

Marginalisation and Restructuring in Nigeria: An Exploration

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Abstract

The ferment associated with the renewed clamour for the restructuring of the Nigerian State tends to be snowballing into the “yugoslavisation” of the country. This is a product of the morass of nationhood and identity crisis confronting the country since its creation. Consequently, there has been a cacophony of prescriptions considered as a desideratum to lead the country out of the path of disintegration. For instance, while a section of the country advocates true federalism based on fiscal autonomy of the constituent parts, others largely from the southeastern axis of the country insist on loose union anchored on confederation. On their part, the position of the south-south region of the country is that the framework for the continued existence of the Nigerian State is resource control. All these divergent views however, converge on the restructuring maxim, which the northern part of the country is stoutly opposed to on the grounds that there was nothing wrong with the structure of the Nigerian State as presently constituted. The conservative temperament of the north has continued to exacerbate the acrimonious rancour and agitation for self-determination amongst most of the southern part as a panacea to their marginalization in all facets of the scheme of things in the Nigerian State. This is an exploratory study aimed at interrogating the source(s) of the agitation for restructuring with a view to finding a viable path to addressing the debilitating grievances amongst the constituent parts of the Nigerian State. Both primary and secondary sources were utilized in generating data while the triple balancing theory was adopted as a framework for managing the political miasma of the national question in Nigeria.

Keywords: *Marginalization, restructuring, confederation, fiscal autonomy, self-determination.*

Introduction

Since its conception as a multinational state, Nigeria has been plunged into a miasma of marginalisation and the consequent clamour for the restructuring of the country. This derives largely from the lopsided structure of the country both in terms of resource endowment and human capital development and partly from the disproportionate population distribution of the constituent ethnic nationalities. Consequently, the successive governments of the country have been inundated with complaints of ethnic domination and inequality despite several measures adopted to allay the fears of marginalisation and to create a sense of belonging amongst the disparate ethnic nationalities.

The first of the series of these attempts was the Willink’s Commission of 1957 set up to ascertain the existence of the marginalisation within the component units with a view to initiating steps towards ending the ugly trend. This was followed by series of state creation exercises that began in 1963 with the creation of mid-western region from the erstwhile western region. The exercise was subsequently followed by the subdivision of

the country into twelve states in 1967, nineteen states in 1976, twenty one states in 1987, thirty states in 1991, and thirty six states in 1996.

The initial aim of this political engineering was primarily to placate the minorities who claimed to be subjugated and marginalised by the larger ethnic nationalities of Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba extractions respectively. At the outset however, the marginalisation alarm was raised by the north in protest against their exclusion from the Legislative Council of 1922 as a result of their educational backwardness. Soon after the January 15, 1966 military coup d'état, the wind of marginalisation shifted to the Igbo ethnic nationality following their capitulation to the Federal Government of Nigeria during the ill-fated civil war.

Since the end of that civil war, the alleged marginalisation has become dynastic in the Igbo dominated area of the southeast in particular and the southern part of the country in general. The marginalisation trend manifests in lopsided appointment, promotion and admission into federal establishments and institutions of learning through the instrumentality of quota system and federal character that favour mediocrity at the expense of merit. More so, in the area of geopolitical boundary, the southeast is made up of only five states while their counterparts are composed of six states and seven states respectively.

This unarguably, is a clear demonstration of marginalisation through obnoxious legalities, which has expectedly, triggered the restiveness of the youths from the area to agitate for the separate state for the Igbo under the aegis of Indigenous Peoples of Biafra/Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra. In any case, the moderate agitators from the area and the other sections of the southern part of the country are united in their quest for the restructuring of the country to eliminate all forms of marginalisation and create a level playing ground for all segments of the country, so that they would have equal access to benefits and burdens accruable to them.

This study therefore, attempts to explore an alternative path to curbing the trend of marginalization in Nigeria based on the following sections. Part one, which is introduction, is an overview of the study. This is followed by the clarification of concepts and theoretical framework of analysis in sections two and three respectively, while section four appraised the marginalization trend and the consequent clamour for the restructuring of the country and section five wrapped up the study with recommendation.

