



NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS

Nemor

ORIENTATION COURSE LECTURES SERIES

GOOD CITIZENSHIP AS A BASIC INGREDIENT IN NATION BUILDING

INTRODUCTION

Inherent in this topic is the presence of a reciprocal relationship between any nation and her citizens. In evaluative terms, a nation cannot be said to be building without basic characteristics in her citizenry in whose psychological make-up can generate ideas which contribute to this development. Implicit in nation-building is the idea of a nation pregnant with a purposive goal toward adequate development of her human and natural resources. Reduced to its core, a nation is a large society which is concerned by individuals. This societal implication of a nation is further corroborated by K. Silver in specifying that a nation is a society containing the state as a social institution which is maintained by group and individual loyalties.¹ Moreover, citizenship equals complete membership in a society with equality in rights and obligations in that society.² It is in the political context that this society becomes a nation. "Conceptually, a nation fuses three dimensions: territory, culture and citizenship."³ This territory defines the geographical cum political boundary with which the economic and governmental roles of the nation are contained. In the cultural qualifier of a nation is a bundle of norms, traditions, taboos and mores which serve as guidelines for the course of expected citizen's behaviour. In citizenship is the "legal status conferred on a person as a direct consequence of membership in a nation-state."⁴

2. Thus, if a nation can be socially interpreted as a society which is conceived of by individuals/citizens, any analysis of citizenship in relationship to nation-building has to involve the psychological characteristics of individual citizens vis-a-vis the nation. Psychology is the main focus of theorizing and researching into an individual's overt (observable actions) and covert (unobservable actions). It is within this

disciplinary orientation that one can dish out those personalistic characteristics which are consistent and enduring enough to precipitate some kinds of behaviours which affect the course of nation building. If these are bad, they are negative to the development course, but if good, positive. Good citizenship is individual/citizen's attitude in relationship to the society/nation. A similar evaluation of citizenship is implicit in the concept of "modern citizen" whose behavioural orientations are toward the crucial aspects of making a nation through public affairs and social relations.⁵ Therefore, some of those citizen characteristics which are of topical importance in any nation building are: national consciousness, national pride, self-discipline, self-less service, loyalty, self-reliance, and leadership. These characteristics will be hereby given psychological interpretations and their development explained within the context of the socialization process. Socialization is hereby defined as the process whereby any individual is tailored through rearing practices within the course of his/her development to characteristics suited for the requirements of any society/nation. The theoretical stance is made here to illustrate that the to-be-diagnosed characteristics are not born but taught.

NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

3. Consciousness connotes awareness at the cognitive level and cognition entails either information or knowledge. A measure of one's national consciousness is a measure of the amount of information, within one's memory, pertaining to Nigeria's social and public affairs (history, name, national anthem, languages, peoples, cultures, constitutional matters of government etc.). Within the cultural outlook is embedded the knowledge of (1) the political structures and procedures, (2) the constitution which spells out the basic qualifier of citizenship on equality of rights, prescriptions of responsibilities

and proscription. Indeed, any Nigerian should not be ignorant of the geographical, political and social worlds around him/her. As such national consciousness can be conceptualized purely on the cognitive level. All other emotional attachments which are attendant upon being a member of a national group as society generate from this cognitive level. It is like an attitude with its components of cognition (information), affect (emotion, and conative (intention to behave)⁶. There can be neither the affective nor the conative without the necessary cognition. If one coins a nation (e.g. Nigeria) as the social object, national consciousness is the psychological container of series of information about the nation. Other aspects of good citizenship enumerated in the introductory statements constitute the affective and the conative aspects. For example: one cannot have national pride without a knowledge of Nigeria's political, economic, and social affairs which can be the basic aspects of one's personal joys.

4. NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS GENERATES FROM SOCIALIZATION.

It is a learned psychological state which is affected by developmental progression or retrogression. Just as a child progresses from the simplistic to the complex levels of acquiring information, so does the course of national consciousness. Consequently, to understand this course of information processing is to pay attention to the main agents of socialization in our nation — parents in the home; teachers in the schools; and peers as friends and significant others.

The family as a societal institution is charged with the affairs of bringing up a child. It is an institution marked by primary ties within members in differing emotional spheres.

