

# The Quest for Restructuring and Ethnic Balancing In Nigeria: The Dynamics and Realities for True Federalism

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**Abstract:** *This paper ascertains the quest for restructuring and ethnic balancing in Nigeria: the dynamics and realities for true federalism. The structure of Nigerian federalism was born out of colonial convenience rather than necessity at the instance of the colonial masters who connived with the selfish political elites who intend to be leaders of big wide Nigeria. Though there is an assumption that the British has good intention to adopt federalism, but they left porous foundation and weak principles within the system. Despite this, Nigeria federalism has been distorted from its original practice and structure by long military incursion in politics through centralization of power. This scenario has created imbalances, enormous tensions and intensifies conflicts that reinvigorate many tribal sects to outwit the formal security apparatus in the structure of Nigeria. The yearnings and aspirations of this sect have been considered as uneven development in fair-share of the national cake; and restructuring is the only pathway to sustain peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. The concept of restructuring is designed to balance all ethnic groups to have a stake on matters concerning the economic base and other basic services leaving the centre to decide only on exclusive matters especially defence, foreign relations, immigration, national security among others. It is the opinion of this paper to investigate the dynamics for restructuring to balance all the imbalances among various ethnic groups in dispensing the national cake in Nigeria. Split-Class Marxian theory was used as the framework to analyze this scenario and proffer solutions to enhance strong federal union and enhance national development in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Ethnicity, Restructuring, Balancing, Federalism and Governance.

## Introduction

There have been observable imperfections in Nigerian federation this has triggered protests, agitations and patriotic calls for restructuring the system (Elaiwu, 2007). The structure of Nigerian federation was born out of colonial convenience rather than necessity at the instance of colonial masters who connived with the selfish Nigerian elites that wants to be leaders of wide Nigeria. Federalism is a system of government where component units of a political organization participate in sharing powers and functions in a cooperative manner; though the combined forces of ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity tend to pull them apart. Nigeria is a creation of British colony with calls for political restructuring and true federalism cannot be an exception. In an attempt to reconcile federalism in theory and practice vis-à-vis political restructuring within the landscape, neither history nor economics has given the cause of federalism in Nigeria a smooth ride (Kunle, Rotimi, Adegun, and Georges, 2004). Majekodunmi (2015) reveals that Nigeria federation lie not in the pluralities of economic and geographic regions or ethnic nationalities as claimed by Thom-otuya (2013), but in the plurality of colonial administration imposed by the British. The Britain has good intent to adopt federalism but they left a porous foundations and weak principles in the system.

According to Oguejiofor (2015), the political aspects of this menace have been asphyxiating, these weak political structures coined by the western imperialist nations received socio-political and economic functions at independence that are not developed enough to handle. The structure of the federal system of government radiate more tears than smiles aggravated by minority-majority crises, the problem of resource control, allocation and problems associated with federal character (Ebegbulem, 2011). According to Rodney (1973) on, how Europe under developed Africa'' argued that a combination of power politics and economic exploitation of Africa by Europeans led to the poor state of African political and economic development late 20th century. It is clear that the political woes that characterized Nigerian political atmosphere since independence in 1960 cannot be disassociated with the imbalances in the structure of Nigeria federation inherited from the colonial authorities. The military incursion into politics distorted the practice of decentralization for centralization.

About two decades of continued civil rule in Nigeria, politicians are yet to restructure the damage caused by military in the Nigeria federal structure. After many years of first and second amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorate in 1906 and 1914 by Lord Lugard, Nigeria has never rested from agitations by her ethnic groups. First, it was between those who referred to themselves as the majority the Hausa-Fulani's, Yoruba's and Igbo's. The relegated minority ethnic groups in North-East, North-Central and South-South started to agitate as a result of marginalization. In the words of Ekot (2010), Nigerians on 1st October, 1960 became the official rulers of Nigeria put together by the British with heaps of unresolved problems, the carry-over of these problems made Sultan Abubakar (2017) state that the recent ethnic agitation is a symptom of a rotten system. The manifestations are seeds of disunity sown in amalgamation growing every day; the sign is now on micro-loyalties rather than macro-loyalties. There have been unrest in which erstwhile neighbours are pitted against each other and those assailed are told to go home and are

expelled from specific geo-physical spaces. The assailed ethnic groups are frequently referred to as settlers by other groups who claim to be Indigenes' of particular geo-political settings (Paul, Alih and Eri, 2014). In these contestations, the same language once used to rally Nigerians of diverse origins in the colonial struggles has resurfaced.