Conceptual Clarification

The two key concepts, marginalisation and restructuring require clarification here to give a clear insight into the discussion. As a derivative of the word marginal, marginalization is synonymous with being at the edge, if you like at the periphery and not in the mainstream. This means that a marginal group or location is considered insignificant to the survival of the society. To that extent, marginalisation implies the process of rendering a section of the political structure inconsequential and therefore prone to being disregarded or neglected. In Ibeanu's (1999) view, it is the process of setting different standard to different people in a polity. This tends to dovetail into Kuper

& Smith's (1969) description of marginalisation as "the total exclusion of subordinate sections from the inclusive public domain". According to them, the mechanism of instituting marginalisation is through "the formally unqualified monopoly of the dominant group or alternatively by instituting substantial and sufficient inequalities of sectional participation in and access to the mainstream societal organization".

To Guttere (2018), marginalisation is administered through discriminatory laws, which breed inequality in the social system. This invariably results in structural dislocations that inevitably follow when different systems of relations and roles are directly juxtaposed as reciprocals. Achebe (1983) reinforced this view in his conceptualization of marginalisation as "the policy of overt and covert exclusion and discrimination..." He identified the Igbos as the victim of marginalisation in Nigeria and traced the trend to Awolowo's banking regulations at the end of the Civil War, which was sustained and pursued relentlessly by the Mohammed/Obasanjo administration under the Indigenisation policy. This sentiment is shared by many analysts who conceive marginalization as:

The deliberate disempowerment of a group of people in a federation politically, socially and militarily, by another group or groups which during the relevant time frame wield power and control the allocation of material and financial resources at the centre of the federation (The Nsukka Analyst, 1994).

Opinions are however, polarized amongst analysts and observers over the propelling force of marginalisation in political society. The assumption of the reactionaries who are the apologists of the status quo, is that marginalisation is an integral process of social relations and therefore, a divine agenda. They hinge their argument on the fact that all fingers are not equal. As such, some people are foreordained to be at the periphery of the political community while others are predestined to occupy the mainstream of the political arrangement. According to the proponents of this view, leadership of Nigeria is the birthright of the north because "Allah knows what he was doing when he gave different talents to the different groups in Nigeria. The Igbos are destined to be businessmen and the Yorubas, excellent administrators, civil servants and teachers, and the Hausa-Fulani, political leaders" (Sule, 1992). This claim was eloquently amplified in Ayoada's (1997) work where he re-echoed Maitama Sule's assertion that:

Everyone has a gift from God. Northerners are endowed by God with leadership qualities. The Yoruba man knows how to earn a living and has diplomatic qualities. The Igbo is gifted in commerce, trade and technological innovation.

Against this backdrop, the Hausa-Fulani pontificate that their monopolization of political power in Nigeria derives from their peculiarity as a chosen race set apart to be the light to the other races. As a result, the reactionaries are stoutly opposed to the clamour for restructuring or power shift, which they see as a disturbance to the status quo and a rebellion against the will of God. In other words, the reactionaries adopt the blame-the-victim approach to attribute the marginalisation of some sections of the

country to the lack of cohesion amongst them. After all, a house that is divided against itself is bound to collapse or yield to external pressures. Nevertheless, the reformists insist that marginalisation is a human contraption and not foreordained. They therefore, believe that the sustainable path out of the raging acrimonious rancour amongst the desperate groups in the country is restructuring. They base their argument on the ground that the Nigeria state is structurally defective as it was built on a faulty foundation that requires rebuilding or rearrangement (Oladesu, 2017).

As a broad and elastic concept, restructuring appears to be a coat of many colours. It means different things to different people. For instance, it has been variously described by diverse commentators in Nigeria as “true federalism”, “confederation”, “resource control”, and “political restructuring”, or “devolution of powers”. Amidst the cacophony of views on restructuring of the country, is the consensus for Nigeria to remain a one indivisible political entity. Thus, Clark (2017) stressed that restructuring “does not imply break up, secession, or quit notice to a section of the country”. To him, restructuring should mean the process of eliminating those structures that divide rather than unite the components of the country, which he describes as awkward. In a similar vein, Adiukwu (2017) asserts that restructuring is the reorganization of the status quo, hopefully for a better outcome. This explains Tinubu’s (2017) description of restructuring as “the fitting tool of a great repair”.