The first socializing experience any child-citizen from any nation is exposed to is the family. 'Conventional wisdom as well as historical and contemporary social theory have emphasized the early childhood years as critical for developing personality, social attitudes, and cultural values'.⁷ Research and theories on the linkage between society and character cum knowledge of any individual have attracted social scientists of anthropological, psychological, and psychiatric persuasions in the areas of child socialization. The social learning theories, with their emphasis on the environmental (experiential) stimulation of acquiring information heavily rely on child-socialization. Piaget who is a giant in the field of cognitive development pays respect to the formative years of a child. One is not expressing the view that child socialization is the only responsibility of the family but it is the sole one wherein the family plays a major part. Thereafter, socialization is heavily affected by peers and schools.

5. This explanation is made to show the relevance of childhood years as a social-psychological predecessor to acquisition of information on national consciousness/awareness. Parents are the main source of information on a nation's affairs and issues during the pre-school years which in the case of Nigeria ends at the sixth age. Through imitation and experience with domicile happenings of social life, the child acquires information. In terms of categorization and labelling this social life, language is of psychological importance. In childhood, the kinds of information on one's nation is simplistic without so much of abstraction which involves discrimination and generalization. A child may not be able to generalize from the concept of either the form of government or to the national state from the concept of a nation to the concept of a country. Above all, the concepts in childhood to the national consciousness through the up coming and

thinking are changeable but lays the foundations stone for the course of natural consciousness as a person swims in the stream of national consciousness.

DEGREE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IS RELATIVE TO AGE

6. The unfortunate aspect of the formation and course of national consciousness in childhood is that differing parents have differing information about any nation. For an example one parent may stress ethnic superiority while the other stress the superiority of a nation because it is difficult to centralize the process of familial socialization and apply it uniformly to every child from every home in order to receive the same opinions, thought provoking issues and information about one's nation. This is where the utility of the schools is greatly felt. Pupils are under the umbrella of the educational institution where teachers can be charged with the main responsibility of imparting information which will augment the content of national consciousness. There can be a uniformity in this cognitive/informative socialization through teaching from books on historical, political, economic and social structures. Since there are differing levels of comprehension for different educational levels, prescribed books should reflect this difference. Moreover these books will be such as to thoroughly reflect the Africanist point of view. More Nigerian publishing companies should be promulgated and encouraged with the main responsibility of stimulating Nigerian writers. These writers can be better able to understand our cultural heritage and national goals. The memory of our national anthem should in fact be in every Nigerian students at every level. Standing at attention or complete silence they should greet the national anthem. These are conventional postures of respect.

7. There is no doubt that the educational process is a very strong supporter of national consciousness. Moreover, the educational process enables a student to be socialized in an anticipatory way. It prepares citizens for future social roles which can uplift their status in occupations and in higher standard of living. In an empirical study conducted by Inkeles of six countries — Argentina, Chile, India, Israel, Nigeria, and East Pakistan, formal education, mass media exposure, and standard of living (as indicated by income) and possessed consumer goods were studied in relationship with modern citizenry characterized by a national participation in a nation by keeping in touch with national information. It was found that citizens who, with the a-fore-mentioned characteristics, from these countries were in heavy touch with public issues and affairs and were well informed on national issues. Education, has the strongest force and is a precipitator of social characteristics.

8. Socialization for the cause of national consciousness is affected by other associational ties other than the familial and educational institutions. We know that all citizens are affected by interpersonal relationships especially at the peer level. This is the level where citizens wish to have associational relationships with people who are similar to them. At the primary level, citizens have playmates and belong to groups such as the boy's scout, among others. At the secondary and university levels, citizens belong to social, ideological, and educational societies. The personalities binding the members in these societies may be weak or strong. The point is that interpersonal relationship is so strong in procuring and interpreting information, which are important to national consciousness. Katz and Lazarsfield have summarized the influence of interpersonal relations by pronouncing them as the "anchorage points for individual opinions, attitudes, habits, and values."¹⁰ Consider peer groups as social groups

and one can immediately understand how a citizen's cognitive level can be affected by them due to fears of punishment; acquisition of physical and emotional rewards; and social comparison by using the group as a source of judgement for his/her views on the nation.