The assumption that underlies the paper on ethnicity and quest for restructuring in Nigeria constitutes the fundamental basis for multiple identities, diversity and framework of a single, integrated political system in the country (Suberu, 2001). The level of development in the country is still very low, agitation for state creation is on the high side and religious conflicts are still common in the country (Ebun, 2014). The ethnic agitation, protest for power sharing, economic advantage and restructuring of Nigeria since the emergence of federalism in 1954 till date has assumed a contemporary issue within the governance circle and recently, the 8th Republic under Buhari administration (2015-date). Some school of thought argued that colonial masters should be blamed for this situation that created national disunity which Suberu (2001) maintains as dilemmas associated with accommodating multiple identity communities within the framework on a national political system.

The unification of Nigeria was for economic, class phenomenon and exploitative in nature and above all to ensure colonial economic policies consolidation (Anugwom, 2000; FRN, 1999; Ekot, 2010). As a result, Ozoligbo (2008) states that if the South had been left alone and vice versa, the current problem would not have arisen. The fear of domination was the causative factor that informed the refusal of the North to agree with the South to demand for political independence in 1956, due to the fear of domination especially in the area of federal appointment and revenue allocation (Wheare, 1953). The agitation assumed a centre-stage because as it is now, an ethnic group that captures state power corners all the material benefits that flow from such power (Agbese, 2001). There has been clamour for resource control, imbalance revenue allocation; cabinet formation on the way. The age long federal character principles coupled with abuse as enshrined in the constitution by present administration and other administration in appointment to key positions over alleged marginalization and neglect in some quarters in the country have reawaken the consciousness of Nigerians for urgent restructuring of Nigeria state.

## Conceptual Clarifications

### (A.) Restructuring

Restructuring can mean a whole gamut of concepts depending on the perspective from which one looks at the word. In Nigeria, the whole system has gone out of control, so restructuring here is generic in that all the basic system elements will be affected. Reforms and reorganization will be undertaken in the diverse framework of political, economic, social, technological, ecological and legal subsystems comprising the system. Nwankwo (2016), view restructuring 'as a process which is anchored on the principle of aspiring for people's needs that help them to stem the tide of restiveness in many parts of the country, it will resolve the questions of citizenship, religion, resource control and fiscal federalism. Restructuring is a term which denotes true devolution and decentralization to states which allows regional growth, development and stability.

This has become a political language subject to several political interpretations based on the interests on the subject matter. What the Biafrans understand as restructuring is different from that of Oduduwas. The former primarily hinged on self determination rights and the latter clamouring for regional states with less control at the centre (Obaze, 2015). The diverse opinions about this term have clogged the wheels of the vehicle of achieving a true federal state in Nigeria. In the true sense, Nigeria's federalism has been battered by series of coups and counter coups and this has caused myriads of political instability and thus ushered Nigerians to an era of unitarism (Bello, 2017). Restructuring means effecting changes to the current federal structure to bring it closer to what our founding leaders erected in order to address the very issues and challenges that led them to opt for a less centralized system. It means devolution of powers to the federating units with accompanying resources, and greater control of the resources in their areas. It is the reduction of powers and roles of the federal government so that it focuses only on those matters best handled by the centre such as defence, immigration, customs and excise, foreign policy, aviation as well as setting and enforcing national standards on such matters as education, health and safety (Atiku, 2017).

In the case of a nation-state, restructuring requires its citizens to take a closer look at the national edifice or better still the state of the nation with regard to how to address structural deformities (Bello, 2017). Restructuring is the process of increasing or decreasing the number of component parts that makes up a system and re-define the inter-relationship between them in a way for the entire system to perform efficiently. Restructuring, if not well planned and handled can lead to system collapse. Many thought that restructuring is creation of states or local government area, resource control, regional autonomy, and power devolution. Political restructuring is a process through which a nation-state requires its citizens to take a closer look at the national edifice or the state of the nation with regard to how to address structural deformities of a nation-state (Kunle et al, 2009). Economic restructuring is associated with post-modernity concerning flexible accumulation. The three core themes are historical, radical rupture into post-industrial economic order and priority of economic forces over socio-political forces; and structure over agency where the process is independent of human (Logan and Swanstrom, 1990). In the wake of widespread disappointment with the centralized state structure as part of the ongoing democratization process, the transfer of some power and resources from central to local level of governments has meet the desire of many Nigerians to advocate for restructuring from different groups to have a change in the affairs of governance in Nigeria (Yahaya, 2018; Ikemintang, 2017).