The implication is that the original structure is fundamentally incongruous, or disequibrated to require readjustment, realignment, repositioning or redesigning (Babawale, 2017). The overall aim is to balance the relationships with a view to redistributing power and resources as well as readjusting the boundaries of the multinational groups that make up the country. In a nutshell, restructuring is being canvassed based on the enlightened conviction of the reformists that, the Nigerian state was founded on both structural and geographical imbalance. It is therefore an idea whose time has come to engender a sense of belonging and quell the agitation by the multinational groups that make up the country through an enduring platform for political bargaining.

Theoretical Framework

The integration theory has often been adopted to analyse the relationships and interactions of plural societies. This derives from the theory’s espousal of the dismantling of the inherent atomistic tendency and communal solidarity of the individuals and groups in favour of the gradual transfer of autonomy and political loyalties to a central or supranational authority (Haas, 1971). This according to the integrationists would eventually lead to a security community not easily shaken to its foundation (Deutsch, 1968).

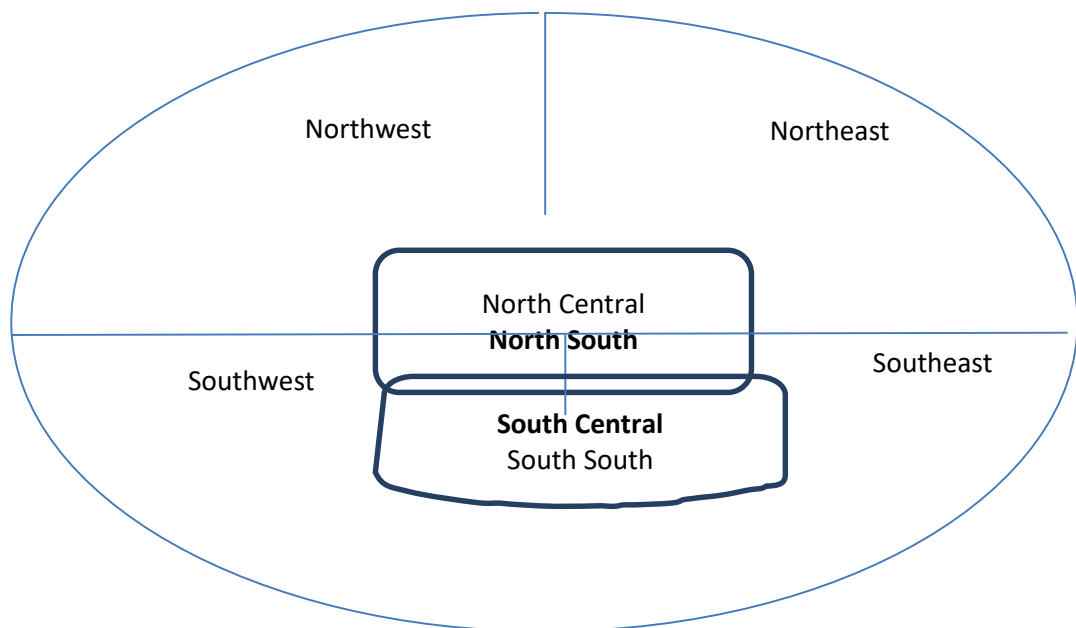
The thrust of the theory is that humans are socially embedded, communicatively constituted and mutually empowered, hence the imperative of their living together in a political community to achieve the common goal of security and development (Reus-Smith et al, 2005). The theory however, did not provide for a clear-cut modality for coexistence. Its silence about this important requirement suggests that integrationists

are apologists of forceful union, which is prone to crisis of acceptability and compatibility. In the light of this analytical gap, this study resorted to the theory of triple balancing as expounded by Edwin Madunagu (2011).

The choice of the theory is borne out of the fact that it is committed to exploring a just and equitable path to stemming the tide of marginalisation and ethnic domination in the country. Accordingly, the thrust of the theory is balancing the lopsided structure of the country to allay the fears of domination and end the long years of lopsided ethnic nationality as well as the attendant acrimonious rancour. Against this back drop, the theory of triple balancing seeks the restructuring of the country in a manner that each zone would be able to balance the dominance of the other zones just as the southern part of the country would muster the structural strength to balance the hegemony of the north, and finally, the minorities would be able to balance and neutralize the dominance of the three major ethnic blocs in Nigeria.

