Comparing Multi-Ethnic Countries in Providing Territorial Autonomy to Ethnic Groups

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Abstract: Territorial autonomy means the country's ability to respond to challenges faced by different ethnic groups in a diverse ethnic population: to accommodate different ethnic groups without the marginalistion or suppression of other ethnic minorities. Territorial autonomy advocates for the process of using ethnicity in determining internal boundaries in ethnic diverse countries. The process which was followed by some African countries including Ethiopia. This paper finds that territorial autonomy to ethnic groups is a solution for many countries in curtailing ethnic boundary violence and it can also assist in addressing ethnic divisions in the country. Simultaneously, all ethnic groups will have a place of belonging within the country if ethnic consideration in determining boundaries or territories is considered, thereby ensuring equal participation by ethnic minorities in the affairs of the country. This paper seeks to compare territorial autonomy of few selected countries in Africa and outside Africa.

Key Words: Territorial autonomy; Ethnic diversity; Ethnic minorities; Ethiopia; Nigeria; Regional autonomy; Federalism; Constitution; Demarcation; Sub-national.

Introduction

Autonomy provides for the possibility of sharing both executive and legislative powers between the central government and national minorities; with the main aim of preserving state integrity and its sovereign territory while ensuring clear self-government or boundary determination for ethnic minority group in a specific region or province. According to Ghai (2000) autonomy can be defined as a device to allow ethnic or other groups the right to claim a distinct identity to exercise direct control over affairs of special concern to them while allowing larger entity to exercise those powers that cover common interests.

On the other hand territorial autonomy can be defined as:

> an arrangement that is aimed at granting a group that differs from the majority of the population in the state, but that constitute a majority or a significant part of a specific region, a means by which it can express its distinct identity (Benedikter, 2006).

This means that territorial autonomy should be understood as a special status that is awarded to a territorial unit which enables citizens or residents of that particular territorial unit to regulate their own affairs through

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autonomous government, legislation, judiciary and administration. For the purpose of this paper territorial autonomy in as far as ethnic diversity in a country is concerned should be considered as an efficient mechanism of preventing ethnic conflicts or providing conflict resolution through which ethnic minorities are accommodated and their fundamental needs are meet within the boundaries of the existing state, region or province.

Territorial autonomy not only can potentially cater for most of the needs and interests of national minorities, but its decisive advantage is that it does not clash with the interest of the states to preserve full integrity of their territory. Moreover, autonomy must often tackle a double problem faced by the country: to grant the protection of the national minority in its traditional homeland, but also to include self-governance to all the groups living in that area. This means that regional autonomy should benefit a whole regional community, not just one sector of the regional population.

This paper will firstly, examines the two basic approaches relating to geographical arrangement of multi-ethnic federations, which are territorial or administrative federalism and multi-national federalism or the ethnic model of federalism. Secondly, it will examines the general factors to be considered when the boundaries of sub-national units are demarcated or delineated. The paper will also discuss in-depth the approach followed by two African countries: namely Nigeria and Ethiopia.

In summary Nigeria is the Africa's most populous country, with about 120 million people and 250 linguistic groups. Although most of the ethnic groups are very small, three ethnic groups constitute somewhere between 60 and 70 percent of the population. The Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups count for 30 percent of the population, the Yorubas about 20 per cent and the Igbos about 18 percent(Benedikter, 2006). Consequently, this paper examines how and why states were created in multi-ethnic federation of Nigeriaand the present constitutional principles.

Ethiopia, on the other hand, has 83 different languages with up to 200 different dialects spoken.The largest ethnic and linguistic groups are the Oromos, Amharas and Tigrayans.The Oromo group represents approximately 40% of the population and is concentrated primarily in the southern half of the nation (World-mark Encyclopedia of Nations, 2007). The Amhara and Tigrean groups constitute approximately 32% of the population and have traditionally been dominant politically (Worldmark, 2007). The paper examines how the territorial states came into existence and the relevant articles in the Ethiopian Constitution.

The Concept of Federalism

In short federalism is a system upon which democratic rules and institutions in which power to govern is shared between national (central) and provincial/state governments. It is also viewed as one of the best system used in

an international negotiation for integrating ethnic groups, diverse nations or combatant parties. However, there is also among countries fear that through federalism an increased regional autonomy is likely to lead to what is called secession or dissolution of the nation. What follows this discussion will be the discussion of two types of federalism being territorial and administrative federalism.

