

NOTES ON THE CRISIS OF STATE-BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

At independence, Nigeria, just like many other post-colonial states, was bequeathed a collection of entities that were merged together for the administrative convenience of colonialists. Hence, the crisis of nation-building and state-building have persisted. Nigeria's case is peculiar because of the continued expression of discontent by some of the federating units. This paper argues that lack of justice and equity is at the root of the crisis of state-building in Nigeria – and this would likely remain so for as long as the Nigerian state retains and perpetrates corruption, deep-rooted structures of injustice and inequity.

Keywords: Alienation, Inequity, Injustice, Nation-building, State-building.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

State-building is fundamental to both developed and developing states. As with everything else in nature and society, states are in a constant process of development and adjustment. State-building, as such, is when human agency, through policies and programmes, tries to engineer a desired outcome in the way various groups co-exist in the state. Ake (1979) identified state-building as one of the challenges of political development, especially in post-colonial states. He surmised state-building to be the process of establishing and maintaining state authority, of penetration of this authority throughout the social formation, and its control of other social forces. The process of state-building may be externally generated, or it might arise internally as determined demands for radical change which might endanger the status quo. Ake maintained that the need for state-building arises when the political elites happen to create new structures and organisations which are designed to regulate behaviour in, as well as draw a large volume of resources from the state. In essence, Ake's argument is that state-building has to do with the creation and sustenance of political structures and institutions hitherto non-existent in a particular territory or political entity.

Indeed, state-building is fundamental and applies to both the developed and developing states. In the Nigerian instance, state-building process, since independence, appears to be a continued effort in futility given the level of discontent among several sections of the polity. Here, it appears that efforts by the ruling class, rather than stabilise, only further destabilise the system,

such that the state lurches from one axis to another. This paper, therefore, examines some of these crises.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

For a thorough understanding of the major propositions of this paper, it is germane to contextualise, in clear terms, the concepts of state-building and nation-building.

2.1 State-building

Fukuyama (2004, p.xi) asserted that “state-building is the creation of new government institutions and the strengthening of existing ones”. Putting the same thing differently, Fukuyama (cited in Bogdandy et al, 2005, pp.583-584), explained that state-building means “the establishment, re-establishment, and strengthening of a public structure in a given territory capable of delivering public goods”. The position of Fukuyama implies that as long as new state structures are being established and old ones strengthened, there is state-building.

State-building, among other things, is about controlling violence and minimising security risks (entrenching the state’s monopoly of legitimate physical force), establishing legitimacy and building capable and responsive institutions so as to foster a shared sense of the public sphere (Fritz & Menocal, 2007). State-building is a long-term process and is often accompanied with violence. Ake (1979, p.7) asserted that:

The problem of state-building may be externally generated or it might arise internally as determined demands for radical change which might endanger the survival of the status quo. More specifically, the state-building problem occurs when the political elites create new structures and organisations designed to penetrate the society in order to regulate behaviour in it and draw a large volume of resources from it.

Thus, state-building involves the strengthening of the capacity of the state to take full charge of the territory and the population over which it claims sovereignty. Once these capacities are developed, a legitimate monopoly of physical coercion can be reasonably assured. This is necessary to maintain law and order. In fact, a survey of states which have been labelled as ‘collapsed’ or ‘failed’ shows that these states, among other things, lack complete monopoly of legitimate use of instruments of coercion. Coercion, as such, is necessarily displayed or looms large because of overarching, binding ideology that would oblige the citizens to obey. Suffice it to say, therefore, that it does appear that when there is no appreciable monopoly of instruments of coercion by the state, state failure or collapse may likely be imminent.

