

20 YEARS OF GERMAN UNIFICATION

AND

52 YEARS OF GHANA'S INDEPENDENCE

Proceedings of a Symposium on Lessons for Nation-Building

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Kojo Opoku Aidoo, PhD

Notes on Nation-Building

The papers published in this volume represent some preliminary results of research conducted within the framework of the symposium in commemoration of 52 years of independence of Ghana and 20 years of reunification of Germany on the general theme of *20 years of German Unification and 52 years of Ghana's Independence: Lessons for Nation-Building*. The raison d'être of the symposium was to offer a platform for stakeholders to candidly express and articulate how the nation-building process could be expatiated for the purpose of enhancing national cohesion. This volume is therefore an important contribution to the practices and discourses on nation-building. Before a summary of the various papers presented at the symposium can be made, it is essential that a few preliminary remarks are made about the phenomenon of “nation-building” to set the tone and the stage for an in-depth examination for the various paper presentations.

Some ambiguity surrounds “nation-building” as a normative concept, not only because of the different conceptualizations, but also because the process of nation-building has followed divergent trajectories in different settings. Confronted with such vagueness, settling on a definitive explanation for nation-building can become a matter of theoretical proclivity. Less insidiously, different theories appear more appealing depending on the scale at which one seeks to examine nation-building. The term “nation-building” is often used in a patently vague and inconsistent manner. Several uses of the term can be distinguished, which are either directed at the real course, description or analysis of historical-social processes or are normatively oriented and focus on a system of objectives or political strategies (Hippler 2002).

The ambiguities notwithstanding, we may regard nation-building as either a process of socio-political development which allows loosely connected communities to become a common society with a nation-state corresponding to it, or a political objective as well as a strategy for reaching specific political objectives as happened under colonial rule in most of Africa. Nation-building can therefore be a development or imperial strategy depending on the political circumstances and actors.

McCormick (2007) attributes the following properties to the state: a) its unchallenged control of the territory within the defined boundaries under its control: b) its monopolization of the legitimate use of force within its borders: and c) its reliance upon impersonal rules in the governance of its citizens and subjects (Harberson & Rothchild, 2000:7) This construct has also been extended by Charles Tilly who includes membership in a system of states as a requisite for stateness (Tilly 2007.) But in Africa's conditions of social pluralism, other properties of the African state should also include, favourable patterns of ethnic relations, the reduction of corruption, the strengthening of civil society, the reform and liberalization of economic policies, an emphasis on the doctrine of state

responsiveness to legitimate public demands, respect for civil rights, the reliance upon the emergence of more capable leaders and the expansion of democratization. The list could go on and on based on the numerous economic, political and social problems afflicting contemporary African states.

Claude Ake (1993) contends that the current spate of global transformation is nothing but a re-colonization process that not only democratizes dis-empowerment but facilitates the sustenance of the status quo. The question of nationhood has not been about how to define nation per se but how to effectively utilize the state to recreate or redefine itself as a representative of all. Sometimes it is difficult to perceive the problem because we have assumed the inevitable dominance of the ideas newly adopted from abroad or imposed by the previous colonial administrations. Normally a state develops its attributes over time, after it must have impressed its relevance and value in the memory of its citizens. No wonder it has taken the United States, United Kingdom or France, such a long time to be able to maintain the degree of democratic postures that they have assumed today. For the African state, the pre-colonial state was terminated by the colonial state, which represented a disconnection between the people that it dominated and had no interest in ever protecting them, except when its lucrative economic infrastructure was in danger. The succeeding post-colonial state lacks a history and has no connection to the pre-colonial state, except some values dynamic enough to resist the years of colonial domination. The post-colonial state is therefore in flux, in a process of integrating a non-native value system and infrastructure, in an un-comprehensive domestic environment. Those institutions that have survived colonial domination, for example the traditional authorities like Chiefs, exist in contradiction to newly adopted European values. The level of confusion is enormous and undermines the successful assertion of the new state structure because of the lack of trust and the disconnection inherited from the colonial experience. At this juncture, a few introductory remarks about the evolution of nation-building is in order.

To begin with, the history of the evolution of nation-building shows that it is evolutionary rather than revolutionary, that it takes a long time and is a socio-historical process that cannot be jump-started from outside. It is usually the result of political leadership, and changes in technology and economic processes as well as communication, culture and civil society.

The second remark relates to the fact that nation-building by one nation may destroy others. For example, the building of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) led to the systematic destabilization of the ancient Asante state. Similarly, the emergence of the US as a nation entailed the wiping away or marginalization of aboriginal nations. Today many "First Nations" are in the process of nation re-building, re-building the social, cultural, economic and political foundations for what is left of self-governance. First nations seek to re-build cultural identities as nations in order to challenge their disintegration by others in the creation of their own states.

The third remark relates to the core elements of a nation-building model of which there are four, viz. (a) genuine self-rule (b) creating effective governing institutions (c) cultural match (d) a strategic orientation (long-term planning).

Finally, especially in relation to Africa, nation-building is either seen as projects rather than realities (Claude Ake 1999) or "failed states". One of the reasons for the difficulties of what many consider "failed states" is that some peoples who had been integrated were 'forced' by European colonialism, while others who were separate peoples were integrated together in new states not based on common identities. Particularly in Africa (including Ghana), new political borders paid little attention to national identities in the creation of new states. The significant difference between nation-building in Europe and Africa is that while in Europe nation-building historically preceded state-building, in the post-colonial states of Africa, state-building preceded nation-building. That seems to be the difficulty associated with a German-Ghana comparative study. The various papers reflect on different aspects of this difficulty.

Notes on the Structure of the Publication

This volume is structured into four chapters and begins with the opening address and remarks by His Excellency John Mahama and Klaus D. Loetzer, Ghana's Vice President and Resident Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) in Ghana respectively.

The symposium was chaired by Ms. Joyce Aryee, CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Mines, who visits Germany regularly and speaks even the German language. Ms. Aryee observed that the unification of Germany energized Ghana and helped Ghanaians to think "Ghana first" and look into the future. She bemoaned the escalating national polarization, and added that given the uneven distribution of resources, Ghanaians need to confront the challenges and build a good nation of one people with a common destiny. She challenged traditional leaders to make the chieftaincy institution more relevant to national development so no government can side-step them, explaining that chiefs have a key role to play in defining what should be national values.

In the opening address, Ghana's Vice President who was represented by the Minister of Communication, Hon. Haruna Iddrisu, commends both Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Ghana and the German Government for focusing their attention over the years on a collaborative development agenda that is helping to improve the creation of real public value in Ghana.

Loetzer takes over and points out that the genesis of political foundations in Germany is a result of the disastrous aftermath of 12 years dictatorship by the national socialists that plunged not only Germany but the whole of Europe into chaos and endless sufferings. It was against this backdrop that the founding fathers, among them Konrad Adenauer, considered it paramount that there should not only be political training by the state at schools, but that the different political currents and ideologies in German society should be represented in the training programmes by independent actors – provided the training observes the democratic stipulations of the constitution. That is the reason why all

political parties represented in the German Bundestag, the National Parliament, receive funds by government to run political training programmes, mainly for adults, but also for youths. Moving from the genesis of political Foundations in Germany, Loetzer elaborates that also in Germany regional sensitivities and regional balance have to be observed in the composition of the state (Bundesland) and federal government in order to maintain peaceful national unity. He observes:

“...if somebody assumes that keeping Germany together politically is an easy task, he/she is totally wrong. Let me take the example of the composition of the government ministers: For a German Chancellor, or female Chancellor for that matter, to form a Government is not just choosing the best political material and appoint them ministers. Far from that. To be successful, any German head of government has to ponder on the regional balance of the composition of his/her Cabinet like any head of state in Ghana or any other African leader of a multi-ethnic society. This does not always allocate the best expertise at the top of a line ministry, not here, not in Germany. But it is the price we pay to keep a nation together and it is thus part of nation-building”

Concluding, Loetzer points out that there are quite some parallels between the Northern and Southern political cultures, even though “there may be differences”.

On his part, the German Ambassador to Ghana, Dr. Marius Haas, said the most detested aspect of the Berlin Wall was that, it separated people living in the same country into East and West, compelling the German people to live as if they were two different nationals. The Ambassador argued that tolerance, patience and fortitude are essential ingredients in nation-building. He urged the Ghanaian people to continue to work hard to hasten the country's development. Concluding, Dr. Haas stressed that the path of democratic development chosen by Ghana is an important pillar in nation-building.

In the opening chapter, Dr. S. K. Bemile, in his contribution titled “Nation-Building in Germany and Ghana: Lessons from Historical Experiences”, engages in a comparative analysis of the historical experiences of Germany and Ghana in nation-building. He observes that Germany has gone through great transformation for many centuries from her Germanic roots to her present nationhood. He notes further that the resilience of Germans and foreign cooperation have made this success a reality. The chapter concludes, nonetheless, that nation-building is by no means complete in Germany in view of the current migratory, the repercussions thereof and the need for tolerance and integration. On the other hand, the author argues that Ghana can be rightly described as a mosaic of little states, kingdoms and groups who have been forcibly merged into a state that is struggling to evolve as a nation that is acceptable to all across the whole country. Whilst the multicultural situation is peaceful and ideal on the face value, undercurrents of ethnic tensions, equity in development and respect for all ethnic groups need to be handled very carefully, the author maintains. A key inference to be drawn from this chapter is that, contrary to conventional wisdom, nation-building in both Germany and Ghana is incomplete. This is an important contribution of Dr. S. K. Bemile to our understanding of nation-building. The chapter, in conclusion, identifies the factors necessary for successful nation-building to be the promotion of security, rule of law, socio-economic development, education, religious tolerance among others.

Chapter two, by Dr, Agyemang Attafuah, titled “Socio-Economic Development: A Pre-Condition for Nation-Building”, looks at the correspondence between socio-economic development and nation-building. The chapter is divided into seven sections, viz.

1. General socio-economic perspectives on nation-building
2. An analysis of the nexus between society and nation-building
3. Efforts at nation-building through educational institutions and other working relations
4. Critical issues of multi-ethnic groups and nation building
5. How socio-economic development enhances nation building or otherwise
6. Some institutional efforts at nation-building in Ghana
7. Other socio-economic issues and nation-building

Attafuah draws a number of interesting conclusions: that both socio-economic development and nation building are dynamic, continuous processes; that socio-economic development does not necessarily produce nation-building; that the relationship between socio-economic development and nation building is best conceived as an intertwining, symbiotic and mutually engaging processes: that socio-economic development, properly managed, aids and fosters nation building. He then draws the most interesting conclusion that nation building precedes socio-economic development. He writes:

“If, in the conceptualization of socio-economic development and nation building, the two processes are seen to face the classic chicken-and-egg riddle, i.e., which is the parent of the other, I will venture to declare nation building the parent, and socio-economic development the child”

This position is somewhat controversial because nation building itself is perceived by a school of thought to be a process of socio-political development. Here again, like chapter one, there is a challenge to the prevailing orthodoxy.

In conclusion, the author engages in extrapolative thinking and argues that the future of nation building in Ghana will depend on a number of factors, including

- (1) Pursuit of a viable socio-economic development agenda;
- (2) Fair and equitable distribution of the benefits of development;
- (3) Promotion of inclusivity, acceptance and shared sense of belonging;
- (4) Prevention of Discrimination based on the prohibited grounds enumerated in Article 17(2) of the Constitution and elsewhere; and
- (5) Promotion of fundamental human rights, social justice and the rule of law.

Finally, the author advocates for the promotion of good governance, human rights, multiculturalism, cultural diplomacy, sound economic management and social justice as prerequisites for successful nation building.

In the third chapter, the final, Kwesi Jonah, in his piece titled “Elections and Nation-Building in Ghana’s Fourth Republic” analyses elections and nation building in Ghana’s Fourth Republic. His basic argument is that the return to electoral politics presents Ghana and Ghanaians with an excellent opportunity to renew the commitment to the task of nation-building in Ghana. At the same time, he points out that unless national political leadership approaches elections with a new spirit of patriotism and national responsibility the task of nation-building in Ghana could suffer a long-lasting political damage due to elections. That mirrors the contradictory historical legacies of electoralism in Africa. Jonah does not interrogate this contradiction further because it is beyond the purview of his paper. Jonah, however, observes further that election has a potential to contribute to nation-building in Ghana because it pulls voters and candidates from every corner of the country into the political system. In addition, election highlights crucial issues in the economy, the state and the society. The record of elections in Ghana since 1992, according to Jonah, clearly indicates that the nation-building potential of this crucial political process remains unrealized. And yet it is not too late to realize the nation-building value of elections.

Concluding this chapter, Jonah makes a number of significant recommendations. First, he recommends that political parties should be allowed into local government or district assembly elections. Second, he proposes that the present first-past-the-post or the majoritarian system, though well entrenched in Ghana has not helped nation-building and should be changed in favour of some form of proportional representation system. Finally, he recommends that the Presidential system in Ghana should be given up to make for the Parliamentary system of government. Jonah does not discuss the possible political ramification and constitutional implications of these recommendations. The chapter appears the most ambitious in terms of its recommendations.

