



REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY IN NIGERIA PUBLIC SERVICE AND THE PROBLEM OF SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: ISSUES AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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The term representative bureaucracy is not exclusively related to the Nigeria administrative system, it has gained popularity and become acceptable public policy in most heterogeneous societies globally, especially in the area of recruitment as well as promotion of personnel in public institutions. The principle arise in Nigeria out of the need to ameliorate the prevalent ethnic conflicts, arising out of the competition over the control of political power, government appointments and employment as well as admission into federal universities in Nigeria. This study attempt to examine the impact of this policy in Nigeria public service on sustainable national development with data mostly generated from the secondary source, to analyze the relationship between the two variables. Using the Marxist political economy theory as its framework of analysis, this study argues that the brand of representative bureaucracy practiced in Nigeria public service is hostile to sustainable national development. It however, recommends that there is need to revert to merit system instead of ethnic representation in employment into Nigeria public service as well as the federal universities since it is evident that the present arrangement has failed in all ramifications and has arrested any form of sustainable national development.

Key word: Quota system, federal character principle, centrifugal tendency, National integration and sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

The principles of bureaucracy are are not strange to management scholars and administrators and are universally accepted and applied. But yet their precise application varies to a great extent from country to country depending on the historical context of a particular country and the people concerned. The representative bureaucracy or federal character principle is one thing and its application is another. Though, there is no universally accepted model of bureaucracy, there are universally recognized principles of bureaucracy, experience has revealed that there are certain unavoidable implications in the working characteristic of any bureaucracy as expanded by the founding fathers. Merit and competent examination are often the basis of recruitment and promotion and not by representation of any ethnic or cultural groups in an ideal bureaucracy, they subsumes difference class or characteristics of human being working together to achieve organizational corporate goal. Each one of these classes of humans has a vital obligation to make the organization relevant in the achievement of a sustainable national development in the society concerned. It is the quest for national integration and sustainable development in a heterogeneous society such as Nigeria that gave rise to the idea of representative bureaucracy or the federal character principle (FCP) in Nigeria public service, as is alternatively referred to by scholars of comparative public administration. Basically the term representative bureaucracy as implied in this study refers to a formal recognition of the plural nature of a definite society or country in the recruitment of employees into any government institutions, also in the authoritative allocation of administrative and political offices as well as the national wealth and resources. Elaiwu in [Cornelius and Greg](#)

[\(2013\)](#) view the concept of representative bureaucracy as the process of creating unity and sense of belonging among heterogeneous groups in a particular state. But In the view of [Ezeibe \(2013\)](#), it refers to the process of constructing a national identity using the power of the state. It further contended that it involves the process designed for unification of different group of people within the state so that they can remains politically stable and viable in the long run within a given country. The concept gained popularity in Nigeria in the post-independence era due to the prevailing diversity in culture, tradition and religious affiliations in the country after amalgamation. Several scholars consider the term representative bureaucracy or FCP as a tool for nation building and sustainable development through eradication of dominance of any sort particularly in the matters concerning the federal government offices and ministries by a particular group within the country, while others perceive its implementation in Nigeria as contradictory to the purpose for which it was adopted by the federal government. The fundamental bases of the federal character principle are to permit the composition and conduct of public institutions and affairs to reflect the heterogeneous character of a given country at a given time. It is rooted on the fact and or, assumptions that a sense of belonging is likely to be evoked from each regional groups that made up the country when national institutions and affairs are reflective of the composition and conduct, of the heterogeneous nature of the country, in other words it is designed to alleviate or reduce the perceived potential bellicosity and political struggle that might characterized Nigeria's society if otherwise.

The primary concern of the representative bureaucracy or federal character principle is the demographic composition of

