

**THE IMPLICATIONS OF SEPARATISTS AND RESTRUCTURALISTS AGITATIONS  
IN THE DEVELOPMENTAL ECONOMY OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY NIGERIA (pgs 48-70)**

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**Abstract**

Every year, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, the world commemorates the **United Nations Day of the Indigenous Peoples of the World**, including their fundamental rights of existence. In the midst of the following plethora of challenges- weak governmental institutions, oil structural disease, inept leadership, ethno-religious divisiveness, state orchestrated corruption and impunity, widespread poverty, unemployment and galloping population increase, reliance on an import based economy, if the daily headlines from Nigerian Newspapers cannot provide a summation of the heartrending national situation, perhaps, one may need to consult the United States 12 clusters of variables index considered in computing the fragile/failed states. Degenerating from 54 in 2005 to between 13 and 15 over the past seven years, and largely in the red alert category with countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Guinea, Syria, Yemen, among others on the same pedestal, starkly put, Nigeria appears to be heading for perdition. Attempts at providing veritable solutions and panacea added with the optional alternative of reverting to primordial status quo have not only enveloped the contemporary Nigerian political landscape, but appears to create a somewhat euphoric vent for many considering the psychological implications of the on-going inter-intra ethno-religious altercations. Ethno-religious groups like the Arewa, IPOB, MASSOB, Pandev, OPC, Mend among others, are busy with selfish and fiery vituperations/utterances and engagements which relatively challenge the foundations of Nigeria's existence. From restructuring to self determination, the resonance of the clamour grows by the day, placing Nigeria in a combustible mode. While applying Frustration/Aggression theory in this study, proper devolution of federating powers remain part of recommended options towards achieving the much needed sustainable economic development.

**Keywords:** Corruption, Unemployment, Terrorism, Ethnicity, Development

## **Introduction**

Unfortunately, Nigeria has remained one of the most controversial plural societies in the world today. Pre and post-independence in 1960, the annals of Nigeria's history is replete with ethnic oriented disturbances. Ethnicity, corruption, inept leadership, domestic insecurity, unemployment, poverty, healthcare challenges are simply part of the many maladies plaguing Nigeria's national development. On a very large scale, ethnocentric chauvinism has consistently continued to create heightened ethical crises, hence the 'one Nigeria mantra has remained nothing but a pure sarcasm, since unity and peace have proved a high sounding nothing. Ethnic politics and polarization along primordial cleavages is not new in Nigeria, but the dilemma is the momentum with which it is unfolding in the country now, regardless of the fact that such fallouts not long ago, cascaded the country into a bitter 3 years Civil War. The 'no victor, no vanquished' slogan adopted at the end of that war, simply appears a farcade, when one judiciously understudy the unfolding scenario within and outside Nigeria's functionality as a sovereign entity. Fairness, equity and meritocracy have been banished on the altar of faulty federalism. All these have bequeathed on the nation, incongruous and melancholic leadership with myriads of negative implications.

Historical annals have continued to lay credence to the fact that the many ethnic groups inhabiting the Nigerian environment in the pre-colonial period were engaged in diverse communication and relationships, *vis a vis* extensive inter-group relationship, regardless of their differences. Nigeria post-independence in 1960, created veritable opportunities for the growth of democratic governance. However, since democracy cannot just fall from the sky, but evolve through popular awareness, participation, political engineering inclusive of the elites, the masses and political parties, it pre-supposes that a level-playing ground should be available to give birth to favourable political atmosphere, whose end product can only be the people's will.

Without bias, one could confidently assert that issues concerning political homogeneity and classifications in Nigeria, came with the colonial government, in its attempt to make political governance and administration easier, it ended up carelessly lumping culture groups together under the same umbrella, even without seeking their consent. This they did in various ways even before the 1914 official amalgamation of Northern and Southern Protectorates. It should be recalled that by law, the British Colonial Government had in place the 1910 Native Land

Ordinance Law, which discouraged Southern Nigerians from migrating and settling in the North. This created unimaginable divisiveness, while promoting ethnicity, rather than national unity and integration. From this stage, the journey to nationhood took the slippery road, just as nepotism, ethnocentrism and primordial inclinations pervaded the psyche of the Nigerian citizenry. Ethnic cleavages appeared and polarised almost every sector of the national life – politics, the Federal Civil Service and even the security agencies. Before long, several ethno-based organizations came up into the limelight – the Igbo Union from the East, the Arewa group from the North, and Omo Oduduwa from the West, among others. The bad sequel was that the existing political parties in the 1960s either by design or coincidence, ended up towing these ethnic colourations. Emergent developments created an atmosphere of utter distrust.