### **(B.) Ethnicity and Ethnic Balancing**

Ethnicity occurs primarily at the levels of various groups even though; the individuals remain central. It refers mainly to segmented human groups who engage in a particular type of social relationship. In addition to the supposition of groups, according to Osaghae (2006), ethnicity has to do with 'the employment or mobilization of ethnic identity and difference to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or cooperation.' Ethnicity is embedded with a state-of-affairs where membership of a group is the only determinant of whether someone may benefit from a particular ethnic social group or not. Bank (1996) noted that the boundary does not bound 'something' off from nothingness, but rather it distinguishes between two or more something. So, Bank opined that ethnicity involves a type of social relations in which members of different ethnic groups seek advantage by appealing to their various groups, ethnic identities or shared group characteristics. These ethnic identities or characteristics include points of personal reference such as perceptions of common descent, history, fate, and culture, which usually indicates some mix of language, physical appearance, and the ritual regulation of life, especially religion (Weber, 1978; cited in Hale, 2004).

One can describe ethnicity as a product of nationalism that is intended to create homogeneity or consciousness; race on the other hand, describes physiological and biological characteristics share by a people and usually used for categorization at a higher level than ethnicity which in addition to physical attributes combines immaterial, attitudinal aspects in describing a group (Williams, 1989 in Banks, 1996). The inability of some ethnic groups and political elites to have equal access or any access to the 'national cake' cum activities of corrupt and incompetent leaders via ethnic politics have mainly resulted in the social conflicts in Nigeria. Sometimes, social conflicts have been between ethnic groups who have hitherto, subsisted in the same political unit. An example of this is the conflict between the Ijaw-Itsekiri, and Itsekiri-Urhobo communities in Warri, Delta State and Hausa-Fulani crisis, recently in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria (Bakoji, and Onoja, 2005). The conflict in this instance is a struggle against the forcible incorporation of incompatible ethnic groups in Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on Group theory as propounded by Bentley (1908) as its framework. He observed that society consists of dynamic process (actions) rather than specific institutions or substantive contents (values). He observed that society, nation and the government is made up of groups, each group cutting across many others. These groups are in the state of perpetual interaction with each other. Bentley states that politics is a force to overcome resistance to alterations or the dispersal of one group force by another group (Bentley, 1908 cited in Varma, 1975). Bentley conceived group as a mass activity, and not merely a collection of individuals. He further argued that, group represented a pattern of process rather than a static form, and as such could emerge only when the interaction among its individual members were frequent and sufficient pattern to produce direction activity. If an individual can belong to various groups, it means that the activity of a group is more important than its structural composition. However, no one group is likely to become too dominant. If one group flex their muscles, the other group will do the same. For every action there is a reaction, power remains balanced. It also assumes that groups usually play by the 'rules of the game. Few groups rely on lying, stealing, cheating, or engaging in violence to get their way, and that group politics is usually a fair fight. People who live together never agree about everything, but if they are to continue to live together, they cannot continue to wholly disagree in their aims". The groups, as indispensable units of the Nigerian political system, devised some sort of political strategies that can help them achieve national integration. However, his interplay and group dynamism will lead to understand the peculiarities, and realities of the practice of federalism in Nigeria. This actually accentuates the suitability of group theory as the theoretical framework for this paper.

### **Protagonists and Antagonists of Restructuring for Ethnic Balancing in Nigeria**

It is obvious that the debate is largely between the southern protagonists who largely bay for restructuring and the northern antagonists who are apparently largely, on the other hand, opposed to restructuring. There is no doubt that the restructure advocates are few and localized to some sections of the country. Some of them have held public offices; others are still serving while some never held public office. There are also notorious armchair critics and non-conformists among them. Some of the advocates are fairly well off in the society. They cannot be accused of acting on selfish grounds or for material gains. But it is quite apparent that they are out to promote the main, sectional interests and agenda that could erode the pillars of national unity. Some of them promote their views with all the force at their disposal. Others threaten to unleash unimaginable calamity on the nation if their largely narrow and untenable wishes are not granted within a time, ignoring the undeniable fact that nation-building is a continuous project. There are those who joined the bandwagon in calling for restructuring without knowing the full import of what the concept and content of restructuring entails. They perceive intolerable imbalance in the federal structure, as currently constituted; imbalance in appointments and distribution of resources. They perceive the system of governance in practice as unitary, contrary to their yearnings for federalism (Elaiwu, 1998, Usman, 2017).