public organizations in relation to the heterogeneous nature of a given political society. The principles of representative bureaucracy which is here used interchangeably with the federal character principle contends that, the social composition of a particular public organization is pertinent to their performance and acceptability before the citizens or the general public to which they represent. It must be on this ground that [Krislov \(1974\)](#), in one of his classic works wondered whether any bureaucracy can enjoy legitimacy if it did not symbolize all different socio-cultural groups that made up the society in question. In addition, the concept of representative bureaucracy is also perceived as a process in which there is a minimal distinction between the bureaucrats as a group and the community. To be an encompassing system, a bureaucracy must first of all, consist of a reasonable cross-section of the body politic in terms of occupation, class, geography, and the like; and secondly it must be in tune with the general ethos and attitudes of the society of which it is a part, furthermore, representative bureaucracy is expected to promote upward mobility on the part of the minority groups in the country and represent the open competition of democracy ([Van-Riper, 1958](#)). The above postulate by [Van-Riper \(1958\)](#) appears obfuscating since a closer examination of the FCP theory has revealed that its practices are inimical to democratic ethos. In fact the major scholarly attack on the practice of FCP or representative bureaucracy stems from the fact that it does not support the Weberian perception of bureaucracy where merit and competent examination are the basis of recruitment and promotion and not by representation of any ethnic or cultural groups. likewise, the idea of making public bureaucracy representative of the heterogeneous nature of a given society or country in contemporary time only also signify that political considerations are paramount in the establishment of the public service instead of achievement of a sustainable socio-political and economic development of the nation state. As a result of the civil war in the late 1960s successive governments and dominant political elites in Nigeria have continued to search for a lasting policy that will ensure sustainable development, national integration and peaceful coexistence of the various ethnic groups that made up the country, till date the security of this search for the formula of social peace and sustainable development in Nigeria has not been secured. However, it was in the midst of this search for lasting policy that the [C.D.C \(1979\)](#) reported that there is evident supporting the fact that inter- ethnic rivalries in the country between one ethnic group or combination of ethnic groups and others has developed to the point where some are attempting to secure the domination of government bureaucracy at the exclusion of other ethnic groups within the country. The [C.D.C \(1979\)](#) however, argued that it is indispensable to make some provision in the Nigeria constitution ensuring that the predominance of persons from a few states or from few ethnic groups is avoided in the composition of government or the appointment or election of persons to high government offices in the Nigerian

bureaucracy ([C.D.C, 1979](#)). In the end, Nigeria political elites accepted the report and adopted the federal character principle or representative bureaucracy to counteract what they saw then as imminent danger and impediment to national integration and sustainable national development in the country.

This clause was also enshrined in the 1999 Nigeria constitution as amended. Specifically the section 14, subsection 3 of the 1999 constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) states that: "The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies". In pursuant of the above constitutional stipulation, section 135(3) avowed that in the appointment of Ministers, the president of the federation shall reflect the federal character of Nigeria" provided that in giving effects to the provision aforementioned, the president federation shall appoint at least one Minister from each of the federating units or states who shall be an indigene of such state for representative purpose ([Nnoli, 1960](#)). in addition, Section 157 provides that appointments by the president of the federation into the offices of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Head of Service of the Federation, Ambassadors, or the principal representatives abroad, Permanent Secretary or other Chief Executive in any Ministry or Department of the federal Government, or any office on the personal staff of the president shall have regard to the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity. Section 197(2) also insists that the composition of the officer corps and other ranks of the Armed Forces of the Federation shall reflect the federal character of Nigeria. Various other provisions were made in the constitution to ensure that the federal character principle was operative in the political and administrative process ([Nnoli, 1960](#)). It is understandable that the representative bureaucracy was adopted and enshrined in the 1999 Nigeria constitution to deal with the problem of imbalance, marginalization and discrimination in the Nigeria public sector in order to ensure cooperative social existence, national integration and sustainable national development. But, the big question is whether this representative bureaucracy or FCP as the case maybe have really achieved the cooperate socio-cultural objective to which it was established or has exacerbated the problem of discrimination in the composition and conduct of public institutions and affairs given the fact that Nigerians citizen overtime have demonstrated a very high proclivity and, or propensity to their ethnic identities? On that very ground this study attempts a thematic assessment of the feasibility of the doctrine in Nigeria political topography, paying a particular attention to its impact on the struggle for sustainable national

development as well as national integration. But we shall first of all attempt a theoretical exposition of the major concepts in the study, such as representative bureaucracy which is here used interchangeably with federal character principle and sustainable national development in order not to confuse or repeat ourselves as the study progresses. Before that however, we shall introduce a theoretical framework under which the analysis of this study will be derived based on the existing literature and or relevant data.

Theoretical framework: We intend to anchor our analysis of the impact of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria public service on the struggle for sustainable development on the Marxist political economy theory. In adopting this theory as our analytical framework this study will highlight such analytical indices like; the distribution of the national wealth and resource and the concomitant contradiction arising from both the social productive forces and the existing relation of production in the quest for better livelihood in Nigeria. We are interested in these variables because they are among the essential economic factors that have always generated qualms upon distribution of resources, especially in the developing world. It is evident that the relation of production and distribution of national wealth in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular are characterized by conflict and antagonism, consequent upon which the dominant regional political elites in the country have found themselves engaged in an endless struggle for position of dominance not just in the state power but also in the production and distribution of wealth in the country. Although to become wealthy in Nigeria without the patronage of the state is likely to invite the unpleasant attention of those who control the state power (Ake, 2001). Marx has highlighted the fact that the mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social political and intellectual life. He maintained that it is not the consciousness of man that determines their existence but their social existence that determines his consciousness. At a certain stage in Nigeria development it became apparent that state power is everything, it is not only the access to easy wealth but also the means to security and the only guarantor of general well-being, in other words, the appurtenance of state power guarantee everything that a man would require including life. It is generally useless to even entertain any hope of getting wealthy through entrepreneurial activities or to even take personnel safety for granted for any person who is outside the hegemonic bloc of the political elites in Nigeria. But for those that is part of or even related to the ruling class, in other words the hegemonic bloc of the political elites to engage in any entrepreneurial activity is not necessary because they can get rich, appropriate surplus with less risk and less trouble by means of state power. The representative bureaucracy, quota system or federal character principle is just one of the numerous methods that are employed by dominant political elite in the country to maintain their hold on the tentacles of state power and to maintain their continued exploitation of better qualified citizens of the