NATIONAL PRIDE:

9. National pride is hereby conceived of as positive feeling toward one's nation. This feeling is the emotional side of a citizen's belongingness to his/her nation. Feelings can be either positive or negative. A good citizen feels good whenever his/her nation prospers and feels bad whenever this same nation deteriorates. If a good citizen's nation is torn by ethnicity, there should be a feeling of apprehension. The same feeling goes for any occurrence of a social problem (a condition affecting a significant number of citizens in undesirable way which necessitates collective/governmental action in that nation. Tribalism should be frowned upon and should depress national pride. Oyediran did a study on the politics of Nigerian Union of Great Britain and Ireland in the middle of sixties and found element of tribalism when students ultimate loyalty is to their tribal group rather than the nation. He found "a strong correlation between political alignment and ethnic origin, the conversion of personal grievancies into issues the conversion of political conflict into ethnic conflict."¹ Sanda found the same tribalism in students in 1975. He reported the observation of a TIV student in the University of Ibadan.

10. "The most serious politics of ethnicity since my arrival at University of Ibadan is that of The ethnic rivalry as usual is mainly between Ibo and Yoruba students especially in their fight for the post of president."¹² It is unquestionable that as far as ethnic politics among university students

are concerned these associations are functional from the point of view of the ethnic members but dysfunctional from the point of view of the university community and the wider Nigerian society.¹³ The associations being referred to are ethnic associations and this element of tribalism is not a mark of good citizenship and does not augment nation building.

11. Ours is a nation which is blessed by many national groups which has a common goal and cultural similarity. I am hereby substituting a new/positive concept of national group for the old/negative and foreign-imposed one of tribal group. There are many national linguistic groups in Nigeria. There are more than two hundred and fifty indigeneous languages with the main ones spoken by millions being Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba and the ones spoken by a few thousand being Kagoma and Tera.¹⁴ Coming from different national groups should not be allowed to disintegrate each citizen's national pride. There have been discussions within Nigerian circles as to which lingua franca is best for the nation in terms of easing communication and of promoting understanding among us. English language is interpreted as unsuitable because of its foreign origin. As a policy, any Nigerian student should be required to learn another native dialect besides his/hers. In fact one of the objectives of the National Youth Service Corps, is to induce graduate-citizen's familiarity with other Nigerians from other parts of the country besides his/hers.

12. Having national pride implies a psychological orientation of personifying the nation's values and goals. It is like a personal identification with the nation's state of course in such away that what happens to the nations is transferred, evaluated, and felt in feelings which can be either positive or negative. Although, national pride has been conceptualized in terms of feelings toward national affairs, these feelings

should be accompanied by actions towards the nation's strengths and towards eradicating her weakness. All that matters, regardless of national groupings, is for Nigerian citizens to inculcate "a desire to forward it's strength, liberty, or prosperity"¹⁵ This positive action to achieve, to maintain, and to develop national pride is very similar to the sentiment involved in nationalism. This spirit of nationalism transcends personal selfishness and instills in citizens the pride of acceptance of the state as the impersonal and ultimate source of solidarity.

LEADERSHIP

13. The psychological orientation of leadership describes influenced behaviours within a group. This group can be as magnified as a nation or as small as two in terms of size. However, this conceptionalization of group is in terms of size. Group is usually linked with leadership because influence constitutes a behaviour of reciprocity in which the influencer engages in behaviours which have impact on the influence in such a way that the influence has to change or maintain his/her behaviour in adherence to the cause of influence. In assessing the quality of leadership, one has to put into consideration the manner of exercising leadership as well as the size of the group. Furthermore, in leadership exercise, the influences is a better judge of leadership. Therefore an examination of either a good or a bad leader should focus on the manner of influence and the size of the group. Since one aspect of leadership assessment entails the judgement of the influences, good leadership is an increasing function of group size. A person whose influence is felt by members of a committee cannot be assessed on the same level with a person whose influence is felt by members of a committee cannot be assessed on the same level with a person whose influence is strong as a nation. The exception is if the committee's influence has far reaching effects on a major segment of national population.