Ekpo (2004) observed that protagonists of resource control began to push forward the argument that Nigeria cannot be a federation when the elements of federalism are lacking, such as state police, control of natural resources by the federating units.

The semblance of a federation in Nigeria is the 36 states; otherwise the country is to all intents and purposes a unitary state. The government at the centre is stronger than the states, with the latter depending on allocations from the former for survival. The protagonists of true federalism argue that if the regions of the 1<sup>st</sup> republic had control agricultural products produced in their areas, and got 50 percent derivation from whatever accrued to the federation account as revenue, why then should the case be different when it comes to the Niger Delta region (Ndu, 2003). The people of Niger Delta find it unacceptable that the practice of resource control was jettisoned, while derivation was drastically reduced.

The answer to quest of reviewing the 1999 Constitution is as a result of the Constitution not achieving the goals and objectives marshalled out in chapter two, sections 13, 14, 15 to 24. For instance, the overt failure of government under section 14 (b) of the 1999 Constitution is responsible for the catastrophic quit order given to Ndigbo by 16 Northern Youth Groups. Their threat has not been rescinded. If implemented by 1st October, 2017 there will either be a coup or the IPOB will achieve Biafra without going to war. The issue of a coup arises when the system is not peacefully restructured before it gets out of control (FRN, 1999). When a system is not achieving the goals and objectives it is supposed to achieve, it is overhauled, examined and analyzed to identify its dysfunctional elements. This will enable the leaders to reorganize the political economic, social, technological, ecological, educational and legal sub-systems. According to Professor ABC Nwosu (former INEC National Chairman), there is too much power, responsibility, money and much waste at the centre. He asserted that the structure on ground is anti-development, unjust and unfair. Restructuring is a thorough process that allows each region to control its resources and pay royalties to the central government. This will help to stem the tide of restiveness and resolve the questions of citizenship, religion, resource control, and fiscal federalism in many parts of the country.

On the side of the antagonists, restructuring has made the print media a platform to pitch the Northerners against the Southerners, the perception is that restructuring is aimed at compromising the historical and natural advantage embedded in the region, while some see it as an attempt to divide the country in which Northern region shall be the worse for it. There are certain unproven statements and beliefs that have found a permanent residence in the heart of Nigerian adults, for example corruption cannot be eradicated, poor census figure, bribe for contract, vote buying to win elections, mediocrity for job or promotion. They paint the picture that Nigeria is an impossible country and the worst place on earth to live in. Unfortunately, youths are growing up with the same orientation and belief that if you don't know a big man somewhere such as senator or minister or political big wig, you cannot secure employment, win a contract in a ministry or get admission into a tertiary institution. Also, if you don't join the corruption train, you can never be rich, or make it. There is need to re-orientate the people's mind-sets. No amount of political or economic restructuring can bring any meaningful progress unless individuals first restructure and re-orientate their mind-sets, change their value system and develop sound character. The younger generations know that religion is not against scientific education or skills acquisition. If the tempo is sustained and other emirs join their crusade, the north in ten years may close the educational gap and become the richest part of Nigeria. This crusade needs to be replicated in every part of Nigeria to implement a positive change in the mind-set of Nigerians. This is the key to future foundation on which other forms of restructuring can be built (Sagay, 2004).

### **Historical Perspective Associated with Political Restructuring for Ethnic Balancing in Nigeria**

In other to discuss the challenges associated with political restructuring in Nigeria, it will be necessary to look at Nigeria political structure from a historical perspective. For purpose of convenience, this section looked at the 1966 political structure in Nigeria and the challenges associated with it that made restructuring imperative. In the other section, structure is defined in terms of two principal elements namely: the delineation of individual parts and the nature and limits of their interconnectivity. One can therefore say that the "structure" of Nigeria, in 1966 was as follows (Akinola, 2011):

- a) A country made up of four regions. One of them, the North, was a virtual monolith, bigger, geographically, than the other three combined and larger in terms of population, resources and income than any other region.
- b) A legal system which conferred all residual legislative powers on the regions, subject only to the paramount to the Federal Law in case of a conflict of interest with regional law.