Territorial or Administrative Federalism

Territorial federalism recommends the drawing of boundary lines as per geographical or administrative convenience (Fessha, 2011).Its primary intent is to use the delineationof subunit boundaries to crack a territorially concentrated ethnic group inorder to ensure that the group does not form a minority in any subunit (Anderson, 2012). Thesofter form of this involves using boundary lines to maximize ethnicheterogeneity of federal subunits (Anderson, 2012:6).

In territorial federalism, federal units do not match in any way with differentethno cultural groupswho desire to retain their self-government and cultural distinctiveness (kymlicka, 2012). The formation of a territorial federalism can be encouraged by the ambition to offer better protection against external threats or by the ambition to facilitate access to the administration in very large areas or by the aspiration to protect democracy (Van der Beken, 2012).

In the UnitedStates, for example, an intentional decision was made not to use federalism to accommodatethe self-government rights of national minorities (Kymilicka, 2000: 210).Alternatively, it was decided that no territory would be accepted as a state unless national minorities were outnumbered within that state(Kymilicka, 2000: 210).

The most prominent case in United States was the expansion of southwestward from its original heterogeneous 13 colonies and it was decided that no territory would receive statehood unless minorities were outnumbered by White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (O'Leary and McGrarry, 2012). Another technique employed was to gerrymander state boundaries to ensure that Indians or Hispanics were outnumbered, as in Florida (O'Leary and McGrarry, 2012:28). Lastly, another method used was that the statehood, as in Hawaii and the southwest, was delayed until the region's long-standing residents could be swamped with enough White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (O'Leary and McGrarry, 2012:28).

American federalism, as one of the territorial or administrative federalisms, is a way of dividing powers on a territorial basis within a single national community, whosemembers are dominant within each of the subunits (Kymilicka, 2000:211). This federation resulted from the coming together of its units, which previously existed independently (Adegehe, 2009). Itsmain purpose was to unite people living in different political units, who nevertheless shared a common language and culture (Adegehe, 2009: 28).

From the above, it is best to point out that the fact that territorial federalism rejects the awarding of territorialautonomy to ethnic groups is a disadvantage. According to Fessha (2011:28), territorial federalism

denies geographically concentrated ethnic groups with territorial spaces which are essential to promotetheir identities. Furthermore, he argues that it makes cultural groups continuously vulnerable to the dominantposition of the majority group or, as the case may be, to the historically dominantgroup (Fessha, 2011:28).

Multi-National Federalism or the Ethnic Model of Federalism

Fessha (2011:28) writes that multi-national federalism takes ethnicity as the pillar for the organization of the stateand draws the internal boundary of a state along ethnic lines. As such ethnic federalism presents itself as an ideal mechanism to reconcile the potentially conflicting objectives of accommodating ethnic diversity and guaranteeing state stability. According to Van der Beken (2012:44) in ethnic federation, ethnic groups have a right to self-rule in their own territory. This provides ethnic groups with the possibility to autonomously deal with issues that affect the specific interests of the group (such as language, education and culture) and thus to develop policies adapted or to cater their needs.

For example, in India the reorganization of the state boundaries was based on ethnic language in the 1950s. All regional languages were to have their own state, except for Hindi speaking states of which more than one was created.Later reorganisations were more controversial and arguably less successful, although the territories, mostly in the North East, which were being reorganized, were far more heterogeneous (Adeney, 2000). However, the states are, in many regards, a microcosm of the Indian society and in several instances the states have greater diversity of minorities and population numbers than entire federations in other parts of the world (Adeney, 2000:13).

Another notable example is Belgium, when three regions which coexisted with the three linguistic areas fixed in1963. The 'Flemish community'consists ofthe Dutch-speakingRegion and the Dutch-speakers in the bilingual Region ofBrussels, while the 'French community'consists ofthe Francophone (Walloon) Region (not the German speakers) and the Francophone ofBrussels (Deschouwer, 2014). As forthe German community, isitlocated inthe Francophone area, but itisgranted language facilities (Deschouwer, 2014:17). It is worthwhile to note that Belgium's linguistic groups have traditionally been highly concentrated geographically, a factor that greatly facilitated theirseparation into federal subunits. It has been argued, correctly in ourview that without this arrangement Belgium would have not existed as a federal state today had such an arrangement not been made (Fessha, 2009).