country from the other class or region. The representative bureaucracy is purely a doctrine of class domination. The primitive accumulation with state power is carried out by domestic dominant power and certain external forces. Contemporary Nigeria nation is a renter states package and structured to encourage the use of the state power for selfish ends. The bourgeoisie scholars such as Clark (2009) argued that the state emerged to moderate class struggle in advanced bourgeoisie states but that is not the case in contemporary Nigeria where state are parts and parcels of the class struggle it is was supposed to moderate.

Thus Nigeria state rather than maintaining or moderating economic relations in the struggle for sustainable national development became an instrument of domination, exploitation and intimidation of the citizens in the hands of the dominant class or ethnic group within the society, the state itself has become involved in the struggle for the accumulation of capital instead of being aloof to moderate contradictions within the society over which it claim supremacy (Asobie, 2002). In addition Miliband (1977) argued that the Nigeria states are dependent on the alien forces that colonized them and consequently is both the source of economic power and an instrument of accumulation of economic power since the state is the major means of production, the representative bureaucracy is therefore a product of its environment and cannot be expected to act with human face (Ake, 1981). Nigeria government lacks the capacity to moderate the struggles between the existing relation of production and the prevalent social productive force which is pronounced among the various ethnic groups and states that made up the country that promote winner take all, hence the political and economic imbalances between the various federating regions or states that makes up the country. These imbalances exist in almost every sector of the economy, and consequently creating precarious socio-political and economic atmospheres among the federating region that is inimical to national integration and sustainable development in the country. This ugly situation therefore denies the minority groups within the country their constitutional right to self-development and actualization of self-esteem. It must be in the process of correcting this socio-political and economic injustice in Nigeria that the policy of representative bureaucracy was established to promote federal character principles in the federal and or state bureaucracy in Nigeria. But the question is how far has this attempt fared in the actualization of the national objective for which it was established or is it another political dribbling by the dominant political elites just for selfish political reason? The study intends to unveil the answer to the above question by a critical reexamination of its prospects and the challenges it has encountered and is encountering in the Nigeria administrative environment.

Conceptual clarifications: At this point the study will embark on the conceptual clarification of the major vocabularies employed for easier understanding of this essay such as: (a)

Representative bureaucracy and (b) Sustainable national development. After which we shall pay a thematic attention on the impact of the term representative bureaucracy, quota system or federal character principle on the quest for sustainable national development in Nigeria with a view to unveil its implication in Nigeria public service, specifically to understand whether it has enhanced its employees performance towards the actualization of the organizational objective to which it was established or have kept it down since inception and requires fundamental restructuring for better outcome. We intend to start with the term representative bureaucracy which we have made known is here used interchangeably with the federal character principles or quota system as the case may be.

Representative bureaucracy: The term "Representative bureaucracy" was first used in Nigeria by the late General M. R. Mohammed as federal character principle (FCP) in his address to the inaugural session of the (C.D.C, 1979) on the 18th day of October 1975. The General was taxing them to unearth a lasting solution to the problem of marginalization that was becoming common among the federating regions in the new Nigeria under his watch. The representative bureaucracy according to the (C.D.C) report of 1977 refers to the distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Babura, 2013). Though the 1979 constitution Section 14 Subsection 3 define it as;

the composition of the Government of the federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or form a few ethnics or other sectional group in that government or any of its agencies.

It is apparent from the report and the subsequent federal constitution that it was an effort to address the problem of the prevailing uneven bureaucratic structure and ethnic domination in government offices in order to achieve national integration and sustainable development in Nigeria. Though, some scholars has argued that the principle of representative bureaucracy arouse out of the need to ameliorate the prevalent ethnic conflict in the country arising out of the competition over the control of political power, government appointments, citing of public industries and institutions, employment into public organizations as well as admission into federal universities in Nigeria (Edigin, 2010). In addition Ekeh (1989) is of the opinion that, the introduction of federal character principle, quota system or representative bureaucracy in Nigeria is an attempt to deal with the problems of marginalization arising from the distribution of