Overall, the papers published in this volume constitute a revitalizing contribution to the discourses and practices of nation-building in both the global north and south. It enhances our comprehension of the dilemmas of nation-building in the era of globalization and liberalism. It is a must read for students of development studies, political scientists, policy-makers and development bearers.

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Opening Address

H.E. The Vice President of the Republic of Ghana John Dramani Mahama

Madam Chairperson,
Your Excellency, Dr. Marius Haas, the Ambassador of Germany to Ghana.
Excellencies,
The Resident Representative of Konrad Adenauer Foundation.
Distinguished Panel of Speakers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to extend the sincere felicitations of His Excellency, the Vice President of the republic of Ghana to you all, on the occasion of the 52nd Anniversary celebration of Ghana's Independence, the climax of which we formally marked last Friday the 6th of March.

Again, His Excellency, the Vice President, has asked that I convey the best wishes of the Government and people of the Republic of Ghana to the Government and People of the Federal Republic of Germany on this occasion when we are simultaneously marking 20 years of German Unification.

Your Excellency, Ambassador Haas, please accept our congratulations and convey same to your Government. And please permit me to add that a pressing national engagement has occupied the attention of the Vice President, and I am honoured to read his address at this august function.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
As you are all aware, the Republic of Ghana and the Federal Republic of Ghana can proudly talk about the establishment of full diplomatic relations which dates back to 1957 when Ghana attained Independence. Prior to this period, we are equally aware that Ghana and Germany had relationships in the socio-cultural sector which brought the peoples of our two-countries closer together in various fields of human endeavour.

As a result of the need to deepen this collaboration Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has over the years, pursued the goal of deepening the Ghana-German relationship in the area of promotion of Democracy, the Rule of Law, Human Rights and Social Market Economy.

Specifically, we have it on record that since the early sixties, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ghana has been supportive in complementing the socio-political reforms of Ghana as a way of helping Ghana to deepen its institutional arrangements to enhance democracy and the rule of law in the country.

Indeed, the contribution of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation has been to support our efforts in Ghana to improve upon our participatory and inclusive decision-making

process with the view to ensuring that the practice of good governance would be enhanced at all levels of our administration and the rule of law respected.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The occasion we are marking today, therefore, gives the opportunity for us in Government in Ghana to extend our sincere commendation to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Ghana and indeed the German Government for focusing their attention over the years on a collaborative development agenda that is helping us improve the creation of real public value. Indeed, as we promote the concept of participatory decision-making process, we aim at accelerating the promotion of change to bring the desired impact on the lives of the people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In our quest as a Government to meet our commitment to the developmental aspirations of the people of Ghana, we have focused our developmental strategy for this country on four thematic areas, namely:

- Transparency and Accountable Governance
- Strong Economy for Real Jobs
- Investing in People
- Expanding Infrastructure for Growth

In this regard, let me use this platform to entreat all our development partners to fashion our collaborative efforts to support policies and programmes that we have lined up to rapidly help to promote the development agenda under the “Better Ghana” initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a fact that in recent times Governments, the world over, are challenged to promote public trust and confidence to meet the citizenry aspiration and expectation. This challenge has undoubtedly taken centre-stage in democratic governance today.

It is in this regard that I appreciate the effort made by KAS to set the stage for the discussion of topical issues that border on the promotion of nation building through the inculcation of the tenets of good governance. And so as we use this platform to discuss the collaborative nation building of our two countries Ghana and Germany, to mark the two occasions which relate to self-determination, let us endeavour to handle this symposium in the context of public policy changes. This will indeed be of immense benefit to both Ghana and Germany as we give prescriptions that will help to create wealth and eradicate poverty.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me therefore take this opportunity to entreat all discussants in the various topics selected to go about the discussions in a forward-looking manner so that we can objectively address current topical issues related to the need for us all to contribute towards the macro-economic stabilization, now affecting the globe and our respective countries. Indeed, I expect that the discussions will be done in a manner of partnership

that can sustain our collaborative support programmes initiated with the support of Germany.

Madam Chairperson,

With regard to our democratic dispensation, we are all aware that Ghana, a little under four months ago, came out of an election process which has been widely, and rightly so, acclaimed as one of the success stories in Africa. Notwithstanding this, we do not intend to be complacent at all but all eager to ensure the improvement of voter confidence to the full in our electoral process.

Let us, therefore, use the platform we have during this period of the symposium, to map out further strategy for collaboration between our two-countries that will eliminate all obstacles that were encountered in our election process so we can deepen our success story to evolve improved governance mechanisms in the country.

I am again aware of the collaborative effort that has been on-going between the Foundation and the legislature in the country and want to use this opportunity to crave the indulgence of all to deepen that relationship. And here, I would like to suggest that the Foundation and the leadership of the Legislature develop a collaborative effort to enhance the promotion of research and development mechanisms that will help bring the legislature and the constituents much closer to each other, taking advantage of the ICT era in which we are.

I know for instance, that it is the desire of every Parliamentarian to own a lap-top computer connected to high speed Internet so that wherever the Parliamentarian finds himself/herself, he/she can undertake research to impact on the delivery of service to the people of this country. This is a major concern for the Government and that is why we are challenged to ensure the development of adequate ICT infrastructure across the country to aid this process. I will expect, Ladies and Gentlemen, that at this symposium a strategy can be fashioned to deepen the collaboration between the Foundation and the legislature in this direction.

With regard to the rule of law, the commitment of Government is geared towards the deepening of the citizenry understanding of his or her rights at all times so that we can enhance the level of civil society interaction with government, the legislature, the judiciary as a whole in a manner that will promote inclusiveness in the overall government decision-making process.

Let us, therefore, strive as we fashion our new path for collaboration to ensure that that we will have much engagement with the civil society, particularly the youth and also help motivate the private sector of the economy to propel the process of socio-economic development.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this note, I urge all discussants to be forward-looking at this symposium planned to mark the 52nd anniversary celebration of Ghana's independence and 20 years of German

Unification. Please do not hesitate to let us be informed about the policy inputs that will come out of the discussions so we can factor them into our policy review processes as appropriate to help deepen the collaboration policies and programmes of Ghana and Germany.

Long live Ghana-Germany friendship and collaboration, as I declare this symposium formally open. I thank you for your attention.

Opening Remarks

Klaus D. Loetzer, KAS Resident Representative

Madam Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am glad that you followed our invitation to participate in this symposium in commemoration of 52 years of independence of the Republic of Ghana and 20 years of reunification of Germany. For a political Foundation, these are good reasons to bring together some eminent personalities from the political arena as well as social scientists to ponder on and bring forward some thoughts on nation-building. It is a pleasure for me to acknowledge today the presence of some old partners and companions of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. As some of you may know, this year KAS looks back to 43 years of work in Ghana.

As you are aware, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) is one of the German political Foundations that seek to promote the ideals of good governance across the globe. KAS supports economic and social reforms of government, strengthens the role of Parliament, promotes broad-based participation of the citizens in decision-making through decentralisation programmes as well as the promotion of indigenous traditional institutions.

However, I would like to point out that the origination of political foundations in Germany is a result of our country's history and aims at providing ongoing political education to Germans in Germany. This was deemed necessary by the founding fathers of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949 after the failure of the first attempt to establish democratic governance in Germany, the Weimar Republic, in 1933. The disastrous aftermath of 12 years dictatorship by the national socialists had plunged not only Germany but the whole of Europe into chaos and endless sufferings. It was against this backdrop that the founding fathers, among them Konrad Adenauer, considered it paramount that there should not only be political training by the state at schools, but that the different political currents and ideologies in German society should be represented in the training programmes by independent actors – provided the training observes the democratic stipulations of the constitution. That is the reason why all political parties represented in the German Bundestag, the National Parliament, receive funds by government to run political training programmes, mainly for adults, but also for youths.

With the German reunification in the year 1989, the political Foundations faced a new challenge. Their political training programmes had to assist that the populations of hitherto two completely opposite political ideologies were to live together as a nation united in territory but also regarding their mental state. In other words, nation-building was the task of the hour. And this is the case up till now. However, today we have sadly to acknowledge that despite the fact that everyone of the age of 20 and below knows only the united Germany, the true reunification of the German people has not yet been really achieved. Not only physically, that is as far as the living conditions and the same salary levels in former East and West are concerned, but as far as their minds, their mental state, are concerned. Some people even contemplate that the division of the (Berlin) wall is still in our minds.

Madam Chairperson, after this brief excursion into some aspects of the concept of political Foundations in Germany, let me proceed to another subject matter linked to nation-building. Very often when I confront my African counterparts with examples of Germany or Europe as regards governance and related issues, they reply: *But we are in Africa!* Though I agree 100 per cent, more often than not, however, it appears just an excuse for not doing better. Let me elaborate. For example, if somebody assumes that keeping Germany together politically is an easy task, he/she is totally wrong. Let me take the example of the composition of the government ministers: For a German Chancellor, or female Chancellor for that matter, to form a Government is not just choosing the best political material and appoint them as ministers. Far from that. To be successful, any German head of government has to ponder on the regional balance of the composition of his/her Cabinet like any head of state in Ghana or any other African leader of a multi-ethnic society. This does not always allocate the best expertise at the top of a line ministry, not here, nor in Germany. But it is the price we pay to keep a nation together and it is thus part of nation-building.

This applies even to the lower level of forming a government at the federal state government where the proportional representation of its regions is equally important. Recently the new prime minister of Bavaria, after appointing his government ministers, jokingly said that he was confident he had succeeded in pacifying all the Bavarian tribes because of equal tribal representation in his government. By the way, political observers describe the equal tribal representation in Bavaria as more axiomatic than a papal dogma. Furthermore, in the predominantly roman catholic Bavaria, not only the tribe is of importance, but also the religious denomination, making it obligatory if the prime minister himself is roman catholic, certain ministers must not only meet the tribal criteria but on top of it also the religious one, i.e. must be Protestants.

Madam Chairperson, permit me to bring to a close my brief ventures on certain aspects of nation-building. My remarks were meant to show that there are quite some parallels between the Northern and Southern political cultures. However, let me also point out that there may be differences. If for example a certain ministry is allocated to a certain "tribe" in Bavaria or at the federal level in Berlin for that matter, it does not mean that in future only members of his or her tribe will benefit from, for example, the consultancy programme of that ministry. The allocation of consultancy assignments, or any other services, will still follow strict tendering rules and procedures as imposed by the respective law. So the observance of the proportional representation of all regions is more a window dressing exercise for the electorate. The equal distribution of public services and



infrastructure is, however, a goal set by the basic law, the German constitution, in that it demands from the successive governments to do everything possible that an equal standard of living is provided to all citizens, no matter where they live and no matter to which tribe they belong, let alone which religious denomination they practise.

Madam Chairperson, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you very much for listening to me.

CHAPTER ONE

NATION-BUILDING IN GERMANY AND GHANA: LESSONS FROM HISTORICAL EXPERIENCES

Dr. Sebastian K. Bemile

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1. Definition of Nation-Building

In simple terms, nation-building is defined here as a process of socio-political development. This process of development may result in a common social order or body politic with its own system of state stemming from loose or conflicting communities. The process necessarily leads to the establishment of common cultural standards, such as a common language and the integration of future parts of the population into socio-cultural and political entities like a legal system, educational system or electoral system. In nation-building the powers that have been achieved are legitimised through militarily, administratively or economically dominant control mechanisms.

“Nation-building entails creating, [for instance,] national symbols like flags, national anthems, national statutory holidays, national stadia, national airlines, national languages and national myths”. (Anderson, In: Wikipedia Encyclopaedia, 2005).

It is also imperative to create a national identity.

2. Historical Analysis of Nation-Building

In order to be able to understand the present conditions and status of Nation-Building in Germany and Ghana it is relevant to take at least a cursory look at the historical development of Nation-building in the two countries, especially with regard to the experiences which characterise the said development.

2.1 Germany

The present German nation dates back to the era of the Germanic tribes, such as the Alamanni, Franks, Chatti, Saxons, Sicambri and Thuringii, whose ethnogenesis occurred during the Nordic Bronze Age or during the Pre-Roman Iron Age were quite vibrant between 100 BC and 300 AD. For the purposes of our discussion here we can only cast a cursory glance at certain historical highlights that led to the establishment of the present German nation-state.

Migratory trends saw a mixture and emergence of different tribes and the rise and fall of empires, kingdoms and dukedoms and the formation of autonomous states. In the so-called High Middle Ages the abundance of states that were formally predominantly Roman Catholic broke into Protestant and Roman Catholic States after the early 16th century Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther. Thus, the northern states became protestant and the southern states remained Roman Catholic.