On his part, Fukuyama (2004) tended to agree with Ake (1979), to some extent, by interpreting state-building to mean the creation of new government institutions and the strengthening of existing ones. The need for state-building is pertinent given the fact that many of the world’s most contentious problems like terrorism, extreme poverty and HIV/AIDS tend to originate and thrive in weak or failed states. Fukuyama argued that while a great deal is known about state-building, very little is known about how to transfer strong institutions to developing countries. The trouble with poor state-building or weak state capacity, therefore, is that it precipitates state weakness, and eventual failure as in the cases of Somalia, Haiti, as well as East Timor.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Fragile States Group Task Team (2005) conceptualised state-building as an endogenous process to enhance institutional capacity, and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations. Put simply, its goal is to develop acceptance of the state and its institutions/policies, as determined by the context and history of the targeted society. Implicit in this explanation is that states experience fragility when there is some gap in citizens' perception between what the state claims to be, what it is supposed to do for the citizens, and what it actually does for them. This meaning put forward by the OECD-DAC Fragile States Group Task Team appears consistent with most of the foregoing explanations. Even though it appeared to have emphasised on capacity-building. In other words, the setting up of new institutions is rather secondary, if not totally absent in state-building. What is rather paramount is the strengthening of the capacity of the existing state institutions.

It should be noted that even though the overwhelming impression in the extant literature is that state-building is something which mainly happens in developing countries, this impression is at best false or at worst, a betrayal of imperialist mentality. State-building is an aspect of development – it is a specific aspect of political development – which is ever on-going. The need for it may be more urgent and the process more intense in weak states, failed states, or in new states, but it is not on that account absent in other mature states.

2.2 Nation-Building

Nation-building and state-building are two concepts which must not be used interchangeably. Underscoring this fact, Borgerhoff (2006) drew a distinction between nation-building and state-building. To him, nation-building is the deliberate interest and ideology-based formation of a national format which creates collective identity and affiliation of the population with the nation-state. State-building, on the other hand, is of a rather technical nature and refers to the factual construction process of the state system (p.103). Borgerhoff asserted that nation-building, as a policy, involves the application of available mechanisms and capabilities of the state system. As a process, it aspires to unify the different nationalities within the state under common orientation and aspirations. It has the overall objective of achieving political stability. To buttress this point, he referred to the remark by Canovan (1996, p.2) that “all political discourses, whether on democracy, transition or social justice, presuppose the existence not just of a state, but of a political community”. This means that the nation is an association of people united by their common descent, territory, language, history, religion and culture.

In the same vein, Mylonas (2007, p.13) noted that “nation-building entails a parallel process where the ruling political elites maintain and reinforce differences within ‘nations’ in surrounding states and eliminate differences within their own boundaries”. He asserted that in as much as there has been consciousness of national or ethnic differences by people for many centuries, the advent of modernity created the imperative of intertwining ethnic consciousness with self-determination. Thus, the nation-state became the basic unit of political organisation in the society.

Just like state-building, nation-building is a continuous process within which, from time to time, there will be contradictory centripetal and centrifugal forces to be managed by the drivers of the process. It has to do with the building of a political entity based on some generally

acceptable norms and values, as opposed to mere establishing, re-establishing and strengthening state structures. In nation-building, there ought to be a mutual sense of oneness, purpose and belonging. This appears to be absent in the Nigerian instance due to a number of factors.

2.3 The Nigerian State: Three Conquests

As noted earlier, mutual sense of oneness, among other things, is central to both state and nation-building. This has been lacking in the Nigerian state due to a number of factors. These factors have been termed the ‘three conquests’ by Ekekwe (2015, p.41). Ekekwe (2015, p.41) explained that in the first conquest:

The British conquered the states-in-formation that existed in the region which became Nigeria, created Nigeria, and promptly supervised its incorporation into the periphery of global capitalism. That was largely the role of the colonial state.

Two phases are identifiable in this first conquest – military and ideological. Military expeditions were carried out in some parts of the North, the Middle-Belt, the South-East and South-West. This created the physical space called Nigeria, and by its nature, could not have provided a basis for common outlook by these states-in-formation. The ideological phase came to the fore when the military expeditions had exhausted their options. Education played a crucial role here. Again, it failed to create that common viewpoint or ideological compass because its spread was uneven. It flourished in the South but found only tepid reception in the North. Added to this were government policies which transformed the colonial Nigerian state into an instrument of rapacious surplus accumulation and capital expropriation. This colonial structure of the state, essentially a project of imperialism, was inherited at independence, but rather than transforming it, Nigeria’s founding fathers retained it intact and went to work consolidating it.