Some scholars positively claim that ethnic federalism reduces ethnic groups' disparity and secession of certain regions, while enabling self-rule to ethnic groups and therefore leads to ethnic harmony (Jessner, 2012).Critics on the other hand argue that rather than being a panacea for ethnically and nationally diverse states, the dismemberment of a centralized state into a so-called multi-ethnic federalism would contribute not only to centrifugal, destabilizing effects but would also create a safe haven for guerrilla activities, eventually contributing to the formation of endless unstable states (Aayehgn, 2014).

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Factors to be Considered when Demarcating Sub-National units' Boundaries

This paper provides that when drawing the territorial boundaries of sub-national units, it is paramount to balance diverse andoften contradictory needs in order to achieve thebalance in a way that is broadlyagreeable to all major political actors. However this can be one of the most difficult aspects of the constitutionbuildingprocess, as such it requires political will.According to Anderson and George (2014), the following factors may be taken into account when drawing sub-national units, depending on the circumstances of each country: First, economic factors such as efficiency, effectiveness, viability (an argument for avoiding many small or economically poor units) and grouping economic regions may be considered; Secondly, the socio-cultural factors, for example, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, tribe and clan; Thirdly, political balance which may mean breaking up one or more dominant regions, or a region that may have separatist tendencies, or avoiding a structure with just two or three units (that are often characterized by divisivepolitics); Fourthly, geographic features like natural boundaries such as rivers and mountains. The fifthly factor will be public opinions which may be assessed through elections, referendums or public consultations; Lastly, what may be considered is historical boundaries which people often identify and which can serve as a useful reference point and remove the needfor detailed consideration of other factors in drawing boundaries (Anderson, 2014).

Nigerian Case Study

The contemporary Nigerian geographical boundaries were established in 1914 by combining the two British colonies of Northern and Southern Nigeria (Suberu, 2006). The objective of amalgamation was to ensure financial viability of the relatively British colonial project through economic unification of the relatively poor but larger northern colony with its more prosperous southern colony (Suberu, 2006:68). However, the amalgamation of two colonies experienced the rising of ethnic and regional antagonisms. In response, the British political rulers and the country's regional leaders negotiated a compromise 1954 (Ejohbowah, 2008). The compromise was the creation of three regions, namely the Northern, Eastern and Western regions. The three regions were designed to grant political autonomy and security to the Muslim Hausa-Fulani of the Northern region, the religious bicommunal Yoruba of the Western region and the predominantly Christian Igbo of the Eastern region (Suberu, 2001).

According to Ojo (2001) in a pre-independence conference held at Ibandan to consider the division of power of different levels of government and whether more regions should be created based on ethno-linguistic lines, however, each region took a different position. The Northern region proposed for a federal structure with a weak centre in which the federal authority would emanate from the constituent units and asserted that the existing boundaries should be left unchanged. The Western region desired a federal structure in which boundaries were to be altered along ethnic-linguistic lines. The Western region proposed for a unitary formula that would have downgraded the existing regional authorities to a local government status (Ojo, 2001:29).

At independence in 1960, the Nigerian federalism experienced big problems. First, there was an imbalance in its federal structure in which the Northern region was larger than the East and West combined. Secondly, the minority ethnic groups demanded the creation of more states on the basis of perceived fears of political domination by majority groups. Thirdly, the drawing of federal boundaries along Husa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo ethnic fault lines led to hegemonic ethnocentrism and secessionism on the part of the big three ethnic groups (Suberu, 2006:70). The above problems led to the beginning of the crumble of the First Republic. When the Western region experienced the political crisis which led to an establishment of a new party by a splinter group, the federal government quickly exploited the situation by carving out the Mid-western region from Western region in 1963 and it represented the first creation of a state in post-independence Nigeria (Ojo, 2001:33).

The military government, in1967, announced the disestablishment of four regions into twelve states, six in the Northern region and three in the Eastern region and two in the Western region and the Mid-western region was left intact (Ojo, 2001:34; Suberu, 2006:70). The reason for disestablishment of four regions was to stop succession of the Igbo-dominated Eastern region as a Republic of Biafra. The creation of twelve state federation had weakened the hegemony of the Northern region, reduced the chauvinism and secessionism of the three major groups, diminished ethnic minority insecurity and re-established the authority of the federal government against centrifugal ethnic and regional challenges (Suberu, 2006:70).