During the Napoleonic Wars the French reorganised the German territories and significantly reduced the German states to a bare minimum of 39 states and enforced a political system that was influenced by the ideals of the French Revolution (1789-1815).

After Napoleon's final defeat in 1815 at Waterloo the German states allied, albeit loosely, in the **German Confederation** (*Deutscher Bund*) in 1815 under Austrian leadership. In 1866, the Prussian-led transitory **North German Federation** (*Norddeutscher Bund*) (1867-1871) replaced the German Confederation. Austria was excluded. On 18th January 1871, the German Empire (dubbed the “Little Germany”) was declared with 25 states and led by the Kaiser and his Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. Thus, Prussia established control over 22 states of northern Germany and southern Germany. This empire underwent an industrial revolution and promoted nationalistic ideas:

*“Bismarck's domestic policies as Chancellor of Germany were characterised by his fight against perceived enemies of the Protestant state. In the so-called **Kulturkampf** (1872-1878), he tried to limit the influence of the Roman Catholic Church and of its political arm, the Catholic Centre Party, through various measures – like the introduction of civil marriage – but without much success. Millions of non-German subjects in the German*

Empire, like the Polish, Danish and French minorities, were discriminated against [...] and a policy of Germanisation was implemented” (Wikipedia, 2008: 17).

Bismarck further tried to repress the social democratic movement from 1878 by outlawing the organisation of the Social Workers' Party (later known as the Social Democratic Party of Germany).

“Bismarck's priority was to protect Germany's expanding power through a system of alliances (e.g. the Three Emperors League signed by Russia and Austria and Germany of 1872, the Dual Alliance of Germany and Austria-Hungary in 1879 and the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy in 1882) and an attempt to contain crises until Germany was fully prepared to initiate them” (ditto).

It is significant to note that Bismarck was reluctant to succumb to Crown Prince Wilhelm II's ambition to make Germany a world power by expanding Germany and to join the Scramble for Africa (in order to secure “a place in the sun”). He was nevertheless compelled to do so due to the exigencies of the times and thus established between 1880 and 1885 a couple of colonies in Africa, namely Togo, the Cameroons, German South-West Africa, German East Africa, German New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago and the Marshall Islands.

It is also significant to note that it was Bismarck who helped initiate the famous Berlin Conference of 1884-5 which was convened to “establish international guidelines for the acquisition of African territory” (ditto).

The new **Weltpolitik** of the Kaiser Wilhelm II focussed on expanding Germany. Bismarck resigned in 1890. The Emperor then pursued a more vigorous policy of increasing Germany's influence in the world. From 1898 the German colonial expansion in East Asia led to frictions with other imperialist powers, e.g. the United Kingdom, Russia, Japan, and the United States of America. Thus, the German imperialist power politics and the determined pursuit of national interests ultimately led to the outbreak in 1914 of the First World War (sparked by the assassination, on June 28, 1914, of the Austrian heir-apparent Franz Ferdinand and his wife). Other causes always mentioned are

“The theorized underlying causes have included the opposing policies of the European states, the armaments race, German-British rivalry, the difficulties of the Austro-Hungarian multinational state, Russia's Balkan policy and overhasty mobilisations and ultimatums [...]. Germany fought on the side of Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire against Russia, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan and several other smaller states. Fighting also spread to the Near East and the German colonies” (ditto).

Instead of achieving more expansion Germany lost many of her territories, had to pay reparations and undergo other harsh conditions after the 1918 armistice which resulted from the Treaty of Versailles.

At this juncture it is relevant to note that historical development of Germany till its introduction of democracy and Germany's status as a republic only occurred on 11 August 1919 with Friedrich Ebert as the first German President, thus resulting in the establishment of the Weimar Republic.

“This Weimar Republic was abandoned when the Prussian government was ousted by a coup (Preussenschlag) in 1932 (lasting nominally until 1933), when in 1933 the Nazis took over Germany with Adolf Hitler becoming chancellor of the Third Reich. [...]. From May 1945 to 1949, the Allied Occupation Forces ruled over all of Germany and in 1949 the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) was made up from the United States, UK and French zones, while the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) evolved from the Soviet zone. [West Germany eventually came to enjoy prolonged economic growth beginning with the Economic Miracle (Wirtschaftswunder) through the forbidden currency reform of June 1948 and the U.S. assistance through the Marshall Plan loans]. While West Germany was a democracy that joined NATO and the European Union, East Germany was part of the Soviet-controlled Eastern Bloc, separated from the West by the iron curtain with its most prominent part, the Berlin wall. [The Berlin Wall, built in 1961 to prevent East Germans from escaping to West Germany, became a symbol of the Cold War]. In 1989, in the course of the [revolution or] Die Wende revolution the East German government was overthrown and the wall opened. In 1990, East Germany was reunited with West Germany“ (Wikipedia, 2008: 3-4).

From the foregoing description of the German Nation-Building process it is clear that Germany passed through a great deal of upheavals from the development of the Germanic tribes in the first century BC to a reunited Germany in the 21st century. Bloody battles were fought; empires, kingdoms and civilian regimes were overthrown or replaced; coups d'état were carried out, e.g. the **Kapp Putsch** which took place in 1920 when the Freikorps voluntary units were dissolved, the **Beer Hall Putsch** in Munich led by Adolf Hitler staged in 1923 in order to seize (unsuccessfully though) power in Berlin and the ousting of the Prussian government by the coup called the **Preussenschlag** in 1932.

2.2 Ghana

Before talking about the present-day Ghana it is imperative to look into the migratory and glotto-chronological trends of the peoples who make up the population of Ghana. There are several theories on the migration of the ethnic groups who occupy Ghana now. Some of the theories are speculative and some carry some weight but remain at an embryonic stage. What may be considered as more specific are the similarities and divergence in cultural features of the peoples inhabiting the areas (cf. Andah and Aquandah, In: Elfasi and Hrbek, 1988: 493).

“While small-scale movements of people and trade and cultural contacts are regular features in the evolution of most societies and must be recognized as such, the old idea of mass exodus of people from place to place is, except for rare cases, an unconvincing approach to explaining ethnic and cultural origins” (Andah and Aquandah, In: Elfasi and Hrbek, 1988: 495).

Andah and Aquandah continue to say that:

“One of the major landmarks in the cultural evolution of the Gold coast peoples is the inception and development of iron technology. Its adoption was crucial in the rise of society from a stage of peasant village economy and isolationism to one characterized by high-level technological competence, large-scale agriculture, diverse industries and crafts, complex trade systems and socio-political systems” (ditto).

The peoples who currently occupy Ghana are a convergence of several ethno-linguistic groupings. Their languages have been classified by scholars under sub-groupings of the larger family of the Niger-Congo family, such as Mande, Kwa, Gur, Guan and West Atlantic (Cf. Ditto: 534-543). Mande languages spoken in Ghana and in neighbouring Burkina Faso are, for instance Bisa (by the Busaansi) and Gyula.

The classification of West Atlantic languages appears to be controversial. Be that as it may an important West Atlantic language spoken in Ghana is Fulfulde (by the Fulbe/Fulani). The major Kwa languages spoken in Ghana and in neighbouring countries are: Akan (Anyi, Baoule, Twi and Fanti), Ewe (spoken in Ghana, Togo, Benin and south-western Nigeria), Gã, Adanme, Nzima and Gonja (spoken in only Ghana).

Some of the major Gur languages spoken in Ghana and in its neighbouring countries are: Dagbanli (spoken in only Ghana by the Dagbamba/Dagomba), Dagara (Dagaare) (spoken in Ghana, Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire by the Dagara/Dagaaba), Gurunɛ (spoken by the Gurunɛ/Frafra), Kasem (spoken in Ghana and Burkina Faso by the Kasena/Gurunshie), Kusaal (spoken in Ghana and Burkina Faso by the Kusaasi), Buli (spoken by the Balsa), Mampruli (spoken in only Ghana by the Mamprusi), Moore (spoken in Ghana and Burkina Faso) and Kokomba (spoken in Ghana and Burkina Faso).

Guan languages include Gonja, Nkonya, Efutu, Awutu, Krachi, Lolobi, and Larteh). The current political map of Ghana is a Western creation of colonies that were virtually drawn without or with little regard to the boundaries of historic ethno-linguistic compositions of the population involved, especially with regard to earlier Kingdoms, Empires, nation-states and groups with their highly specialised bureaucracies. Many European settlements or invasions took place from the Portuguese (1482) through to the Dutch (1598), British, Danes and the Swedes. During that period “the coastline was dotted by more than 30 forts and castles built by Dutch, British and Danish merchants”. The British finally made the Gold Coast a protectorate in 1874 and a colony in 1896.

It is worth mentioning once more here that the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck initiated the Berlin Conference of 1848-5 to “establish international guidelines for the acquisition of African territory” (Wikipedia, 2008: 16) which served as an impetus for the ‘Scramble for Africa’. Thus, it was during this conference that the initial boundaries of the Gold Coast and those of other African countries were arbitrarily drawn.

Moves towards the de-colonisation of the region began in 1946. The first political party, the United Gold Coast Convention (U.G.C.C.), was formed in 1947, for instance, by Paa

Grant and Dr. J. B. Danquah, with its slogan “**Self- government within the Shortest Possible Time**” and invited Kwame Nkrumah to be their Secretary. The attitude of the party was liberal and did not please Nkrumah who wanted “**Self-government Now**”. “Following disagreement of ideologies, Kwame Nkrumah left the U.G.C.C. and formed a more radical nationalist party – Convention People’s Party (C.P.P.) on June 12th, 1949 with its motto ‘**Self-government Now**’” (Presidential Diary, 2007: 37).

Its first constitution was promulgated in 1951. In April 1954 a new constitution was introduced. This made the country virtually self-governing. After two general elections which were won by the C.P.P. the way was cleared for the independence of the Gold Coast.

On 6th March, 1957, the area which was then formed from a merger of the British colony, the Gold Coast, the Ashanti Empire and the British Togoland trust territory became the first democratic sub-Saharan country in colonial Africa to gain its independence and adopted the name Ghana (formerly the name of the great ancient Empire of Ghana). Kwame Nkrumah became its first president (Cf. Presidential Diary: 39).

Kwame Nkrumah was an African anti-colonial leader, one who dreamt of an independent united Africa which would not drift into the so-called neo-colonialism or still be under the yoke of its colonial masters. “Ghana’s principles of freedom and justice, equity and free education for all, irrespective of ethnic background, religion or creed, borrow from Kwame Nkrumah’s implementation of Pan-Africanism” (Wikipedia, 2008: 17).

Nkrumah’s foreign policies were characterised by his struggle for independence for African nations. This struggle was manifest in his famous statement during the declaration of the independence of Ghana on 6th March 1957: “*The independence of Ghana is meaningless, unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent*”.

On 1st July, 1960, Ghana became a republic – thus ushering in the **First Republic**. On 24th February 1966, the Ghana Armed Forces and the Police overthrew Nkrumah’s administration in a military *coup d’état*, forming A National Liberation Council (NLC) and led by General J. A. Ankrah. In 1969, the Progress Party (PP), led by Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia as Prime Minister and the former Chief Justice Edward Akufo Addo as President, took over the reins of government from the NLC – forming the **Second Republic**. The PP administration was overthrown in a military *coup d’état* in 1972 led by Col. I. K. Acheampong who formed the National Redemption Council (NRC), later changed to the Supreme Military Council (SMC I). In a palace *coup d’état* in July 1978, General F. W. K. Akuffo replaced General Acheampong as Head of State forming the SMC II. The SMC II was overthrown in a *mutiny* by the Ghana Armed Forces on June 4th, 1979 forming the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) headed by Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings as its Chairman. After only three months the AFRC handed over power to a democratically elected government formed by the People’s National Party (PNP) 1979 led by Dr. Hilla Limann. This elected government ushered in the **Third Republic**. The democratically elected government was overthrown by another *coup d’état* in 1981 and

the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) was formed and led by Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings as its Chairman. The PNDC ruled Ghana from 31st December 1981 to 7th January 1993 when a democratically elected government was formed. This administration formed the **Fourth Republic** and was headed by Flt. Jerry John Rawlings as the President with Mr. Kow Nkensen Arkaah as the Vice President. In the presidential and parliamentary elections held in December 2000, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) won the elections and Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor became the President. In 2004 Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor won a second and final four-year term as Present of Ghana. In the general elections of 2008 Prof. John Evans Fiifi Atta-Mills won the elections and became the third President of the Fourth Republic of Ghana.

3. Critical Issues of Multi-ethnic Groups

The historical description of nation-building of Germany and Ghana outlined above demonstrates the tortuous ways and harsh experiences the two countries have passed through before reaching their present stage of nation-building. It shows how nation-building is not without problems. Nevertheless, nation-building in the two countries has by no means been completed as yet. Comparatively, Ghana's situation seems to be currently more challenging than that of Germany. This is not only because of the different political and socio-economic conditions that prevail in the two countries, but also because of the different critical issues posed by multi-ethnic groups, cultural diversity and integration.