In the second conquest, the masses “were effectively shut out of the political space” (Ekekwe, 2015, p.43). This scenario has continued to play out till date. Mobilisation of the masses by political parties through town unions and development associations were not rooted in policy and economic pillars. But rather, the masses were only needed to confer legitimacy on public office-holders.

The third conquest was by the military (princes in military uniform) over the majority of Nigerians. This came in the aftermath of the submission of Biafra. Successive military regimes enshrined “a republic that was only federal in name and entirely unitary in operation” (Ekekwe, 2015, p.44). Subsequently, petroleum laws and the Land Use Decree, among others, were promulgated to effectively ‘dispossess the majority of the people of the land on which they live, as well as the values under this land’.

The three conquests discussed above inevitably entrenched inequity and injustice in the Nigerian state. These, in turn, have militated against state-building.

2.4 Inequity

Inequity in the Nigerian polity manifests in several dimensions, but here, the focus is on how this is replicated in the economy, especially in the oil industry, which is the heart of Nigerian economy. It is a well-known fact that Nigeria is blessed with abundant natural resources. Prominent among such is crude oil. Oil exploration led to the creation of oil blocs and successive administrations allocate these to certain individuals. Extant laws give great latitude for the executive arm of the state, in particular, the President and the Minister of Petroleum, to allocate oil blocs. In the light of the third conquest mentioned above, Nigeria's Generals and those connected to them have been the beneficiaries, in a state where the distribution of patronage is invested with legality.

During a debate on the Petroleum Industrial Bill (PIB) on the floor of the Senate on May 18th, 2016, the Chairman, Senate Committee on Business and Rules, Senator Ita Enang, representing Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District, stated categorically that 83% of oil blocs in Nigeria are owned by Northerners. Suffice to state here that virtually all the oil blocs in question are located in the Niger Delta region. Senator Enang listed the beneficiaries thus:

- Seplat/Platform Petroleum, operators of the ASUOKPU/UMUTU marginal field, has Prince Sanusi Lamido (not former CBN Governor) as a major shareholder and Director;
- South Atlantic Petroleum Limited (SAPETRO) was established by Gen. Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma, who is also the Chairman of ENI Nigeria Limited. SAPETRO partnered with Total Upstream Nigeria Limited (TUPNI) and Brasoil Oil Services Company Nigeria Limited to become operators of the OPL 246;
- AMNI International Petroleum and Development Company is owned by Alhaji (Colonel) Sani Bello of Kotangora, Niger State. They are operators of OML 112 and OML 117;
- A former Petroleum minister and former OPEC chairman, Rilwanu Lukman, another northerner, manages AMNI oil blocs and with very key interests in the NNPC/Vitol trading deal;
- Oriental Energy Resources Limited, a company owned by Alhaji Indimi, runs three oil blocs: OML 15, the Okwok field and the Ebok field;
- Alhaji Aminu Dantata's Express Petroleum and Gas Limited operates OML 108 while OML 113 allocated to Yinka Folawiyo Petroleum Limited is owned by Alhaji W.I. Folawiyo;
- OPL 291 was awarded to Starcrest Energy Nigeria Limited, owned by Emeka Offor, which was sold by Starcrest to Addax Petroleum (Emeka Offor still has a stake in Addax operations in Nigeria);
- Mike Adenuga's Conoil is the oldest indigenous oil exploration industry in Nigeria, with six oil blocs;
- Alhaji Saleh Mohammed Gambo's North East Petroleum Limited is the holder of the OPL 215 licence. NOREASTER Petroleum was awarded blocs OPL 276 and OPL 283 and closing thereupon a Joint Venture Agreement with Centrica Resources Nigeria Limited and CCC Oil and Gas, and;
- INTEL is owned by Atiku Abubakar, Yar'Adua and Ado Bayero, and has substantial stakes in Nigeria's oil exploration industry, both in Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe.