Based on the postulation of the theory, Nigeria should be restructured into eight regional federations by splitting each of the south-south and north-central geopolitical zones into two to raise the number of geopolitical zones of the country from six to eight resulting in four regions each for the north and south respectively. In the light of this arrangement, the East and the West will have two Zones each; the South-South and North-Central will together have four Zones while the big groups comprising the North East, the North West, the South East and South West will together have four Zones. As a result, the North balances the South, the East balances the West, and the historical “Minorities” balances the historical “Majorities” as diagrammatically demonstrated below.

Fig. 1. A diagrammatic illustration of the triple balancing arrangement



other words, since the postulation is geared towards dismantling the structures of marginalization in the country, it is reasoned that though the present six geopolitical structure is hypothetical, its retention would perpetuate marginalisation against some ethnic nationalities and the minorities in the country. For instance, northwest geopolitical zone is made up of seven states; the Southeast zone has five states while the other four geopolitical zones have six states each. But with the proposed eight geopolitical structure, the seeming dynastic dominance of a particular segment of the country over others will be eliminated with each zone and ethnic nationality balancing the other in a level playing interaction devoid of domination and marginalization.

Concerning the exercise of power in the country, the proposed eight regional structures should serve as a template for a collegiate presidency of eight members drawn from each geopolitical zone with equal responsibility to anchor on rotational headship of one-year term each.

Trends of marginalization in Nigeria

Claims of marginalization process are as old as the Nigeria state. Since the fusion of the disparate groups into a political entity in 1914, there has been both expressed and observed trends of marginalization and domination by the larger tribal and ethnic blocs. Thus, out of the hypothetical 350 ethnic groups, the Hausa/Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba have emerged as the triadic hegemony over the rest, monopolizing the political, cultural and the economic landscapes of the country. This is in addition to the overt mutual suspicion amongst the triadic ethnic blocs which has posed a constant threat to the cooperative existence of the country.

The first premonition of mutual distrust and a crack on the foisted union was the quest by the north to part ways from the country in protest against the deliberate exclusion of the region from the Legislative Council under the Clifford Constitution of 1922. This was replicated in 1953 when the North distanced itself from Enahoro's motion for Nigeria's independence in 1957. This was informed by the fear of domination nursed by the North against the South on the grounds of educational disparity. As a result, the north opted out of the political community where they allegedly assumed the status of underdog to the better equipped and educationally sophisticated south.

When late Gen. Aguiyi U. T. Ironsi unitarized the country under Decree 34 of 1966, the north again saw the move as a weapon of marginalization against the less educated north and therefore, opted out of the Nigeria state. After the resultant pogrom of the Igbo extraction and the Nigerian Civil War, the north dramatically took over the reins of political power and has ever since dominated both the political and economic spaces of the country to the point of asserting the birth right to rule while emasculating their rivals and coheirs of southern extraction, particularly the Igbo through the following instrumentalities.

Lopsided political and appointive positions: Over the years, available records expose the overbearing domination and monopolization of the country's political and appointive positions by the people of northern extraction at the expense of their southern

counterpart, especially the Igbos. For instance, between July, 1966 and 2018, nine out of the thirteen Heads of State/Presidents are of northern extraction while only four are of southern extraction with none of them of Igbo extraction as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1. Profile of political positions in Nigeria since July 29, 1966

S/no	Name	Period	Geopolitical Extraction	Tribe
1	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	1966-1975	North Central	Lantang
2	Gen. Murtala Mohammed	1975-1976	North West	Hausa/Fulani
3	Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo	1976-1979	South West	Yoruba
4	Alh. Shehu Shagari	1979-1983	North West	Fulani
5	Gen. Muhammadu Buhari	1983-1985	North West	Fulani
6	Gen. Ibrahim Babangida	1985-1993	North Central	Hausa/Fulani
7	Chief Ernest Shanekan	1993	South West	Yoruba
8	Gen. Sani Abacha	1993-1998	North West	Hausa/Fulani
9	Gen. Abdusalami Abubakar	1998-1999	North Central	Hausa/Fulani
10	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	1999-2007	South West	Yoruba
11	Alh. Musa Umoru Yar'Adua	2007-2010	North West	Fulani
12	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan	2010-2015	South South	Ijaw
13	Alh. Muhammadu Buhari	2015-	North West	Fulani