Federal government had exclusive competence in a very restricted list of subjects of a fiscal or semi-technical nature. The only politically sensitive areas among these were defense, emergency powers over regions and foreign relations. All other areas were either exclusively regional, or on the Concurrent list. The purpose of this paper is to review the strengths and weaknesses of this "structure", as a guide to the discussion of the challenges associated with restructuring the Federation. To facilitate analysis, it is broken into one "objective" and "subjective" variables. The first deals with material issues removed from secondary contradictions. The second deals with the complex interplay of ethnic and religious identities. It is worthy to note that one of the major strengths of the structure of Nigeria in 1966 was made up of economically viable and self-sufficient Federating units. It is indeed true, as later developments showed that each unit could even be broken into sub-units and with each remaining viable. This process which should have stopped with the creation of 12 States by Gowon, continued in a ridiculous fashion until we find ourselves today with 36 glorified latifundia called states and a Federal Capital Territory (Sanusi, 2015). Each state has a bloated civil service, a governor and his deputy, commissioners, state assembly, judiciary among others; such total revenue is insufficient



for prompt payment of salaries and the states have to run to the federal government or to banks for assistance or loans. The sine qua non for any viable restructuring is a viable structure which by definition its constituent parts are themselves viable.

A second objective factor in the structure of the first republic which is, this time, a draw-back, was the lack of equity in the delineation of its constituent parts. The North was too large compared to the other regions and it was, in reality as well as perception, preponderant and overbearing. The refusal of Ahmadu Bello refusal to go down to Lagos and his decision to send Tafawa Balewa to be Prime Minister, the federal government itself seemed subject to dictation from Ahmadu Bello in Kaduna. Northern politicians staunchly deny that the Sardauna controlled Federal Policy from his Northern base. It is however, difficult to believe this fully, especially in view of certain instances of bias. As an example, Mid-Western Region was carved out of both the Western and Eastern regions in 1965 ostensibly to fulfil the desire of the minorities for self government and free them from marginalization from the dominant Yoruba and Igbo. However, despite the very large area covered by the North and in spite of tensions and perennial crises led by the United Middle-Belt Congress and the Borno Youth Movement, neither the middle belt nor old Bornu was able to obtain autonomy from subjugation to the old Sokoto Caliphate. The Tiv riots were brutally suppressed and Sardauna, officially a leader of the whole North, carried on for all intents and purposes as the inheritor of the mantle of Uthman Dan Fodio with little regard for the sensitivities of citizens of those areas like Bornu and to a larger extent, the Middle Belt which were never conquered by his ancestors and their Fulani protégées. The West and East can therefore be forgiven for taking all arguments proffered for creation of the Mid-West with a pinch of salt given that the same objective conditions obtained in the North, and no similar action was taken (Sanusi, 2015). The lesson in all this is that the federating units must be such as not to give any one unit or group of units, dominance over others. It is the researchers' opinion that this condition can only be fulfilled with a strong federal government. In a "loose" federation, with a weak centre, the various units forming a historical block will just as soon conglomerate into something similar to what obtained in 1966 and negate the very purpose of their delineation. The researchers therefore note from the discussion above the following points:

- 1) The first point of departure in restructuring Nigeria is the reconsolidation of its balkanized constituent parts into individual entities that are economically viable and amenable to smooth administration. Only such units would be able to carry out functions assigned to them.
- 2) That these entities must be balanced and none of them should be able to dominate or destabilize others, or make possible the unjust oppression of ethnic and religious minorities.

This condition is best fulfilled where the monopoly of instruments of repression is in the hands of a broad based and representative federal government. This, in turn, immediately leads to a number of other issues such as the creation of states based primarily on the desire to achieve ethnic or religious homogeneity which only serves to provide a platform for effective domination of ethnic and religious minorities by more populous groups. There is no doubt that, especially with large groups, some states will turn out to be ethnically or religiously homogeneous such as Yoruba in the South-West, Muslim in the far North, Igbo in the South-East, Christian in the South-South. It has been observed that the relations between various ethnic and religious groups contributed, as much as (if not more than) objective defects to the collapse of the First Republic. In 1999, the country is faced with the same generic problems although they clearly vary in concrete and specific historical form. These problems, which the nation has to address as an integral part of any restructuring, are the subject of the next subsection. The former civilian governor of Kaduna State, Alhaji Balarabe Musa, in an interview declared that the Northern bourgeoisie and the Yoruba bourgeoisie were Nigeria's principal problem. Of the two, Yoruba bourgeoisie is even greater problem because of their tribalism and selfishness which formed the basis for the analysis of subjective factors.

