

NOT VIABLE, YET DESIRABLE? THE POLITICS OF STATE CREATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria has had both civilian and military administrations with abundant human and material resources. However, the presence of the aforementioned has not transformed the quality of life of her citizens. Nigeria is still being plagued with the crisis of insecurity, unemployment, energy challenges, and economic underdevelopment etc., several efforts to remedy the crisis of poor governance is the clamour or agitation for state fragmentation which has become unresolved and unabated. Major actors in the clamour opined that restructured Nigeria is a worthy and desirable venture for statecraft which is capable of unleashing an enabling environment for the sub-national governments to thrive in the delivery of effective governance. This paper made use of secondary data to explore the nature and context of the subject matter. While the state-centred thesis and the theories of cooperative federalism were deployed to navigate the topic. The research avers the character of the political elites, the minority question, and the fiscal posture of the existing state to issue the proponents of state fragmentation need to address. Moreover, the following recommendations were made to allay the endless clamour for restructuring; the clamour for restructuring should start with the ethical reorientation of the drivers of the machinery of government to see public offices as an avenue to render selfless service and contribute their quota to national development. Moreover, efforts should be geared towards the institutional restructuring of the agencies saddled with the responsibility of combating corruption without let or hindrances. The constitutional instruments for inter-group relations that promote the accommodation of conflicting interests and inclusivity should be embraced. The Nigerian federation should emphasize revenue generation rather than revenue sharing through the review of the revenue sharing formula that favours derivation. This will strengthen the financial capability of the state governments to be in a better standing to discharge their governance responsibilities to their constituents.

Keywords: Political Restructuring, State Fragmentation, State Viability

INTRODUCTION

The structure of the Nigerian federation has been seen to be overly concentrated at the centre (Osaghae, 2015). In addition to the centralization is the posture of administrative

and financial subordination that has made the survival, existence and sustenance of the component units at the mercy of the centre. The abused federal structure whereby each region of the country is waiting for its turn to have access to the national cake served as a harbinger for conflicts and disunity in a nation with wide fault lines and divisions along numerous identities. Those groups who are unable to have access to the opportunities and benefits at the centre, particularly through the acquisition of political power as well as a political environment dominated by a zero-sum game will become frustrated while some will use violence as an instrument of negotiating an existence in a faulty structure that is built on marginalization (Okumu and Ikelegbe, 2010).

The alleged marginalization of a segment within a state has made the agitation for reconfiguration or restructuring of the federation to attract a large follower over a separate component unit. One of the variants of restructuring is the clamour and agitations for state creation to tinker with the existing structure to achieve a level of decentralization. Worthy of note is previous efforts to reconfigure the federation which include constitutional conferences, constitutional amendments, state/ local government creation, forceful regime change and even civil war. The aforementioned efforts have failed to bring to rest the agitations for the creation of states or reconfiguration of the federal structure in Nigeria (Adeyemi, 2013).

The National Conference of 2014 recommended the creation of 18 additional states in Nigeria. The proposal has led to different reactions and debates about its workability. According to an Afenifere chieftain state fragmentation or political restructuring has become the minimum condition to preserve the unity of Nigeria which will ultimately lead to parity in the number of states in the six geographical zones in Nigeria (Ohwvoriole, 2017). The debates appear to be a move to correct the structural deformities inhibiting effective governance which will lead to faster national development (Oderemi, 2017; Omojuwa, 2017).

These debates do not seem to be taking state viability into consideration whose sustenance is skewed to the centre. It is obvious to state fragmentation proposal will increase the architecture of governance at the federating level. The number of states will be 54 with its inherent bureaucratic set-up. In addition, the cost of running the national assembly will increase because of the constitutional requirement of three senatorial seats from each state of the federation. The present 109 membership size will increase to 163 leading to the further degradation of the meagre resources for developmental projects to overhead expenditure thereby stifling the aspiration for effective governance.