3.1 Migration in Nation-Building

Early migratory movements were effected in Germany by people of almost homogeneous groups, i.e. Germanic, and eventually only German, groups who spoke the same language or different dialects of the same stock. After the World War II, however, Germany experienced a different trend of migration of foreigners and German re-settlers. Migratory waves of people into the present-day Ghana did not follow the same trend. Different ethnic groups belonging to different linguistic groups were forcibly merged to create a nation to serve their colonial master. However, in the last few decades Ghana has also experienced different waves of rural-urban migration and migration of refugees and asylum seekers.

3.1.1 Germany

With regard to Germany migratory trends, especially from the period after World War II till now have changed drastically. Since then migrant workers, refugees and German re-settlers have formed the main waves of migration. Klaus J. Bade puts it this way:

“The economic miracle in the Federal Republic of Germany that lasted until the early 1970s formed the framework for the recruitment of migrant workers (‘guest workers’) of both sexes from south and southeast Europe. From the late 1950s until recruitment was stopped in 1973, more than 14 million foreign workers came to Germany. Roughly 11 million returned home, while the rest stayed and were joined by their families” (Bade, In: Deutschland, 2008: 50).

However, not only legal foreign workers can be found in Germany, but also there has been a spate of irregular and illegal migrant workers since the restriction of the fundamental right to asylum in 1993.

With regard to refugees as asylum seekers Bade says:

“The number of foreign refugees and asylum seekers in the Federal Republic was much lower than the number of foreign workers, although public debates on immigration since the early 1980s frequently revolved around the issue of asylum” (ditto).

Even though the above-mentioned migrants were non-Germans there came to Germany another group of migrants known as the ethnic German re-settlers and Jewish re-settlers from the former Soviet Union, especially into the former German Democratic Republic that had reunified with the Federal Republic of Germany. Bade says:

“In the 1980s and early 1990s the migration of ethnic German resettlers to the Federal Republic increased considerably. The migration of these resettlers includes ethnic German groups from east, central and southeast Europe whose destinies had been strongly defined by the Second World War [...]. A total of 200,000 Jews from the CIS migrated to Germany by the end of 2007” (Bade, In: Deutschland, 2008: 51).

The migration of foreigners and Germans with a different political, ideological, religious, linguistic and socio-economic experience certainly began to pose a challenge to the German society and needs to be addressed appropriately.

3.1.2 Ghana

After Ghana had attained her independence from colonial rule she experienced many waves of migration, especially of freedom-fighters who sought asylum from their countries which were still under colonial rule. Also, during the past few decades, Ghana has received hundreds of refugees and asylum seekers from foreign countries that have been oppressed by African rulers.

Some interesting phenomena that have resulted from inequitable development in the country is seasonal and permanent migration of workers from the northern sector of the country to southern Ghana to seek jobs and a decent livelihood, a general rural-urban migration in the whole country and brain drain of intellectuals and professionals not only from one section of the country to another but also out of Ghana to foreign country to ‘seek greener pastures’. Mention should also be made of foreigners who have also migrated into Ghana to ‘seek greener pastures’ or to invest their resources into the Ghanaian society. Consideration should also be taken of people who have migrated into the country out of love, wanderlust, new chances, curiosity and education.

All such migrants bring with them or take away, especially in the case of brain drain, different cultural, political, ideological, religious, linguistic and socio-economic experiences to bear on the transformation of their target society.

3.2 Cultural Diversity and Nation-Building

In the UNESCO “Declaration on cultural diversity”, 2001.11, it is stated that:

“Cultural declaration encompasses the cultural differences that exist between people, such as language, dress and traditions, and the way societies organize themselves, their conception of morality and religion, and the way they interact with the environment” (UNESCO, 2001: 1).

Despite the fact that “there are several international organisations that work towards protecting societies and cultures, including Survival International [and the fact that the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by 185 Members States in 2001, represents the first international standard-setting instrument aimed at preserving and promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue” (UNESCO, 2001: 2)], it is still feared that the world’s cultural diversity is on a precipitous decline, due mainly to overpopulation, immigration, militaristic and cultural imperialism and globalisation.

However, for the time being at least, cultural diversity is generally considered as a phenomenon that enriches society and promotes development and nation-building. It is, nevertheless, also viewed as a phenomenon that causes friction.

3.2.1 Germany

Maria Böhmer, Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration and Minister of State in the Federal Chancellery said in an interview on integration as a key task in Germany that “many migrants are well-integrated and successful. They enrich our country”(In: Schayan, Deutschland, 2008: 43).

Even though cultural diversity enriches Germany it also breeds jealousy, hatred, friction, and conflicts between foreigners and powerful individual Germans, especially the youth and jobless people, who have vested interests and, thus, often seek to either reverse to or protect their *status quo ante* by opposing vigorously any reforms.

3.2.2 Ghana

In Ghana owing to the pluralistic ethnic and cultural composition that has existed in the country since colonial times differences have existed and still persist among the different peoples. The first President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, tried to fight ethnocentrism because

“he was not only concerned that Africa should unite, he was also concerned that Ghana should unite [...]. The reality he was dealing with was a nation which would not hang together because of ethnic differences. And so long as Ghana would not unite, so long would his own foothold remain weak and uncertain and the quest for African Unity more precarious” (Hagan, In: Arhin, 1991: 11).

Nkrumah's regime, in Yoh's words, "made it a point to keep ethnicity outside in national politics. A Ghanaian was employed in government institutions as a Ghanaian, with no regard to his ethnic origins" (Yoh, 2004: 4). Yoh continues to confirm that "For this reason, ethnically based political parties are unconstitutional under the present Fourth Republic" (ditto).

Ethnically-based political parties may have been made unconstitutional. Nevertheless, from the historical and practical points of view tensions have risen due to covert partisan politics and, especially because of "ethnic rivalries of the pre-colonial era, variance in the impact of colonialism upon different regions of the country, and the uneven distribution of social and economic amenities in the post-independence Ghana have all contributed to present-day ethnic tensions" (ditto). Examples may be drawn from all over the country like the February 1994 war between the Kokomba on the one side and the Nanumba, Dagomba and Gonja on the other side, the strife between the Andanis and the Abudus principally over Chieftaincy in Dagbon, the wars between the Mamprusi and the Kusaasi in Bawku over Chieftaincy and land, the Chieftaincy disputes among the Gã and those among the Ewe.

Yoh has this to say about the north-south gulf in Ghana:

"One of the overriding features of the country's ethnic population is that groups to the south who are closer to the Atlantic coast have long been influenced by the money economy, Western education, and Christianity, whereas Gur-speakers to the north, who have been less exposed to those influences, have come under Islamic influence. These influences were not pervasive in the respective regions, however, nor were they wholly restricted to them" (Yoh, 2004: 5).

Indeed, whether the attitude of peoples living in the northern part of Ghana is solely or even partly due to their association with Islam is a big question. For it is not all of the people in those areas who are followers of Islam. Their attitudes may be more attributable to their adherence to certain moral values and principles acquired in the long years of evolution of their ethnic groups and less to foreign influences.

4. Integration

Migration and integration are generally considered as key concepts for shaping social interaction: "Integration cannot be regulated, cannot simply be proclaimed in ceremonious speeches, not conjured up in flourishing 'dialogues of cultures' theses" (Deutschland Editorial, 2008: 3).

With reference to Islam in Germany, Klaus J. Bade says that "the German Islamic Conference aims to promote dialogue and integration" (Bade, Deutschland, 2008: 53). Successful integration entails equal opportunity to participate in all areas of life. Integration takes time and demands tolerance, a little from every stakeholder. Every individual needs to be proactive, e.g. in making friends and engaging in social activities, for example excursions, travels, festivals and sports.

4.1 Germany

The fact that in the history of her nation-building Germany has always favoured the formation of alliances and confederations shows her interest in getting integrated in wider communities than remaining isolated. Her membership and vibrant participation in the activities of several current international organisations, e.g. the European Union (EU), United Nations (UNO), North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), European Patent Organisation (EPO), International Federation of Football (FIFA) and the Reporters Without Barriers (RWG), are also a testimony to her desire to share in global affairs. It also shows to some extent her readiness or compulsion to integrate other people or groups into the German society.

Another test of German commitment to integration was the absorption and resolution of the many challenges after the reunification of Germany posed by re-settlers or migrants from the former East Germans into the former West German territory.

The Federal Government's Immigration Bill which came into effect in 2005 and was amended in 2007 has made integration a statutory duty and introduced mandatory measures to promote integration – in the form of language and orientation courses (vid. Bade, In: Deutschland, 2008: 51).

At present the German Government has embarked upon the integration of migrants from all over the world which has been sanctioned by the National Integration Plan that was drawn up in 2007. Maria Böhmer has this to say about the Plan:

“As a result of this initiative, we have managed to get everyone engaged in the field of integration to work together for the first time in our country's history. Some 400 measures and commitments will significantly improve the integration of the 15 million people from immigrant families who live in our society, because concrete action will now be taken [...]. Integration has become a central issue in almost all areas of policy and society as a whole” (Böhmer, In: Deutschland, 2008: 46).

Nevertheless, integration in Germany still leaves much to be desired, especially when one considers the activities of, for instance, skin-heads and extreme rightist politicians. Also, many of the plans have been relegated to mere political banter.

4.2 Ghana

Since the 1950s and 1960s, especially after independence, Ghana has joined numerous world-wide and regional organisations, e.g. the United Nations Organisations (UNO), International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Health Organisation (WHO), Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (now transformed into African Union – AU), the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) respectively. This has been done in a bid to demonstrate her interest in being integrated into the world or African communities and to allow for integration into Ghana of foreign nationals.

Before Ghana attained her independence the peoples who now form Ghana were used to the running of states, empires and kingdoms. These peoples co-existed and were bonded by kinship and principles. The arbitrary borders drawn by colonialists only succeeded in forming artificial a multiethnic nation Ghana. Ghana lacks the internal political cohesion that is absolutely necessary for her survival as a nation. It lacks the moral core that would otherwise be provided by ethnicity, thus the ingredient required for constructing one nation with local roots. There are competing ethnic nationalisms that are hardly prepared to relinquish their hold onto their freedoms and self-determination. Apart from this reluctance to let go their grip on their valued *raison d'être* as independent peoples, certain ethnic groups believe that they are superior to others, thus making consensus-building even more difficult. Ethnic loyalty also makes it difficult to build “strong and viable resources of political association and mass-based political parties, [since selfish politicians can easily manipulate] ethnic loyalty as the cheapest and most reliable strategy to acquire and consolidate power” (Yoh, 2004: 2).

As already demonstrated above, violent conflicts have erupted and will continue to erupt in areas where traditional states, traditional land tenure, chieftaincies are collapsing or there is a fragmentation of communities. Examples of such situations are shown by many young nation-states, e.g. Nigeria, Ethiopia, Pakistan and Rwanda, which have been shaken and partly divided or destroyed by power struggles caused by ethnic and religious conflicts.

5. Education and Development in Nation-Building

Education, together with language, forms the all-important keys to participation in society. Education is relevant to work/employment, rural development, modernisation, national identity, cultural identity, ethnic identity, national identity, citizenship, exercise of civic rights and responsibilities, and political awareness which all lead to effective nation-building.

Lack of education is one of the most serious factors hindering development in nation-building. This fact was realised in the early days of nation-building in Germany. Also, when Ghana became independent in 1957, the first President realised the need for the promotion of education in Ghana. In the case of Germany, for instance, it can be said that:

“From 1763, against resistance from the nobility and citizenry, an ‘enlightened absolutism’ was established in Prussia and Austria, according to which the ruler was to be ‘the first servant of state’. The economy developed and legal reforms were undertaken, including the abolition of torture and the improvement in the status Jews; the emancipation of peasants began. Education was promoted” (Wikipedia, History of Germany, 2008: 12).

In Ghana education has been considered very essential for nation-building. Even during the colonial administration educational policies, were formulated, e.g. through Advisory Committees on Education, to accelerate the development of the indigenous people.

During the first government Nkrumah and the CPP embarked vigorously upon the promotion of education. For example:

“For the first time in the history of the country, the Central Government was to assume full responsibility for educational policy and practice. Educational development itself had passed the where it was a political project of the greatest magnitude. It had been both fundamental and crucial to the political economy, and was to find full expression in the Seven-Year Development Plan of 1964, the CPP’s programme for ‘work and happiness’” (Haizel, In: Arhin, 1991: 60-61).

Since the CPP regime a couple of educational reforms have taken place, notably the 1987 Education Reform by the PNDC Government and the 2007/2008 Education Reform by the NPP Government. However, in many cases governments have paid lip-service to education, initiated inappropriate reforms and made arbitrary changes not backed by sound reflection and preparation. Thus, education is still developing effectively to boost nation-building.