The same is replicated in the appointive positions, which appear to be home to northerners since the counter coup of July 29, 1966. The lopsided trend in appointive positions has persisted into the Buhari-led civilian government to the extent of attaining impunity posture thereby eliciting the reverberating clamour for restructuring of the country. The table 2 below vividly captures the distribution of the 47 appointments in Nigeria since 2015.

Table 2. Distribution of appointments in Nigeria since 2015

S/no	Name	Designation	Geopolitical Extraction	Tribe	Religious Affiliation
1.	Tukur Buratai	Chief of Army Staff	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
2.	Babagana Monguno	National Security Adviser	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
3.	Boss Mustapha	SGF	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
4.	Ahmed Idris	Accountant General	North West	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
5.	Anthony Ayine	Auditor General	South South	Edo	Christian
6.	Abayomi Olonishakin	Chief of Defence Staff	South West	Yoruba	Christian
7.	Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas	Chief of Naval Staff	South South	Ibibio	Christian
8.	Sadique Abubakar	Chief of Air Staff	North East	Hausa/fulani	Muslim
9.	Monday Morgan	Chief Defence Intel	North Central	Idoma	Christian
10.	Yusuf Magaji Bichi	DG, State Security Services	North West	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
11.	Mahmood Yakubu	INEC Chairman	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
12.	Hadiza Bala Usman	MD, NPA	North West	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
13.	Paul Boroh	SA, Niger Delta Amnesty	South South	Ijaw	Christian
14.	Dakuku Peterside	DG, NIMASA	South South		Christian
15.	Sen. Olabiyi Durojaiye	Chairman NCC	South West	Yoruba	Christian

16	Babatunde Fowler	Chairman FIRS	South West	Yoruba	Christian
17	Maikanti Baru	GMD, NNPC	North East	Hausa/fulani	Muslim
18	Boss Mustapha	SGF	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
19	Abba kyari	Chief of Staff	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
20	Hameed Ali	DG, Nigeria Customs	North West	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
21	Mohammed Babandede	CG, Nigeria Immigration	North Central	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
22	Ahmed Lawan Kuru	MD, AMCON	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
23	Mohammed Kari	Insurance Commission	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
24	Ibrahim Magu	Acting Chairman EFCC	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
25	Abike Dabiri	SSA, Diaspora	South West	Yoruba	Christian
26	Abdullahi Muhammadu	CG, NSCDS	North Central	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
27	Winifred Oyo-Ita	Head of Service	South-South	Ibibio	Christian
28	Funso Doherty	DG, PENCOM	South West	Yoruba	Christian
29	Dikko AbdulRahman	Chairman BOI	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
30	Mr. Adebayo Somefun	MD, NSITF	South West	Yoruba	Christian
31	Lady Azinge, Azuka Obiageli	Ag. Registrar General, CAC	South East	Igbo	Christian
32	Alex Okoh	DG, BPE	South South	Edo	Christian
33	Shetima Abba	Chairman FCC	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
34	Umar Gambo Jibrin	ES, FCDA	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
35	Roli Bode George	CEO, NDLEA	South West	Yoruba	Christian
36	Garba Abari	DG, NOA	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
37	Sule Kazaure	DG, NYSC	North West	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
38	Jelani Aliyu	DG, NADDC	North West	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
39	Bayo Onanuga	MD, NAN	South West	Yoruba	
40	Ibrahim Idris	IGP	North Central	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
41	Ghaji Bello	DG, NPC	North East	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
42	Julie Okah-Donli	DG, NAP TIP	South South	Ijaw	Christian
43	Ishaq Oloyode	Registrar, JAMB	South West	Yoruba	Muslim
44	Bolaji Owasanoye	ICPC	South West	Yoruba	Christian
45	Lenrie Aina	National Librarian	South West	Yoruba	Christian
46	Sani Abubakar Mashi	DG, NiMet	North West	Hausa/Fulani	Muslim
47	Patience Oniha	DG, DMO	South South	Edo	Christian

Source: Premium Times Nigeria, September 6, 2018.