Nigeria's quest for progressive nationhood and democratic growth post 1970 has remained chequered, and all attempts at ameliorating this problem has submerged the country through the depredations of more than 30 years of military rule. This democratic aberration even midwife Nigeria's political challenges to grow in leaps and bounds so much so that apart from the military imposition of the 1979 Constitution on the nation, the political parties post-1979, continued to tow the ethnic angles (Unity Party of Nigeria – West, Nigeria People's Party – East, National Party of Nigeria – North). Rather than influence and sway peoples support and opinion through balanced and prospective ideologies on poignant issues, these ethnically oriented political parties preferred to adopt and apply the ethnic mantra, thereby deepening the depth of the political divide. By all intents and purposes, from the first Republic to the contemporary Fourth Republic, it does appear that Nigeria's exercise in Nation-building has largely remained a futile project. Nigeria could boast of harbouring a very large number of political parties, a population of possibly more than two hundred million citizens and a prospective economic base, but all these facilities have unexpectedly continued to remain a drawback on its developmental strides. The political class, the elite and the leadership steering the Nigerian State have remained largely retrogressive, disoriented, while their actions, representations and responses have largely appeared antithetical to normal global standards and etiquette. When leadership impunity remains widespread, the judicial and legislative caution, control and regulations appear a mirage, an atmosphere of political apathy and hopelessness is bound to dominate the land, moreso where the polity appear over-policed, but simply under-secured.

The citizenry are bound to react in various ways, either through total political dejection and apathy or organized agitations and demands for better alternative conditions. These agitations have grown over the years in both complexities and sophistication from passive to violent formats, in almost all parts of Nigeria – from the terror-laden approach of the Boko Haram in the North East, to the threat-based strategy of the Indigenous People of Biafra in the South East and the melodramatic approach of the Odua People’s Congress of the South West, to mention but a few; Nigerian Political environment is simply in a combustible mode. In the midst of agitations, consultations are constantly going on, engaging the many polarised ethno-religious groups operating within the Nigerian environment – AREWA, OHANEZE, PANDEV, AFENIFERE, MEND the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs. More energy was added to the disunity and polarity existing with the heightened scenario unfolding through the destructive actions and tendencies of the rampaging Fulani Herdsmen in many Nigerian locations. An eclipse of fraternal confidence dawned on the different culture groups, when the government at the centre started and continued manifesting its inability to check the excesses of such groups. When many groups agitate and clamour for self determination or restructuring at the same time within a particular political polity, certain problems and challenges must have triggered such. The need to understudy these developments, the causes and the course, coupled with the challenge of proffering viable solutions to identified implications, is the objective of this study; hence the following sections have been adopted to achieve these: introduction, conceptual clarifications, theoretical guide, the politics of hide and seek, Reflections, Conclusion and Recommendations.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

The following concepts demand concise and insightful explanations to aid depth to this study- separatist, restructure and economic development.

#### **Separatist:**

To disunite something from one thing, cause things or people to be separate, to set apart, to disconnect or removed from the rest – all these words help to explain the word separation. Someone who advocates separation or splitting from an established or an existent entity, hence it could be the separation of one country or territory into two politically independent territories. In

the political realm, and in the context of this study, a separatist is seeking for self determination armed with secessionist claims over a definite territory. However, situations involving issues of self-determination and the territorial integrity of states are so diverse, and have such varying political, humanitarian, economic and other contextual facets, that there can be no definite set of rules for every particular situation (Mullerson: 1994:85). This certainly does not mean that international law does not provide guidelines for self-determination issues. Trends in the worsening conditions in the sustenance of life in general as applicable to the ordinary Nigerian citizen has continued to prove intractable, hence the widespread attraction and application of separatist and secessionist sentiments as the assured remaining option available for the diverse discordant and tactile ethnic nationalities engaged within the Nigerian Project.

### **Restructure:**

Undoubtedly, the most used and applied word on the political horizon of Nigeria within the present dispensation. To change the organization of, or reorganize an existing *status quo*, the acceptance in the broader consensus of the socio-economic and political groups within Nigeria of the need for the implementation of this procedure may not be contested, but the template for it remains more elusive by the day. Restructuring, in whatever formula, and as applicable to the Nigerian Political entity obviously appear viable and a veritable solvent to the myriads of the age long endemic problems clogging the wheels of Nigeria's political economy as applicable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In terms of content and nature, one could group the various restructuring models into three categories: soft restructuring (tinkering with amendments of the 1999 constitution); hybrid restructuring (negotiate a new constitution with sufficient regional autonomy within the federation); and hard restructuring (confederation or outright independence for any desiring part of the country). All in all, the act of restructuring in whatever medium, demands awareness, conviction, ability to sacrifice and dedication from all involved, since temporary losers and winners are bound to collectively gain on the long run.

### **Economic Development**

Economy involves activities connected with the management of collective gains, monetarily, socially and politically, hence it includes production, trading and monetary gains. The productive engagements embodied in economy enables it to be created, managed, stimulated and boosted or

reduced and kept down over a given time through certain policies. One's interest in economy is simply because it helps to sustain life in all ramifications, hence a good platform towards achieving both individual and national interest. On a larger scale, economy involves the collective expenses, investment, productivity, importation and exportation made by a group or country, not overlooking the immediate and later well being, or condition of the generality of its members or citizens (Ezeonwuka; 2014:69). The power any group or sovereignty exercises, or within its disposal is often determined by the strength and capabilities of its economy. An economy may grow, develop, shrink, retard or fail. Since it moves from growth to development, an economy is deemed to have attained growth sequel to a long-term rise in capacity to supply increasingly diverse economic goods to its population, based on advancing technology and institutional and ideological adjustments that it demands, (Kuznetl 2006:55). Economic development being a wider concept advances in economic goods, wants, incentives, institutions, productivity and knowledge, including the possible decline in such endeavour (Jhingan; 2006:5). An economy can grow, but it may not develop due to the challenges of poverty, unemployment, lack of technological and structural changes.