privileges and benefits among the federating regions or states in Nigeria. This implies that representative bureaucracy as a doctrine of the 1979 constitution sought to give a semblance of order to the modes of this distribution by preventing any ethnic group from having dominance and exclusive access to these opportunities and benefits inherent in the exercise of state powers and consequently ensuring that every state or region has equal access to the benefits of the state. In other words, the application of the Federal character principle, the quota system or the representative bureaucracy in the Nigeria public service is seen as the democratization of our public bureaucracy through the principle of representation as contained in the 1979 constitution of Nigeria (Okpata, 2011), as a matter of fact many scholars consider it as a tool for nation building and development through elimination of dominance of any particular group and marginalization of other groups in the government institutions, while others see its implementation as defeating the purpose for which it was adopted. For instance, Edigin (2010), Osaghae (1988), Ammani (2014), are of the opinion that representative bureaucracy has helped in consolidating national stability by reducing ethnic competition for political position and ethnic politics and makes it difficult for an ethnic chauvinist to take over political power and suppress other ethnic groups and that the principle is not only desirable but also inevitable in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria.

In addition Olaopa (2012) contends that the principle has been one of the effective nation-building strategies invented for managing the combustive diversity in Nigeria, though, it had badly eroded professional and competency capacity of the public service. He maintained that determined to ensure equality for the unequal in the federal government institutions, federal character principle has become discriminatory. However, the interpretation of the federal character on the basis of state and ethnicity is regarded by some as inadequate as other social division in Nigeria include class, religion and ideological divisions. Operations of federal character tend to give more powers to the politically dominant groups, creating wider power disparity between the stronger and weaker groups (Ikime, 2002). Other scholars also argued that the principle provide an equitable formula for the distribution of socio-economic service and infrastructural facilities; provides modalities for redressing imbalances; ensures equitable admission into federal universities; ensures that no one section of the society unduly dominates the elective or appointive positions; provides equal access into Armed Force, the police, etc. protect the interest of minority ethnic groups, ensures even spread in the recruitment into federal civil service among civil servants, has ensured the corporate existence of Nigeria and has douse the centripetal tendencies in the country (Ammani, 2014). This means that the concept is concerned with the demographic composition of public organizations in relation to the federating regions that made up the political society. The term representative bureaucracy is a concept or doctrine which emphasize that every social group in a heterogeneous society

should have spokesman or woman and officeholders in administrative as well as political positions. The idea of representation bureaucracy is not novel to scholars of politics and comparative public administration; it has been part of political discourse since the early period of democracy in the city states of Athens. However, the issue of representation in the public bureaucracy does not enjoy either the popularity or age of its use in democratic practices. The representative bureaucracy is seen "as a deliberate design to accommodate less dominant but often forcibly expressed interest... Essentially, it is a design which is aimed at depoliticizing new demand through an institutional arrangement hence this principle should be modified and gradually applied even to the private sector" (Olagunju, 1987). On the other hand while Ezenwa (1987) argued that the principle arose out of the need to correct the anomalies that emanated from the random and uneven distribution of natural and economic resources he is doubtful of whether such principle could correct such anomalies that have already been inculcated and imbibed by the various ethnic groupings in Nigeria. He however, pointed out that this inequality which found succor in areas of revenue allocation and educational advancement worsened after independence. However the theory of representative bureaucracy recommended that a demographically diverse public sector workforce will lead to a policy outcome that reflects the interest of all groups represented, including historically disadvantaged communities. It symbolize an attempt to build a nation where equal opportunities abound and where every individual must feel that he has equal chance to participate without bias of ethnic affiliations (Talib, 1987). It is both a reaction as well as a system. It is an effort to correct those wrong past practices in the composition of the federal and state bureaucracy, as well as the conduct of public management which tended to exploit the heterogeneous nature of the nation and by so doing animosity among and between the federating units. Also it is a reaction to those practices which tended to reflect egotistic and narrow-minded reflection, particularly those pessimistic behaviors which placed the national interest below the self interests. Representative bureaucracy involves a deliberate plan to construct means of ensuring the proper distribution of amenities and government projects in the whole country. The term representative bureaucracy or federal character principle is not exclusively related to Nigeria administrative system; it has gained popularity and become acceptable public policy in many heterogeneous societies in the world both the developed and the developing, especially in the area of recruitment as well as promotion in public institutions. For instance, in Canada the representative bureaucracy or federal character principle is referred to as employment equity, in India and Nepal it is reservation while it is known as positive discrimination in the United Kingdom. In the United States of America the introduction and adoption of the principle of representation in public institutions is habitually discussed under the umbrella of the term affirmative action. Its main