Lopsided political structure: Nigeria is structured into 36 states, which are further organized into six hypothetical geopolitical zones largely mirroring the distribution of the ethno-regional constellations (Mustafa, 2003). The arrangement is however, unevenly distributed against some sections of the country but in favour of the northern part of the country. To begin with, nineteen out of the 36 states and 411 local governments (with the exclusion of the 6 local governments in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja) are located in the north while 17 states and 357 local governments are in the south as captured in table 3 below.

Table 3. Number of states and local governments in northern and southern Nigeria

North			South		
S/no	States	Local Governments	S/no	States	Local Governments
1	Adamawa	22	1	Abia	17
2	Bauchi	20	2	Akwa Ibom	31
3	Benue	22	3	Anambra	21
4	Borno	27	4	Bayelsa	09

5	Gombe	11	5	Cross River	18
6	Jigawa	27	6	Delta	25
7	Kaduna	23	7	Ebonyi	13
8	Katsina	34	7	Edo	19
9	Kano	44	9	Ekiti	16
10	Kebbi	22	10	Enugu	17
11	Kogi	20	11	Imo	27
12	Kwara	16	12	Lagos	20
13	Nasarawa	13	13	Ogun	19
14	Niger	24	14	Ondo	18
15	Plateau	17	15	Osun	30
16	Sokoto	22	16	Oyo	34
17	Taraba	16	17	Rivers	23
18	Yobe	17	Nil	Nil	Nil
19	Zamfara	14	Nil	Nil	Nil
	Total	411		Total	357

Source: Adapted from Amended Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011.Pp. 171-177.

When organized into geopolitical zones, the Igbo ethnic group is obviously marginalized without any compunction as shown in table 3 below.

Table 4. The composition of the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria

S/NO.	NORTH CENTRAL	NORTH EAST	NORTH WEST	SOUTH EAST	SOUTH SOUTH	SOUTH WEST	TOTAL
1.	Benue	Adamawa	Jigawa	Abia	Akwa Ibom	Ekiti	6
2.	Kogi	Bauchi	Kaduna	Anambra	Bayelsa	Lagos	6
3.	Kwara	Borno	Kano	Ebonyi	Cross River	Ondo	6
4.	Nasarawa	Gombe	Katsina	Enugu	Delta	Ogun	6
5.	Niger	Taraba	Kebbi	Imo	Edo	Osun	6
6.	Plateau	Yobe	Sokoto	-	Rivers	Oyo	5
7.	-	-	Zamfara	-	-	-	1
Total	6	6	7	5	6	6	36

Source: Adapted from Mustafa 2003, p.7.

Discriminatory policies: A prevailing trend of marginalization in Nigeria is the tendency by most successive regimes in power to place glass ceilings and “no-go area” against some sections of the country. Apparently, this is geared towards disempowering and

emasculating such social category so that they would become incapacitated to assert their right of existence and equal participation in the scheme of things. This appears pronounced in the southeastern part of the country, which is predominantly populated by the Igbo races. Thus, despite the post-Civil War policy of “No victor, No vanquished” successive governments in Nigeria had adopted vagary of discriminatory policies and programmes to deflate the ego of the Igbo and undermine their industry.

A case in point is the overt exclusion of the Igbo in appointment into sensitive or lucrative positions in the Departments and Agencies, which are critical in terms of power and control of the country since the end of the civil war. The emergence of Ogonnaya Onovo as the Inspector-General of Police appears to have broken the jinx. But it was to say the least incidental and this explained his short-lived tenure. It was the appointment of Gen. Ihejirika as the Chief of Army Staff under the President Goodluck Jonathan-led government that made the difference. All along, the Igbos was only fit-enough to be Minister of Information (Onuegbu, 2018). The trend has continued even under the President Buhari-led government contrary to his assertion in his inaugural speech that he was for everybody and for nobody. Yet no Igbo is considered fit amongst the 47 positions in his government.