6. Gender issues

Gender issues are essential in nation-building and ought to be tackled vigorously. In both Germany and Ghana women are ceasing to merely play the second fiddle in society and are assuming highly responsible positions.

For example, for years now, Dr. Angela Merkel has been the German Chancellor, the first female Chancellor indeed. Also, another prominent German female political figure worth mentioning is Prof. Dr. Maria Böhmer, Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration and Minister of State in the Federal Chancellery to boot.

In Ghana we now have the first woman Chief Justice, Mrs. Georgina Wood, the first woman Speaker of Parliament, Mrs. Justice Joyce Adeline Bamford-Addo and the first woman Acting Inspector-General of Police, Mrs. Elizabeth Mills-Robertson (since the establishment of the Ghana Police Service in 1874 by the British Colonial Administration).

These new developments with regard to gender issues go a long way to enhance the image not only of women but also of their own society and nation.

7. Some best Practices for Germany and Ghana to emulate?

Best practices here refer to the factors that are important in ensuring success in nation-building. One can hardly talk of best practices that serve as a panacea for all social, political and economic ailments in all societies.

For instance, one of the most successful cases in nation-building emanate from Singapore, where Chinese, Southern Indians, Malays, Europeans and other ethnic groups now live together. But will the methods employed in Singapore work effectively and successfully in Ghana?

The conditions for a successful Nation-Building demand a series of skills, such as the creation of a financial basis for a functioning state apparatus, e.g. an effective tax system, an organised police system, and organised legal system and an administrative system, which is effective and accepted in the whole country (cf. Hippler, 2003: 3).

For nation-building to be successful there is the need for security, unity with one strong national identity, availability of local people to carry out the basic tasks of government, it may be helpful to encourage multilateral decision-making or the support of other countries/powers, especially the neighbouring countries, and a great deal of effort and patience. Nation-building can be successful if it stems from a strong integration ideology or is developed in the process of successful integration. Education and language, which form the most important keys to participation in society, nation-building and development, have to be promoted effectively and efficiently.

Cultural diversity and integration can be more successful in African countries where development and education is distributed equitably and people with different ethnic background are treated are respected and treated equally. Perhaps one can also look up to certain good practices in cultural diversity and integration in the City of London, the City of New York and the City of Sydney. Another multilingual or multicultural society that could be emulated to some extent is the Swiss society that exists in relative peace despite their four national languages, namely German, French, Italian and Rhaetoromansh.

8. Conclusion

There is no hard and fast definition for the term 'Nation-Building'. One may simply define it as a process of socio-political development. Germany has gone through a great deal of transformation for many centuries from her Germanic roots to her present nationhood. The resilience of Germans and foreign cooperation have made this success a reality. Nation-building is, however, by no means complete in Germany in view of the current migratory trends, the repercussions thereof and the need for tolerance and integration.

Ghana can be rightly described as a mosaic of little states, kingdoms and groups who have been forcibly merged into a state that is struggling to evolve as a nation that is acceptable to all across the whole country. The multicultural situation is merely peaceful and ideal on the face value. Undercurrents of ethnic tensions, equity in development and respect for all ethnic groups need to be handled very carefully.

In order to achieve successful nation-building security, rule of law, socio-economic development, education, religious tolerance and any other relevant requirements have to be promoted.

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CHAPTER TWO

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – A PRE-CONDITION FOR NATION-BUILDING

Professor Ken Agyemang Attafuah

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1. Socio-Economic Development – A Pre-Condition for Nation-Building

Madam Chairperson, Your Excellency Dr. Marius Haas, German Ambassador to Ghana, Hon. Haruna Idrissu, Minister for Communications, Mr. Klaus Loetzer, KAS Representative, Prof. N. S. Nabilla, President of the National House of Chiefs, Prof. George Hagan, Chairman of the National Commission on Culture, Hon. Gifty Ohene-Konadu, MP for Asante-Akyem South, other Distinguished Members of Parliament, civil society representatives, friends from the media, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have been asked to examine the relationship between socio-economic development and nation building. The symposium organizers suggested that I consider the following ideas in my exploration of the issue:

1. General socio-economic perspectives on nation-building
2. An analysis of the nexus between society and nation-building

3. Efforts at nation building through educational institutions and other working relations
4. Critical issues of multi-ethnic groups and nation-building
5. How socio-economic development enhances nation-building or otherwise
6. Some institutional efforts at nation-building in Ghana
7. Other socio-economic issues and nation-building

I hope to address the salient concerns raised in these suggestions, though not necessarily in the format presented. I also hope to discuss other dimensions of the topic such as the meaning of socio-economic development, variants and elements of nation building, characteristics of a cultivated or built nation, threats to nation building in Ghana, and future directions in nation building in contemporary Ghana.

Madam Chairperson,

I wish to offer the following propositions on the subject at the outset:

1. Both socio-economic development and nation-building are dynamic, continuous processes;
2. Socio-economic development does not necessarily produce nation-building;
3. The relationship between socio-economic development and nation-building is best conceived as an intertwining, symbiotic and mutually engaging processes, i.e., nation building produces the social and political conditions that conduce to the socio-economic development of a state, and socio-economic development, properly managed, aids and fosters nation building;
4. Properly understood, nation building entails socio-economic development. In other words, socio-economic development is best appreciated as an integral part of the process of nation building; and
5. If, in the conceptualization of socio-economic development and nation-building, the two processes are seen to face the classic chicken-and-egg riddle, i.e., which is the parent of the other, I will venture to declare nation-building the parent, and socio-economic development the child.

2. Perspectives on Socio-Economic Development and Nation-Building

2.1 The Concept of Socio-Economic Development

Madam Chairperson,

Socio-economic development refers to changes in the life circumstances of a people occasioned by the pursuit of specific social, economic and legal policies by the state. Such changes usually connote improvements in the lives of people within a country. Among other causes that impact on socio-economic development are advances in technology, changes in the physical environment and ecological changes.

Socio-economic development is measured with such indicators as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), life expectancy, literacy levels, scale and quality of employment, and access to health care. Socio-economic development is also frequently measured in terms of *human rights*, i.e., in terms of the extent to which conditions exist for people to satisfy their basic needs in dignity and respect. Thus, qualitative improvements in the scale of personal dignity and freedoms are critical in assessing the socio-economic development of any country.

It is apparent from the formulation of the topic, “*Socio-Economic Development – a Pre-Condition for Nation-Building*”, that nation-building is conceived as the end goal of socio-economic development. My reflections on the subject, based in part on the foregoing brief survey of the outlines of socio-economic development and on the ensuing detailed analysis of nation building, lead me to a different conclusion. It is my considered opinion that, while socio-economic development and nation building are critically intertwined, there are compelling reasons, grounded in the practical experiences of many nations, and in theories of state-society relations and development, to conceive of nation building as the parent, not the child, of economic development.

Madam Chairperson,

Examples abound in both the past and present to sustain the argument that where economic development efforts have taken precedence over nation-building, the result has often been chaotic – self implosion, ethnic discontent and racial strife. Athens provides us with a historical example, while Ivory Coast and Zimbabwe provide living proof of what can go wrong when economic development does not move in tandem with nation-building.

2.2 The Concept of Nation-Building

In Africa, the concept of nation-building gained considerable scholastic and practical currency during the period of African decolonization in the 1960s and early 1970s. The euphoria and goodwill that attended the attainment of political independence were not translated into vital *social capital* for the socio-economic development of the various independent African countries. Corruption, economic mismanagement, thievery from state coffers and exploitation of ethnic differences for political advantage ensured the further impoverishment of the African. Existing bank reserves were largely squandered while natural resources were plundered and exported to Europe and North America.

Across the African continent, but particularly in West Africa, the anti-colonial freedom fighters were soon booted out of office for allegedly accentuating the poverty of the masses and failing to engage in serious nation-building efforts. The neo-colonialist liberators and redeemers in khaki were soon replaced by hungry and populist revolutionaries all of whom also failed woefully to facilitate the attainment of socio-economic development, peace and nation building. Today, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria are all entrapped in what appears to be in a state of *perpetual infancy* in nation-building and the facilitation of economic development. Malawi, Burundi, DR Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe are examples of other countries on the continent that failed to

build nations when they should have, and are still grappling with the painful costs of development without nation building.

2.3 Nation-Building as Modernization and State-Building

Cataclysmic political change often engenders the necessary conditions for a focused attention to nation-building. In addition, post-conflict societies undergoing national reconstruction often find transitional justice arrangements, such as truth and reconciliation commissions, as necessary components of nation building. Again, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Morocco, Sierra Leone and Liberia provide us with classic examples of countries that have experimented, with different degrees of success, with truth and reconciliation commissions (TRCs) as mechanisms for healing and nation building. Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Kenya and Zimbabwe are at different stages of establishing transitional justice mechanisms.

In Europe, the end of the Cold War provided the occasion for the United Nations, NATO, the United States and a range of other states and nongovernmental organizations to engage directly and increasingly in nation-building operations. *In this context, nation-building refers to broad efforts to promote political and economic reforms with the objective of transforming a society emerging from conflict into one at peace with itself and its neighbours.* This is the first meaning or variant of nation-building.

In post-conflict societies, nation-building equals *state-building*. It often entails the massive investment or deployment of financial resources and humanitarian aid. Indeed, in the contemporary world, nation building is a strategy of *modernization* modelled after the Marshall Plan – the magnificent reconstruction effort initiated by the United States in 1947 to rebuild some European nations devastated by the World War II. The implementation of that plan cost \$12 billion between 1948 and 1951 under President Truman.

Nation-building also frequently requires the use of armed force to ensure law and order. As in Liberia, Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and Belarus, armed force was considered vital to securing the appropriate environment for the pursuit of other restorative and national reconstruction measures.

Thus, the key constituent elements that make up any nation-building mission in the *narrow sense* may be summarized as:

- Deployment of military and police forces for law enforcement;
- Establishment of rule of law;
- Provision of humanitarian relief;
- Promotion of good governance and democratization; and
- The pursuit of economic stabilization and development. In this sense, nation building is essentially a process of restoration and *modernization*.

Madam Chairperson,

Nation-building is not the preserve of nationals living within the territory; Ghanaians abroad also contribute immensely to building the nation when they send down remittances to support relatives, educate children, and invest in commercial farming or other business venture.

But nation-building is also not the exclusive preserve of countries emerging out of colonialism and violent conflicts. For instance, nation-building keenly engaged the attention of Canada during the late 1980s and early 1990s as it grappled with the issue of how best to manage its ethnic diversity through the *Meech Lake Accord* and other agreements. This search was not only reflected in its Aboriginal, Francophone and Anglophone heritages but also in the multicultural reality of that country's ethnic tapestry – from the long-established Asian communities from China and Japan who built the longest railway line in the world to the Caribbean and African peoples whose slave labour built the foundations of Canada's industries.

Today, the United States is grappling with a different kind of nation-building founded on revitalizing the relatively shattered American economy, saving industries, jobs and banks, paying for education, rebuilding families, and generally restoring hope to millions. Building on the dreams of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., America under President Barack Obama is also building a nation that is more inclusive and fairer, kinder and gentler.

2.3.1 Nation-Building as National Identity Formation and Governance

Nevertheless, the concept of nation building has a second, *broader* and probably more compelling meaning. In its broad sense, nation building refers to the process of constructing or structuring a *national identity* through the use of state power. The exercise of state power in aid of nation-building commonly finds expression along two key dimensions, namely social psychological engagement and infrastructural development. The aim of nation-building is to foster a *shared* and coherent national identity, orientation and unification among the people or peoples of a state in order to ensure the long-term political stability and viability of the state.

Typically, nation-building in this broad sense entails the simultaneous use of strategies of mass reorientation, including propaganda, *and* major infrastructural developments to foster social harmony and economic growth. The second variant of nation building also emphasizes the development of the social sector comprising education, health and family welfare, water supply, sanitation, housing, social welfare, nutrition, rural employment and minimum basic services.

Symbolic efforts and manifestations of such orientation in aid of nation-building may include (a) the introduction of superficial national paraphernalia such as flags, anthems, pledges and currencies, national identity cards; (b) the institution of national holidays; (c) the establishment of national colleges and universities, airlines and stadiums; (d) the institution of a *lingua franca* or national language for the state; (e) and the production, articulation or propagation of national myths. Nation-building is thus a complex and

dynamic process with ideological, philosophical, political, socio-economic and cultural dimensions.

