord in Nigeria are increasing, and the resistance to the cause of nation-building threatening her sovereignty, the need for more solution-oriented research to create peace and harmony and search for path to nationhood becomes even more urgent. This is exactly why this paper is important at this point.

Methodologically, it adopts a critical literature review of extant studies, and the conceptual analytic approach, in its examination of the role of communication in nation-building. Specifically, it proposes the exploration of the Burkean theory of Identification and the use of intercultural communication as theoretical but strategic tools for the social construction of Nigerian nationhood.

Section one introduces the paper and examines the general background of the study. As part of the background, the paper establishes the various nation-building efforts made in the pre-independent, postcolonial and modern Nigeria. It highlights how the mass media have been used, and could be employed, to construct national identity. Section two reviews related literature and engages in the conceptual analysis of the study. It highlights the works of previous scholars and situates them within the frame of the concepts of nation, nationalism, nation-building and nationhood - especially taking cognisance of their historical and evolutionary specificities. The paper also states clearly the author's position on how these terms are used in this paper. It further examines the various theories related to this study and determines the particular theories that are used in framing the study. Then, the last section identifies, analyses and proposes how the Burkean Identification and intercultural communication theories could be applied in the task of nation-building and in the social construction of the Nigerian nationhood.

## 1.1. Background of the Study

### 1.2.1. Nation-Building in Pre-Colonial Nigeria

During the pre-colonial and colonial periods, Nigeria as a socio-political reality, in the way we know it today, did not exist. However, it is noted that, there was already in existence direct contacts between some Nigerian empires or kingdoms with the Europeans through trading, and also indirect relationship through the production of needed products by the Europeans which were shipped via the port cities. These two forms of interaction were in addition to the existing slave trade that was functional since about the 1500 century (Tersool & Ejue, 2015).

Before the emergence of Nigeria in 1914, there were in existence pre-colonial ethnic communities, kingdoms and empires. These communities, empires and kingdoms including but not limited to Kanem Bornu, Oyo, Bini, Igala, Fulani, Kanuri, Arochukwu and others were invaded by the British imperialists and hobbled into a combination of nations without consideration to the differences in their cultural values. After the First World War Nigerians and other Africans were conscripted to fight on the side of the British Empire. The consequence of the Africans fighting side by side with their colonial counterparts was the creation of awareness that these white men were after all human. They saw them cry and observed feel the pains of war. This knowledge of the frailties of the Whiteman emboldened the Africans to seek for their freedom from the dominance of the Whiteman. Hence, there was a surge of agitation for decolonization and independence from the soldiers - who came back from the war - in collaboration with the emerging educated elite. It could therefore be argued that, nationalism had two faces – one in which the British imperialists attempted, successfully, to aggregate the various ethnic groups into a nation starting from the Northern protectorate in 1900; and the colonialism in which the educated African elites initiated a process of decolonization and post-colonial nation-building.

For instance, on January 1, 1852, Akintoye, the King of Lagos signed a treaty with the British government for the abolition of slave trade, encouragement of legitimate trade, and the protection of missionaries. This treaty was not signed between Britain and Nigeria as an entity, whether as nation or nation-state, but with a part of a geographical location in which two protectorates were in 1914 merged to form the postcolonial state or nation-state called Nigeria. Before then, the disparate communities and ethnic groups (kingdoms and empires across the geographical regions today called Nigeria) were independent and they governed themselves according to their own administrative laws and customs. This means that, before the amalgamation of 1914, the various kingdoms and empires made up of several ethnic groups could be considered as nations or what I mean as 'ethnic-nations'. Masajuwa and Isike (2003), agree with this point when they defined a nation as "A large group of people who are bound together, and recognise a similarity among themselves, because of a common culture; in particular, a common language which seems important in creating nationhood" (pp. 14-15). Here, they reconised that nationhood is created. On the other hand, they defined a nation-state as "a well-defined political unit made up of diverse people and cultures" (Masajuwa & Isike, 2003, pp. 14-15). They affirm that, different nations can form a state and that some of the features of a nation-state include identified territory and sovereignty. Their definition is in consonance with Omu's (2008) position that "Ethnicity applies to the consciousness of belonging to, identifying with and being loyal to a social group distinguished by shared cultural traditions, a common language, in-group sentiment and self-identity" (pp. 88-89). Stalin (1913) shares similar sentiment with Omu, and this corroborates my position that ethnic-nation is not constructed and is different from the nation being referred to by most of the scholars including Anderson (1983) and Smith (1991).

The end of pre-colonial nationalism was the creation of the nation-state called Nigeria through the aggregation of the disparate ethnic groups, empires and kingdoms into two major protectorates – North and South, with the eventual merger of the two protectorates in 1914 as Nigeria. So, the Nigerian leaders who fought for, and won independence in

1960, took over from the British imperialists and then embarked on the nation-building project aimed at consolidating the nation-state through the enshrinement of democratic governance and the provision of infrastructure for the well-being of the people. This process however, has been most daunting with the realisation of the need to concretely mould Nigeria into nationhood, if any serious development must take place. This will require first and foremost the construction of a national identity. How far has Nigeria gone in this process?