objectives have been to ameliorate inequality in employment process, enhance sustainable national development, encourage equitable access to education, promote national integration and eventually, to ensure that public institutions are representative of the population they serve. The argument in favor of representative bureaucracy is also apparent from other administrative perspectives. For instance, it is argued that the composition of bureaucracy is in itself, capable of serving as a check on a malevolent bureaucracy especially when the traditional controls of administrative actions such as oversight law, budgeting, and so, on become inadequate (Yagboyaju and Oluseye, 2017). Other scholars has also argued also that the heterogeneous nature of the Nigeria society is the root cause of constant socio-economic and political crisis and blamed the governments for not attempting to ameliorate the horrible social political situation in the country. These scholars are of the view that the universal remedy to this problem lay in the application of the principles of representative bureaucracy or federal character approach to the administration, employment and appointments in Nigeria public institutions as well as admission of students into federal tertiary institutions in the Nigeria, including elections into public offices (Ikejiani *et al.*, 1986). Njoku (2017) on the other hand contends that the application of the representative bureaucracy and or federal character principle democratizes personnel management, enhances sustainable development and promotion of employees in the public sector. As it will definitely lead to the introduction of political arrangement in the Nigeria public service that will provide due recognition and fair-play to all ethnic nationalities, states and local governments in the country in employment, appointment and promotion in all government establishments, without consideration and justice to merit, qualification and experience. The representative bureaucracy as an integrative instrument in Nigeria political society stands for fairness and effective representation of the various components of the federation in the country's position of power, status and influence. Its acceptance and application in the country is ensuring a broad public participation in the nation's public sector while encouragement equitable sustainable national development. Though, the application of the principle had remained challenging because of the disparity in the standard of training attained between or among the federating states in relation to the federal institution (Mohammed, 1998). The educationally disadvantaged states with lower standards of personnel or representatives are pressuring to be accommodated and given their own quota in the federal public institutions, in order to ensure equity and justice but there is no injustice worst that equal treatment of unequal employees. The principle of Representative bureaucracy contends that the social composition of public organization is pertinent to their performance and acceptability in the views of the general public. It must be as a result of the above postulate that some scholars wonder whether any

bureaucracy can ever secure legitimacy if it is unable to represent all sectors of a society to which they are serving (Krislov, 1974). Finally, representative bureaucracy defined as a process in which there is minimal distinction between the bureaucrats as a group and the community.

To be representative, a bureaucracy must as a matter of necessity consist of a rational cross-section of the body politic in terms of occupation, class, geography, and all so it must be in general tune with the ethos and attitudes of the society of which it is part. The major source of scholarly attack on the principles of representative bureaucracy is that it does not agree with Weber (1946) principles and perception of ideal bureaucracy in which merit and competent examination are the basis of recruitment and promotion. In addition the idea of making public bureaucracy representative of the population irrespective of the training and quality of the persons being employed into particular public institutions in a given time also signifies that political considerations are paramount in the establishment of the public service than the social and economic development of the country (Van Riper, 1958). So much on the issue of representative bureaucracy, quota system or federal character principle we shall now turn to the next variable in the study namely sustainable national development.

Sustainable national development: The famous Brundtland report as cited in UNGA (1987) used the term “sustainable development” extensively in its contextual expositions and defined it as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. By this definition the report is argued to have put the concept of sustainable development firmly into the political arena of international development thinking. Through an analysis of the key debates in the previously separate literatures of development thinking and environmentalism, it is possible to comprehend the sources of continued conflict regarding sustainable development in theory and practice and the broad political economic context in which sustainable development is being sought in the twenty-first century. By the early 1990s, it was suggested that there were more than 70 definitions of sustainable development in circulation. Certainly, it has been translated into more than twenty five languages by now but the Brundtland (UNGA, 1987) definition of the term continues to be that which is most widely used and accepted by scholars of development studies. In this study, sustainable development refers to maintaining national development over a period of time and by national development we refer to a phenomenon that encompasses a whole nation. Hence, national development can be viewed and described as the overall development or an amalgam of socio-political, economic, cultural as well as religious advancement of a nation or country. And these are actualized through developmental planning, which can be seen as a collection of country’s strategies mapped out by the government. The concept national development is used to refer to a set of sustainable

growth and development of a nation to a more conducive and desirable one. National development plan is usually people oriented and its success or failure is determined in terms of the impact it has on the masses (Onyishi, 2018; Onyishi and Amoke, 2018). National development encompasses more than just the provision of physical infrastructure, it must be man oriented. Amucheazi (2009) in one of his classic studies has rightly argued that national development is realistically seen as a multi-dimensional process involving the totality of man in his political, economic, psychological and social realities among others. He insisted that it is a holistic phenomenon not a concept to be abridged in application or compartmentalized and approached as a uni-dimensional process. Fundamentally it should be man-oriented and not institutional-oriented. If we focus our attention on the individual citizens we can then think of what he needs at a particular time and how he can combat a number of colonial legacies which have held him down (Igbogo, 2015).