This broad view of nation-building, then, is a deliberate political and cultural process of constructing or moulding a common *nation* out of hitherto independent political and ethno-cultural groups or tribes. In other words, the task of nation-building in *this broad* sense is the creation of a universal *national* identity and sense of common destiny for people who previously belonged to different social formations and who defined and perceived their destinies as diametrically opposed. Thus, for instance, at the time of independence in 1957, the Gold Coast was a motley collection of different nation-states previously formed from the magma of wars, political alliances dictated by fear of military conquests, colonial annexation and impositions. Indeed, the Asante Kingdom, for example, was an amalgam of several smaller nation-states that came together to form a single political, military and religious entity under King Osei Tutu I “because of war” – *osa nti*. [The Asante nation gained its name from the corruption of the “*Osa nti*” to “Asante”]

Nation-building in much of Africa commenced in the post-independence period as a reaction against the *divide-and-rule* tactics of the colonialists. It is an enterprise of persuading, manipulating, moulding, cementing and bonding diverse peoples into a *nation* with a common *emotional* relationship to the *state* and modernizing and improving their material socio-economic circumstances. That process continues to this day. This form of nation building thus requires the subordination of all competing ethno-cultural, primordial loyalties in a state to an *emergent* nationhood and *supra* ethnic identity.

2.3.2 Some Institutional Efforts at Nation-Building in Ghana

Significant institutional and policy efforts at nation building in Ghana include the following:

1. Affirmative action policies of the Nkrumah Government – establishment of boarding schools, fair and equitable distribution of scholarship across the country, and multi-ethnic appointments,
2. Broad civic education on citizenship, national cohesion and human rights education by:
 - The erstwhile Centre for Civic Education of the late 1960s;
 - The National Charter Secretariat of the 1970s; and
 - The National Commission for Civic Education – the constitutional body charged with the promotion of civic awareness about duties and responsibilities of the citizenry;
 - The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)
 - The National Commission on Culture

3. The Role of the CHRAJ, pursuant to Article 218(b) of the Constitution, in investigating complaints “concerning the functioning of the Public Services Commission, the administrative organs of the State, the Armed Forces, the Police Service and the Prisons Service in so far as complaints relate to the failure to achieve a balanced structuring of those services or equal access by all to the recruitment of those services or fair administration in relation to those service”. The typical focus of concern in such complaints and investigations are ethnicity, gender and regionalism;
4. The role of the National Reconciliation Commission in excavating Ghana's history of human rights violations, administrative measures and other acts and omissions that fractured the nation or otherwise undermined national cohesion;
5. The role of Parliament in enacting legislation to promote nation building;
6. The role of the Judiciary in the progressive interpretation of laws during adjudication in order to advance socio-economic development, national cohesion and unity;
7. The role of political parties in serving as national platforms for the articulation of common ideologies, visions and aspirations for the governance of the nation; and
8. The role of the National Identification Authority in establishing a credible national identification system to accelerate socio-economic development and promote a symbolic sense of belonging through the use of the national identity card.

2.3.3 Elements of Nation-Building as Identity Formation and Governance

What, then, may be described as the essential elements of the second variant of nation building? In my view, the foremost elements of nation building are:

- Vigorously pursuing socio-economic development;
- Promoting inter-group harmony;
- Advancing and protecting human rights, administrative justice and integrity in private and public life;
- Engendering a sense of national identity and belonging;
- Nurturing an open society;
- Fostering respect for the rule of law, transparency and accountability;
- Ensuring individual and public safety and security; and
- Creating the social and political space for a vibrant civil society to flourish and participate in the process of governance at the local and national levels.

2.4 Constitutional Foundations of Nation-Building in Ghana

Socio-economic development and nation building are constitutional imperatives in Ghana. Indeed, Ghana's Constitution (1992) provides a legal framework for the pursuit of socioeconomic development and nation building. In the Preamble to the Constitution, the people of Ghana assert their conviction that the purpose of establishing a democratic framework of government is to “*secure for [themselves] and posterity the blessings of liberty, equality of opportunity and prosperity*”. Article 1(1) also provides that the welfare of the people of Ghana constitutes the basis for the exercise of governmental power. The essence of that welfare is elaborated upon in the *Directive Principles of State Policy* (DPSP) found in Chapter Six of the Constitution which, in Article 34(1), calls for the use of law and state power to establish “a just and free society”.

Accordingly, Article 34(2) specifies the realization of the following fundamental conditions of liberty and human welfare for Ghanaians as the foremost job description of the State:

- Basic human rights
- A healthy economy
- The right to work
- The right to good health care; and
- The right to education

Given the great importance the framers of our Constitution attached to these cardinal conditions for ensuring the welfare of the people, Article 34(2) obliges the President to “*report to Parliament at least once a year*” all the steps taken by Government to ensure their realization. Indeed, for Ghana, these foundational elements of human liberty and prosperity constitute the key benchmarks of socio-economic development, which the Government of every President must earnestly strive to achieve. This article therefore provides the compulsory template for the essential contents of the President's *Sessional Address* to Parliament.

The Constitution also obliges the President to pursue, and report to Parliament on, other key policy objectives contained in the DPSP. And I must add that the President does not have to report to Parliament *only* once a year, but *at least* once year! Minimalism is not a best practice when it comes to public sector accountability.

Madam Chairperson,

We build the nation when we sincerely and prudently commit our energies and resources in the pursuit of these socio-economic development goals as contained in *Vision 2020* of old, and in the first and second *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS I & II)* documents. We build the nation when we sincerely and prudently, in accordance with Article 35(2) of the Constitution “protect and safeguard the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ghana”, and when we “seek the well-being of all”.

We also build the nation when, as required of us by Article 35(2), we sincerely “promote just and reasonable access by all citizens to public facilities and services in accordance with law”. We further build the nation when we enable people to achieve their goals without placing frustrating impediments in their way. We build the nation when we allow everyone to belong; when we do not discriminate against anyone based on race, colour, ethnicity, ancestry, place of origin, sex, age, physical or mental disability, economic status, social status, and family status.

We build the nation when our chiefs set personal examples of tolerance and acceptance of diversity, when they engage in high level cultural diplomacy – when the Agbogbomefia of Anlo pays a courtesy visit to the Asantehene, when the Nayiri of Mamprugu exchanges visits the Nzimahene, the Wa Na visits the Ga Manste, or the Drobohene visits the Krobohene, and forge friendships in real and substantive ways. What positive impact on inter-group relations there would be, when ethnic groups join forces to stage food festivals in celebration of each other cultures, and organize language clinics for members of the other ethno-cultural group.

We build the nation when we protect and defend the civil rights of all persons from discrimination and unfair treatment regardless of their political orientation or affiliation, or their religious persuasion or creed. We build the nation when we do not abuse our power or authority at the workplace; we build the nation when we do not subject our subordinates at the office, factory or church to bullying, sexual harassment or other form of demeaning treatment or humiliation.

We build the nation when we cultivate among all Ghanaians “respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms and the dignity of the human being.” The dignity of the human being, we are told in Article 15(1), is “inviolable”. That means that human dignity is sacred. A nation is built and sustained when it respects the dignity of all persons within its boundaries.

Madam Chairperson,

In a most progressive pursuit of nation-building, Article 35(5) of the Constitution charges the State with the obligation to “actively promote the integration of the peoples of Ghana; it charges the State to prohibit discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of place of origin, circumstances of birth, ethnic origin, gender or religion, creed or other beliefs”. Towards this end, the State is further required to pursue appropriate measures, among other things, to:

- foster a spirit of loyalty to Ghana that overrides sectional, ethnic and other loyalties;
- achieve reasonable regional and gender balance in recruitment and appointment to public offices; and
- provide adequate facilities for, and encourage, free mobility of people, goods and services throughout Ghana.

The State is also obliged to take steps to eradicate corrupt practices and the abuse of power, and to promote political tolerance among Ghanaians.

In Article 36, the State is enjoined to competently manage the national economy with a view to maximizing the rate of economic development and securing the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every person in Ghana. It must also provide adequate means of livelihood and suitable employment for the people, as well as public assistance to the needy.

In particular, Article 36(6) requires the State to afford equality of economic opportunity to all citizens, and to take all necessary steps to ensure the full integration of women into the mainstream of the economic development of Ghana.

Madam Chairperson,

These, then, are the core goals of nation-building as enshrined in the Ghanaian Constitution. Nation building in contemporary Ghanaian society, as in the contemporary world generally, thus includes the active promotion of good governance, including the eradication of corruption and the prevention and control of administrative injustice and abuse of power.

2.5 Socio-Economic Development as a primary precondition for Nation-Building

Permit me now to address the issue of socio-economic development as a condition for nation-building. Socio-economic development provides an impetus for nation-building. Much racial bigotry and ethnic prejudice melt away when the processes of socio-economic development plunge strangers from different social groups into unavoidable cooperation or collaboration on such arenas as education, workplace, the sports team or the battalion. The boarding school in Ghana, for instance, served as a training ground in inter-group tolerance, peaceful co-existence and social harmony. More than the university, the factory or the church, it was in the boarding schools of this country that the most enduring inter-ethnic friendships were forged, and where long-term political alliances were incubated and nurtured. Respect for religious diversity and tolerance was better fostered among our peoples from interactions in the boarding school than from the state propaganda apparatus. It is evident from the foregoing that socio-economic development is the handmaiden of nation-building.

As with all processes, nation-building aims at the production of a *preferred* outcome – a society in which most citizens emotionally and intellectually identify themselves with the salient manifestations of its nationhood, and the citizens evince a sense of unity, a common outlook, and a sense of shared destiny.

2.6 Other Characteristics of a Built Nation

Madam Chairperson,

The built or cultivated nation evinces the following attributes or characteristics:

- Most citizens of the *built nation* possess a firm grasp of, and pride in, their *national identity*
- Reverence toward emblems and icons of nationhood
- A “settled populace” in the sense that most citizens have are content to live the most productive years of their lives within the country, and travel abroad more as tourists than envious economic migrants.
- A confident *national persona* with the capacity to welcome “outsiders”
- Widespread respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms and their corresponding duties and responsibilities
- Responsible exercise of rights and freedoms
- Highly dependable, hardworking and transferable workforce

Although these characteristics are matters of degree that probably better fit into a typology of societies with growing as opposed to *mature* sense of nationhood, it is possible to gauge where our country, in 52 years of official “nationhood”, may be situated.

2.7 Characteristics of the Accidental Nation

The foregoing characteristics of the built or cultivated nation may be contrasted with what I describe as the *accidental nation*. The accidental nation perennially remains an amorphous collection of disparate groups uncemented by any deep or extensive ties and symbols of nationhood. Devoid of a sense of nationalism and nationhood, citizens of the accidental nation maintain primary loyalties to the leadership of their particular cultural groups, identify with the myths and icons of the tribe maintain a strong sense of *in-group solidarity* and look upon out-group members with suspicion and mistrust. The label “nation” is accorded the accidental nation by foreign countries and international organizations as a simple commonplace register for all countries.

Usually a creation of colonialism, the most significant characteristics of the *accidental nation* include the following:

- Retention of the physical and mental relics of undemocratic [colonial] and parochial
- Prevalence of a noisy, impatient, quarrelsome or pugnacious outlook
- Prevalence of inter-generational nomadism, i.e., the quality of being an *unsettled population* in the sense that most citizens of the state are, from generation to generation, in a constant search for opportunities to migrate to other lands
- Denigration and underdevelopment of local languages
- Prevalence of a fetish preference for foreign culture, especially language, food, myths and music
- Predominance of foreign-inspired development frameworks

- Widespread belief in, and emphasis of, rights to the virtual neglect of duties and responsibilities
- Fairly easy-going, minimalist and “timeless” workforce with little discipline

2.8 Threats to Nation-Building in Ghana

The enterprise of nation building in Africa is as relevant and compelling today as it was in the early 1960s owing to the gigantic failures, or mildly put, the limited successes made over the last four decades. From Rwanda and Burundi through Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan to Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria, ethnic prejudice and discrimination continue to haunt and frustrate nation building efforts. To be sure, Ghanaians have made some gains on the path toward nationhood, even if the perennial Abudu-Adani, Kokomba-Nanumba, Mamprusi-Kusasi, Asante-Ewe and Christian-traditionalist conflicts and frictions threaten national identity and dismay us.

But the major threats to our nascent nationhood in all its dimensions may be summarized as follows:

- Corruption and its effects
- Abuse of power
- Economic mismanagement and failure to bridge the north-south divide
- Unbridled partisanship and cyclical political victimization
- Maintenance of a “spoils system” and the attitude of “winner-takes-all” in politics
- The politics of negative competition
- Growing political violence and *strategic silence* of segments of the national political leadership
- Chieftaincy conflicts and disputes over access to land
- Ethnic voting blocks and enclaves
- Ethnic discrimination in state institutions
- The blatant celebration of ethnocentrism instead of national identity and pride
- Crime and the growing but baseless ethnicization of particular crimes, e.g. blaming particular tribes for drug trafficking
- Radio rule and tyranny (by the media practitioners)
- Capitulation to populism and ethnic politics

a) Corruption

Madam Chairperson,

Kindly permit me to elaborate on the first two threats to nation building in Ghana – corruption and abuse of power.