## 1.2. Nation-Building in Postcolonial Nigeria

Since 1960 when Nigeria gained her independence from the colonial masters, efforts have been made to build her up, from the current status as a 'nation-state' into a Nation. Usually strategic nation-building starts with the creation of a concept like the 1Malaysia, propagated by Malaysia's 6th Prime Minister (Husin, 2011) aimed at developing an integrated culture of unity and solidarity amongst the various ethnic-nationalities that make up the Malaysian state. For Nigeria, the concept 'Unity in Diversity' is the equivalent of the concept of 1Malaysia. This concept clearly understood that Nigeria is composed of about 400 ethnic-nationalities including Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa/Fulani, Ishekiri, Anang etc. It also recognised that, for unity - a condiment for development - to prevail, the rights and nuances of the various ethnic groups must be recognised and respected.

The leaders, in the process of nation-building since 1960, have exploited different initiatives and artifacts to ensure that the people cohere in peace and harmony for the development of the country. These include the existence of the following: The Nigerian Constitution, the adoption of English language, national anthem, national pledge, national currency, national flag, national monuments (national stadium, national theatre etc.), national sports festival, unity schools, national university examination board, JAMB, and national secondary school examination, WAEC. Others are: national awards, national science academy, National Youth Service Corp, NYSC, national security set-up (police, navy, army and air force), the creation of zones - from three geo-political zones to four - then into 12 states, to 19 states and now 36 states and the federal capital territory, Abuja, and many more.

There are several other initiatives created by the political leaders in the cause of nation-building. The constitution is the fundamental guiding document for the definition of how the country is governed and how law and order are maintained. It makes provision for almost everything in the land. The Nigerian constitution also considered the existence of the various ethnic-nationalities and that informed the establishment of several institutions to enhance the idea of oneness, unity and belongingness and its national character provision. An institution like the National Youth Service Corps, NYSC, established by Decree 1993 (now an act) is aimed at the proper encouragement and development of common ties amongst Nigerian youths, and the promotion of national unity. It was intended to give the young adults an opportunity to know the country and interact with other cultures, for the purpose of being able to live together in peace and progress as one people. There is also the Unity schools intended for the same goal - to enable young Nigerians understand the diverse nature of the country, and to learn while in their youth, how to live and accommodate others of different values, cultures, beliefs and languages. Monuments and ceremonies like festivals, national theatre, national stadium and others are very great initiatives to cultivate a culture of oneness and unity (Elgenius, 2005). In Nigeria, football is a passion for the greater percentage of the populace. Whenever Nigeria's national teams – the Golden Eaglet, The Flying Eagles, The Super Eagles, The Falconet and the Falcons - are engaged in a tournament, it becomes a time for national get-together. During the World Cup or the African Nations Cup tournaments, the government and even private companies try to get Nigerians involved, as this provides a time when people forget their ethnic sentiments and become one Nigerian. The national anthem, the Nigerian flag and the coat of arms are all insignia and unifying symbols to generate a sentiment of one nation.

At a time, it was suggested that, there would be a need to cultivate the use of an official language that all Nigerians can understand. One of the manifestations of this intention for unification is the adoption of WAZOBIA - WA (come in Yoruba), ZO (come in Hausa) and BIA (come in Ibo) as a rallying lingua franca for Nigeria. This project did not succeed. Consequently, the English language was adopted as the official language to avoid the acrimony which the choice of one of the languages – Ibo, Hausa or Yoruba will generate.

However, in spite of all these efforts, some part of Nigeria, particularly in the South-east and South-south still feel marginalized. They complain of being treated unfairly and inequitably in the Nigerian project. The same complaint was the major cause of the first civil war in Nigeria between the mainly Ibo ethnic stock and the rest of Nigeria. The war which lasted from 1967 to 1970 ended with a declaration of no victor no vanquished. The Ibos were integrated back to the Nigerian nation.

This study argues that, with the so many initiatives on ground the nation-building efforts have not yet created the nationhood expected to be the end result of the initiatives. This paper argues that most of the efforts were political and lacked the required deep thinking generated from theoretical and conceptual affirmations. It therefore proposes the use of the Burkean theory of Identification in collaboration with the idea of intercultural communication to achieve the expected result.

## 1.3. Media Communication, National Identity and Nationhood

Media and Communication are fundamental to the construction of nationhood, especially as communication is a major carrier of "symbolic values and the reproduction of cultural and historical motifs, from generation to generation" (Smith, 1991, p.11). Communication is much more than message exchange. Communication enriches culture, and generates cohesion and connectedness amongst people in the society. Following the theory of symbolic interactionism, human relationships find meaning in the symbols of communication while symbolic constructionism posits that reality is constructed. Symbolic convergence theory emphasizes that a people's cohesiveness can be explained in their shared

experiences, emotions, motives and meanings. So, in constructing nationhood, communication which glues all these elements, is indispensable.

The word communication derives it root directly from the Latin word "communicare' and 'communicat' which means 'to share', 'communicate' or 'impact'. The verb form translates to 'common' or 'shared locally'. Originally, it meant to share tangible things like food, land, goods and property. But now it includes sharing of information and knowledge. Communication is related to communion and community (Biakolo, 2010). Communication could be seen as a process in the sense of Lasswell's (1948) 'Who Says What to Whom through What Channel and to what Effect'. But, the Lasswellian processual model is mechanistic and now outmoded, - considering the contemporary understanding of communication as interactions with social signification. Communication defined in the processual model offers too much power to the message creator – the sender, leaving the message receiver passive and non-involved. It does not also consider the contexts in which messages are created, sent and received. It sees messages as only texts, and deny the context in which they operate. Derrida (1976) affirms that, messages are both texts and contexts and that the receiver of the text inputs meanings into it. Every communication is polysemic; as they take place within a specific knowing or unknowing context – cultural, physical, socio-psychological and temporal. Communication operates within a cultural context and that cultural context is the society.