The twelve state federations did not settle the issue of state creation in Nigeria. In 1970 there were renewed agitations across Nigeria as more Nigerians demanded for state creation of their own out of the existing ones (Oluwatobi, 2013). The agitation for new state became a political issue and the newly emergent politicians used the issue to canvass for votes and political support in the bid to gain political power (Oluwantobi, 2013:164). In 1976 the Murtala Mohammed administration announced the creation of seven more states which led to nineteen state federation. In announcing the states, Murtala Muhammed emphasized three basic considerations that informed his decision, the need to ensure even development within a federal structure of government; the need to bring government nearer to the people; and the need to make the creation of new states as one time operation that would minimize future agitation for new states (Oluwantobi, 2013:164).

The addition of seven states did not stop the demand for state creation. Therefore, in 1987 Ibrahim Babangida administration announced the addition two states making it twenty one states in Nigeria (Ojo, 2001:34).However, in1991, Babangida announced the creation of additional nine states to make the total number of the states in federation thirty. While the 1987 reorganizations genuinely appeared to be in national interest, as claimed by Babangida, the 1991 reform underscored both the continuing popular pressure for new states and Babaginda's desired to exploit these demands to promote his personal ruler-ship project (Oluwantobi, 2013:166).

In 1993 Nigeria was experiencing political crisis as a result of annulment 1993 general election.As a way of resolving the problem of the country, the regime set up the National Constitutional Conference. State creation was one of the issues that dominated the debate of National Constitutional Conference set up by the Abacha's government. Finally, Abacha announced the creation of new six states to make Nigeria a federation of thirty six states.

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Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999

The preamble of the Constitution provides that the people of Federal Republic of Nigeria have resolved to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation. In reiterating and emphasizing that, article 2 (1) stipulates that Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

By indivisible means that Nigeria cannot be divided, in other words these provisions prohibit secession. The states of the federation of Nigeria are allowed to secede from the Federal Republic of Nigeria.As much as secession is prohibited, most importantly, article 10 provides that the Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion.

Article 2(1) declared Nigeria to be a Federation consisting of States and a Federal Capital Territory. As a Federation, it therefore consists of 36 states which are: Abia, Adamawa, Akwalbom, Anambra, Bauchi, Bayelsa, Benue, Borno, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Gombe, Imo, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Lagos, Nasarawa, Niger, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo, Plateau, Rivers, Sokoto, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara.

Article 14 (3) of the Constitution prescribes 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 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 State or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or in any of its agencies. Moreover, article 14 (4) stipulates that the composition of the Government of a State, a local government council, or any of the agencies of such Government or council, and the conduct of the affairs of the Government or council or such agencies shall be carried out in such manner as to recognise the diversity of the people within its area of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the people of the Federation. This article prohibits the government which is made up of the people from one ethnic group or subnational unit. This accommodative character has ensured minority appointments in the national offices, subnational units and local government.

Assessment

It is clear that following a geographical criterion in drawing a country's boundaries will dependent on whether the country is a multi-ethnic country or not. In a multi-ethnic Nigeria, drawing subnational units based on the geographical criterioncaused problems. This was seen from the amalgamation of two regions which experienced the rising of ethnicity and regional antagonisms. In trying to solve this situation, three regions were created along three big ethnic groups, which were Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo. However, the creation of

three regions along three ethnic groups led to hegemonic ethnocentrism and secessionism on the part of the part of the three ethnic groups.

This was a call to create more states to accommodate minorities and the fear was, inter alia, that once the process of creating states along ethnic lines started, it would be difficult to stop it. This is because of the heterogeneity of Nigeria, every creation of new states create new majorities and majorities. Despite a Nigeria being a federation of 36 states, the demand for state creation has not yet being fulfilled. The reality is that each ethno-cultural unit feels itself marginalized when enclosed with another ethnic group that is more dominant (Nwankwo, 2003).

One of the remarkable contributions of this Constitution is to accommodate both majority and minority groups in several states and local governments, thus making possible for groups that would otherwise be locked out of national power to have their own internal governments. Moreover, the multiplication of states has made it possible for groups to be accommodated fairly and thus creating a sense of reasonableness or legitimacy. The existence of several states which are nearly equal in size has reduced the political capacity to threaten secession.

Another indispensable contribution is that it has put some conflicts within a local area, thus preventing them from inundating the entire country. Formal territorial dispersal of powers has produced, at local level, a complete set of legislative, executive and judicial institutions that serve as focal points of political contestation, thereby providing a buffer for centre.