The Senator decried the lack of equity and federal character in the allocations of oil blocs in Nigeria. A closer look at the above owners indicates that the beneficiaries are mostly from the

North-East, North-West and North-Central. On the other hand, the South-East, South-South and South-West are left with next to nothing.

Expectedly, the military cabal that took turns to rule Nigeria played key roles in these biased allocations. For instance, most of the oil wells were awarded between 1987 and 2006. This period spans the military regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha, Abdulsalami Abubakar and the civilian administration of General Olusegun Obasanjo (Rtd.).

Sagay (2012) cited in Adegbami (2013, p.143) remarked that:

You will observe that because of the long stay of the north in power at the centre, they manipulated the process and cornered these blocs to the disadvantage of the south; today, you have all juicy oil blocs in the hands of the north.

Needless to say, this pattern of distribution does absolutely nothing to heal already deep and wide regional cleavages that weaken the Nigerian state and its legitimacy in the perception of Nigerians.

2.5 Injustice

Closely related to inequity is injustice. In fact, injustice can rightly be categorised as a manifestation of inequity. Injustice in a polity has serious political implications for state-building because it plays right at the root of citizens' perception and appreciation of the state and its policies. A cursory survey suggests that for Nigerians, revenue allocation, political appointments, and state creation are some of the arrow heads for the perception of injustice in the system. It would be expedient to illustrate with the following statistics drawn mostly from the Fourth Republic:

Table 1: Service Chiefs (1999-2023)

S/N	Portfolio	State of Origin	Geo-Political Zone
	Chief of Army Staff (COAS)		
1.	Lt. Gen. Victor Malu (May 1999-April 2001)	Benue	North-Central
2.	Lt. Gen. Alexander Ogomudia (April 2001-June 2003)	Delta	South-South
3.	Lt. Gen. Martin Luther Agwai (June 2003-June 2006)	Kaduna	North-West
4.	Lt. Gen. Owoye Andrew Azazi (June 2006-May 2007)	Bayelsa	South-South
5.	Lt. Gen. Luka Yusuf (June 2007-August 2008)	Kaduna	North-West
6.	Lt. Gen. Abdulrahman Bello Dambazau (August 2008-Sept. 2010)	Kaduna	North-West
7.	Lt. Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika (Sept. 2010-January 2014)	Abia	South-East
8.	Lt. Gen. Kenneth Minimah (Jan. 2014-July 2015)	Rivers	South-South

9.	Lt. Gen. Tukur Yusuf Buratai (July 2015- January 2021)	Borno	North-East
10.	Lt. Gen. Ibrahim Attahiru (January 2021- May 2021)	Kaduna	North-West
11.	Lt. Gen. Farouk Yahaya (May 2021-June 2023)	Sokoto	North-West
12.	Lt. Gen. Taoreed Abiodun Lagbaja (incumbent)	Osun	South-West

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

1.	Admiral Ibrahim Ogohi (May 1999-June 2003)	Kogi	North-Central
2.	Gen. Alexander Ogomudia (June 2003-June 2006)	Delta	South-South
3.	Gen. Martin Luther Agwai (June 2006-May 2007)	Kaduna	North-West
4.	Gen. Owoye Andrew Azazi (May 2007- August 2008)	Bayelsa	South-South
5.	Air Chief Marshal Paul Dike (August 2008- Sept. 2010)	Delta	South-South
6.	Air Chief Marshal Oluseyi Petinrin (Sept. 2010-Oct. 2012)	Osun	South-West
7.	Admiral Ola Ibrahim (Oct. 2012-Jan. 2014)	Kwara	North-Central
8.	Air Chief Marshal Alex Sabundu Badeh (Jan. 2014-July 2015)	Adamawa	North-East
9.	Gen. Abayomi Olanisakin (July 2015-Jan. 2021)	Ekiti	South-West
10.	Gen. Lucky Irabor (Jan. 2021-June 2023)	Delta	South-South
11.	Gen. Christopher Gwabin Musa (incumbent)	Sokoto	North-West