On the other hand, the mass media, through the communication process, are major channels for the promotion and the construction of national identity, which is a prerequisite for nation-building and nationhood. The mass media can be used to promote the culture of 'Us consciousness' and engender a 'we-feeling', capable of mobilizing a people to collective action and a feeling of family among the community - providing continual opportunities for identification with the nation through invitations to be present at 'national' ceremonies and rituals (Chaney, 1986, p.249). Chaney considered mostly the broadcast media like "radio and later TV as very effective means of creating the 'we-feeling'" and a major platform to involve the people to a common destiny in national rituals and ceremonies like the independence day, national football matches, armed forces remembrance day, national democracy day and even workers day. Recently, the citizens are being mobilized by the media to patronise Nigerian made products and also to be proud of Nigeria as their country.

In Nigeria, various state and national radio and television stations take the responsibility to create this 'we feeling' and the integration of the various ethnic-nationalities into the Nigerian nationhood through deliberately and carefully designed programming. In the past, the creation of this 'we feeling' and the mobilization of the people to support nation-building was spearheaded and sometimes activated by the nationally owned broadcasting stations like the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, FRCN, Voice of Nigeria, VON and the Nigerian Television Authority, NTA. In terms of programming, there were deliberate policy efforts to run some episodes that demonstrate the nature of our diversity and the unity inhered in it. Examples are the 'Masquerade, Sunset at Dawn, Icheoku and Tales by Moonlight'. The print media including the Guardian, ThisDay, The Punch, Vanguard, the Sun and others are used to supplement the efforts of the broadcast stations. Before now the Daily Times, and the New Nigeria, - two moribund national newspapers, were in the vanguard for the publishing of editorials and reportorial texts that support nation-building and nationhood. Recently, even the privately-owned media houses and communication outfits have joined in the nation-building effort through social change and behavior change communication. These stations try to develop programmes and documentaries based on a common theme, 'Unity in Diversity'. The stations use the major languages of Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba to convey their information and stories.

Unfortunately, these efforts were not enough. They were not based on strategic communication. The citizens were mostly not involved and the goal was focused on creating national identity. Perhaps, it was thought that the creation of national identity through nation building is equivalent to the modelling of nationhood. Therefore, all the efforts made since independence to build a disarticulated nation-state into a virile Nigerian nation, including the media efforts to create a viable, stable and sustainable national identity, all appear to be in vain, as national strife based on agitation for ethnic self-determination still persists. What should be done? This paper proposes the combined deployment of the Burkean theory of identification and the intercultural communication strategy, based on the theoretical foundations of framing and social constructionism, to create awareness towards the building of an acceptable nationhood amongst the ethnic-nationalities that make up the Nigerian nation-state.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### 2.1. Conceptual Clarification - Nation, Nation-Building and Nationhood

The idea of nation-building and nationhood lies posterior to the concept of nation. To understand them involves a conceptual clarification of the term 'Nation'. The terms nation, nationalism, nation-building, nation-state and or nationhood have been associated with controversy ever since the idea of national identity became the central focus of collective identities (Hungwe & Hungwe, 2010). This is even more problematic in postcolonial Africa, with multiple cases of identity crisis, borne out of slavery, imperialism and colonial induced collective self-alienation. These controversies are located in several intellectual spheres, including in the challenges posed by the lack of general consensus by scholars in, and the acceptance of, the meaning of these terms. These issues raise fundamental questions yet to be resolved. For instance, what is the difference between nation-building and nationalism? What about nationhood and nation-state? Can there be nationalism without a nation? Are nations created, constructed or are they natural phenomena? Are ethnic-nationalities the same thing as nations? This section of the paper attempts to put a historical peg on it, conceptualize and theorize these concepts and terms in a way, also, to operationalize them for usage in this paper. Let us look at them one after the other, starting from the term Nation.

## 2.2. The Polysemic Character of the Concept of 'Nation'

The challenge in the conceptual interrogation of the term 'Nation', and its ancillary cousins, nationhood and nation-building, has lived with man for generations and is yet to be resolved. Bagehot (1887) presented the history of the 19th century as that of 'nation-building'. In defining or establishing the meaning of the term 'Nation', he asserts that, "We know what it is when you do not ask us, but we cannot very quickly explain or define" (pp. 20-21). Hobsbawm (1990) notes that Carleton Hayes and Hans Kohn disagree with Bagehot. They argue that nations are not as old as history, as the modern theory and thinking about nation is not earlier than the 18th century. Ting (2008) described the term nation as a "notoriously amorphous word...understood as a mental construct, and the formation of national identity as a dynamic, contentious historical process of social construction" (p.1). Tilly and Charles (cited in Ting, 2008) submit that, the concept of Nation depicts a political community; while Hartley (2002, p.156), asserts that, Nation, is often used to mean a nation-state, a sovereign state with its own government, boundaries, defense force with symbolic markers of nationhood such as a flag, an anthem, local currency, a head of state, and membership of the United Nations, UN. Anderson (1983) has a viewpoint slightly different and affirms that the term "Nation' does not make reference to facts of the external world but an imagined community of symbolic referents. These symbolic referents, he argues, are located in a variety of discursive platforms and artifacts such as literature and linguistics, national currencies and other institutions including education and family. A nation is "an historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture" (Stalin, 1913, pp. 10-11).