This seminar paper examines the debates about state fragmentation in Nigeria taking

into account the viability of the states. The research is subdivided into five sections. The first section deals with the introduction and also theoretical discourse. Section two unveils the overview of the political restructuring. The third section dwells on the current agitations for political reorganization and its variants. Similarly, Section four examined fragmentation in the context of state un-viability by x-raying the pitfalls of why restructuring is not yet a worthy venture for statecraft in Nigeria. The final section examines the concluding thoughts and is followed by some recommendations espoused.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research is anchored on the State Centered Thesis; The adherents of this school argue that structural components of the state determine the direction, and shape the interest and political identities while the state actors matter more than the class or interest groups in determining political outcomes Amenta, (2005). Orloff and Skocpol, (1984:730-731) argue that “social scientists need to bring the state back into their explanations of social change and policy developments. States are first and foremost sets of coercive, fiscal, judicial, and administrative organizations claiming sovereignty over territory and people.

According to this conception, states primacy affects politics in two major ways. First, states are seen as sites of independent official action which cannot be reduced to the demands of any group. Secondly, bureaucratic or administrative structures have a major influence on group politics within the state. This theory gained currency after the Second World War which placed the state on the independent variable side of causal arguments with the central view that state structures and actors as wielding commanding heights over politics and the state (Skocpol, 1979; Tilly, 1975; Huntington, 1968; Lipset, 1963).

The State Centered Thesis also assumes that the use in which the state is put into with character of domination, exploitation, subordination, exclusion, and marginalization results in reactive desperation by the citizens. Moreover, the lack of avenues of civil and peaceful engagement by marginalized groups has made the agitations for restructuring of the federation to attract large followers. This theory places the clamour for restructuring of political reconfiguration of the state in the nature, character and behaviour of the state. The nature is large, over-bloated with the character of repression, authoritarianism and violence (Okumu and Ikelegbe, 2010).

Another useful theoretical strand to explicate the clamour for restructuring in Nigeria is Cooperative Federalism: This concept is one of the variants of federalism in which each level of government operates partly dependent and not wholly dependent on the other which is deployed to utilize the enormous benefits inherent in federalism. This system

makes each level of government interdependent. This practice is conducted to the operation of federal principles amongst the levels of government.

The governmental system under this arrangement is seen as related parts of a unified government deepened by cooperation, and shared function rather than by conflict and unhealthy competition. Cooperative federalism gained currency according to Nicholas (1995:215-217) during “the 1930s and the 1950s to function as a team to confront the common problems of depression, world war II etc.... which made federalism to continuously evolve from layer-cake to marble-cake federalism and increasingly difficult to separate the government activities of localities, states, and nations”.

According to Shafridz (1988), the marble cake federation stresses the cooperative relations among the levels of government in contrast to the more traditional view of layer cake federalism which holds that the three levels of government are almost separate. Cooperative federalism assumes that the national state and local government are interacting elements, jointly working to solve common problems (Shafridz,1988).

Morison (1968) identified five types of cooperative federalism cited in Omotosho (2010) which includes: (a) Horizontal Cooperative Federalism: This involves the relationship between the government of the same level such as inter-state cooperation which does not concern the central government. (b) Vertical Upward Cooperative Federalism: This refers to the relationship that exists between the state and the federal government. The state governments enjoy the leverage in the articulation of national policy just like the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme (c) Vertical Downward Cooperative Federalism: This involves the relationship between the state and the federal government in which the state government carry out the national laws, policies, rules and regulations. (d) Financial Cooperative Federalism: Involves the distribution of financial resources to meet common needs like the federal government's financial assistance to the state. (e) Partnership Cooperative Federalism: This involves the relationship which allows for common state institutions to be created that encourages partnership between the two levels of administration.

The following are merits of cooperative federalism according to Walts, (2006) (a) Coordinating federal and Component unit policies in areas with shared jurisdiction (b) improves the information base available to all governments resulting in better decision-making and reconciling policy differences. (c) It leads to the emergence of coordinated public sectors at all levels with a defined economic management approach. (d) It helps to achieve federal objectives at the constituent's level. (e) Cooperative federation helps to accommodate different opinions, and views in policy capacity, financial resources and historical conditions.

The lofty ideals of cooperative federalism are targeted at promoting good governance by encouraging joint development efforts amongst the levels of government appear to have bastardized political architecture in Nigeria. Its practice has made the constituent components to be wholly dependent on the centre while the local government level saddled with the delivery of services to the local populace has been reduced to the mere administrative outpost of the state government. This contributes to weakening the capacity to perform statutory functions. Moreover, the failure of the drivers of the system to develop tools or mechanisms that will enable policy innovations leading to good governance and democratic accountability of each level of government to its constituents has bred frustration and anger. The culture of blame game or shifting responsibility to another level of government in the delivery of public service to the masses, and the poor level of governance have acted as some of the major triggers for the call for restructuring in Nigeria.