He maintained that national development, more importantly must be conceived in the context of a particular social system. In other words, it is wrong and indeed injurious to conceive of national development in terms of system or system suited for a different cultural milieu. Ogai (2008) also conceive the term national development as a gradual manifestation of positive changes in the economic, industrial, political, social, cultural and administrative life of a country. He also went further to contend that in viewing the progress of a country, the term national development is more comprehensive than structural advancement. National development therefore can be described as the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as religious advancement of a country or nation. This is best achieved through development planning, which can be described as the country’s collection of strategies mapped out by the government economic growth. It involves high quality and large quantity of productive resources as well as efficiency in using them. When we talk about national development we are concerned about quality improvement in the various sectors of our national life such as the political, ethical, socio-psychological, and economic spheres of national existence, which combined, to define and assure quality and productive existence for the citizens of a country. It is the accelerated economic, administrative, social, political, cultural and industrial changes in a condition considered desirable to achieve the progress of civilization. The crucial element in national development is the constant and joint effort by the citizenry to harness the force of nature and human potentials for their own material well-being. Nigeria has experienced series of development plans in its history. Though, it has consistently been hunted by the specter of statist and or statism which has concentrated both the political and economic power of the nation on the central government, thereby making competitive development struggle among the federating units virtually impossible. Her several decades of independence actually rolled out by series of development experiment that never made any headway as

a result of the statist nature of the national economy. This seems the only country where virtually all notions and models of national development have been experimented without any meaningful result (Aremu, 2003). Though, the collapse of the first Republic and the commencement of civil war also disrupted the plan. After the civil war in 1970, the second national development plan 1970 to 1974 was launched, the plan priorities were in agriculture, industry, transport, manpower, defense, electricity, communication and water supply and provision of social services (Ogwumike, 1995). The third plan, covering the period of 1975 to 1980 was considered more ambitious than the second plan. Emphasis was placed on rural development and efforts to revamp agricultural sector. The fourth plan 1981 to 1985 recognized the role of social services, health services, etc. The plan was aimed at bringing about improvement in the living conditions of the people. The specific objectives were: an increase in the real income of the average citizen, more even distribution of income among individuals and socio-economic groups, increased dependence on the country's material and human resources, a reduction in the level of unemployment and underemployment (1995). During these periods, Nigeria's enormous oil wealth was not invested to build a viable industrial base for the country and for launching an agrarian revolution to liquidate mass poverty. For instance, the Green Revolution Programme that replaced Operation Feed the Nation failed to generate enough food for the masses as a result of lackadaisical attitude given to it by the economic managers (Onyishi and Amoke, 2018). In the recent past, various strategies for development have also been tried with little or no result; among these were the structural adjustment programme (SAP), Vision 2010, and later vision 2020. National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), creation of development centers, and so on. The above postulates and expositions certainly must have tutored us on why national development must be man oriented, that is, why man must be both the subject and object of development in a country or nation in contemporary times. Representative bureaucracy in Nigeria public service: challenges and prospects: It is no doubt imperative in any heterogeneous society to identify a lasting principle that will carry everybody along and eliminate or reduce envy or bigotry to the barest minimum. Again it is no doubt that it is in the attempt to secure a national integration and sustainable development in a heterogeneous Nigeria that the idea of representative bureaucracy was introduced in the country. The idea however, is not a novel idea it has been in practiced in other part of the world and has become acceptable public policy in the area of recruitment and promotion in public offices in many heterogeneous societies such as Nigeria. In Canada for instance it is referred to as employment equity, in India and Nepal it is known as reservation, but in the United Kingdom it is referred to as positive discrimination. Its major aim is to reduce disproportional employment in the public offices, enhance equitable access to education, promote

national integration as well as national development and eventually, to ensure that public institutions are true representative of the people they are established to serve. However, its implementation in Nigeria public service has become counterproductive, in practice, the principle in Nigeria encourages divisive ethnic sentiments and tends to pose serious challenges to the administrative effectiveness in the Nigeria public service, especially since merit is surrender on the altar of federal character principles. It has been argued that the representative bureaucracy or federal character principle is simply an elite strategy which cannot enhance sustainable development or national integration in Nigeria because it is not designed for such responsibility but for selfish elite's political reasons (Gboyaga, 1989). He maintained that they constitute the ideas of corrupt cabals for their own selfish political interest and use ethnic sentiment to cover their evil intention. The practice of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria context is a strategically plan of the dominant political elites to position their loyal agents in public offices who will act as political representatives against the set out goals of the establishment where they work. These issues tend to emphasize liability to the judicious practice of the principle and poses serious impediment to the realization of sustainable development in Nigeria. The practice of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria instead of restructuring the negative effects of ethnocentrism to positive outcome, tend to aggravate ethno-regional division in the country, its practice in Nigeria lack the fundamental stimulus required as a state policy for ensuring sustainable national development, nation building or national integration. The principle is centrifugal, in practice rather than centripetal in Nigeria context, it does not promote a working environment where individuals or employees are seen as bona fide members of the nation-state, but a situation where they are viewed from the political calculus of ethno-linguistic group within the country, in so doing strengthening the integration of the federating units instead of the nation as a whole (Onyeoziri and Momah, 2002). It is argued that public management of public service is developmental and entails that the federal or even state administrative managers should possess a unique kind of skills, education, knowledge and values as pre-requisite for effective performance in the management situation (Okata, 2004). The above postulates imply that competence not representative bureaucracy, federal character principles or ethnic balancing as argued by the advocates of federal character is the requirement for successful, effective and efficient performance of public organizations and by implication the achievement of national integration and sustainable development. In addition, Sharma *et al.* (2011) avowed that politicization of public organization breeds unevenness in that institution, which is inimical to organizational growth and accordingly contributes considerably to inefficiency of most public institutions in Nigeria. Those who got employed in federal institutions through representative bureaucracy or federal character