It appears, there is a dissensus here, on, whether the term nation has a historical specificity in the form of homogeneity of a people based on commonality of language, culture, beliefs and other factors derivable from ancestry or natural descent. Or, on the other hand, whether a nation is a function of social construction embedded in discursive elements of language, literature and cultural symbols. This paper posits that, it depends on what 'nation' is being referred to, and the perspective of those making the reference. Arguably, most of these definitions stream from western intellectual presuppositions, which exclude cultural and experiential specificities from the other climes. 'Nation', spoken whether in imagery or in existential reality is always culturally contextualized. It follows therefore, that, one may be mistaken in expecting people from diverse cultural backgrounds to understand the concept of nation the same way, and also define it the same way – because the idea of nation appears not to possess any universal characterization.

Day and Thompson (cited in Hungwe & Hungwe, 2010), identified two contrasting schools of thought that could be used to explain the development and origin of the concept – 'Nation'. They are the Modernist and the Ethnicist schools. Modernists argue that nation and nationalism are concepts that are not traceable to the social and economic processes of modernity like urbanization, industrialization, the rise of capitalism, individualism and other related social and economic changes that have taken place in modern times. They argue that nations are socially constructed. On the other hand, ethnicists believe that nation and nationalism have traces to ancestral linage in pre-modern ethnic identities. Most scholars who define or try to explain the concepts of nation, nationhood or even nation-state fall into either of these categories. Miller (cited in Day & Thompson, 1995) argues that nations are created and are sustained by communicative actions which involve active processes of thought and interchange among relevant body of people. To him, "a nation is a form of community whose values and identity are the subject of ongoing negotiation and reflection" (p.6). This thought processes, through communication, involving negotiations is what they refer to as nationalism, which are practices "designed to operate, to bring together large numbers of people into a new kind of consciousness and collective identity. The discourse of nationalism conclusively helps determine the form in which nations are conceived" (p.6).

Following the ethnicist theorists' argument, Brubaker (cited in Day &Thompson, 2004), assert that, scholars should "start to think less in terms of how nations develop and instead concentrate on the many ways the nation as a category is involved, institutionalized and more generally used as a cognitive frame" (p.11).But, Smith (1991) maintains that, while nations may be modern, their origins are not, but can be traced to earlier *ethnie*. By *ethnie,* he means - a named human population with shared ancestry, myths, history and culture having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity. For Smith, the maxim is that the forces described by modernists transform these *ethnie* without destroying them. This position supports the argument posited by this paper, and also finds expression in what this paper will later consider as the recognition of ethnic-nationalities of pre-independent Nigeria. The outcomes of nationalism are: the independence of the colonized Nigerian territory; and the British creation of the nation-state out of the various pre-independent ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. The challenge now is, how to construct the Nigerian nation-state into Nigerian nationhood or Nigerian nation. This paper takes a departure from this point.

The paper posits that, the idea of nation, and here I mean, 'ethnic-nation', similar to Smith's (1991) *ethnie*, is not merely a symbolic referent as argued by Anderson (1983); but that, it actually has concrete existential components, even though these are reflected in symbolic referents. Amongst many people, a sense of nationhood is derived from a collective self-awareness of 'We and Others'. It is embedded in a common ethos of a psychological consciousness of shared historical origin and cultural heritage. In this case, there is a manifest material linkage, based on ancestral descent, which builds the people into a common cultural lifestyle, belief system, tradition, standards and mores. They are always able to identify themselves even in the diaspora. The Igbos would always know themselves different from the Yorubas and the Hausa/Fulanis. Psychological bonding is a major ingredient of a nation. That is what joins a people and differentiates them, in the subconscious mind of its members, from all other non-members. "The perception of similarity of members and of difference from non-members is then a critical element in a people's perception of themselves as a nation" (Connor, 1993, p.377). Most times, to achieve this state of nationhood requires strategic nation-building processes that are deliberate and goal oriented. What then is nation-building, especially how it has been applied in the Nigerian situation?

*2.3. Between Nation-Building and The 3R's In Post-Civil War Nigeria*

Like the term 'nation', nation-building is also an amorphous term that requires proper clarification in the way it is used. It could be perceived in different senses. For instance, it could refer to a strategic rebuilding of a state after a period of conflict or war situation. A nation-building plan for Syria could be an example. Reimer (2005) sees nation-building in this sense as a "comprehensive approach, which usually is intensified after the decision to end a conflict (no matter in which way, be it victory, defeat, armistice, peace accord)" (p. 10). This implies the "restoration of law and order in the absence of government authority, the reconstruction of infrastructure and security forces, and the facilitation of the transfer of power from the interim authority to an indigenous government" (Reimer, 2005, p. 10). This was how nation-building was understood after the Nigerian/Biafra civil war (1967-70) in which the federal government declared 'no victor, no vanquished', and then established the 3R policy of reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation. Its goal usually would be to restore peace and order, confidence and trust amongst the warring parties.

On the other hand, nation-building conduces to the cohesive socio-cultural and psychological spirit for common solidarity and feeling of oneness. Hippler (cited in Husin, 2011) described it as "an effort to develop the spirit of patriotism and solidarity to create a country whose people share a common identity. The major aim is to foster national unity by developing a new nation and an integrated race" (p. 1). This position is also supported by Elaigwu (2011) who sees the concept of nation-building from two main perspectives. First, as the acceptance by, and the willingness of, members of the same polity or nation-state to live and develop together in peace and harmony as one people under the legitimacy of a central government as a symbol. Secondly, nation-building, he asserts, involves the acceptance by and recognition of other members of the nation-state or civic polity as equal and same in a corporate nation with same rights to share of a common history, resources, values, and other aspects of the state.Alesina and Reich (2015) define nation-building as "a process which leads to the formation of countries in which the citizens feel a sufficient amount of commonality of interests, goals and preferences so that they do not wish to separate from each other" (p.1).