The scholars begin by stating that the bane of the Nigerian elite can be condensed into three elements that are: ethnic chauvinism and religious intolerance; selfishness and the inordinate desire for dominating others, and short-sightedness. In view of the above, the researchers contend that for any national conference in Nigeria on federal structure to be successful, certain issues and the manner in which they are handled will to a large extent determine progress made towards the ideal political structure. These issues, inter alia are the Sharia and religious intolerance in the North; the Yoruba elite and area-boy politics; Igbo marginalization and the responsible limits of retribution; and the Niger-Delta and the need for justice. These issues have made past and present political restructuring a difficult task in Nigeria. If these issues are not addressed through a political restructuring that does not emphasize the creation of more states or regional governments like before, the Nigeria state is on its way to collapse. Former Vice President, Atiku in recent public speech has recently posited that the agitations by many right-thinking Nigerians call for a restructuring and renewal of the federation to make it less centralized, less suffocating and less dictatorial in the affairs of the country's constituent units and localities. This should not be mistaken for a call for creation of more states but to make the system less centralized.

### **The Imbalances in the Structure of Nigeria Federation**

The clamour for restructuring had been from individuals and groups from the Southern part of Nigeria, especially South-South and South-East geo-political zones. Those of them from the North probably think that the agitation is because the South controls the major resources that constitute the bulk of Nigeria's wealth. There is a wide spectrum of agitators both for and against,

agitators from the South are unanimously in support of restructuring while those from the North have divergent views (Obaze, 2015). Some of the imbalances in the structure of the inherited federalism as well as leadership are as follows:

**1.) High Cost of Governance:** The structure of the Nigeria federalism has made cost of governance exorbitant. It makes provision for 36 states, Federal Capital Territory with the near status of a state and 774 local governments. This multiplicity and wasteful spending is also seen in the national assembly of 360 House of Rep members and 109 senators totalling 469 members doing the job a 10-man committee can conveniently handle. Such a squander is replicated at the state and local government levels. Records show that as high as about 25% of Nigerian annual budget is spent on these prodigal elements. In a lecture at University of Benin, the then governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) alleged that ‘the situation whereby 25% of the country’s revenue spending yearly goes to the national assembly is unhealthy for the country and its economy (Ajani, 2010). Indeed, the 2016 budget is not different from this tradition, where the National Assembly's N115 billion budget is almost the same as the capital expenditure allocations for Agriculture (N47 billion), Education (N37 billion), and Health (N35 billion) put together. This avoidable spending of national resources calls for a need to restructure the pattern and form of the nation governance. The much needed development and progress in Nigeria is the opportunity cost for the extraneous spending of the government (Ogunyemi, 2016).

**2.) Resource Control:** This is the process of allocating resources in a controlled fashion in an ideal federalism. In Nigeria, resource control and revenue allocation among federating units experience a lot of political interferences from central government which cannot guarantee the operation of state as an autonomous entity. It is provocative that states where resources are found in abundant are the least developed in Nigeria federalism. Ebegbulem (2011) reported that the quasi model of Nigeria federalism has not been able to address the socio-economic and developmental needs of the people of Niger-Delta, in spite of their unquantifiable contribution towards the development of the entire nation. The wealth of the nation is assumed by many to be generated from a given region but used in the development of another. This situation has generated strife among federating units hence, impeding the growth of democracy and ideal federalism in Nigeria.

**3.) Unhealthy Competition:** Federalism is a feature of integrating the people in a society who are diverse ethnically, culturally, geographically and even religiously. It is not an avenue for competition as experienced in Nigeria. Majekodunmi (2015) lamented that in Nigeria, there are instances where governments have openly violated this principle of federalism creating strife among federating units. In any true federalism, rather than horizontal and vertical competition, powers are shared among and between the federating units and the central government respectively in such a way that each government has its own apparatus for the conduct of its own affairs. This unhealthy competition can manifest itself in the operation of federal character. Inappropriate application of federal character as exercised in Nigeria creates mediocrity, inequality, corruption, and lack of transparency and unhealthy competition. The able hands are often compromised for mediocre.