Public and private sector corruption have long hampered nation-building in Ghana. In a paper I presented at a garden discussion organized by the Institute of Economic Affairs exactly 10 years ago titled “*Corruption and the Challenge of Economic Development*”, I made the following observations on the costs of corruption:

“The enormous costs of corruption can be measured not only in terms of the loss of funds for development, over-inflated administrative costs and capital flight, but also in terms of the loss of legitimacy and respect for legally constituted authority, public loss of confidence in systems and institutions and lowering of moral values. Corruption also violates civil and political rights, as well as the right to economic and social development. It fosters the appointment of the proverbial “square pegs in round holes”, nourishes mediocrity and undermines the merit system of rewards, appointments and entitlements. Corruption engenders market inefficiencies, and fosters the deliberate creation of bottlenecks in the bureaucracy in order to further the ends of exploitation. In short, the canker of corruption is a hindrance to economic development and social advancement. This is only a brief portrait of the manifestations and dire consequences of this social evil.”

Today, I will add that the colossal costs of corruption are also to be seen in measures that could have been, but were never, implemented to reduce ethnic bigotry, improve inter-group relations, and cement the people of different social backgrounds more cohesively along the elegant and uniting principles of citizenship, patriotism and loyalty to the nation, pride in national identity, commitment to equality of opportunity, and belief in social justice for all.

Madam Chairperson, I will insist now, as I did 10 years ago, that

“Any serious effort to grapple with the canker of corruption must be comprehensive, broad-based, and developmental. To succeed, it must be anchored in a well-considered social and economic development agenda, efficient and impartial law enforcement, and the promotion of high integrity throughout our society. The anti-corruption effort must also be grounded in the creation of a civically-conscious society alert to the evils of corruption and willing to report corrupt conduct to the appropriate authorities. A regime of sanctions and punishments have a better chance of success if they are swift, certain and severe. Such a regime is also destined for success if it is applied alongside a broad-based and thoughtful programme that promotes integrity, reduces poverty, provides a living wage, and provides adequate resources and equipment for anti-corruption agencies such as the Ghana Police Service, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, and the Serious Fraud Office.”

Most importantly, our chances of succeeding in the fight against corruption will be significantly enhanced if we, as a people, stop the rabid and fanatical politicization of the trial of virtually every senior public officer for corruption or irresponsible exercise of discretionary power that makes Ghana financially poorer for it. We will succeed if we stop the unwarranted debasement of the judiciary and the cruel intimidation and militant condemnation of judges who preside over trials we define as *political*.

b) Abusive Exercise of State Power

Arbitrary action causes fear and insecurity and engenders a sense of exclusion. Public office holders in Ghana are constitutionally required to be just in their administrative decisions and actions. Specifically, Article 23 of the Constitution of Ghana (1992) provides that:

“Administrative bodies and administrative officials shall act fairly and reasonably and comply with the requirements imposed on them by law and persons aggrieved by the exercise of such acts and decisions shall have the right to seek redress before a court or other tribunal.”

This obligation to act fairly is further buttressed by Article 296 (a) and (b) of the Constitution, which relates to the exercise of discretionary power. Article 296(a) provides as follows:

“Where in this Constitution or in any other law discretionary power is vested in any person or authority –

(a) that discretionary power shall be deemed to imply a duty to be fair and candid;

(b) the exercise of the discretionary power shall not be arbitrary, capricious or biased either by resentment, prejudice or personal dislike and shall be in accordance with due process of law”

Madam Chairperson,

Those who exercise discretionary power have a duty to be fair to every person, and to give reasons for their decisions; they have an obligation to be candid to those whose interests or rights are adversely affected by the decisions they make. Candour must be rediscovered and re-injected into the bloodstream of public office. The public officer must be sincere when he signs “Yours Sincerely” at the end of the letter; she must truly believe in the contents of the communication when she signs off as “Yours Truly”, at the end of the letter. No wonder today, letters in the public service and civil service are signed without the empty civility of these traditional modes of signing off.

But private sector workers must also appreciate that not everyone who works in the public sector is corrupt, lazy, docile, inefficient or insensitive. A great deal of the strides in socio-economic development of our country have resulted from the manifest commitment to the high ideals of patriotism, loyalty and integrity in public service coupled with demonstrated industry and sacrifice by selfless public and civil servants. The holier-than-thou attitude of many private sector critics of public servants rings hollow and hypocritical. This is because much corruption in the public sector is the result of inducements by private sector persons to circumvent established procedures, or to avoid compliance with their statutory obligations.

2.9 Future Directions in Nation-Building

Madam Chairperson,

Our country will make significant advances in nation-building if we tailor our development strategies closely to the DPSP contained in Chapter Six of the Ghanaian Constitution. As outlined in the DPSP, the key principles that must be earnestly promoted in order to achieve effective nation-building are:

1. Pursuit of a viable socio-economic development agenda;
2. Fair and equitable distribution of the benefits of development;
3. Promotion of inclusivity, acceptance and shared sense of belonging;
4. Prevention of discrimination based on the prohibited grounds enumerated in Article 17(2) of the Constitution and elsewhere; and
5. Promotion of fundamental human rights, social justice and the rule of law.

To succeed with nation building efforts generally, there must be a firm commitment on the part of Government and civil society to social justice – a view that everyone is entitled to fair treatment, equitable access to the opportunities and resources of the State, and to prosper in life; a view that those who are disadvantaged by circumstances and the accidents of birth must be helped along the ladder of personal growth and development. It is a view that the nation is better built and made even stronger when no one is left behind; when, in the language of the times, “we *all* move forward in the right direction”.

2.10 Characteristics of a Cultivated or Built Nation

In addition to the foregoing, we as a country will improve and accelerate nation-building if we earnestly pursue the following critical ingredients or characteristics of a well-built nation:

- An independent, efficient and trustworthy judiciary
- An efficient, stable and dependable educational system not given to whimsical tinkering
- Promotion of a sense of national identity
- Promotion of patriotism and national orientation
- Cultivation of a productive and reliable workforce

Madam Chairperson,

It has to be acknowledged that fundamentally, nation-building is the turning a state into a nation, uniting its peoples and improving their scale of well-being. It is, thus, a long- term **social development** process which results in the transformation of the social structures and attitudinal templates of the people in a manner that improves the capacity of the people to fulfil their aspirations.

In the long run, in spite of their brilliant intellectual appeal, nationhood and democracy must yield measurable dividends in the lives of the people, otherwise they become expensive enterprises with hollow platitudes, and subject to populist manipulation or even vulnerable to being overthrown.

For these reasons, Government's foremost duty is to guarantee that the affairs of the state are conducted in as competent and profitable a manner as any corporate body could do under similar circumstances, while humanely carrying along *all* segments of the society, especially the weakest and most vulnerable members. For the truest measure of a civilized society consists not in the number of physical infrastructures it constructs, but in the extent to which it protects and advances the well-being of its weakest and most vulnerable members.

Thus, we must urgently pursue measures to protect the dignity of persons with physical and mental disability in this country, not just by establishing employment quotas for those with physical disabilities and housing the mentally disabled in well resourced psychiatric hospitals, but in truly facilitating, through a comprehensive set of measures and educational campaigns, their full and equitable integration into, and participation in, mainstream activities of the state and our communities. Employers, for instance, must appreciate that they bear a duty to reasonably accommodate physical and mental disability to the point of *undue hardship*, and that the burden is not discharged with impressionistic evidence of inability but with objective empirical evidence of reasonable effort, or of impossibility due to undue hardship.

It is imperative therefore that Government promotes and protects respect for the dignity of all persons within the society. And Government must do this first by providing the requisite levels of funding to the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice and the Judicial Service to competently do their work.

Second, and equally importantly, Government must quickly behave in a manner that assures the entire citizenry that it *accepts* freedom of association, the existence of multiple political viewpoints, and the right to disagree with anyone, including those in power, as foundational elements of a liberal, pluralistic and constitutional democracy on the path of nation building.

Third, Government must move quickly to assure the people of their personal safety and freedom from fear of physical harm from common criminals, as well as operatives of the state, be they military or police. And the state must protect the citizenry from overzealous and vigilante political party loyalists who appoint themselves as enthusiastic state officials commissioned to secure the interests of the state through unlawful means. The national political leadership at the highest levels must roundly condemn political violence perpetrated against political opponents and ethnic minorities. Strategic silence on political violence constitutes tacit endorsement of such violence; it also lends credence to the widespread public belief that politicians turn a blind eye to political violence when it inures to their benefit.

3. Conclusion

Madam Chairperson,

Nation-building is not an event but a process; it is not a revolution, but it is no fancy needle-work either. Nearly twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, German unification is still a struggle, although from the outside, it seems like a seamless process of integration and socio-political harmony. Failed families and suicides increased vulnerabilities and crime, a sense of anomie and purposelessness were among the initial burdens that many former nationals of East Germany shouldered in the early phase of the unification. South Africa continues to experience the pangs of racial unification and the promotion of multiculturalism. In Ghana, the task of promoting ethnic tolerance and political harmony continue to be as difficult today as it was 52 years ago.

The answers, as I have emphasized, lie in the promotion of good governance, human rights, multiculturalism, cultural diplomacy, sound economic management and social justice.

I thank you for your kind attention.

*Prof. Ken Agyemang Attafuah
Executive Secretary
National Identification Authority
March 11, 2009*

CHAPTER THREE

ELECTIONS AND NATION-BUILDING IN GHANA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

Professor Kwesi Jonah

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1. Introduction

Nation-building is an ongoing and incomplete political process which is central to the building of a well integrated democratic society and economic development in Africa. And yet a careful reading of the scholarly writings on Ghanaian and African politics would seem to suggest that nation-building was completed within a few years of political independence and is no longer of any significance or relevance for contemporary Africa. We know that virtually all the major obstacles impending social and economic development such as civil wars, armed conflicts and political instability are directly and indirectly attributable to an incomplete nation-building in Africa.

In this paper therefore we shall argue that the return to electoral politics presents Ghana and Ghanaians with an excellent opportunity to renew the commitment to the task of nation-building in Ghana. At the same time unless national political leadership approaches elections with a new spirit of patriotism and national responsibility the task of nation-building in our dear country could suffer a long-lasting political damage due to elections.

2. Concept of Nation-building

Political scientists do not agree on exactly what the nation-building process stands for but certain common elements are discernible in virtually all discourse on the subject.

First, it is the orderly exercise of public authority through-out the length and breadth of a country.

Second, this authority should be exercised beyond family and ethnic group to the level of the state.

Third, the exercise of that political authority should be underpinned by a common political understanding between rulers and the ruled about their reciprocal rights and obligations.

The key objective of nation-building is to ensure national integration. Political authority is not extended to every nook and cranny of the country for its own sake. It is first and foremost to ensure that the entire nation is well integrated both politically and territorially. Political integration comes about when deliberate national efforts are exerted to bridge the gap between those who have and those who do not have such that the two do not look like two nations in one country.

Territorial integration on the other hand implies taking concrete political steps to ensure that people living in different geographical regions of the nation feel that they belong to one nation. There should not be a state within a state and behave accordingly.

3. Two Nation-building Strategies

Diverse strategies of nation-building have been employed throughout human history but two broad categories stand out, namely the forcible or repressive method of nation-building and the democratic-peaceful. Forcible or repressive methods have been used where people either through colonial conquest, war, authoritarian or totalitarian methods have compelled a people against their will to become part of a nation. Naturally, forcible and repressive nation-building does not produce a happy and contented people. Neither does it build a viable and durable nation. However, long it may take people to embark on a national liberation struggle and the forcibly built nation falls apart. Forcible and repressive nation-building often does not stand the test of time and in most cases things do fall apart.

Peaceful and democratic nation-building in which people of different parts of a country freely or voluntarily submit to a central political authority is more preferable. People subject themselves to central political authority for mutual benefit, since nation-building brings many advantages. It creates law and order which provides the suitable political environment for legitimate and profitable economic activity. Peace prevails, markets expand and producers and consumers are happy. Nation-building also widens the tax base for the state. More tax revenues will in turn provide the financial capacity for the state to deliver vital services to citizens. Nation-building above all also creates a diversity of national cultures as people of different regions bring to bear on the nation as a whole their various cultural particularities, food, drink, dressing, music, dance etc.

Discussion of the two strategies of nation-building teaches an important aspect of nation-building, and that is nation-building is a two-way process. It involves the extension of central political authority to all corners of a country's territorial units. At the same time it

is a process of voluntary acceptance of central political authority on account of the concrete and varied benefits that come with his authority.

4. Two Myths about Nation-Building in Ghana and Africa

Two myths about nation building in Africa in general and Ghana in particular should be addressed right from the outset. Myth number one states simply that nation building in Africa in general is a European initiated project. The underlying assumption is that until European colonization brought a wide diversity of African people together in colonies Africa was a continent of antagonistic individual tribes better known for their mutual animosities than for any project of nation building.