The nature of the concept of nation-building gives it out to variegated interpretations. There is the tendency to pass it on as same with the idea of national integration, national development, national consciousness or even political development. Of course, in principle, it includes all of these terms and more. But, this paper aligns with Adigun's (n.d.) point that, it is a "systematic process of making a people, who hitherto are from different cultural, ethnic, religious, racial, or national backgrounds, to feel they belong together under a nation" (http://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/179373/1/nation-building-in-nigeria.html). The paper also agrees with the argument that nation-building process should promote the sharing of certain values and preferences by the citizens in order to inculcate homogenous character traits; and that this can be done through education, teaching a common language, building infrastructures to promote travel and tourism and discouraging tendencies that divide (Alesina & Reich, 2015).

*2.4. Nationhood as the End of Nation-building*

Having clarified the use of the term 'Nation' in this paper, and also our meaning of the concept of nation-building, this section situates the term 'nationhood' and its relation to the other terms – nation and nation-building. Discussing the concept of nationhood takes us back to where we started, that is, from research historian Mazrui's (1982, p. 23) assertion that, "Africa is caught between the birth of her modern nationalism and the quest for nationhood. Her nationalism is a reality that played a part in ending territorial colonialism but nationhood itself is an ambition rather than a reality". Mazrui believes that, the pride of African nationalism was in race-consciousness, but the negative of African nationhood is ethnic-consciousness. Nationhood, even though an elusive concept is the anticipated end product of nation-building. Nation-building is a deliberate, planned and focused strategic frame to consolidate the gains of nation-state status by molding the disparate ethnic-nationalities that make up the state into a people with the psychological 'we feeling' of oneness, with a commonality of purpose, vision, mission, aspiration, patriotism, belongingness and collective goal. In nationhood, the people must identify their 'separateness' and yet highlight their 'togetherness'. The concept of Marx's philosophy of 'the contradiction of opposites', points to the fact that, for progress and development to be achieved the negative and the positive must merge to create the possibility of movement. The same should be the case in building the Nigerian nationhood. This means that in Nigeria the various ethnic groups should be recognized and respected, while the unity of the various ethnic groups should be highlighted and promoted without denying the identity of the various ethnic groups.

## 3. Review of Related Theoretical Literature

There are many theories related to media and communication in the study of nationalism, nation-building and nationhood. But, clearly, two families of theories are here identified as most related to this study. They are composed of two media theories and three sociological theories. They are: Agenda Setting and Framing theories (media) and Social Constructionism, Symbolic Interactionism and Symbolic Convergence theories (sociological).

In this case some media theories such as agenda setting and framing are applied here to explain the phenomenon of national identity creation through media and communication. On the other hand, nationhood is a social reality reified through, among other things, the instrumentality of strategic communication such as intercultural communication. To achieve the goal of constructing nationhood requires the consent, approval, conviction, socio-psychological buy-in and connective participation of the various ethnic-nations that make up the nation-state - if the 'we feeling' and the consciousness of oneness and solidarity in one nation must be achieved. This paper therefore recommends the application of the ideas contained in the theories of Identification and Intercultural communication to achieve this purpose.

Agenda setting theory propounded by McCombs and Shaw in 1972 refers to the idea that media coverage of any issue positions such issue as important. The theory implies the significance of the media in influencing human cognition and action. Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) assert that agenda setting is "the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that media place on certain issues and the importance attributed to these issues by mass audiences" (p. 11). Agenda setting underscores the assumption that the mass media play a fundamental role in shaping human cognition – including the perception and comprehension of socio-political, cultural and economic realities. It presupposes that the amount of airtime or print space allotted to a news item on television and radio or in the newspaper affects the reader's attitude in interpreting and inputting importance to that particular information. Walter Lippman (1922) in his book *Public Opinion* posit that "The news media construct our view of the world" (Wahl-Jorgensen & Hanitzsch, 2009, p.147). For him, we have to contend with 'The world outside and the picture in our head'. The picture in our head is constructed by the media and that creates our world and not the existent world in its reality. The implication here is that the media filter and construct reality; it does not mirror or reflect reality as being assumed by the public.

On the other hand, framing, an extension of agenda setting, is the idea that the way the media report a particular incident influences how it is interpreted by the audience. Beyond the choice of using a particular story, the way, slant or frame in which the story is structured and conveyed is very important, as it plays a key role in the way the story is perceived and received. In the case of mass media construction of national identity and nationhood, agenda setting and framing are important in consistently reporting stories that unite the various ethnic groups and differing belief systems in the nation.  The framing of those messages to promote and priviledge significant symbolic values for national unity and nationhood is even more important.

From the sociological perspective, Symbolic interactionism conceived by George Herbert Mead posits that human interactions and the meaning derived from every day lived experience is based on the use of symbols, particularly, as contained in languages. According to him, without symbols there would be no human interaction and no human society. Herbert Blumer, his student, further theorized and published this idea as a sociological system of interpreting social life. So, communication he affirms, occurs through the creation of shared significant symbols.  Meanings are created, developed and modified within the process of interaction. Meaning is not fixed and does not happen outside the domain of human interaction. He also contends that, meanings are interpretive, resulting from the interactions of the actors and the contexts of the interaction. So, the meanings that guide human actions arise from the interactions and their interpretations. In the process of nation-building and nationhood the media will need to use the appropriate communication symbols to interact with the various ethnic-nationalities in a manner that will make them find meaning and interpretation in the need for cultural commonality and oneness. The next one is social constructionism.