The Case of Ethiopia

The statehood of Ethiopia went back to 3000 years where the traditional governance systemswere hereditary basis on monarchical state consisting of many autonomous provinces characterized by an empire federation (Baraki, 2016).A king of kings or an emperor was at the centre and the provinces used to be governed by kings or chiefs (Baraki, 2016:1). However, the present Ethiopia, in both its territorial context and ethno-linguistic architecture, only became defined at the end of the 19th century and the turn of 20th century (Praeg, 2006). Ethiopian emperors tried their best to integrate and unify the different regions by means of territorial expansion (Praeg, 2006:63).

The expansion of Menelik brought together different ethnic groups that had their own identity, culture, and language. With the creation of a modern empire, there is the domination of Amharic culture over the newly incorporated ethnic groups. According toClapham, the expansion was accompanied by an assumption of Amhara supremacy and a policy of Amharisation. The Tigray, Oromo and Somali described the central rule as an'Amhara rule', and this gave an advantage for the movements to mobilise significant supporters and fighters in ethnic lines (Balcha, 2008).

Emperor Haile Sellassie (1916-30 as regent and 1930-74 as emperor) subsequently centralized all power. The 1931 Constitution and the 1955 revised Constitution were important instruments to reduce the power of regional lords and consolidate his personal rule. For the sake of Ethiopian Unity, there was an attempt to suppress all non-Amhara identities. Political domination was aggravated by cultural domination and economic exploitation. To be within the state structure, all non–Amhara people were expected to speak Amharic and adopt the culture and religion of the ruling class.

This discriminatory policy resulted in an uneven representation of various ethnic groups in central government. The condition for southern Ethiopians was worse. Therefore, the formation of the modern Ethiopian empire is characterized by political exclusion, economic exploitation, and cultural domination. Because of the suppression of various ethnic groups, Ethiopia was called the prison house of nations and nationalities.

The military junta or Derg that seized power in 1974 ignored the principle of self-determination, and the various political movements continued their armed struggle until 1991. In 1991, a new government led by the EPRDF (Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front) replaced the Derg. In order to address the national questions of Ethiopia, a democratic federal system was set up in 1995. The attempt was to accommodate ethnic diversity within a new federal Ethiopia based on the principle of political, economic, and social equality. As it was seen, the view of the EPRDF government could be considered as a compromise between a unitary government, which cannot easily accommodate diversity, and disintegration of the country into its constituent ethnic regions.

In 1991 the Boundary Commission was established and it was composed of 10 members, and represented six political groups in addition to EPRDF: three from EPRDF, two from OLF, one Gurage, one Hadiya, one Harari, one Somali, and one Afar (Vaughan, 2003). The Commission drew only the outlines of the regions, and left it to the regional governments to sort out their own internal boundaries (Vaughan, 2003:33).Whilst the states are constitutionally 'delimited on the basis of settlement patterns, identity, language and consent of the people concerned', it was current language use which became the single effective criterion applied by the commission, considered a more visible and conclusive marker than, for instance, history (Vaughan, 2003:34).

The Constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 1995

The Constitution declares, in its preamble, that the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia are committed, in full and free exercise of their right to self-determination. It went further to stipulate that every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has an unconditional right to self-determination, including the right to secession (Article 39(1) ofthe Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia). According to the Constitution, a Nation, Natonality or People is a group of people who have or share large measure of a common culture or similar customs, mutal intelligibility of language, belief in a common or related identities, a common psychological make-up, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory (Article 39(5) of the Constitution).

The Federal Ethiopia comprises of states which shall be demarcated on the basis of the settlement patterns, language, identity and consent of the peoples concerned.These states are the State of Tigray, the State of Afar, the State of Amhara, the State of Oromia, the State of Somalia, the State of Benshangul/Gumuz, the State of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, the State of the Gambela Peoples and the State of the Harari People.These nine regional states were created on the basis of predominant ethnic group, except the Southern regional state formed by 46 ethnic groups, and except two federal territories, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa (Article 47 (1) of the Constitution).

The Nations, Nationalities and People within the States have the right to establish, at any time, their own States. However, the following procedures, as stipulated in the Constitution, must be adhered to:

(a) The demand for statehood must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Council of the Nation, Nationality or People concerned, and the demand is presented in writing to the State Council; When the Council that received the demand has organized a referendum within one year to be held in the Nation, Nationality or People that made the demand;

(b) The demand for statehood is supported by a majority vote in the referendum;

(c) The State Council has transferred its powers to the Nation, Nationality or People that made the demand, and

(d) When the new State created by the referendum without any need for application, directly becomes a member of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (Article 47(3) of the Constitution).