Related to the exclusion of the Igbo from critical positions of power and control in the country are the deindustrialization of the southeastern Nigeria. For instance, no federal commercial industry is sited in the southeast even when it was the best location for such industries as refineries, steel plants, cements firms, etc. The consequence is that any Igbo man that wants to work in a commercial federal establishment has to leave the southeast to where he or she would be treated as a second-class citizen. This largely explains the virtual exodus of the Igbos from their organic base of existence despite the pathological hostility towards them in certain parts of the country.

Above all, the southeast is made hell for those who lacked the will to migrate to the other parts of the country as a result of neglect of the federal roads. Thus given the deplorable state of these roads in the southeast, it becomes absolutely difficult for the citizens of the area to engage in commercial endeavour. Moreover, the eastern seaports have been systematically rendered ineffective just as the upgrading of the Enugu airport to an international status has been in limbo for years. To add insult to the injury, the southeast was conspicuously left out in the new railway plan of the President Buhari-led Federal Government while all the other five geopolitical zones were fully captured in the national railway plan.

This open discrimination and exclusion of the Igbo in the scheme of things in Nigeria has unequivocally created disaffection amongst people of the southeast Nigeria and informed the restiveness of the youths of the area under the aegis of the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) and Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign States of Biafra (MASSOB). Nevertheless, the elders of the area under the aegis of Ohaneze Ndigbo do not share this sentiment. Instead, they have joined their counterparts in the western part of the country to agitate for the restructuring of the country as the panacea for the marginalization.

The clamour for geopolitical restructuring of Nigeria

It is incontrovertible from the foregoing discussion that the clamour for the restructuring of the country is a product of the disequibrated social structure and the concomitant lopsidedness in terms of the distribution of social benefits and burdens amongst the members of the Nigeria political community. Therefore, the agitation for the restructuring of the country does not imply the dissolution of the Nigerian state into the respective ethnic pieces. Instead, restructuring is aimed at preserving the corporate existence of the country through the rebalancing and rearrangement of the country to allay the years of domination and to create a sense of belonging amongst the constituent units. In other words, the defective structure and distributive process of the country created the colossal injustice that has triggered the intense agitation for restructuring. This is why the general consensus is that restructuring is the process of eliminating those structures that divide rather than unite the country. It is the reorganization, if you wish the overhaul of the status quo for a better outcome (Adiukwu, 2017).

The thrust of the restructuring agitation is that the defective structure of the Nigerian state constitutes an encumbrance on the rights of existence and participation of others, thereby necessitating the need to correct the imbalance for equal participation and enjoyment of sundry rights and burdens, especially in the area of security, representatives, political participation and resource sharing. In other words, the essence of restructuring is to reorder the mode of existence, redistribute power and resources and re-adjust the boundaries of the component units (Babawale, 2017).

Power sharing: The post-independence constitutions of the 1960 and 1963 eloquently shared power among the component units of the federation in a manner that was found equitable and satisfactory. In these constitutions, powers embedded in the Exclusive-Legislative List were ascribed to the Central Government while powers contained in the Residual List were the exclusive preserve of the respective component units. Any power not provided in either the Exclusive-Legislature List or the Residual List was to jointly, if you wish concurrently exercised by both governments under the Current List. But whereby, the powers being exercised by the constituent parts under the concurrent list is not consistent with that of the Central Government, then the powers of the Central Government prevails over the Lower Governments.

This arrangement flourished under the First Republic until it was truncated by the military takeover of government through the January 15, 1966 coup d'état that ushered in the unitarization of the country. The unitary trend has been sustained even under both the 1979 and 1999 constitutions of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, thereby compelling analysts to describe Nigeria as a quasi-federation. For instance, the conspicuous absence of the Residual List in Part I and II, in the Second Schedule of the 1999 constitution gives the Central Government the virtual monopoly of power while rendering the states as mere spectators. Expectedly, this has formed the basis for the restructuring agitation to devolve more powers to the states since they are closer to the people than the Central Government. Simply put, the thrust of power sharing agitation is to neutralize the over-

centralization and monopolization of power by a distant central government, which is detrimental to the pauperized and disadvantaged component units.