Social constructionism was sparked by Berger and Luckman in their book '*The Social Construction of Reality'*, published in 1996. The basic premise of the theory refers to "the processes by which events, persons, values and ideas are first defined or interpreted in a certain way and given value and priority, largely by the media, leading to the construction of larger pictures of reality" (McQuail, 2010, p. 101). The theory summarizes that society is a social construct rather than a fixed reality. That media and communication provide the materials for reality construction. This theory connects to the idea of symbols as an instrument of meaning making and construction of reality. It relates to the idea of agenda setting and framing too.  It also connects to the argument that nationhood is a social construct, and that media and communication are the major instruments for this construction. The last of the three sociological theories treated here is the symbolic convergence theory.

Ernest Bormann in 1972 propounded the idea of Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) as a general communication theory that offers an explanation for the appearance of a group's cohesiveness, consisting of shared emotions, motives, and meanings, even though it does not control human communication, it however allows for the opportunity of anticipation and prediction of what will happen. It provides a description of the dynamic tendencies within the social interaction that causes communicative forms to evolve. Specific types of story forms like fantasy or dramatization are employed by SCT to foster group or community cohesiveness based on shared emotions, values and shared experiences. Communication is used to make sense of these common values and experiences. SCT could be used by media and communication to weave stories that will illustrate group consciousness using common symbolic values of the nation-state like festivals and ceremonies. This theory could be applied in the case of nation-building and nationhood.

However, since 1960, the previous nation-building attempts have succeeded in using media communication to construct national identity and sustain the existence of the nation-state; but have failed in achieving the end product of nationalism which is nationhood. This study argues that media communication in the past have been applied more as information dissemination tools and awareness creation platforms in terms of building national identity, but have not been able to awaken the individual, group and national consciousness required to achieve nationhood. This study therefore intervenes in proposing the theories of the Burkean Identification and intercultural communication to achieve this goal. So, these two theories will be used to frame this study.

## 3.1. Theoretical Framework

### 3.1.1. The Theory of Identification

The theory of Identification was explored by Kenneth Burke in his book A Rhetoric of Motives. It is an extension or a fresh insight into the existing traditional theory of rhetoric defined by Aristotle as the "faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion" (McKeon, 1941, p.1329). Burke (1969) elaborated on this theory with the concept

of Identification, which he used to distinguish his idea from the Aristotelian traditional rhetoric concerned with persuasion.

Burke believes that human social relations is more complicated than the context in which the traditional rhetorical theory was conceptualised. For him, the concept of Identification underlines fully what it means to be human, as it involves interaction and communication. He posits that human beings, by their very nature as biological formations, exist as separate beings and therefore seek out their identity and *Beingness* through interactions with other Beings. Identity here, he postulates, is a function of otherness. But, to overcome the burden of separateness, as part of humanness, humans consistently seek for interaction with others through communication. This is akin to Martin Heidegger's phenomenological idea of the Dasein. Dasein, according to Heidegger (1967) is the 'Human' that found 'the being' in the world by nature, without his contribution, as to how he got to the world, and what he is doing in the world. Nature brought him/her here in what Heidegger referred to as '*throwness*'. He argues that humans found themselves in this world as not just 'Beings-in-the-world, but also Beings-with-others'. "Thus, as a Being-with, Dasein 'is' essentially for the sake of others". (Heidegger, 1967, p. 160).

So, the whole idea of humanness involves both biological separation and social interaction, hence this makes humans distinct substances in *consubstantial* relations with others. "We are both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another" (Burke, 1969, p. 21). Burke added that "Identification is affirmed with earnestness precisely because there is division" (p. 22). Burke asserts that, human beings do not only experience biological separateness, but also the existence of order, authority, social hierarchy, and our inability to obey hierarchical structures, which all put together create division. So,*Identification* becomes necessary to bridge this dichotomy. To affect this bridging of the division, we seek for ways in which our interests, attitudes, values, experiences, perceptions and material properties are shared with others, or appear to be shared with others. Therefore, these instances make us *consubstantial* with others, hence we constantly seek for associations with certain other individuals or groups, to attach some position in the hierarchy of social structure. This concept is seen within the context of understanding the role of language in building peace, trust and social cohesion, confidence amongst people of diverse cultures; or, on the other hand, create destruction, conflict or war. Language here is seen as a form of symbolic action where humans are actors – so using language is one way, among many other ways, of acting in the world. Human beings are symbol bearing animals, responding negatively or positively to symbolic forces as symbols convey human attitudes.  This is the point of departure between the traditional rhetoric of the Aristotelian bent and Burke's *Identification*. Burke defines rhetoric as "the use of words by human agents to form attitude or induce actions in other human agents" (Burke, 1969, p. 41). Following this perspective *Identification* draws on three major pillars:

- The process of naming something or someone (according to specific properties).
- The process of associating with or dissociating from others – suggesting that persons (and ideas or things) share, or do not share, important qualities in common.
- The product or end result of identifying – the state of being consubstantial with others.

So, the goal of this study is to use this theory in association with the intercultural communication theory to explain how the Nigerian nation-state created by the colonial master and bonded into an identity through the mass media could be elevated into a state of 'Nationhood' with the associating process whereby individuals persuade themselves or others that they share important qualities in common. This understanding will create the need for natural bonding based on shared experiences, attitudes, values, perceptions, beliefs and material properties; and yet with the appreciation of their distinctions as separate people, with diverse cultures, who are *consubstantiated* into the Nigerian nationhood. Now, let us examine the second theory which is intercultural communication.