Long before European powers with the aid of the compass, ruler and pencil carved out spheres of influence for themselves successful nation building projects had taken root in the continent. The Kingdoms of Ashanti, Oyo, Buganda, were exercising central political authority over vast territories and nation building even in those days was not always of the repressive or forcible variety. Some colonial powers found in these Kingdoms competitors for territorial control. Colonial wars with well established central political authority in Africa slowed down and frustrated the colonization process.

Myth number two follows directly from the first. Since it was European colonization that for years held antagonistic African ethnic groups together in one colony, the departure of colonization had revived ancient "tribal" enmities. Nation-building in post-colonial Africa will therefore be complicated and hindered by Africa's age old tribal antipathies. Western media therefore continued to see Africa's many problems in post-colonial times in terms of tribalism as the excessive attachment of people to their tribe or ethnic group, which remains the basic form of identification in Africa, instead of the state or country as a whole.

There is no doubt that Africans lived in a continent where ethnic attachment is very strong and does indeed influence political behaviour and political choices in particular. However important ethnicity may be in African politics it does not and cannot explain everything in African politics, especially, armed conflict, poverty, wrong policy choices, state failure and political exclusion often provide the wider political environment within which ethnicity assumes catastrophic dimensions.

5. Elections and Nation-building

Elections contribute to the nation-building process in several important ways, the first of which is the extension of political participation. The pressures exerted by elections have increasingly ensured the enlargement of the electorate to the point where almost all adults regardless of where they live in the country are eligible to vote. In 1954 when Ghana's population was estimated at 4,535,500 some 1,225,603 registered to vote in the election, the voting age being 21 years. By 2008, 54 years later with an estimated population of 22 million and a voting age of 18 years, 12,472,758 people were eligible to vote. Twelve-fold increase in just over half a century.

Bringing more people into the political system to exercise their franchise is not the only way in which election has been aiding the nation-building enterprise. Elections have also widened the authority of elected representatives, national and local as well as elected executives to the point where it covers every aspect of public life.

Elections focus national attention on critical issues for political bargaining between politicians and voters. Elections touch on every aspect of national life, e.g. economic, social cultural and other issues of importance to voters in the economy, education, health, water and sanitation and must be addressed by politicians. Elections thus compel politicians to meet voters every where to discuss their needs.

Through elections citizens everywhere secure a representative through whom their interest may be articulated in national, regional or local representative bodies.

6. Single Party and Nation-building before Ghana's Fourth Republic

Ghana's historical experience with elections and nation-building is replete with lessons in alternative strategies of nation-building. Three elections prior to independence 1951, 1954 and 1956 revealed the inescapable fragility of the nation's body politic.

A process of national fragmentation became evident when in the midst of these pre-independence elections, regional, ethnic and religious parties emerged to contest elections each with its own particularistic agenda. The Northern People's Party (NPP), the first to emerge stood for protection of the culture and dignity of the people of the Northern Territories while the National Liberation Movement (NLM) of Ashanti represented the interest of the rich Cocoa farmers and the traditional rulers of Ashanti. The Togoland Congress (TC) was essentially created to fight for the unification of Ewe speaking people of the British and French Togo. The Muslim Association and other particularistic groups which emerged later convinced the ruling party that ethnic and religious parties were a threat to nation-building in Ghana.

Soon after independence a clear trend towards eliminating these parties emerged. A series of restrictive legislation was enacted to rid the country of parties considered a threat to nation-building and eventually to curtail free and fair democratic elections. First, the avoidance of Discriminative Act in 1957 outlawed regional, religious and ethnic parties and compelled all such parties to join together to form the United Party (UP).

The ruling party did not stop there but passed a Preventive Detention Act which made it legal to detain without trial for up to five years, persons suspected of planning subversion of the state. Then a Deportation Act was passed which empowered the Government to deport from Ghana persons whose presence in the country was not considered conducive to national stability. The victims were mainly people associated with some opposition parties.

After 1961 it had become abundantly clear that the country had become a *de facto* single party state and democratic or multi-party elections had effectively come to an end. What had happened can best be explained by Aristide Zolberg. In his small volume “Creating Political Order” he attempted an interpretation of the political development of the time. The CPP and its leader President Nkrumah, faced with the task of nation-building had come to the conclusion that the single-party was the most effective vehicle of creating a national political order. There was no viable alternative as neither language nor religion could do the job. English could not unify the population because it was the language of the coloniser and few people spoke it. No single African language was used by the entire population. The major religions popular among the people, Christianity and Islam, were alien importations. The CPP, the political party created by the popular nationalist movement, should be the sole instrument of nation-building. The CPP was Ghana and Ghana was CPP. The single party, CPP, had become the symbolic representation of the United People of Ghana subject to one political authority, that of the CPP Government.

7. Military Rule and Nation-building prior to the Fourth Republic

In February 1966 the military intervened to terminate the nation-building experiment through the instrumentality of single party rule. The idea was that a more peaceful and democratic nation-building was preferable to single-party rule. Within three years of military rule multi-party politics was once again restarted in Ghana except that, the CPP could not be allowed to operate again in Ghanaian politics. Elections were held, and an elected government installed to continue with peaceful and democratic nation-building through competitive party and electoral politics. Yet within a short two and a half-year's period the new democratically elected government had once again been overthrown by the military. This ushered in an era in Ghanaian and African politics when there appeared to be a consensus in African military circles that all party government and not just single-party rule could not be relied on for effective nation-building in Africa. Party rule bred corruption, tribalism and discrimination. Military rule should be the preferred vehicle of nation-building in the continent as a whole. As a consequence, within the first thirty years of African independence (1956-1986), 60 military coups d'état had been recorded in the continent, on the average two coups per year. The Ghana story was not very different. Within the first 30 years of independence five military governments had already ruled over sixteen years altogether.

8. Nation-building under the Fourth Republic

Nation-building under Ghana's Fourth Republic is predicated on the rejection of forcible or repressive nation-building in favour of peaceful and democratic nation-building.

Accordingly, the single-party state and military coups d'état are proscribed by the constitution of the Fourth Republic, Article 3(1) states that parliament shall have no power to enact a law establishing a one-party state. Other paragraphs of the same article declare as high treason punishable by death sentence any attempt to violently overthrow or abrogate the constitution of the Fourth Republic.

The constitution does not only reject forcible and repressive nation-building, it upholds peaceful and democratic nation-building by prescribing multi-party politics as the main legitimate vehicle of nation-building. This is accomplished by guaranteeing the right of Ghanaians to form parties and securing for every adult citizen the right to join a party (Article 55(1.2)). In addition, the constitution institutionalizes elections and voting by guaranteeing to every citizen of Ghana who has obtained voting age the right of vote and to be registered for the purpose of exercising their right (Article 42). Under the Fourth Republic peaceful and democratic nation-building has become the legally acceptable nation-building strategy. Chapter seven of the constitution, Article (42-54), lays out the elaborated institutional arrangements of the realization of this strategy.

To bring legitimate political authority to all corners of Ghana a highly decentralized system of government has been established, comprising initially 110 district municipal and metropolitan assemblies now increased to 170. These assemblies have the following characteristics

1. Membership is 70 percent directly elected by popular vote and 30 percent appointed by the President in consultation with the traditional authorities and other interest groups in the district;
2. A District Chief Executive nominated by the President and approved by Assembly members;
3. A presiding member elected by Assembly members from among their number;
4. The members of parliament for the district as ex-officio members;
5. Total exclusion of political parties from participation in district Assembly elections;
6. Sub-district structures called unit committees that extend the authority and reach of the Assembly further into country;
7. All elected officials of the Assembly and its Sub-units given the same four year term as national elected officers.

Since 1988 when the District Assemblies were created regular elections have been conducted every four years, the last four being 2000, 2002, 1998, 1994.

The district municipal and metropolitan assemblies as they presently exist suffer from many defects including:

1. Lack of highly qualified man power,
2. Inadequate transfer of functions powers, responsibilities and resources for their effective operation,
3. Contradiction between their official non-partisan character and practical politicization, DCE presiding members, appointed members and even elected members all being well known members of various political parties.

The greatest shortcoming of the Assemblies, however, related to their elections. Local people have shown little or no inclination to contest elections to the unit committees

which are the Sub-district structures, even though no filing fees are charged for the elections at the level. The result is that many unit committees are either non-existent or do not have the full complement of members, are virtually inactive and have become non-functional over time. The most recurrent complaint of unit committee members is one of the discrimination by central government. Unlike district assembly members they are neither paid sitting allowances nor ex-gratia awards at the end of their four year tenure.

The most fundamental weakness of district assembly elections is voter apathy. Local voters are not as interested in district assembly elections as they are in presidential and parliamentary elections. Comparison of voter turn-out in the two sets of elections clearly show that contrary to national expectation voters are not interested in election to those governmental structures established closer to them in order to respond to the specific needs of their communities. The official turn-out in presidential elections are as follows:

i.	1992	-	50.2%
ii.	1996	-	61.7%
iii.	2000	-	60.4% (Run-off)
iv.	2004	-	80.1%
v.	2008	-	72.9% (Run-off)

As against this compare the turn-out for District level elections since return to constitutional rule in 1993:

i.	1994	-	29.3%
ii.	1998	-	41.6%
iii.	2002	-	33.1%
iv.	2006	-	42.65

What has distinguished district Assembly elections from presidential election is the thick layer of apathy that has dogged district elections since return to constitutional rule. To what should we attribute this extraordinary display of voter apathy? Three main reasons explain this.

1. Official prohibition of political parties from district assembly elections deprives election at that level of both voter mobilizing institution and lively policy debate.
2. Inadequate resources at the district assembly level means that people still look up to central government to deliver the most important development project such as roads and hospitals they critically need.
3. Inadequate transfer of powers, functions and responsibilities to the districts means people still have to commute to the national capital to have essential services such as passport and pension payment delivered to them.

Not only are voters not interested in district assembly elections but even the candidates are hard to find. Districts assemble structures such as the unit committees are also elective and yet there is always a lack of candidates in adequate numbers to fill the unit committee positions. Not surprisingly many Ghanaians have called for the total abolition of unit committees or a reduction in both the total number of committees in the country and the number of persons to be elected to them. What has baffled advocates of abolition is the continuing lack of interest in unit committee elections in spite of the fact that no fees are charged for filing nomination papers for this particular election.

Even the district assembly election where candidate interest is fairly high has demonstrated only a limited capacity to contribute to nation-building in two main ways, few women show interest in the election and fewer women get elected as a consequence. Women in the assemblies have never constituted more than 33.3 per cent of assembly members. The response of government has been to reserve one-third of the 30 per cent Assembly members appointed by the president for women. This has turned out to be nothing more than a symbolic rather than a substantive approach to increasing women participation in the Assemblies. District Assembly elections have also been characterised by a very high turn over of assembly members. Every election the majority of Assembly members fail to seek re-election for many reasons. Among them are poor sitting allowances and inadequate ex-gratia allowances paid at the end of the four year term.

Presidential and Parliament elections excite, by far, more Ghanaians than local government or district assembly elections. Voter turn-out is comparatively higher and the interest of candidates extremely high. Besides, there has been remarkable interest of many members of Parliament in their parliamentary work, to the extent where some members of Parliament have already done three terms and are into their fourth year, a rolling sixteen years in Parliament. However, the contribution of parliamentary and Presidential elections to nation-building in Ghana suffers from severe limitations.

Generally, elections in Ghana, since return to constitutional rule in 1992 have revealed that, ethnicity is a major determinant of people's electoral choices more than any other factor, as Akan-speaking people are electorally more inclined toward the NPP while Ewe and Northern Ghana ethnic groups are more inclined toward the NDC. Next to ethnicity is poverty. Generally, regions that have more than two times the national level of poverty, (29 per cent), in particular the three Northern regions vote NDC while regions with poverty levels lower or closer to national average vote NPP. Representation of women in Parliament has seen a sharp decline from 25 in 2004 to only 19 in 2008.

Elections at the Presidential and Parliamentary levels have done little or nothing to dissolve ethnic loyalties. Indeed, individual party affiliation and electoral choices are critically dependent on ethnicity and to some extent poverty. Elections cannot be relied upon in Ghana's multiethnic context to deliver the badly needed nation-building project anticipated since the dawn of political independence.

9. Conclusion

Election has a huge potential to contribute to nation-building in Ghana. It pulls voters and candidates from every corner of the country into the political system. In addition, election highlights crucial issues in the economy, the state and the society. The record of elections in Ghana since 1992 clearly indicates that the nation-building potential of this crucial political process remains unrealized. And yet it is not too late to realize the nation-building value of elections. The nation as a whole needs to take the same hard decisions to make elections perform their nation-building role.

First, political parties should be allowed into local government or district assembly elections. Second, the present first-past-the-post or the majoritarian system, though well entrenched in Ghana has not helped nation-building and should be changed in favour of some form of a proportional representation system.

Finally, to link strength in Parliament more closely to control of the executive in a more direct way the Presidential system in Ghana should be given up to make for the Parliamentary system of government.

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