### **Theoretical Guide**

The thesis of this study is centered on the implications of the separatists and restructuralists agitations on the developmental economy of 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. Suffice it to stipulate that due justice can only be meted out to this topic only when proper tools are deployed constructively. Amongst the several theories of social conflict, the Frustration/Aggression Structural Conflict Theory appears to provide a veritable sequence to this study, hence is adopted as the anchor guide. The subsisting 'state of order' in Nigeria is not only fragile, but cumulatively negates universally genuinely acceptable common values, hence abundant vestiges of, and sustained evidence of 'state of terror' on the citizenry have created a psychopolitical chasm in the minds of the populace. Ill-motivated and uncared for and with expectation continuing to be distanced from attainment and actual need satisfaction, the greater will be the chances that anger and violence will result (Gurr,1970:24). Aggression in which ever form it manifests, would always be the product of frustration rather than a mere natural instinct or biological reaction, more so where and when legitimate desires are denied directly or indirectly sequel to certain structural discrepancies within a society. The importance of socio-economic factors and forces in the

contentious issues of politics, governance, religion and ethnicity more so in many post-independent plural sovereignties remains a running sore.. This becomes apparently trivial when evaluated with the stagnating identity of such economies, the former colonizing power is still allowed to exploitatively maintain a domineering influence through the imposition of preferred ethno-religious cleavages on the particular polity. Reactions to such could either be passively aggressive or violent, as a let out of prolonged feelings of frustration. The emergent status of ethno-inclined pressure groups whose antics and statements sometimes tend to challenge the structural fabrics of Nigeria's nationhood and federalism is now a recurrent problem, just as the Boko Haram elements still remain focused on their violent strategy.

### **The Politics of 'Hide and Seek':**

Beginning from the colonial period, Nigeria has not only been a bad brand in homogenous plurality, but an item of display in ethnic rivalries; mainly between the Hausa-Fulani in the North against the Yoruba in the West, and the Igbo in the East. These ethnic polarization led to the creation of political parties which inevitably were polarized along stereotyped culture lines, hence divisiveness got entrenched in the political geography of the country. Possessing one of the highest number of political parties in the world, Nigeria's developmental economy is repulsively retrogressive even with an estimated national population of above a hundred and eighty million in the twenty-first century. One may not be wrong to say that from on start, the contrapted effigy termed 'Nigeria' in 1914 had already started manifesting clear signs and symptoms of pathophysiological auto-rejection, even as it went through the political baptism of 1960 independence, onwards to the depredations of the 'wild wild West', the 1963 national census imbroglio, the emergent intractile corruption and nepotism, the January 15<sup>th</sup> 1966 coup d'etal, and the Igbo pogrom, including the three years genocidal war against the Easterners of the 1960s. It may be recalled that Nigeria has along its course of history flinted with the Unitary system of governance, romanticized with the Parliamentary, while solemnizing with the Presidential system in its strides as a portent federation. Fully and odiously aware of its endemic problems and challenges, and ominously poised strategically towards entertaining and dislodging any potential proactive solution, the melodrama has been that of deceit and delay through the application of and reliance on half measures.

Even before 1960, Nigeria's faulty physiognomy did create and stir worrying questions from many elites in the country's North and South, but the vaulting British amoral and vaulting machinations and interests cocooned it. Separatists demands and yearnings got reclined, readjusted and fixated, opting rather to meander out as pacification from above in the form of 'state creation'. Undoubtedly, this policy would have helped the nations democratic setting, by lending voice to the minority culture groups, but was later hijacked by the powers that be. Towards dousing fulminating tensions, emanating from perceived further political marginalisations, and geared towards maintaining Nigeria's stability, the following technocratic prescriptions were administered as remedies – Federal Character Principle, Quota System and Resource Derivation Policy, among others.

Dotted in the pages of pre-independence Nigerian history are the many 'separatist' musings and rantings, quelled and re-packaged as 'state creation movements and vanguards'. At the beginning of 1952, the following groups became vehemently occupied with this quest: Benin – Delta Peoples Party (BDPP), Calabar – Ogoja – Rivers Movement (COR), and by March 6<sup>th</sup> 1956, one Mallam Ibrahim Imam tabled a motion, requesting that the issue of the creation of Middle Belt State be officially considered on the floor of the Northern House of Assembly (Ekanade; 2015:158). In August, 1959, some Anioma Communities in the present day Delta and Edo States were carved out of the core Igbo heartland, despite protests from the Anioma traditional rulers then to the British Colonial authorities, while a large chunk of Ezza Community in the present Ebonyi State was allotted to the present day Benue State.