Overview of Political Restructuring:

One of the unresolved problems that are confronting the Nigerian state is the continued clamour and agitations for a political reorganization of its governance architecture. Even though the country has been restructured several times, agitation for the reconfiguration has persisted and intensified up to date (Adeyemi 2013; Osaghae, 2004).

In 1900 Britain established political control over three separate territories in Nigeria: the Lagos colony, the protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria. The Lagos colony was merged with the protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1906. The amalgamation of the two protectorates was proclaimed in 1914. Richard's Constitution of 1946 led to the creation of three regions such as Eastern, Northern and Western as well as Regional Houses of Assembly (Oshintokun, 1979).

The prevailing character of the political contest was that the majority ethnic groups in each region used their majority advantage to gain power while the minorities unable to gain power and share in the benefits of office were frustrated hence the agitation for state creation (Lloyd, 1970). These circumstances led to the inauguration of the Willink Commission in 1957 to recommend ways of allaying minority fears. The commissions' basic "recommendation was that some fundamental human rights provisions in the proposed independence constitution be reinforced" (Alapiki, 2005:54).

In 1963, luck smiled on the minority groups in the then-Western region with the creation of the Mid-Western region after the political crises of 1961-1962 to make the regions in Nigeria four (Lloyd, 1970). It has been argued that the fragmentation was part of the Federal coalition parties such as the NPC and the NCNC to destroy the main Federal

opposition party, the AG, while at the same time resisting the Statehood aspirations of the minorities in their controlled regions (Vande 2012; Nwosu 1995)

The threat of Eastern secession led to the fundamental reorganization of the federation. The country was divided into twelve states by Gowon in 1967. In creating the twelve-state structure, a conscious effort was made to "balance" the North and the South, giving each region six states: six in the north and six in the south. The Mid-West remained as a unit, the Western region was divided into two states and the Eastern into three. This was a decision made and implemented in haste, involving many compromises.

Five major principles were crafted in the creation of twelve states. First, No one state should be in a position to dominate or control the central government. Second, Each state should form one compact geographical area. Thirdly, Administrative convenience should take into account the history and wishes of the people. Fourthly, each state should be in a position to discharge effectively the functions allocated to regional governments. Finally, The new states should be created simultaneously (Alapiki, 2005; Smith, 1981).

After the 1967 exercise, subsequent demands for the creation of new states were no longer the exclusive preserve of minority ethnic groups. The struggle for more access and control over state resources by various factions of the power elite assumed greater saliency. In 1970, for example, a decree by the military government modified the existing federal revenue allocation formula. The new formula for dividing the Distributable Pool Account (DPA) resources among the constituent states allocated 50 per cent equally among the states and 50 per cent proportionally to their populations. This benefited those regions that had been split into most states (Alapiki, 2005).

The military regime could not resist these pressures to reduce minority dissent and end the uncertainties left by the 1967 changes. It, therefore, set up a small panel under the chairmanship of a Supreme Court judge in 1975 to consider whether new states were necessary for a 'balanced' federation with specific terms of reference to (1) Advise on the delimitation of such states; (2) Advise on the economic viability of the proposed states; (3) Advise on the location of administrative capitals of the proposed states; and, (4) To receive and examine written representations from individuals, groups, organizations or associations who may have views on the desirability or otherwise of creating states in particular areas. The panel's recommendations led to further reorganization of the structure of the Nigerian federation into 19 states (Adeyemi, 2013).

The Babangida's response to the agitations for more states creation set up Political

Bureau which was presented with a different proposal on how additional states could be created in the country. The Bureau in its report recommended six additional states in the interest of fair play and justice. On September 23, 1987, General Ibrahim Babangida announced the creation of two more states, Katsina and Akwa-Ibom making it twenty-one (21) states with a note that it will not respond to the agitations of state creation again (Adeyemi, 2013). However, in August 1991, the regime created nine new States to bring the number of States to thirty (30) following the demand by the Constituent Assembly for the creation of new States (Suberu, 1995).