principle tends to be more loyal to their region or state to which they represent, since they lack the requisite competence for the position they occupied. They often have the proclivity to frustrate organizational objectives without being appropriately sanctioned as a result of the region or unit they represent in that particular public organization.

In corroboration of the above Utume (2003) contends that there is genuine fear that employees that are appointed into a public organization, through the principles of representative bureaucracy may begin to operate like political representatives without paying due attention to their job descriptions. He maintained that the variation in human and material resources across ethnic groups in Nigeria is known but the struggle to control the power in the center among the political class is so absorbed to the point that everything else including national integration and sustainable national development is abandoned. Competition as a mode of recruitment into the public service would have engendered competence which would encourage good governance and in time condense ethnic tension and the possibility of political pandemonium, a situation that would have definitely encourage sustainable national development. The application of the principles have brought about the inadvertent effect of generating situations of elimination by substitution in Nigeria public service which makes it counterproductive, this is carry out through discrimination in appointment and promotion in the public institutions, as the representative bureaucracy attempts to achieve equal representation of all states in the public sector, forgetting the fact that there is no inequality worst than equal treatment of unequal. In addition it is argued that the principle allows ethno-regional patrons and their clients to exploit and mismanage state resources without contributing to any meaningful development (Tonwe and Oghator, 2009). To promote administrative effectiveness for performance in the Nigerian public service, Utomi (2002) assert that the emphasis should be shifted from representative bureaucracy to more pressing issues in Nigeria which is the needs to engage on the issues of competence, commitment, corruption and conflict of interest and career certainty in the public service, he is of the opinion that it is only when that happens that Nigeria can think of sustainable national development as well as national integration. It is true that the principle was introduced for the sole purposes of ensuring ethnic balancing in the country's public service. But the ethnic balancing is conceived, perfected and applied by the dominant political elite for the promotion of their egocentrism through an institutionalized mediocrity. It is no secret that Nigeria is divided along ethnic nationalities with language as the most outstanding factor that constitutes the basis for consideration in federal appointments in the federal public service. Given the heterogeneous nature of Nigeria society, it is unmitigatedly imperative to acknowledge the fact that problems of sustainable national development as well as national integration in Nigeria are deeply rooted in the political environment and the structure of the federal public

service system which encourages mediocre under the pretence of representative bureaucracy or federal character principles. This has been identified as one of the major challenges of Nigeria public service. There are many other countries as we have already emphasized that practice representative bureaucracy but still can boast of viable public institutions and sustainable national development, this begs the question as to why Nigeria brand is counterproductive? The answer to that question is very clear, the fact is that representative bureaucracy was not introduced in Nigeria for the purpose of achieving sustainable development or national integration since such objective was never in the agenda of the political class, it was introduced by the dominant political elites to ensure a wider and stronger hold on the state power, it does not matter whether the qualification and training of the individual controlling the highest authority position in the country is suitable as long as they enjoy the appurtenance of power. By virtue of its statutory responsibility the Federal Character Commission in Nigeria strives to maintain equitable distribution of human resources in government establishments. Regrettably, the practice has been used to downgrade the system of merit which is commonly accepted as the significant basis of every public organization in the world. In the words of T. T. Meadow, for instance, the long duration of the Chinese empire is exclusively and generally a function of the good governance that promotes the development of men of skills, talent and merit in the Chinese public service system.