**4.) Ethnic, Religious and Regional Conflicts:** Federalism creates harmony among heterogeneous socio-political and ethnic divides, the Nigerian case is characterized by politics of contest among federating regions for positions, power and resource control. According to Eresia-Eke and Eberiyi (2010), a situation of master-servant or graduated citizenship is a negation of true federalism because federalism does not mean rivalry or competition rather grows under a system of mutuality and interdependence. How can democracy thrive in an atmosphere of suspicion and fear of hegemony and domination of minority groups by majority groups? The so-called federating units are mere entities that have never fused and cannot merge into one federation but have remained an amalgamation of distinct and antagonistic entities.

**5.) Structurally Imbalanced and Morbid Federation:** Nigeria as presently constituted does not accommodate differing interests, circumstances and diversities of the constituent groups. This has made effort in securing peace and stability of the country, and its survival against the forces of division and conflict in a diverse and heterogeneous society like Nigeria to remain elusive. In terms of land mass, the Northern Region then had 71 percent, Western Region 8.5 percent, Eastern Region 8.3 percent and the Mid-Western Region 4.6 percent (Egwaikhide, and Suberu, (2004). The table below captures the current structural coloration of Nigeria:

**Table 1: The Structure of Nigeria’s Present Political Economy North and South**

<b>Number of States</b>	<b>36</b>
North East	6
North West	7
North Central	6
<b>Total No of States in North</b>	<b>19</b>
South East	5
South South	6
South West	7
<b>Total No of States in South</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>No of Local Government in Nigeria</b>	<b>774</b>
Total No of House of Rep. in the North	191

North East	48
North West	92
North Central	49
Total No of House of Rep. in the South	169
South East	43
South South	55
South West	71
Total No of Senators in the North	57
Total No of Senators in the South	51
Federal Allocations	56%
States	57%
Local Governments	55%
<b>Federal Allocation</b>	44%
<b>States</b>	43%
<b>Local Government</b>	45%
<b>Contribution to Major Revenue Sources</b>	14%
<b>Oil and Gas</b>	0.0%
<b>Value Added Tax</b>	28%
<b>Contribution to Major Revenue Sources</b>	86%
<b>Oil and Gas</b>	100%
<b>Value Added Tax</b>	72%
<b>FCT Contribution</b>	20% Inclusive

**Source:** Federal Ministry of Finance, Abuja 2010.

The above analysis shows that there is political and economic imbalance, this structural imbalance in the political ecology of Nigeria cannot guarantee peace, stability, progress and economic development. There are obvious inequalities in the number of states, local governments, Senators, House of Representatives and federally allocated revenues. This was skewed to favour the Northern block; but the Southern block contributes 86 percent of the revenues used in running the present political architecture. For instance, North receives an average of 56 percent of federally allocated revenues against 44 percent receipts for the South which contributes an average of 86 percent of the revenues. The reasons for the continued militancy and other regional agitations from the South is not far fetch as the region believes that they are massively short-changed by the current structure of Nigeria and this has decelerated national development. The inequality between the North and South has made it impossible for the South to control political power at the centre, given the ethno-regional politics of the country, without power concession from the North. It is common that no one becomes the President of Nigeria without the support and blessings of the Caliphate. These inequalities being promoted by current political and economic structure is antithetic to national development.

**6.) Feeding Bottle Federalism:** A situation where the existential of the federating states and federal government is dependent on sharing oil rent monthly is far from being an ideal situation that stimulates economic growth as well as sustainable development. Babalola (2017), quote that unrepentant supporter and crusader for restructuring of the country argue that what Nigeria has as federal level is indeed a unitary government where states only go for begging of money at the end of every month and no development of any kind is taking place. Governance in Nigeria has been turned into beggarly affair where all states depend on federal allocation for survival. This rent seeking tendencies have led to states jettisoning all forms of viable revenue generation in wait for free federal allocations, under the Joint Account Allocation Committee (JAAC).