On December 13, 1995, General Abacha inaugurated Chief Arthur Mbanefo's committee on the creation of state and local government following a renewed agitation for the creation of states (Ojo and Adebayo, 2008). On the occasion of the Country's 36th Independence Anniversary on 1st October 1996, General Abacha announced the creation of six new States. The new States were spread equally across the six geo-political zones in Nigeria which brought the number of federating units to thirty-six (36) States (Suberu, 1998; Adeyemi, 2013).

Current Agitations for Political Re-organization:

The essence of government is to provide the enabling environment for its citizenry to strive towards the attainment of life's basic goals to enhance their well-being. Nigeria has had both military and civilian regimes to provide effective governance for its citizens but the country is still plagued by the challenges of insecurity, economic decay and lack of good governance.

Several state actors, public affairs analysts and academia have attributed the challenges of effective governance to the governance architecture inherent in Nigeria federation which provides structural impediments to good governance which Atiku refers to as "structural constraints imposed by constitutions" to Akinrinade's "over-centralization" of governance structure while Omojuwa calls it "Nigeria's structural set-up " for Adeniji "current unitary system" for Yaqub "Structural deformities of the Nigerian state" which has inhibited efforts of successive administration to provide effective governance to Nigerian (Omojuwa,2017; Akinkuotu and Adetayo, 2017; Yaqub, 2017:7; Oderemi, 2017; Adeniji, 2017)

Efforts to find a solution to the challenges of governance architecture have led to the clamour and agitations for restructuring of Nigeria. According to Anyaoku, one of the proponents of restructuring "Our history and continuing underperformance in virtually all aspects of our national life should persuade all truly patriotic citizens that the restructuring that I and many others are advocating will usher in greater political stability,

It will also at the same time bring faster national economic development by unleashing our people's creative capacity as they operate in more viable and healthily competitive federating units" (Oladimeji, 2017:13).

According to Yaqub, Restructuring means in the case of a nation-state, requires its citizens to take a closer look at the national edifice or, better still, the state of the nation about how to address structural deformities to make it less centralized, less suffocating and less dictatorial in the affairs of our country's constituent units and logistics. (Yaqub, 2017).

Central to those agitating for restructuring according to Nwosu is that the "Federal government has too much power, too much responsibility, too much money, much to waste..."(Nwosu, 2016:32). Nigerian Federation needs restructuring to make it less centralized, less suffocating and less dictatorial in the affairs of our country's constituent units and logistics (Yaqub, 2017. Worthy of note is the weak nature of the federating unit which is sustained by borrowings, federal interventions, etc are failing or have already failed to meet the basic, legitimate aspirations or expectations of their citizens (NEITI,2017; Pate,2017; Akowe, 2017).

The dominant views inherent from the contents analysis of the positions of the agitators for restructuring can be classified into the following headings; Advocates for Six Regions and devolution of power, Advocates for the retention of the present structure and those advocating for Self-determination and secession.

Advocates for Six Regions and devolution of power:

The advocates of restructuring are harping on the "possibility of using the existing six geopolitical zones as federating units" (Oyegbade, 2017). To Nwankwo restructuring is the reinvention of the 1963 constitution that will make provisions for six geo-political zones as "federating units and devolving considerable powers to the regions that will divest the central government of certain powers and limiting its area of influence to such issues as fiscal policies, military defence, foreign policy, immigration and national elections"(Nwankwo, 2016).

One time governor of old Kaduna state Balarabe Musa made it clear that the present 36 states are not viable and that the governance structure of six regions (the North-west, North-east, North-central, South-west, South-south and South-east) will provide effective governance for Nigeria (Ebije, 2017).

According to Akinrinade an Afenifere Chieftain fiscal federalism will replicate the governance principle of the first republic in Nigeria which gave prominence to the

principle of derivation that made the regions retain up to 50% of the revenue generated within their spheres of influence (Oderemi, 2017). The "practice of the principle of derivation did enable each region to embark on competitive development projects that led to the generation of more wealth that, in turn, conducted to more revenue accruing to the region" (Yaqub, 2017:8).