14. Before delving into the characteristics, goals, and **styles** of leadership, it is necessary to clear the air in terms of a psychological role which is often confused with leadership — the headship role. Since leadership has been defined in terms of influence within a group, the layman can confuse the influence wielded by a head of a group (educational, occupational, religious) with that of leadership. Persons who are cast in leadership role within a group is one "who influence their fellows more than they are influenced by them".¹⁷ In the case of a head, the reverse is the case. Moreover the head is often externally imposed on a group and rather than internally imposed as it is involved in leadership. As such the wielding of functions of a head does not have to be group-determined. The fore mentioned differentiation between leadership and headship does not preclude the fact that a head can possess leadership qualities.

15. The main goals of a leader can be dichotomized into task and social — emotional.¹⁷ The task is functional for a group. The idea is that a group has some goals to perform and bring to successful completion. It is the responsibility of the leader to institute a planned action which leads the group members toward that/those goal/goals. The other goal of a group is the generation and maintenance of positive relationships among group members. This responsibility of emotional leadership creates a pleasant atmosphere within which members can work together to achieve their goals. In terms of being a social-emotional leader, there should be a "degree to which the leader manifests warmth in personal relationships, trust, readiness to explain actions and listen to subordinates."⁸ Effective task leadership depends on "the extent to which the leader maintains standards of performance and follows routines, makes sure his position and functions are understood, and tasks distributed."

16. It is one thing for a leader to have as his/her goals the task and the social-emotional, it is another to be able to engage in the best styles to achieve those goals. From a social-psychological point of view, the main leadership styles are: authoritarian, democratic, and Caissez faire. In the authoritarian style there is the presence of the leader who solely determines the running of the group's goals. Generally this style involves dictating what to do to group members without a serious consideration of the suggestions and feelings of members. This leader behaves like a head who is externally imposed on a group. The democratic leadership involves an acceptance of a reciprocal participation among group members in decisions leading to the fruition of group goals. Although this leadership can involve the leader having the final say in deciding the course of the group, the opinions and feelings of others have to be accorded due respect. In Laissez-faire leadership, a complete freedom is bestowed upon the group members in terms of decisions, suggestions, and actions dedicated to group goals. The leader comes in only on group-determined situations. The difference between the democratic and the Laissez-faire is that the one allows the leader to impose either decisions or influence on the group and the other does not.

17. If one wishes to pass a value judgement in terms of which type of leadership is the best, it has to be relative. Relative in the sense that the value of leadership depends solely on those influenced without whom this psychological characteristic cannot be recognized. There is a common mistake in the political world to equate democracy (government elected by the people, of the people and for the people,) as the best and all other forms of government are not as good without putting into consideration those governed. My inspection of democratic governments reveals a mixture of

democracy and autocracy. Any "democratic" government marked by discriminations based on religion, race, national origin, sex, etc. is absent in straight democracy. Leadership should be judged within the contexts of acceptance by the people.

SELF-DISCIPLINE

18. Within contemporary Nigeria, there has been a lot of discussions on discipline. The famous Jaji Declaration of the Head of State spurred this to action. These discussions reveal diverse meanings of discipline. In a study among secondary and university students, obedience to societal rules was regarded as discipline.²⁰ There is another similar definition being conceptualized as "control by enforcing obedience or orderly conduct."²¹ An inspection of these definitions portrays discipline as those external strategies of maintaining discipline itself. It is one thing to discuss ways of maintaining discipline, it is another thing to recognize what it is. Discipline is a psychological property of an individual and should be conceived of as self-discipline. "On a social-psychological basis, discipline is a learned consequence whereby the individual develops habits of self-control and recognizes his own responsibility to society."²² It is that characteristic which enables any individual to monitor his/her behaviour for the end-result of self-induced control. Any discourse on self directing, self-control and self-reliance is a discourse on self-discipline. Self-discipline should involve (1) certainty in one's responsibility to chart instrumental actions for the fulfillment of personal and national goals; (2) differentiation of what are right and wrong according to one's conscience, (3) openness to criticisms and suggestions by changing according to constructive ones and by neglecting those that do not matter, and (4) willingness to sacrifice (by postponing, modifying and obliterating one's social motives) for the benefit of one's country and of one's self.