### 3.2. Intercultural Communication

Culture and communication are intertwined, as they influence one another in the process of human interaction. Differences among people of dissimilar cultures affect how they perceive and relate with one another. To create understanding and harmony for peaceful coexistence people of diverse cultures need to recognize their separate cultural identities and appreciate the cultural identities of other people. This is where intercultural communication skill and awareness comes in.

The underlining principle of intercultural communication is that it occurs between people of diverse cultures and personality backgrounds. It involves the idea of interacting with someone who is more like a stranger or does not share similar values with someone else (Gabrialla, 2008). Intercultural communication according to Ting-Toomey (1999) is the sending and receiving of messages across languages and cultures. It is further seen as a negotiated understanding of meaning in human experiences across social systems and societies. Ting-Toomey further affirms that Intercultural communicationtakes place when individuals influenced by different cultural communities negotiate shared meanings in interaction.In a narrow sense intercultural communication occurs among individuals from different nationalities, ethnic groups, races, etc. He asserts that, broadly speaking, it includes intra-ethnic, intra-religious, inter-regional communications; communication among individuals of different sexual orientation, age. Meanwhile, the strategic use of intercultural communication helps to build consent, understanding, approval, and intention of the 'other'. Intercultural communication helps to break the barriers occasioned by ethnocentrism, stereotype, prejudice, misattribution and others. In this case intercultural communication approach will be used to negotiate the construction of nationhood in Nigeria.

We shall now examine how these two ideas – Identification and intercultural communication will be applied in the case of the Nigerian state to build it into nationhood considering the differences in language, religion and other cultural dissensus.

## 4. Identification and Cultural Communication in Building Nationhood

Some forms of communication are persuasion oriented and priviledge the sender over the receiver or the audience. But genuine communication ought to attend to the need of the community or society. Habermas (1984) proposed the theory of communicative action, where, communication serves the need of both the sender and the receiver or the audience. Momoh (1989, p. xv), recognised communication as a main engine for 'wholesome development of the society". This is the sense in which this paper treats the role of the Burkean theory of Identification and the concept of intercultural communication in building the Nigerian nationhood. This paper applies both theories to some identified thematic issues to build a virile nationhood. Some of these thematic templates are as follows:

- Change! Sharing a Common Vision and Common Ideology
- Build Trust, Build a Nation
- Cultural Toleration/Ethnocentrism and Multi-culturalism
- Promote Democratic Principles and Values

### 4.1. Change! Sharing a Common Vision and Common Ideology

The idea of Identification and cultural communication possess the ingredients required to bond the people together and create a 'we feeling' through communication with the aim to create a brighter vision for a better Nigeria, irrespective of the disparate social and cultural diversities in the country. For instance, the present All Progressive Congress, APC, government won the last election on the mantra of 'Change'. The concept of Identification could be used as a driver using the change mantra. The message of change should have focused on persuading or 'conscientising' people to the understanding that though they are of different cultural backgrounds, but, they have a commonality of national consciousness and communality of shared goal and purpose. In this case, they will be free to appreciate their individual differences, and yet reinforce and emphasize their similarities; and how their different cultural backgrounds can be turned to strength in diversity. The cultural diversity should be a source of strength, instead of weakness, as it is presently. The change mantra should have emphasized deliberate search for areas of interest as enunciated in the idea of consubstantiation. Based on the idea of Identification the Igbos could seek what is of common interest and benefit for them if they consubstantiate with the Youbas or Hausa/Fulanis without denying themselves of their 'Igboness'. The same thing for the other ethnic nation-states.

The use of cultural communication will support the concept of identification by encouraging Nigerians to interact in manners that de-emphasize ethno-centrism, prejudice, misattribution and stereotypes; but rather promote and enhance shared meanings to create understanding, peace and harmony amongst Nigerians. Intercultural communication does not deny individual cultural differences, it rather uses it to create the 'we feeling' and bonding that is required for nationhood.

The government's 'Change' mantra would have been more effective if these two concepts were applied in the communication to sensitize and enlighten the citizens about nation-building. The consubstantiation of the interest and desires of all the ethnic groups in Nigeria can be located in the universal unifying elements which include change from unfairness to fairness, from discrimination along the lines of ethnicity to ethnic inclusion without diluting various ethnic cultures. It could include adherence to equitable distribution of the common wealth, openness and accountability in governance, corporate governance, responsible citizenship, equality before the law and respect for all Nigerians irrespective of ethnic background or differences in tongue. The media will be used to frame the stories of this project as building a new Nigeria with a bigger vision where everybody and every ethnic-nationality is a stakeholder. Part of the elements of cultural communication is that the campaign must be sincere, goal driven and involving. The people must be made to be part of the vision and its execution. Currently, this is not the kind of communication that spews from government. The concept of change is communicated more as a campaign slogan and excludes all who do not belong to APC. This kind of slogan will neither build nationhood nor strengthen the nation-state.

### 4.2. Build Trust, Build a Nation

The bonding together of a people from different cultural backgrounds requires building trust amongst them. Building trust requires consistent discussions, listening, sharing, learning and consensus building. In the case of building the Nigerian nationhood, strategic communication based on principles of Identification and cultural communication are required to achieve all these. It encourages holistic participation by all and sundry, irrespective of people's ethnic groups. Communication is the engine of all forms of engagement, connection and involvement. Intercultural communication helps to negotiate meaning from communication of differing groups thereby bringing it to a point of common interest and mutual collective benefits.