Chief of Air Staff (CAS)

1.	Air Marshal Isaac Mohammed Alfa (1999- 2001)	Kogi	North-Central
2.	Air Marshal Jonah Domfa Wuyep (2001- 2006)	Plateau	North-Central
3.	Air Marshal Paul Dike (2006-2008)	Delta	South-South
4.	Air Marshal Oluseyi Petinrin (2008-2010)	Osun	South-West
5.	Air Marshal Muhammed Dikko Umar (2010- 2012)	Kano	North-West
6.	Air Marshal Alex Sabundu Badeh (2012- 2014)	Adamawa	North-East
7.	Air Marshal Adesola Nunayon Amosu (2014-2015)	Lagos	South-West
8.	Air Marshal Sadique Abubakar (2015-2021)	Bauchi	North-East
9.	Air Marshal Isaac Oladayo Amao (2021- 2023)	Osun	South-South

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|-----|---|------|------------|
| 10. | Air Marshal Hassan Abubakar (June 2023 till date) | Kano | North-West |
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Chief of Naval Staff (CNS)

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------|---------------|
| 1. | Vice Admiral Victor Ombu (1999-2001) | Bayelsa | South-South |
| 2. | Vice Admiral Samuel Olajide Afolayan (2001-2005) | Kwara | North-Central |
| 3. | Vice Admiral Ganiyu T.A. Adekeye (2005-2008) | Kwara | North-Central |
| 4. | Vice Admiral Ishaya Iko Ibrahim (2008-2010) | Kaduna | North-West |
| 5. | Vice Admiral Ola Sa'ad Ibrahim (2010-2012) | Kwara | North-Central |
| 6. | Vice Admiral Dele Joseph Ezeoba (2012-2014) | Delta | South-South |
| 7. | Vice Admiral Usman Oyibe Jibrin (2014-2015) | Kogi | North-Central |
| 8. | Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas (2015-2021) | Cross River | South-South |
| 9. | Vice Admiral Awwal Zubairu Gambo (2021-2023) | Kano | North-West |
| 10. | Vice Admiral Emmanuel Ikechukwu Ogala (incumbent) | Enugu | South-East |

Source: Compiled by the authors from different sources.

From the table above, of the 12 Chiefs of Army Staff (COAS) that Nigeria have had in this Fourth Republic (1999-date), 5 are from the North-West geo-political zone, 3 from the South-South, while North-Central, North-East, South-East and South-West produced one each. Thus, it could be seen that the highest number of COAS in the Fourth Republic (5) came from the North-West.

Also deducible from the table is that between 1999 and 2023, Nigeria has had 11 Chiefs of Defence Staff (CDS). Of this number, 4 came from the South-South, South-West, North-Central and North-East produced 2 each, while 1 came from North-East. The South-East has never produced a CDS.

In the same vein, the table shows that Nigeria has had 10 Chiefs of Naval Staff (CNS) in this Fourth Republic. The breakdown indicates that 4 are from the North-Central, 3 from the South-South, 2 from the North-West and 1 from the South-East. The North-East and South-West are yet to produce a CNS.

2.6 Revenue Allocation

The need for equitable revenue allocation in Nigeria has been a recurrent issue. After several revenue allocation commissions, this problem seems to have defied every attempt at finding a satisfactory solution. It has also been listed as one of the problems of Nigerian federalism, the others being the minority question and state creation (Chikendu, 2003). Especially in federal

states, the issue of state revenue allocation has been one of the most contentious and political. Not surprisingly, revenue allocation has generated a lot of passion among Nigerians.