The frenzy and incipient apprehension such moves stirred amongst the populace greatly generated dangerous passionate feelings of marginalization and domination in most minority culture groups, hence the Colonial government set up the Willinks Commission to ascertain the feasibility and strength of such agitations. Apart from acclaiming certain levels of credibility to these agitations by this Commission, coupled with the outright rejection of the Willink Commissions Boundary Adjustment Report by these agitators, it was observed that in the near mortal contests between the regions in the First Republic, politicians used 'self-determination' as a bait to attract minority voters away from the regional majority party (Peil; 1976:85). Since rights drives the vehicle of justice, and since the issue of rights connote the unobstructed ability to chose or decide for oneself from a series of alternatives, Chief amongst these rights just as the



political discourse in the aftermath of the second World War put it, was the right of diverse people to **self determination**. In Nigeria, issues of self determination have been a perennial accoutrement of the country's political architecture since the outset of the colonial state, hence in the immediate aftermath of the Amalgamation Act of 1914, a notable Northern nationalist, Ahmadu Bello, had insisted that;

Lord Lugard and his Amalgamation were far from popular among us at that time. There were agitations in favour of secession, we should set up on our own, we should cease to have anything more to do with the Southern people, we should take our own way. (Tamuno: 1970).

It has remained a proven fact that the sword of separation and self determination have been brandished by the many minority groups in Nigeria early enough by the bigger ethnic nationalities – the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo, throughout the Colonial and immediate Post-colonial era, (Dudley, 1973: 63; Ayoade, 1973:68; Suberu, 2002:391).

Shortly after Nzeogwu's January 15<sup>th</sup> bloody coup, separatist demand assumed a militaristic, not an outright rebellions dimension. On February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1966 Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw former student of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and an indigene of the Niger Delta Area, hastened to arms against the Nigerian State on the account of the deprivation of the region. Boro sought for the outright secession of the Ijaw nation from the Nigerian body politic, charging his men to 'fight for your freedom' (Kalu; 2008:175). By the same token, taking into cognizance the litany of events that cascaded the country eventually into a bloody civil war, and the resultant Igbo attempt to actualize their right to self determination, rather than heed to the plain need for proper solution, the Gowon regime clandestinely complicated the problems through a nefarious state creation exercise. Apart from the creation of the twelve states imbroglio while hostilities raged on between the Eastern Region and the Nigerian government, a deliberate designated partitioning programme was strategically embarked on even as the war ended, to remove the Igbo advantage of posing as the highest oil producing region hence:- In 1976, Ahoada, Obigbo and Port Harcourt were ceded to Ijaw dominated Rivers State (Thus separating oil rich Obigbo in Aba division of old Imo State from their Ndoki and Azumini kith and kin); Olugbu an oil and gas rich Ndoki Community was ceded to Akwa Ibom State, the Egbema Community of old Imo State was balkanized into three parts, with the highest oil producing area ceded to Rivers State, whereas

Ndoni who are kiths and kin to Ogbaru Community of Anambra State was carved out of Aboha, and ceded to Rivers State.

Just as the ghost of self-determination and separation have been held down from Nigeria's pre-independence period uptill the present twenty-first century, through the chess board of state creation and massive realignment of paternal affinities, the Quota System and Federal Character Principle became handy as veritable tools for domestic equity. This frenzy was fed by Northern fears, having been warned by the British 'not to lose the Federal Civil Service in its anxiety to Northernise its own Service', and afraid of Southern domination in an independent Nigeria (Albert, 1998). It may be recalled that in 1950, the North had at the Ibadan Constitutional Conference, through the Emir of Zaria, seconded by the Emir of Katsina raised the issue of equal representation for the North in the forthcoming central legislature, or in the alternative, the secession of the North (Osuntokun, 1979:101). Under the threat of Northern secession, the colonial government, the Eastern and Western regions quickly capitulated to the Northern demands of parliamentary equality to the North, hence other areas soon fell, to the quota system, like in the army (Adekanye, 1998; Adejumobi, 2002), and in office distribution (Orji 2008; Osaghae 1989). By the turn of the seventies, quota was being used actively for admission into tertiary federal institutions (Mustapha, 2004:34). The overwhelming Southern despondency with the quota is without doubt, but it is bound to remain largely helpless in the face of an overwhelming Northern Political strength, homogeneity and determination to prevent Southern political hegemony over the 'Caliphate'. Despite its lack of motivation and spirit of competition in the sphere of national development, the military regime went on under Murtala Muhammed to garb and enshrine it into the Nigerian Constitution, under the guise of the Federal Character Principle.

Since the Federal Character Principle oscillates on the pedestral of equitable resource distribution and representation, and since such does not necessarily translate into operating from the national commanding height', overtime, some minority groups vehemently instituted a sustained agitation (passive and aggressive) towards re-addressing revenue distribution *vis a vis* resource derivation. In the unfolding eco-terrorism, many Niger Delta militants took up arms against the Federal Government and many lives and properties were lost. A rapprochement was adopted which not only allotted certain percentage to the source of the revenue, but granted a presidential amnesty

and other motivational engagements to the youths of the Niger Delta region (oil producing communities).