Advocates for the Retention of Present Structure:

The advocates for the retention of the present structure according to Anthony Sani and Tanko Yakasai quoted in Yaqub (2017) made it seem arguments for restructuring are targeted at the Northern Part of Nigeria, for Anthony Sani "the North is currently opposed to the restructuring of Nigeria precisely because there is nothing to restructure...those who hanker for 'true federalism' to enable each constituent unit to develop at its own pace are unwittingly advocating that Nigerians should live as if they are in different countries, where some citizens would live in a comfort zone, while others would live on the fringe. Such a split would be a harbinger for split". While for Tanko Yakasai most agitators for:

...restructuring in Nigeria today is doing so with some kind of hate in their minds. The thing that is working in their minds is to find a way of denying states from the North [from] getting the kind of shares they are getting from the federation account. Some of the factors the government is [sic.]using to distribute the revenue are God-made. For instance, when they talk of population, the Nigerian people were not created by the Nigerian government. It is God who created the Nigerian people and concentrated some of them in a particular area, which is the North and which always has more than 55 per cent of the total population of Nigeria. Now, if you go with the other factor, that is landmass, the North has two third [sic.] of the total landmass of Nigeria. You cannot deny a Northerner those advantages given to him by God simply because he gets some revenue based on those creations. [sic.]That talking about restructuring is hiding their real intent under the slogan. They are yet to explain what this restructuring means. They are only shouting and fighting restructuring because of the share of the revenue the North is getting" (Yaqub, 2017:10).

Also, in the vanguard for the retention of the present political architecture is the Northern Delegates Forum (NDF)that where members of the 2014 National Conference vowed to resist any move to restructure Nigeria which they see as "contrary to the existing constitutional order" (Ohwovorirole, 2017:49).

However, Afenifere Leader Yinka Odumakin in Southwest Nigeria stated that the position of the northern leaders, opposing the restructuring of the country, “is self-serving... We agreed on all those issues based on consensus.....because they are in charge-they got the power back-all that is wrong with Nigeria and should be overlooked. This shows their opportunism in them.... All we are saying is that we must restructure this country, and that is the minimum condition to preserve this country because Nigeria is suffering” (Ohwovoriole, 2017:50).

Oodua People’s Congress (OPC) National Coordinator, Otunba Gani Adams equally reacted thus:

We view the recent back out of some Northern elders on the resolution for regionalisation of the country as a panacea for a stronger Nigeria as a gross display of irresponsibility, reckless approach to sensitive matter bothering on national security cum unity and an affront on the collective psyche of Nigerians. The agreement on the regionalisation of the country after failed attempts to unite the country in the past was a collective one at a rare seating where every ethnic nationality that makes up the country had the rare chance to sit together to discuss the future of the country. To now make a detour at this time when the country is almost approaching a brick wall on the path of national cohesion is simply unpatriotic. We are not unaware of the desperate moves going on underground by a cabal that has all the while constituted the tail-wagging dog of unity in Nigeria, that is so comfortable with the lingering lopsided presidential system that is deliberately skewed to favour indolence and evil manipulations that allows a few to benefit at the expense of others. Let it be known to those supporting the continuation of the current locust regime that the only alternative to the regionalisation of Nigeria is self-determination. Nigeria started with a system that allowed each region to develop at its own pace and the Yoruba benefitted a lot from the system which promoted hard work and rapid development across the country. We built our nation to be the pride of the world under that system and as such tipped it as the minimum condition for our unity in diversity as a country (Okohue, 2017: 9).

Advocates for Self-Determination and Secession:

These groups of agitators are clamouring for the withdrawal of their ethnic group from Nigeria as well as those with the moderate view that there is no alternative to restructuring the governance architecture or they will mobilize their ethnic Nationalities

for secession.

According to Femi Fani-Kayode the only way forward is to restructure or redefine the present “complicated hybrid nation where we are expected to live with and accommodate those that hate our faith, despise our people, scorn our values and that rape, maim and kill our loved ones and compatriots in the name of religion, conquest, land, cows and cattle”(Fani-Kayode, 2017 B).

This present governance structure has propelled ethnic Nationalism with:

the formation of numerous groups such as Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), the Oodua Liberation Movement (OLM), the Oodua Nationalist Coalition(ONAC), the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Middle Belt Youth Forum (MBYF), the Southern Kaduna People’s Union (SOKAPU), the Ombatse Militia Group (OMG), the Tiv Cultural and Development Association (TCDA), the Berom Militias, the Tiv Militias, the Zaar militias, the Jukun militias, the Ngas Militias, the Nigerian Christian Falange (NCF), the Sons of Gideon (SG) and numerous other groups that are well-motivated, well-organised and well-equipped but also highly focused and committed to their cause and ready to defend the interests of their people” (Fani-Kayode, 2017a).This has left one with no option than restructuring because “the bottom line is that you cannot compel a people to remain part of any nation unless they choose to be in that nation and you cannot deny them the right of self-determination and the freedom of choice and association (Fani-Kayode, 2017b).