Revenue allocation has both vertical and horizontal dimensions. While vertical revenue allocation refers to that between the federal, state and local governments, the horizontal aspect has to do with (differences in) the capacity for internal revenue generation by the component units. From the Phillipson Commission (1946) to date, emphasis was, in certain periods, placed on derivation, population, even progress, land mass, needs, national interest, equity, among others. Suberu (1995, p.4) noted that after several modifications, it does appear that three notable points have been made in the politics of revenue allocation in Nigeria, thus:

- demography and equality have been effectively legitimised as prominent horizontal revenue sharing principles;
- revenue allocation has become intensely political and divisive in nature; and,
- in Nigeria's horizontal revenue allocation, policies and reforms accord insufficient recognition to social development and internal revenue generation.

It is worrisome to note that revenue sharing principles in Nigeria appear to be adopted at certain points in time to serve parochial interests. This could be said to reflect the political nature of the process. But if so, this political process has appeared to differ (especially Southern) sections as though it was tailored to keep them marginalised. And to the extent that these principles create such perceptions which undermine the foundation for state-building, then the nation's leaders could be said to be blind to their class interests; they give credence to Ekekwe's idea of the third conquest.

Even with the dire condition of the environment in the Niger Delta due to oil exploration, it does appear that some members of the northern oligarchy believe that the 13% accruable to states based on derivation is unjust. This discontent has been echoed by Babangida Aliyu, former Chairman of Northern Governors' Forum, and Junaid Muhammed, a Member of Parliament in the Second Republic. Derivation, however, could be seen as a compensatory measure. This position is in tandem with that of Ikeji (2011, p.126):

The compensation principle is the basis on which derivation as a criterion for sharing fiscal revenue is anchored. The production of oil, for instance, entails losses to the oil communities in three major ways, namely; natural resources losses – these include the extracted depletable crude petroleum and losses on the vegetative part of the land used in the mining; externalities of oil production – these include environmental pollution, high costs of living, unemployment and loss of means of livelihood due to environmental degradation, etc; social costs of production – for example, breakdown in social value system, high crime, etc. These losses by the oil producing communities due to oil production activities can be compensated for using fiscal means of revenue allocation based on losses suffered by those communities.

The real injustice here lies in the expropriation of revenue from one productive zone to a relatively non-productive one based on seemingly contrived principles like landmass.

2.7 State Creation

As noted earlier, the problem of state creation, like the passionately contested revenue allocation issue, has been a recurrent decimal in Nigerian federalism. There is an obvious imbalance in Nigeria's 36-state structure. This can be illustrated below:

Table 2: Distribution of States by Geo-political Zones in Nigeria

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Zone</i>	<i>No. of States</i>	<i>List of States</i>
1.	North-Central	6	Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau + Abuja (Federal Capital Territory)
2.	North-East	6	Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe
3.	North-West	7	Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara
4.	South-East	5	Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo
5.	South-South	6	Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Rivers
6.	South-West	6	Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo
Total	6	36	

Source: Compiled by the authors from different sources.

From the table above, four of the six zones have six States each. On the other hand, the North-West has seven States. The South-East inexplicably has only five States. There is no obvious reason for the distribution of States, save the fact that the military who "shared" the States were mainly Northerners determined to ensure that their region retained that advantage envisaged for it by the British coloniser.

To the Igbo nation in Nigeria, this case of inequality comes across as a continuation of the war against them by other means. In this part of the country and in this instance, restructuring the Nigerian State means addressing this and other instances of inequality. This is why they have been agitating for the creation of an additional state to make up for the deficit. The need to create more States was recognised in the recommendations of the 2014 National Conference Report which recommended the creation of an additional 19 states. But then, not all the demands rest on the same base as that of the South-East.

It will be a grave error were restructuring to be seen as merely the creation of more States. As Ekekwe (1986) argued, there will be no end to demands for new States because it is being spearheaded by actors that see it as a means to wealth. While indeed there should be even playing ground for competition, further creation of States, many of which will not be viable. It would in fact be counterproductive because it would be undermining the real basis/imperative to restructure the State. Many unviable States will be only too vulnerable to a strong centre, as is already evident. Also, the same strategy ostensibly played out in the creation of 12 states by the regime of General Yakubu Gowon. The heightened tension between Chukwuemeka Ojukwu and the Federal Government was remarkable as the move was seen as a way of minimising the influence of Ojukwu in the Eastern Region. The point being made here is that

obvious disparity in the number of states in each of the six geopolitical zones can best be interpreted as another form of marginalisation.