In discussing anything that has to refer to marginalization, state creation movements, self determination and separatist agitations in Nigeria, without prior and proper mention of the part played by the Igbo ethnic nationality, would simply be a 'high sounding nothing'. The dramatic events starting from the failed January 15<sup>th</sup> Nzeogwu Coup, the counter coup, the Igbo Pogrom in the North, the genocidal manifestations of the three years Nigeria/Biafra debacle, the Post-war years of hardship and lack of inclusion, coupled with the painful unfolding game of marginalization and 'holding the Igboman down syndrome' in all fronts by the rest of the country, through a whole lot of discriminative organogram enshrined covertly into the Nigerian functional body politic simply bear witness of the faulty federalism operating in Nigeria. Perhaps the most marginalized ethnic group in Nigeria, who have lost both identity, form and freedom may not be the Igbo, but the Hausa under the depredations of the marauding and subtle Fulani. Be that as it may, the many unfolding bizarre security challenges within the Nigerian nation in the contemporary twenty-first century have continued to query not only the supposed homogeneity of the Northern part of Nigeria as a viable political entity, but the puzzling doubts of the Nigeria project's ability to sail securely through the troubled waters of international politics.

Separatists and secessionist agitators have largely evolved, grown and solidified into portent destabilizing vanguards, as terrorist, extremist groups and passive/cocercive pressure groups. The actions and continued activities of the dreaded *Boko Haram* Islamic Sect in Nigeria's North East appears larger than life. Simply attacking and destroying lives and properties within the Nigerian enclave is not its mere ambition, but to establish and sustain an independent Islamic Caliphate, carved out of the country remains their mission and vision. One cannot equally lose sight of the prolonged and widespread depredations of the Fulani Herdsmen in Nigeria. Its continued socio-economic implication on Nigeria's developmental gait remains deleterious. The immediate fallout of this Fulani Herdsmen imbroglio is the high rendition in the discordant ethno-religious tunes amongst the diverse primordial demarcations subsisting in the Nigerian environment, hence vehement reactions from the Plateau Peoples Development Association (PANDEV), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Igbo Umbrella

Socio Cultural Organization (OHANEZE). Against this backdrop, one must call into focus the sustained reactionary campaign conducted by both the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and in particular the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) bent on Biafran self governance through a United Nations organized referendum.

## **Reflections**

Constructive demands and agitations remain corporate and important part of internationally acceptable democratic etiquette. Over the years, consistent and persistent complaints of ethnic discrimination, political marginalization and lack of political inclusiveness have coalesced into the adoption and use of the word restructuring, as a somewhat veritable panacea for equitable sustenance and management of the endemic Nigeria complexities. To maintain clarity while addressing the implications of these agitations in the developmental economy of twenty-first century Nigeria, this study would opt to first evaluate the dictates of International Law on the issue of the procedural steps undertaken by a political entity towards obtaining the status of self determination from an existing mother entity or sovereignty. It is only when this is done, could it be realistic to properly evaluate the restructuring option in the same political entity, as a sort of equitable rapprochement for fairness, understanding and trust.

The right to self-determination, secession and separation are different things and as an ongoing right of all peoples, are not strictly confined to colonial peoples. In the non-colonial context self-determination is an entitlement to democracy and the right of participation in democratic process. Self determination under international law classify different ethnicities in their territories within the population of states as constituting minorities (Mullerson, 1994:91). Furthermore, since ethnicities do not live in isolation, in clear-cut units or territories, ethnically based claims and agitations for autonomy practically always conflict with those of others and interests. Issues of separation and self determination, as in many politically sensitive challenges in world affairs present varying political, humanitarian economic and contextual complexities that defy definite set of rules for every particular situation regardless of the backing of international law to the demands of self determination in separation. The underlying factor is whether separation or unification would best promote security and facilitate effective shaping and sharing of power and of all other values for most people, hence a proper balance between freedom of choice and the viability of countries must be maintained. The right to secession is simply out of question here,

because it is similar to the 'right to revolution'. In the case of gross violation of human rights by a state, the population may overthrow the government and liberate itself from tyranny; while in the case of gross violation of minority rights, (as obtained during the Igbo Pogrom), the minority may either overthrow the government or secede from the oppressive regime. It must be noted that in both cases, (and they usually go hand in hand as democratic states would hardly grossly violate the rights of minorities), such a state is in flagrant violation of international law, and the world community has the right to intervene (through economic sanctions, humanitarian interventions, among others), and in the case of utter violation of minority rights, such interference may consist *inter alia*, in the recognition by the world community of the right of the oppressed minority to secession (Mullerson, 1994:91).

By all intents and proposes, restructuring depending on which ever angle one decides to approach it, could be seen in the perspective of a change, though it could be soft, hybrid or hard restructuring. Restructuring *vis a vis* content and nature in the perspective under study, would classify soft restructuring as tinkering with certain amendments of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution; while hybrid would entail negotiating a new constitution with sufficient regional autonomy within the federation; and hard restructuring grants outright confederation or independence for any desiring part of the country (Soludo; 2018:2). Cognisance of the overriding momentum noticeable in Nigeria presently, there seems to be a preponderance of main stream opinion around the hybrid option centred on the political and ethno-religious agitations and disturbances. This study is at peace with this view, considering the level of Nigeria's decay and degeneration as a sovereign entity, evidenced by a plethora of ill-inept leadership and civil service, salary arrears, exchange rate collapse, inflation, output stagnation, import dependency, soaring poverty and unemployment, institutionalized insecurity in all spheres, amongst others.