Fiscal Autonomy: Sequel to the unitarization of the country, the military equally centralized the fiscal assets of the constituents, thereby emasculating and condemning them to a beggarly status. Invariably, the various states became dependent on the magnanimous disposition of the Central Government, which has by this turnaround of event assumed the posture of the vault of the country. Consequently, the states, which are familiar with the local needs of the people, now rat race to the centre to capture and in most cases receive the manna falling from the federal heavens. Following this trend, there was no economic clout on the part of the states to initiate and accomplish any developmental project without the intervention of the Central Government which has virtually taken over every initiatives and lucrative revenue sources.

This has triggered the clamour for restructuring to the post-independence constitutions of 1960 and 1963, which provided for the fiscal autonomy of regions and elicited a health rivalry and competition amongst the constituents in the area of development despite their dependent on agriculture as the economic mainstay. The main thrust of the agitation is that fiscal centralism tends to milk the cow without feeding it but fiscal autonomy guarantees the exclusive control and utilization of the resource capabilities by the component units regardless of their peculiar local needs (Omemma, 2012; Nnoli, 1978).

Geopolitical Equality of States: The fundamentality of encapsulating multinational entities into a one political entity is to achieve unity in diversity by creating a platform for equal participation and sense of belonging. This explains Wheare's description of a federation as a political arrangement in which the "general and regional governments are each, within a sphere, coordinate and independent (1943). By extension, it means that the various components of the federation have to be equal in geographical boundary for purposes of representation and distribution of benefits and burdens. Granted that nature did not endow every nation equally in terms of natural resources, it is imperative that the disparate entities being forged together have to exist on equal basis to give each a sense of belonging in the scheme of things.

This has however, been lacking in the Nigeria context since the regionalization of the country into three disproportionate sizes (Adebayo, 1993). The exercise made the North to become larger than both the East and West combined and invariably laid the foundation for the fear of marginalization and domination that has failed to be exorcised by the various political engineering such as state creation exercises and federal character measure. The reason is that each attempt ends up favouring the dominance of the north at the expense of the south. For instance, the subdivision of the country in 1967 apparently aimed at castrating the rebellious East, ended up giving the north six states out of the twelve states and leaving the remaining six to be shared by both the East and West.

Even the reorganization of the country in 1976 by late Murtala Muhammed also gave a disproportionate share of four out of the seven states he created to the north, thereby making the north to have nine out of the nineteen states. The trend has remorselessly continued in the subsequent reorganization of the country up to the present thirty-six with the north having nineteen states edge over the south, which is left with seventeen states. This also translates to the disproportionate number of 411 local governments for the north and 357 local governments for the south excluding the six local governments in the FCT, Abuja located in the north.

This expectedly forms a major bone of contention against the present structure of the country and the craving for geopolitical restructuring to create a balance in the number of all the states in the geopolitical zones of the country. A step in this direction will guarantee equal treatment in appointment or employment based on the federal character mechanism. But the present arrangement is a shenanigan to short-change the minorities and the Igbo with less states in the country as shown in table 3 above.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

The restructuring ferment in Nigeria is a product of marginalisation which is induced and fuelled by the lopsided structure of the country. This implies that the agitation will linger until the country undergoes a systemic overhaul to give room for equal participation in the production and distribution of benefits and burdens amongst the constituent parts. The imperative of this process has been widely acknowledged by policy makers and analysts. But the modality to achieving the desired goal of ending the marginalisation malaise has elicited divergent views ranging from resource control, confederation, secession, power shift, rotational presidency to restructuring. Even the ground breaking policy measure by the Jonathan's administration through the National Conference of 2014 ended up as Westphalia Treaty that achieved nothing.

These efforts could not address the marginalisation trend because they glossed over the fundamental steps to restructuring which is the restructuring of the constitution through a referendum. In other words, a successful restructuring of the country has to be preceded by constitutional amendments to accommodate the reorganization of the states and local government and the designing of modalities for power sharing and resource distribution among the constituent parts. Against this backdrop, it is recommended that the way out of the marginalisation challenge and the clamour for restructuring is the restructuring of the country into eight geopolitical parts that should rotate the leadership of the country in a collegiate presidency of one-year term each.

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