19. The development of self-discipline starts within the familial institution and progresses toward the educational institution which builds on to what has been taught within the family. Self-discipline involves every step taken by the individual to control his/her behavior according to norms and conscience toward beneficial ends of one's self and one's nation. Reward and punishment systems are crucial to knowing when to control one's self. Reward (approval, praise, money, etc.) for a child's action can precipitate a code of futuristic guidelines for sanctionable conducts. Punishments with explanations can, too, precipitate those guidelines for determining what is wrong.

LOYALTY

20. Loyalty is a psychological condition in which one supports other persons or code of conduct because they are human pockets of influence over one's behaviors. The influence can be acceptable under the condition in which one is either in direct or of an indirect participant in the decisional process leading to means of influence. Globally, loyalty is the psychological consequence based on (1) an opportunity to be either directly or indirectly involved in the formulation of a code of conduct (e.g. the constitution), (2) support for or adherence to this code of conduct as it exists or as interpreted by either a group or an individual who act as interpreters of this role of conduct. Within loyalty are feelings of positive support and actual behavioural representation of this support in covert ways representing common agreement with whose authority one is under or whoever one is collaborating with for the betterment of nation building.

21. The psychological conditions of obedience and conformity fall within the province of loyalty. To obey/conform is to uphold and adhere to social expectancies. Compliance/superficial loyalty but identification with the internalization

of the code of conduct evidenced by a deep belief and the practise of it is loyalty²³ To give a commitment of agreement to someone in governmental, personal, and social spheres and behave contrary in his/her absence is not loyalty. It will be a mistake, however, to conceptualize all forms of obedience, and conformity as constructive. There is the blind loyalty which is marked by adherence to conduct which is detrimental to nation building. There is an experimental finding relating to blind loyalty which occurred in the American culture but is pan-cultural in its application. It is S. Milgram's experiment on the behavioral implications of obedience.²⁴ At the command of another, (who is perceived as having authority over them) to increase shock to a painful level for helpless others who failed in a learning situation, a significant number of experimental subjects kept the loyalty!!

CONCLUSION

22. The content of this paper has been tailored toward a psychological analysis of good citizenship within the context of nation-building. It is an evaluative appraisal of how an individual, (a psychological germ), can be appraised on citizenry through the behavioural implications of nation consciousness, national pride, self-discipline self-reliance, selfless-service), leadership, and loyalty.

23. The mistake should not be made in interpreting these psychological characteristics as generating from a vacuum, of societal/national impetus. Good citizenship is a consequence of a "normal" interaction between the nation and the individuals populating that nation. It is the responsibility of any nation to develop and inculcate in her citizenry those characteristics which are in consonance with cultural values as well as nation building. There should be an inter-dependence among the social institutions (politics and education) for

the promotion of these characteristics. The educational institution should enrich national awareness by widening knowledge and information about national history, national affairs and the world state. Books, written by nationals on national history and national-affairs should be encouraged and available for cognitive/informational consumption. It is the birth of this national consciousness which can partially contribute to an emotional attachment to a nation called national pride. The familial institution should be set up to inculcate in the child-youth, before moving on to the educational institution, the global virtues of self-discipline. The manner of control depends on regulating one's behaviour according to societal code of conduct in conjunction with one's conscience. These inner regulatory mechanisms are heavily affected by the use of the reward and punishing systems administered within the home environment. And, they are effective in the sense that the child-youth — is more dependent on the parents as satisfiers of his/her needs. To promote self discipline, any reward or any punishment administered must be accompanied by explanation. Else, the familial environment is perceived as authoritarian in which there is no clear perception of right from wrong. To be aware of how one's behaviour is being either rewarded or punished stimulates the process of self-discipline.

24 On the whole there should be the right atmosphere for nation building by (1) a clear and well-applied constitution to which everyone is liable, (2) able and trustworthy leaders who will champion the course of the nation (3) responsible citizenry who will ask what they can do for the nation and not what the nation can do for them. Given this right atmosphere, the aforementioned characteristics can be allowed to germinate and grow !!!

FOOTNOTES

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