Unequivocally, the Nigerian constitution has proved to be an inappropriate trajectory for a prospective developing democracy right from independence. Sequel to its pathophysiological deficiencies, even as peripheral efforts were made one time or the other to reform, reinvent and re-energise it with a better and clearer focus proved abortive. Nigerian developmental economy remains held down by its extremely weak institutions. Since the economic realm of any sovereignty cannot progress in isolation from that of the political, and coupled with the fact that one cannot give what one lacks, its not absurd why the Nigerian nation has continued to

retrogress. Political governance property rights, rule of law, speedy and fair dispensation of justice, fiscal structure management and distributional arrangements for investment and entrepreneurship, over-policed but under-secured citizenry among others – the management of all these remain within the ambit of strong and powerful institutions as sustainable base of democratic checks and balances. In driving home this point most especially on the part of economic development, Acemoglu and Robinson in their seminal paper tersely stated thus:

...we argue that the main determinant of differences in prosperity across countries are differences in economic institutions. To solve the problem of development will entail reforming these institutions. Unfortunately, this is difficult, because economic institutions of a society depend on the nature of political institutions and the distribution of political power in society. As yet, we only have a highly preliminary understanding of the factors that lead a society into a political equilibrium which supports good economic institutions.... Nevertheless, some countries do undergo political transitions, reform their institutions, and move onto more successful paths of economic development. We also can learn a lot from these success stories.... Making or imposing specific institutional reforms may have little impact on the general structure of economic institutions or performance if they leave untouched the underlying political equilibrium.... A piecemeal approach may be dangerous (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012:7).

It is fundamental at this juncture to remember that context and history matter, just as the building of progressive institutions is a continuum, consequently, issues concerning the economic development of Nigeria can never be a cut and paste affair. A good institution unleashes and maximizes the creative energies of the citizenry for the promotion of the highest possible security, prosperity and happiness of the populace. Just as no universal template exists through which political and economic institutions are synchronized, suffice it to state that each entity must be spurred to galvanize and spurt through its peculiar channel of uniqueness (past experience and agreed formula). The global economy is already in the fourth Industrial Revolution or digital age, dominated by Robotics, Artificial intelligence, machine learning, virtual reality, Augmented reality among others, hence an economy basically oscillating on most aspects of the old economy can only stagnate. The annals of Nigeria's governance are filled with wonderful and insightful politico-economic blueprints brandished here and there, but never implemented, hence the problem is apparently beyond textbook analysis. When leadership and a nation's civil service is streamlined by the dictates of primordialism and stereotyped quota system, when oil revenue accounts for more than 90 percent of Nigeria's export and foreign

exchange earnings and more than 65 percent of government revenue (Soludo; 2018:4), when at 58 years and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Nigeria continues to subsist on oil dependant/entitlement mindset (oil structural disease), in a country where the clamour for and creation of new states and local governments have turned to a patronage and political tool for elite buyout and political balancing allowing indolent loafers to make it with effortless ease thereby discouraging hardwork and competition. When the national rentier system is fashioned in such a way that leaders are not people with best ideas and talents, the component states rather than unleash their creative abilities through competition in a synergistic boom, (leading to more than 30 states governments finding it incapable of paying salaries without allocation from Abuja), poverty countries to grow in the land supported by unbelievable unemployment, population thrust and disenchantment.

These have continued to support heightened survival challenges and affected criminality, social misdemeanors and insecurity including Nigeria's low life expectancy. Once a large number of a given population remains immersed in such malady, violence quotient increases coupled with political agitations for redress, restructuring and self determination, moreso, when the Federal government through several notable incidents has continued to maintain complicity in compromising one ethnic nationality over another. This has continued to create and nurture discordant tunes in Nigeria's body politic, especially considering the country's diverse inclinations. Unfolding developments have continued to challenge domestic food security sequel to both the *Boko Haram* atrocities in Nigeria's North East, and the widespread Fulani Herdsmen and farmers attritious clashes, the Shiites imbroglio, the Kaduna and Jos recurrent mayhem. Where lies the attraction and motivation for the foreign investor to be spurred in engaging his capital and resources in a country lacking even the basic requirements for proper economic investment – Electricity, balanced transport system, security, infrastructural development, among others. Rather than spend quality time thinking about innovative ways to attract and sustain productive activities, the Nigerian leadership is simply concerned with the monthly Federal Accounts Allocations.

The story of, and the unfolding scenario with regards to Nigeria's institutional dysfunction and incipient circular stagnation has continued to be enigmatic, considering its population advantage,

(manpower and consumer strength), abundant material and mineral resources. The naked truth is that:

Every penny of capital spending by the Federal Government of Nigeria is borrowed and its fiscal position is precarious. Put starkly, not one kobo of oil money is invested in infrastructure by the FGN, it is all consumed by the obtuse Federal bureaucracy (Soludo; 2018:8).