Equally following the aforementioned is the President General of the Igbo Apex Socio-Cultural Organisation, John Nnia Nwodo who said the South East Geo-political Zone in Nigeria agitation is between restructuring and Self-determination

I am already in the public domain on this. My inaugural speech as president general of Ohanaeze made very clear what our views are. I did say in the course of putting across our view that the infrastructure in our political system has precipitated a state of dissatisfaction, anger, and impatience, especially on the part of the youths in Igboland. If you belong to a country where you are not being treated equally; where your fundamental human rights are abused with reckless abandon; where despite constitutional provisions on federal character, representation in government especially appointed representations are denied you; where your

zone has the least number of states notwithstanding two constitutional conferences that recommended more states, you cannot but feel unwanted. So, the South-East appears to be between self-determination and restructuring of Nigeria (Ndujihe, 2017).

Also, in this category but with a radical view is the former President General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo, a socio-cultural group in the South East geo-political zone in Nigeria who said: "restructuring of the country would not end the agitation for the new Republic of Biafra.... that they are "tired of staying in bondage in a country called Nigeria"(Mamah and Okonkwo, 2017).

Fragmentation in the context of state un-viability

The clamour for restructuring or re-organization is gaining currency in the political discourse amongst scholars, public commentators, political elites etc, towards the removal of governance defects inherent in the current political structure that is perceived to be inimical to effective governance in Nigeria. It is the contention of the proponents of political reorganization in the public space that a restructured Nigeria will unleash the creative capacity of the citizens which will engender faster economic development. According to Oladimeji, (2017), political restructuring will make the federating units operate in a less suffocating political structure that will make the sub-national government engage in healthy competitive development.

However, advocates for restructuring must first address the character of the political elites, the minority question or ethnic domination, fiscal posture of the existing sub-national Governments if the whole idea behind restructuring or state reconfiguration can be a worthy venture for statecraft.

The Character of the political Elites: The idea of restructuring which is aimed at the removal of impediments, and encumbrances to effective governance will become a mirage in a political environment where corruption is pervasive. According to Abiodun (2012:5), over 70% of corruption cases can be attributed to the political elites in Nigeria. The majority of the agitators for political restructuring or state reconfiguration of the governance template belong to the elite circle that is hoping to have a state which they see as prebends to be appropriated to generate material accumulation for their selfish and inordinate gains. The political elites see public offices, not as an opportunity to serve but as a glorious opportunity to be enrolled into a state looting club that permits mindless embezzlement of public funds, deployment of nepotism, and cronyism as a grand strategy for regime survival and sustenance. According to Ogundiya (2009:290), the political elites deploy corruption majorly as an instrumental utility to "acquire political office for manipulation, domination as well as legitimacy reengineering".

The political elites have contributed to the image crisis bedeviling the country. The avaricious lifestyle of a few in Nigeria has compounded the poor ranking of Nigeria as one of the most corrupt countries in the world as attested by Transparency International and Corruption Perception Index 2018 rating. According to the Independent Policy Institute and Research, Chatham House 2017 report cited in Okunola et al, (2019:166) several huge amounts of money such as "\$480 billion and \$182 billion were stolen from Nigeria between 1960 and 1999 and between 2005 and 2014 respectively".

The prevalence of corrupt practices amongst the political elites impact negatively on citizens' aspirations for good governance in the area of delivery of dividends of democracy to the people. This will ultimately engender endless agitation for restructuring if the crisis of corruption and political orientation of state pillage is not addressed.

The Challenges of Ethnic Domination and Marginality: The fear of domination by the major ethnic group in Nigeria has become a recurrent challenge in public space and a source of intellectual contestation amongst scholars. There are three major ethnic groups in Nigeria with over 350 linguistics minorities Babalola, (2015), (Otite, 1990 cited in Balogun and Famakinde, 2018). The multiplicities of the ethnic groups make Nigeria's diversity robust and unique, which is itself a huge asset for national development (Ibietan and Itodo, 2015).

However, what makes it problematic is the poor and hostile management of inter-group relations by the political elites and most importantly, the insatiable and voracious political elites managing the machinery of government. Efforts to manage the fear of ethnic domination according to Ibietan and Itodo, (2015) have made the successive government formulate perceived workable measures such as state creation exercise, federal character principle, the policy of national youth service corps, unity schools etc.