**7.) Weak Institutions and Systemic Corruption:** these have been institutionalized, accepted and accommodated as a norm in Nigeria. According to Okowa (1994), Nigerians are so dishonest, lazy and weak, people allowed dishonesty to grow deep that most people are not ready to work, everyone wants to get rich; systemic corruption defines a situation in which corruption has been institutionalized to a level of structural parameter. The nature of institutionalized corruption and dishonesty is evident across every breadth of Nigeria; be it in business activities, religion, politics, public and private sectors and even personal relationships. An opportunity to serve in public office in Nigeria makes one to become super-rich through selfish accumulation of wealth and brazen embezzlement. The entire citizenry no longer frowns at looters and dishonest people rather they are being celebrated by all members of the society including the religious bodies. According to Okowa (1994) and Ndiyo (2008), corruption is the major obstacle to Nigeria's development, this has deformed every aspect of human existence; the socio-economic losses cannot be quantified. Survey conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics between June 2015 and May 2016, revealed that Nigerians paid

about N400 billion or \$4.6 billion as bribes in 2016 to public officials. The survey evaluates the integrity of public services in Nigeria, its deformities have inadvertently entrenched distorted political economy a (NBS, 2017).

The federal structure of Nigeria is believed to be a bad marriage that all dislike but dare not leave, and that there are possibilities that could disrupt the precarious equilibrium in Abuja (Ogbe, 2011). In its structural context, Nigeria's federalism may be likened to a biological cell capable of dividing and reproducing itself which has continued to witness continuous splitting of units (Dent, 1995). In 1954, it began as a federation of three regions but by 1964, it became four with the creation of mid western region from the then western region. By 1967, the federal structure was subdivided into 12 states while in 1976 it was split into 19 states. By 1989, it became a federation of 21 states, to increase 30 by 1991 and 1996 it became a federation of 36 states. The creation of more states has always been accompanied by the creation of more local government areas. From 301 in 1976, the country boasts of 774 local councils. Nigeria's federal structure is predicated on three-tier administrative structure namely federal, state and local levels. It is not a misnomer to have a federation, more than two tiers of government to cope with the diversities; structural division has not produced satisfactory component units. This is so because every attempt at state and local level creation will increase agitations (Muhammad, 2007).

Similarly, power distribution is a volatile issue which if not properly handled could lead to various forms of crises. Nigeria has not been forthright applying this principle to the latter and the result of this has heighten ethnic tension, mutual mistrust among ethnic groups, minority problem, and clamour to answer the national call (Uhunmwangho and Ekpu, 2011). According to Ojo (1989), due to unequal sharing of power, Nigeria is transformed from a political community to an administered state. The political community is characterized by consociational values, while an administered state is absolute subjugation to centralized authority where there is no regard for consociational political relationship. Every level in federal arrangement derives its powers from the constitution and these powers are justifiable when any level can seek redress against an infringement of these constitutionally stated rights and authority. In Nigeria, the powers and functions of each level of government are spelt out in 2<sup>nd</sup> schedule of the 1999 amended Constitution. The legislative lists are exclusive legislative and concurrent legislative lists. The former is subject in whom the federal can administer laws, while the latter deals with matters over which the federal and state governments have legislative powers (Ola, 1995).

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Nigerian federation is a marriage of over 400 ethnic nationalities whose consents were not sought in its formation. This fundamental flaw is further deepened by the fact that these ethnic groups have very striking differences ranging from language, population, level of education and geographical terrain which was not factored into the crafting of the Nigerian State. Expectedly, the politics of Nigerian State continues to be rudely punctuated by very disturbing ethnic and ethnic related crises that threaten its continued existence as a nation. Despite the strains and stress which Nigeria's federalism system suffer, since the intervention of military rule after the independence eroded our constitutional basis of federalism, but the major point of consensus among the political elites and view of many citizens in operating the principles of federalism as a turning point that will keep Nigeria together despite our difference that manifested in different part of the country as a threats to integration as a case in past civil war between 1967-1970, still current agitation for Biafra State from South-East, Boko Haram attacks since 2009 and farmers-herdsmen conflict are issues of security threat calling for caution for restructuring of Nigeria as one nation. Despite the complex nature of Nigerian society, people with different values, culture and ethnic identities need to live without difference but agree to live as one nation, The type of restructuring Nigeria needs is regionalism that will address the complex, complicated and hydra-headed challenges that are bedevilling various component states to have a weak centre with emphasis on social inclusion and national development. In other to combat these challenges, we, recommend that, Nigerians should aim at operating a true federalism, cultivate a suitable political culture, out-grow ethnic rancour and stop blaming ethnicity for any social policy that affects a group unintentionally.

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