Since the current system tilts the balance in favour of distribution and consumption thereby creating a near permanent dependency on the life support of the oil rents, it is simply an anachronistic economic adventure. If after more than twenty-six years of existence, more than 30 states (Federating units) cannot meet even their minimal running costs without the handout from the Federation Account, then one could conclude that the existing structure may no longer be in tandem with the time sequence after prognosis. Everything in life remains exposed to change, and such change can either be peaceful or violent; depending on both human factors and natural phenomena. Beyond mass mobilizations for change, restructuring and self determination; lies the articulate realities of the looming national catachilism that lies ahead of Nigeria, a hopelessness and a daily growing frustrated majority whose candour is fast exhausting. Nigerian politico-economic edifice is webbed in incompetence and lack of fairness, and this study remains deeply convinced that both anomalies drives corruption against democracy and development. When the terrain is bedeviled and bequeathed with underdevelopment dictated by dysfunctional values of corruption, nepotism and wholesome impunity, a traditional already laid platform whereby the existing dialectics and principles of governance under Nigerian democracy remains a painful façade to federating principles, devolution of powers, fiscal federalism, private-sector participation and equitable representation.

When Rule of law, Freedom of the press and association, the operational modicum of the domestic security operatives, and the rules of engagement guiding military operations (which remain encapsulated in basic United Nations guidelines on the ruses of war), are discarded and trampled on by the government of a Third World democratic experiment like Nigeria, where then lies the hope of the ordinary citizenry towards obtaining desired attention. One is apt to pause and wonder what the reactions of many Nigerians would be in a situation where the dreaded *Boko Haram* activities in Nigeria's North East appears reclined into insignificance in comparison



with the atrocities of the Fulani Herdsmen throughout the country; one many equally want to know what the outcome would be when some respected, revered and retired army generals and national elders descend into the dangerous frustrated rhetorics of encouraging and urging their ethnic alignments to take up arms and defend themselves, since the Nigerian government has been found wanting and compromised. Frustrated and in a quagmire, some Nigerians have taken recourse and solace through diverse ethno religious cleverages demanding for national restructuring and even separation from the Nigerian entity.

### **Implications**

The politics of 2019 is not interrogating the major issues affecting Nigeria today. If every country continues its present trajectory, by 2050, 90 percent of all poor people in the world will live on the African continent (Nigeria and Congo), and by implication, Nigeria will therefore remain the poverty capital of the world (Sanusi; 2018, Oxfam/World Bank Reports; 2018).

That over 87 millions Nigerians are living below the poverty line (Theresa May: [http: 2018](http://)), while the country constantly relies on external loan to fund every federal budget has become a tradition, is simply the outcome of the caricature that is Nigeria's political arrangement and its insidious experience with oil coupled with its accompanying institutional arrangement spanning from 1960. Considering the many existing and emergent challenges facing the country, and quite aware of the frustrating indices oozing from the variegated commanding heights of the government, many citizens appear to have taken recourse to agitations for restructuring and even ethnic self determination, after an official referendum. When the clamour for such is no longer unusual in a sovereignty, moreso in an ethno-religious diverse Nigerian society, a wholesome and dangerous eclipse of fraternal confidence is re-awakened and sustained within the polity. Its cumulative influence and implications on the overall domestic peaceful conviviality and transactions has continued to remain deleterious. Once suspicion steps in, curiosity, anxiety and fear continue to hatch and replicate, marginalizing developmental engagements having disfigured perceptions and understanding. It is simply disheartening to observe the depth of polarization on which the Nigerian country oscillates. In the unfolding quagmire, some elites across ethno-religious demarcations, whose selfish interests appear threatened by these agitations, feeling unsafe, degenerate into emitting confusing and conflicting signals/information, aimed at keeping adrift their exploitative octopus of inefficiency. There seems to be a dissonance

between those whose responsibility it is to act, and the popular demands of the people, if one is apt to evaluate the effects and the prospects of these agitations and positions on the existing national psyche of the country.

In the face of abject injustice, frustrated fair minds begging for justice sometimes agitate bitterly passive or violently destructive as showcased during the eco-terrorists blowing up of oil pipelines in Nigeria's South-south region, accompanied by the threat of separation from the rest of the country. In recalling the tide-like spate of agitations and destructions in Nigeria's South-west at the wake of the June 12<sup>th</sup> 1993 election results annulment coupled with the threat of separation, one may find it equally difficult to overlook the persistent Shiite moslem showdown with the national security apparatus. It is disheartening to observe that the Nigerian security apparatus has been militarised and privatized. The army is now an internal aggressor rather than an external aggressor.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century developmental economy of the Nigerian state is neither here nor there, and painfully refusing professional diagnosis and attention, hence with terrible prognosis. Within the country, the media is awash with claims and counter-claims, sensationalism and under-reportage, the judiciary appear caged, while the National Assembly painfully exhibit the clearest handful of selected sycophants of the unhindered manipulations of an obsessed executive. Whereas proper developmental economy elicits appropriate intricate undertaking and engagements, this study has observed that a good number of the populace are disenchanting, hopeless and lack the inertia to act. When the enabling environment for progressive endeavour is proved to be grossly unavailable in a country, potential investors (domestic and foreign) continue to abhor such a place like a leprous hand. It may be observed that post 1963, the Nigerian Constitution has remained manipulated towards producing strong personalities, rather than strong institutions, hence making it easier to exploit citizen fellowship and awareness based on stereotyped sentiments, rather than issue-based state craft. Undoubtedly, this study believes that behind the farcade of these sustained pressure and clamour for restructuring and threats of separation from different echelons of the Nigerian Society, is the all important hopeful awareness generated even beyond the enlightened, armed with the simple message that all hope is not yet lost.