State creation exercise was a result of agitations for restructuring or political reconfiguration by the ethnic minorities against the perceived dominance of the created regions. Ever since the first tinkering with the creation of 12 states, agitation for state creation has become an endless clamour to address minority questions such as the fear of ethnic domination, but the clamour continues to resonate. One of the moves to put the clamour to rest led the 2014 National Conference to accept state creation proposals from several ethnic nationalities across Nigeria. The action was targeted at achieving regional balancing by proposing three states each for the six geo-political regions apart from the south East which was allotted four while North West was given two. The formal currently has five states while the latter's present structure account for seven states. The table below contains the proposed states recommended by the 2014 National

Conference.

TABLE 1: List of Proposed States by 2014 National Conference

S/N	Existing State	Proposed State	Proposed Capital	Geopolitical Zone
1	Ogun	Ijebu	Ijebu Ode	South-West
2	Oyo	New Oyo	Iseyin	South-West
3	Ondo	Ose	Ikare	South-West
4	Abia	Aba	Aba	South-East
5	Enugu	Adada	Ukehe	South-East
6	South East Zone	Etiti	Lokpa-Nta	South-East
7	Anambra and Imo	Njaba-Anim	Orlu	South-East
8	Delta	Anioma	Asaba	South-South
9	Cross River	Ogoja	Ogoja	South-South
10	Rivers	Oil Rivers	Ahooda	South-South
11	Kano	Ghari	Dambata	North-West
12	Kaduna	Gurara	Kachia	North-West
13	Adamawa	Amana	Mubi	North-East
14	Bauchi	Katagum	Azare	North-East
15	Borno	Savannah	Biu	North-East
16	Benue	Apa	Oturkpo	North-Central
17	Niger	Edu	Bida	North-Central
18	Niger and Kebbi	Kainji	Zuru	North-Central

Compiled by the Author from the National Conference, 2014 Main Report.

Agitation for state reconfiguration will continue to resonate, in the body politics of Nigeria due to its deployment for “legitimacy reengineering” and as a strategy for elite appeasement in Nigeria. State creation exercise as an instrument for addressing ethnic domination has not helped to abate the endless clamour for more states. Accordingly to Soludo (2012:7) state creation exercises as an instrument or antidote to ethnic domination "is a failed strategy. After the 12 states failed to ensure stability, equality, and justice, and remove the fear of domination as envisaged in 1967 we have now tripled the number to 36 and there is still demand for another 57 or more states. The more states we create, the greater the demand for more. Rather than uniting us Nigerians are more divided under the state structure than before".

Corroborating the position of Soludo, Ibieta and Itodo (2015), aver that every state created reinforced the challenges of minorities, settlers and indigenes questions which generate the challenges of equal access to states benefits and opportunities and in most

cases degenerate into violent conflicts.

Fiscal Posture of the Sub-National Government: The endless agitation for political fragmentation of the existing federal structure in Nigeria must be anchored on the fiscal capacities of the proposed state to be in good standing to perform its responsibilities.

Nigeria as a state largely depends on oil rents which account for over 80% of external revenue. The component units do not have control over this rent because of the over-centralization of mineral resources (Osaghae, 2015:111).

The sub-national government has failed largely in deploying its innovative capacity to boost improved internal revenue generation as well as enhancing efficient fiscal management to reduce over-dependence on oil rents.

The fiscal fortune of the sub-national government will continue to deteriorate with frequent fragmentation of existing component units which further the degradation of the fiscal capacity of the states (Ibietan and Itodo, 2015). The current vertical and horizontal revenue sharing formula which has not changed with previous political reconfiguration will make the sub-national governments contend with the challenge of fiscal capacity to meet their obligations to the citizens. According to (Lukpata, 2013 cited in Oni and Faluyi 2018), the federal government has always exercised a commanding height over the nation's revenues which is not less than 40% in the allocation formula since 1967 till date.

The over-centralization of mineral resources, the failure of the sub-national governments to innovate and activate improved revenue generation and efficient fiscal management in addition to the debt burden of the existing states have degraded their capacity to perform their statutory functions. Table 2 below is captured in the 2017 NEITI quarterly publications.