Unfortunately, the political elites and senior bureaucrats in Nigeria public service perceive the ethnic balancing arrangement as a method of extending their power and political tentacles in the country rather than a basis for the recruitment of competent hands into the public service to ensure sustainable national development in the country. In highlighting the weakness of the principles of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria (Gboyega, 1989) opined that the issues of making public institutions reflect the federal character was taken up unsystematically, giving rise to arbitrariness and victimization of some unfortunate public servants. in addition to the above it is also argues that "the most radical and damaging aspect of the application of federal character has been in the bureaucracies and public services of the federation, where permanent secretaries have been kicked around, removed and sometimes dismissed" (Ekeh, 1989). The problem of equitable representation in the federal public service remains one of the major problems of sustainable national development in most polyglot and or heterogeneous societies especially in development world. Therefore impartial and fair representation in public offices, both elected and appointed positions should hence, become a natural demand on multi-ethnic societies, such as Nigeria. It becomes even more significant, considering the fact that bureaucratic domination is capable of reinforcing hegemonic influence of one group over the other which can breed schisms in the work place and discourage sustainable

development in the country.

Conclusion and policy recommendations: From the explication of the above existing literature viz. a vis the practice of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria public service and its impact on the struggle for sustainable national development as well as national integration in Nigeria. The paper has presented a conceptual review of the principle of representative bureaucracy, federal character principles or quota system in Nigeria, and the affiliate concepts such as sustainable national development and also national integration. It also highlighted the issues related to the application of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria public service, some of which include but not limited to mediocrity, ethnocentrism, under-employment, elitism mutual suspicion and arrested development. Therefore, we have seen how the prevailing political topography negates the achievement of sustainable national development as well as national integration. We have also seen how the intense struggle among the political elites for selfish reasons have relegated the quest for the practice of ideal bureaucracy to the background and arrested any hope of sustainable national development in the country. Merit and competent examination of prospective employees into any public or private offices are often the basis of recruitment and promotion and not by representation of any ethnic or cultural groups in an ideal bureaucracy, an ideal bureaucracy usually subsumes difference class or characteristics of people working together as one under a corporate arrangement with the purpose of achieving the organizational corporate objectives. And each one of these classes of people has a vital obligation to make the organization relevant in the achievement of a sustainable national development in the society concerned. Understandably, there are political and economic imbalances among and or between the federating units that formed Nigeria viz. a viz. the occupation of the federal public service offices . But these imbalances arise from the nature and method of application of the representative bureaucracy or federal character principle in the post-colonial Nigerian. These imbalances exist in almost every sector of the economy and consequently most of the groups especially the minority ethnic group constantly feel marginalized in the public service. This study has contended that the practice of representative bureaucracy in Nigeria context is a strategically plan of the dominant political elites to position their loyal agents in public offices who will act as political representatives against the set out goals of the establishment where they work. These issues it further argued tend to accentuate liability to the judicious practice of the principle and poses serious impediment to the realization of sustainable development in Nigeria. It is of the opinion that the poor capacity of the majority of public service managers arising from the application of the Nigeria brand of representative bureaucracy, often lead to a situation where illiterate applicants are employed or appointed at the expense of the fully qualified personnel. This poor capacity of the

personnel managers in the public service that is engendered by the skewed application of the principles no doubt enhances poor performance of the Nigerian public service. The neglect of adequate capacity development programmes for public servants and the mode of the federal character implementation in the Nigeria offer a credible explanation of the hopelessness of the Nigerian public bureaucracy for enhancing sustainable national development as well as national integration.

Based on the above explication this study strongly recommends that while reasonable balancing among the federating units in the Nigeria public institution is very essential in order to reduce political and socio-economic tension in the country, it is hyper important that at least 80% of merit is required from the prospective representatives of the various federating units, in order to be considered for appointment into the public service as well as admission into the Nigeria tertiary institutions. The constitutional principle guiding the Nigeria public service should ensure that unequal employees in the public sector cannot as a matter of urgency be treated as equal since we have seen that such tendency is inimical to sustainable national development as well as national integration. It is also strongly recommended that more efforts should be devoted to the idea of inculcating or imbibing high moral standard in all the employees of the Nigerian public service irrespective of his or her ethnic or religious background in order to establish a feeling of oneness among them so as to discourage any form of schisms in the work place and by implication making political office holders and corporate institutions as well as career officials more responsive and responsible in their day to day relations. Finally, the study recommends that it is unimaginably imperative to acknowledge the fact that problems of sustainable national development as well as national integration in Nigeria are deeply rooted in the political environment and the structure of the federal public service system which encourages mediocre under the pretense of representative bureaucracy or federal character principles, therefore, it has become vital that the foundation of such principle should be revisited and restructured to be competitive irrespective of the background of the prospective employees. There is need to give every Nigerian equal opportunity in employment into the public sector as well as the federal universities independent of their states or local governments of origin since it is evident that the present arrangement has failed in all ramifications and has arrested any form of sustainable national development since inception. This will inevitably increase competition among the federating units that will lead to increase in their per capita income in the short run and in the long run enhance Nigeria gross domestic product GDP that will then open door for sustainable national development as well as national integration.

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