To build a Nigerian nationhood, not just any form of communication is required, but intercultural communication based on the consubstantiation of the interests of the various groups in Nigeria, which leverages mostly research and people engagement for its operation. It deemphasizes stereotypes, misattribution, prejudices and overgeneralization. It tends to unite than divide. It builds trust and confidence amongst people who ordinarily would feel like strangers, rather than brothers and sisters in a common nationhood. Nationhood cannot be built with a 'feeling' of mistrust.

In a well-constructed nationhood, the cultural values of the various groups that make up the nation-state must be recognised and respected. While as, the various ethnic groups - stimulated and encouraged by intercultural communication - will passionately thrive to consubstantiate with others to build a virile nation. This recognition of group cultural values and the group's volition to strive to be together will develop the natural trust that is required for them to live in peace and harmony. The government should be deliberate in applying the intercultural communication paradigm

based on the Burkean theory of identification including all its ancillary components of consubstantiation to achieve the needed trust amongst the various ethnic nationalities in order to build a nation-state into nationhood.

### 4.3. Cultural Toleration/Ethnocentrism and Multi-Culturalism

Cultures vary in core values. All cultures are a subject of symbols and meaning-making. Scholars consider cultural values as the most deeply felt of all emotions. Culture here encompasses religious beliefs, language, and others. Various people use their cultural values to determine rationality, ethics, morals and mores. To some people, anything different from their way of behavior falls short of the standard. This, most times leads to ethnocentrism, which causes distrust and breeds conflict.

The tools of intercultural communication could be deployed in educating and enlightening Nigerians that a post-modern nation is not necessarily constitutive of sameness in culture, beliefs, language and other differences. The idea of cultural relativism and multiculturalism will help in educating people on how to accommodate and tolerate other people and other cultures. Moreover, even in the face of differences in the various ethnic-nationalities, they should be taught through a combination of development communication and cultural communication based on framing of events and fantasy/myths, to know and learn that diversity is a virtue for nationhood. Communication should be used to let people understand that all Nigerians are equal and equally valued; and that all cultures in Nigeria are appreciated, respected and equally recognised. Communication should stress that no culture is superior to the other and no one person, no matter how highly ranked in position or possession, is superior to the other. People should also be encouraged to adorn cultural dressings of other cultures. For instance, the Jonathan Niger-Delta apparel looks good and is now being worn by anybody who appreciates it, irrespective of region. But, in this case it should be made a deliberate communication campaign to emphasize cross-cultural dressing as part of 'Nigerianess'.

Intercultural communication approaches should be deployed to enlighten Nigerians about the effect of stereotypes by featuring movies, films, radio programmes and other programme types that will showcase the best and the riches of almost every region and ethnic-nationality, if possible. The stereotype that 'All Igbos or Ijebu people love money' for instance is fallacious and should be debunked using strategic communication tools. Emphasis should be laid on the hardworking nature of the Igbos and the Ijebus. The idea that the Hausa man does not know anything is not valid and that should not be the characterization of an average Hausa/Fulani stock.

### 4.4. Promoting Democratic Principles and Values

The essence of democracy and its culture should be promoted, especially, in the area of open governance. Full participation in public affairs by the citizens and equal treatment of all before the law and in the allocation of national resources to all the regions of the country should be encouraged. Politics should emphasize the choice of leaders who are capable, competent and are of good character. Cultural communication should be used to enlighten the citizenry, particularly the uneducated ones, about democratic tenets and the need to focus on competent leadership than on the tribe or ethnic origin of the leader. On the other hand, development communication strategies, like research, should be employed to understand the feelings and concerns of the citizens. Then the people in government should also be educated on the purpose of leadership using the feedback mechanism offered by the system.

### 5. Conclusion/Recommendations

To build the Nigerian nation, communication should be used as an instrument of dialogue and negotiation to create a peoples' shared vision. Lozare (2015), argues that, communication can open the citizen's eyes to see the bigger opportunities in building a bigger nation as against clinging on ethnic nationalities. He added that through intercultural communication every citizen will be made to feel a part of the nation and also appropriate their civic responsibilities.

Lozare (2005, p. 1) affirmed that, "perhaps, only when citizens of a country have nurtured a true shared vision, transcending personal agendas, can the process of development reach tipping point". He further identified communication as a non-material resource which transcends in importance the value of material resources. Lozare, argues further that intercultural communication is important in nation-building as it bonds the people together with the society and the society with the state. He recounts that many nation-building efforts fail on account of ineffective communication.

Finally, this paper recommends the following:
- The strengthening and reorganisation of the National Orientation Agency, NOA, to enable it to do its jobs.
- The establishment of a national literacy and enlightenment campaign based on a clear understanding of how the media operates, using the tools of intercultural cultural communication paradigm.
- Media literacy should be made a part of our educational curriculum to enable an average Nigerian to be able to interpret media messages.
- The Nigerian media should also be made to appreciate intercultural communication as distinct from the dominant market orientated news production mode. The framing of news in Nigeria follows the market logic to the detriment of news coverage and dissemination of developmental issues that concern the citizens of the country – like issues of environment, population, agriculture, and others.
- Institutions of higher learning should also be encouraged to teach intercultural and multicultural communication. This will enable Nigerians to learn how to tolerate another people's culture. That way communication will help in building understanding and respect amongst the various ethnic nationalities. Communication is the oil that lubricates the society and the engine that provides reality of the Nation.

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