Table 2: Summary of FAAC Allocations, IGR, Total Revenue and Debt of State Governments (Jan. to Dec. 2016)

States	Total FAAC Allocations Received (N billion)	Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) (N billion)	Total Revenue (N billion)	Total Debt Burden (N billion)
Abia	34.33	13.35	47.68	44.93
Adamawa	33.48	7.59	41.06	67.93
Akwa Ibom	116.64	16.59	133.24	161.23
Anambra	34.35	14.79	49.15	20.60

Bauchi	39.73	5.39	45.13	83.78
Bayelsa	87.73	7.41	95.14	113.69
Benue	37.60	8.89	46.48	49.15
Borno	40.46	2.52	42.98	28.22
Cross River	33.55	13.54	47.09	153.54
Delta	97.88	44.89	142.78	331.95
Ebonyi	30.09	11.03	41.13	46.05
Edo	37.33	20.68	58.01	94.54
Ekiti	30.18	2.39	32.57	67.29
Enugu	34.15	12.67	46.82	57.56
Gombe	31.41	3.57	34.98	63.89
Imo	38.12	5.43	43.55	88.06
Jigawa	37.54	3.34	40.88	30.96
Kaduna	44.16	15.50	59.65	110.39
Kano	55.32	34.46	89.78	81.05
Katsina	41.62	5.51	47.13	30.03
Kebbi	34.95	3.13	38.08	76.83
Kogi	36.56	7.73	44.28	51.05
Kwara	30.08	16.46	46.54	45.38
Lagos	109.31	301.19	410.50	603.25
Nassarawa	30.40	2.09	32.50	55.63
Niger	39.28	5.76	45.03	33.13
Ogun	32.62	56.30	88.92	103.75
Ondo	47.79	7.78	55.57	40.54
Osun	31.50	8.96	40.46	165.91
Oyo	40.59	15.66	56.25	65.59
Plateau	34.86	9.09	43.95	104.06
Rivers	103.98	82.10	186.08	147.98
Sokoto	36.54	6.22	42.77	22.90
Taraba	31.82	4.11	35.92	33.83
Yobe	32.65	3.80	36.45	11.74
Zamfara	33.47	4.21	37.67	55.71

Sources: Office of the Accountant-General of the Federation, National Bureau of Statistics, Debt Management Office, Budget Office (cited in NEITI Quarterly Report, 2017)

The table reveals the sorry condition of the state's fiscal capacity; it revealed that Lagos and Rivers states top the ranking of internal revenue generation. Lagos state generated 302 billion while Rivers records N82.1 billion in revenue generation in 2016.

The report shows that there is a high level of dependence on federal allocation except for Lagos and Ogun states whose internally generated revenue exceeded federal allocation for the period under review.

CONCLUSION

The political orientation of a zero-sum game perpetrated by political elites has contributed to igniting the agitation for restructuring. Moreover, the utilization of majority advantage to gain access to state material benefits and opportunities at the detriment of the minorities has been implicated in the endless call for restructuring. Central in the message by the advocate for political structure fragmentation is the present governance architecture that is replete with structural constraints inhibiting effective governance. The over-centralization of the revenue fields in Nigeria has weakened the sub-national governments and rendered them ineffective and powerless in discharging their functions to their respective constituents. It should be noted that the failure of the government to ensure there is enabling environment for her citizens to achieve life's basic goals has ignited the call for restructuring.

The call for restructuring with its variant on state fragmentation appears inviting. However, the character of political elites, the challenges of ethnic domination and the fiscal posture of the existing sub-national governments have been identified as constituting an albatross to the intent behind state fragmentation. In light of the foregoing, the following recommendations are hereby espoused;

- a. The call for restructuring should start with the ethical reorientation of the drivers of the machinery of government to see public offices as an avenue to render selfless service and contribute their quota to national development. Moreover, efforts should be geared towards the institutional restructuring of the agencies saddled with the responsibility of combating corruption without political interference.
- b. The constitutional instruments for inter-group relations that promote the accommodation of conflicting interests and inclusivity without "outvoting the minorities and the use of force" should be embraced (Duchacek 1970:192)
- c. The Nigerian federation should emphasize revenue generation rather than revenue sharing through the review of the revenue sharing formula that favours the derivation principle. This will strengthen the fiscal capacity of the sub-national governments to be in a better standing to discharge their governance responsibilities to their constituents.

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