## **Conclusion/Recommendations**

The thought of Nigerian developmental economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century taking a clue from the many advancing economies of the world may forever remain mere hallucinations if adequate attention is not paid to the several agitations for restructuring and the total reorganization of the country's federalism and economic myopia is not interfaced. One of the biggest gains and achievements of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) group in not only the South Eastern part of the county, but throughout Nigeria and even beyond, is the raising of awareness and the designated pressure mauled on the Nigerian government on the need for either restructuring or the granting of referendum for Biafran self determination. Along the lines of running battles, broken and damaged lives, properties and portent 'sit at home' declarations, the Nigerian government have largely applied extreme strategies and rules of engagement in quelling and containing the tantrums of this pressure group. In its spread and possible acceptance as not only the heart of progressive politics and excellent economics in contemporary developing economies, restructuring has really permeated beyond political parties debates and pedestrian manifestos into a tsunami force whose time has come in the Nigerian environment that has been left behind amongst the comity of nations.

In recalling several historical hiccups littered along the contours of Nigeria's turbulent evolutionary history, this study ventured towards pointing at the many foundational mistakes, pre and post-independence subtle maneuvers, which were largely cumulatively antagonistic against the will and demand of the several culture groups and ethnic nationalities inhabiting the Nigerian environment. Since freedom and the right to exist remain part of the internationally accepted global etiquette accruable to humanity, and so long as a people cannot be tricked and subdued forever, the need for restructuring is now.

One could always easily, with direct reference to the persistence and rapacity of these agitations, evaluate and conclude that Nigeria's stability as a sovereignty is queried, moreso considering the rising debt profile, infrastructural decay, overdependence on oil/gas and food insecurity. It remains quite understandable that all these and more continue to affect and weigh down the collective inertia to act beyond mere mass mobilization for change into articulate actions. This is not to say that continued organized political agitations is not helpful towards igniting reforms. When incentive systems are freed through a new versatile Fiscal Responsibility Act,

irresponsible fiscal behavior which could trigger a wholesale bailout of state governments – (Consumption hinged on unsustainable public finance) would be contained. Nigeria’s Tax-to-growth domestic ratio constrains flexibility in deploying fiscal instruments for development. When all corporate taxes and value added Tax are paid into the federation account, where lies the incentive for states and local governments to attract, sustain and promote industrialization? Economic development would become an attractive decimal when federating units have the flexibility to deploy taxation as a veritable instrument to attract and promote enterprise, and also an independent revenue. By the same token, does it not negate commonsense and contemporary political-economics to operate a uniform salary scale/common minimum wage scheme across the country in a federalism? Moving at the same speed for the different components of the Nigerian Society negates sensitization, innovation, ingenuity, entrepreneurship and appears incendiary to national development. A people’s Constitution is advocated, which would not only address Resource derivation/control, the separation of religion from the state, but institute the much needed political identity of Nigerian Citizenship in place of that of cultural identity

With due reference to the European Union Charter which opined thus:

Subsidiarity means that Public responsibilities shall generally be exercised, in preference, by those authorities which are closest to the citizen. Allocation of the responsibility to another authority should weigh up the extent and nature of the task and requirements of efficiency and economy (European Charter, 2000).

Standing firmly on this premise, this study strongly advocate that the federal government should loosen its hold on policing, electricity provision, railways, ports, aviation, business incorporation, taxation powers, regulatory functions, among others. A politico-fiscal arrangement in tandem with explicit devolution of powers is not only advocated, but section 162 of the 1999 Nigerian constitution desires to be urgently expunged to create a bazaar for hardwork and innovation. Since restructuring demands dismantling and recoupling, the country should be guided by the economics of scale and high investment rates to dictate the viability of either maintaining the thirty-six state structure or harmonizing into six regional partitions hence six vice-presidents and one president dictated by the principle of equality of regions; multivariate judicial systems among others (Soludo; 2018:8). A competitive federation is required to unleash the creative energies of all the component parts into a synergistic boom.

Weak institutions can never provide veritable checks and balances to an evolving functional democracy destined for growth and development, moreso in African context. Suffice it to say that, a hybrid restructuring program should be initiated forthwith, from mere declarations to action, encompassing the negotiation of a new constitution with sufficient regional autonomy within a federating Nigeria. This is tantamount to sweeping away the old order with its pathological ingredients of neo-colonialism, ignorance, tyranny, savagery, corruption, negative values, primordialism and conservatism. Faith in Nigeria from Nigerians is the only way patriotism, hardwork, ingenuity and healthy competition could promote public wealth rather than individual wealth. Developmental economics is driven by faith, benevolence, commitment and ingenuity, since belief in ones country grows from inside, not impacted.

Unarguably, Nigerians are not only a happy bunch, they are amiable, and relatively easy to rule, possessing high capacity propensity to absorb shock. They would easily rally to ones understanding and support when help is needed, but automatically diverge sentimentally along ethno-religious cleavages once that challenge comes. This is Nigerian's redline which invokes and exposes national patriotic identity to the dangerous tunnel vision of Stereotype.

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