In order for a self-determination or secession to come into effect, the following conditions, as prescribed in the Constitution, must be fulfilled:

(a) The approval of secession by a two-third majority of the members of Legislative Council of the Nation, Nationality or People concerned;

(b) A Federal Government has organized a referendum which must take place within three years from the time it received the concerned council's decision for secession;

(c) A demand for secession is supported by majority vote in the referendum;

(d) A Federal Government has transferred its powers to the council of the Nation, Nationality or People who has voted to secede; and

(e) When the division of assets is effected in a manner prescribed by law (Article 39(4) of the Constitution).

Assessment

It is possible for the regional states to increase since the Constitution allows the different nationality groups within the existing regional states to establish its own state as long as the procedure for that purpose is adhered to and to large extent the Constitution provides for secession provided that the procedure has been met. However, it has been argued, correctly in my view, that the implementation of all these principles is a cumbersome issue in a land of more than 80 ethnic groups, in which all ethnic groups may fulfill the defining criteria to be identified as Nation, nationality or Peoples (Chekole, 2012).It was argued further that theminority governance in this context requires a right-based bottom up approach and a participatory democratization process, in which the needs of each ethnic group is accommodated depending on the practical context on the ground (Chekole, 2012:7).

In Nigeria, there were critics on the proliferation of the subnational units since they are economically unviable. Another critic was that the multiplication of the states undermines the federal principle because of the problem of representing all the states in national institutions. However, the indispensable fact is that the proliferation of the states has made it possible for groups to be accommodated fairly and thus creating a sense of reasonableness and legitimacy. In Ethiopia, the federal response has facilitated the recognition of ethnic diversity and responded to ethnic claims, thus elevatedethnic identity to a primary political identity (Fessha, 2012). According to Fessha (2012:277), this can be seen from the proliferation of ethnic-based parties or movements. According to the National Electoral Board, in 2015, 75 political parties were registered; 23 of them are national parties while the rest are regional, whereas in Nigeria, there were 28 registered political parties in 2015.

Both Nigeria and Ethiopia are prohibiting religion to play a part in the regional states. The Nigerian Constitution provides that the Government of the Federation or of a State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion (Article 10 of the Nigerian Constitution). And just like its Nigerian counterpart, the Ethiopian Constitution stipulates that there shall be no state religion and the state shall not interfere in religious matters and religion shall not interfere in state affairs (Article 10 of the Nigerian Constitution).

Ethiopian ethnic federalism has effectively undercut the drive for secession by ethno nationalist organizations by largely denying them manifest ethnic oppression as a rallying cause (Habtu, 2003). Therefore, its proclamation of ethnic and regional autonomy, ethnic federalism has managed to maintain the integrity of the Ethiopian state. The proclamation of ethnic autonomy has diminished grievances based on diminished languages and cultures (Habtu, 2003:27). On the other hand, the Nigerian federal model has explicitly sought to contain potential secessionist impulses from the country's major ethnic groups through the subdivision of each ethnic of the large ethnic communities into separate sub-ethnic states (Suberu, 2006:86).

Furthermore, the Nigerian Constitution is silent on the secession, in fact it provides that Nigeria is indivisible and therefore closing a door for secession. However, its counterpart in Ethiopia does have a clause for self-determination or secession provided that the requirements for such are met.

Conclusion

In a multi-ethnic country, like Nigeria and Ethiopia, it is difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate all ethnic groups by granting a mother stateto each of them. Empirical evidence shows that an attempt to adopt a territorial federalism is not workable in a multi-ethnic country.However, in Nigeria and Ethiopia, the emergence of ethnic consciousness and ethnic mobilization are not based on the fact that those countries are ethnically diverse but because of social, political and economic reasons.

Creation of states in Nigeria, unlike in Ethiopia, has never intended to create ethnic or national states. The architects of Nigerian Federalism have sought to use the internal boundaries of the federation to fragment the identities of the country's largest ethnic groups and create constituent units of roughly equivalent population (Suberu, 2006:86). Despite the fact that the drawing of the boundaries of sub-national units in Nigeria followed geographical approach, however the boundaries followed ethnic and sub-ethnic group territories very closely. In Ethiopia, the demarcation of sub-national units followed rigorous ethnic basis where each ethnic group has been given statehood. Lastly, the authors agree with Fessha that the institutionalization of ethnicity not only encourages the political mobilization of ethnicity, but also elevates ethnic identity to a primary political identity. However, we have seen from Nigeria that even if ethnicity has not been institutionalized, it may still enter in the political arena.

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