The table above indicates that the South-East geopolitical zone has the least number of States (5). In contrast, the North-East, South-South and South-West zones have 6 States each. If Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is to be classified as a State, it would have brought the total number of States in the North-Central Zone to 7. The only geo-political zone with 7 States is the North-West. Given the above distribution, claims of marginalisation by the South-East geopolitical zone becomes somewhat more understandable.

2.8 The Challenge of State-building in Nigeria

As seen from Ake's perspective (Ake, 1979) which was pointed out earlier, state-building has to do with establishing state authority, penetration of this authority into all parts of the territory and the control of the territory and its population by the State. Authority is here interpreted as the recognition of the State's right to demand and receive the loyalty and/or obedience of the people. This is the necessary and sufficient condition for the state to make authoritative decisions to express its sovereignty. It should be noted here that to guarantee the unalloyed support and loyalty of the people, the state must be seen to be fulfilling its part of the social contract.

In the case of the Nigerian state, the challenges in the state-building appear unrelenting and persistent precisely because the degree of inequality and injustice is so deep and pervasive no major or minor national bloc perceives the State as anywhere approximating their notion of a people-oriented entity. Rather, the State and its agencies are perceived as predatory, unresponsive and irrelevant. And why not, when the State has dispossessed the people of their rights to their natural resources, only to redistribute same to a relatively tiny group, thus giving evidence to Ekekwe's three conquests.

2.9 Resource Control

The question of who controls the resources of a state has been one of the most contentious issues in state formation and consolidation. It is one which Nigeria's federalism purports to have answered effectively, by conferring ownership of natural resources across a federal state on the federal government. Proceeds of these mineral resources are sources of revenue to keep the state afloat and they have been the major revenue source in Nigeria. Such revenue generated is then distributed among the individual component States, using a formula that gives the lion share to the federal government. This manner of proceeding, to say the least, has been considered obnoxious especially by States where these resources lie. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1803 of 1962, Article 1, provides that:

The right of the peoples and nations to the permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the state concerned.

Implied here is the fact that natural resources belong to the people and must be used for their development. In the course of using resource allocation to improve the well-being of the people, the question of equitable distribution predictably pops up.

In the process of natural resource exploration and exploitation also, environmental degradation inevitably occurs (Okafor & Oddih, 2009; Akinbobola, 2009; Gilbert, 2009; Ojakorotu, 2008; etc.). Consequent upon continued environmental degradation, and against the background of injustice implied in the extant revenue allocation formula, there have been calls for resource control by affected communities. They want to have entitlement to the larger portion of value of the resources under their soil not least because they bear the brunt of the environmental damage. According to Dafinone (2001), resource control is the practice of true federalism and natural law in which the federating units express their rights to primarily control the natural resources within their borders and make agreed contribution towards the maintenance of common services of the government at the centre. Dafinone's voice, though representative of the dominant views in the zone, receives scant, if any attention, at the federal level where, ironically, representatives of the zone are also major players.

However, the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, provides in Section 44(3), that:

Notwithstanding the foregoing provision of this section, the entire property in the control of all mineral oil and natural gas in, under or upon any land in Nigeria, under or upon the territorial waters and the exclusive economic zones of Nigeria shall be vested in the government of the federation and shall be managed in such manner as may be prescribed by the national assembly.

The 1999 Constitution, in Section 162(2), however, grants to the State from which the minerals are extracted, only 13% of the proceeds. Adding salt to injury is the fact that the managers of the state at either local, state or federal levels have not been deploying the lion share they appropriate to meeting the people's need for health care, education, infrastructure and other livelihood goods and services. Rather, these resources have been used to sponsor the emergence in Nigeria, of a stupendously rich but tiny bourgeoisie. To worsen matters, this class is unproductive and so does little to grow the economy.

Suffice to say here that a combination of inequitable distribution and skewed development of the respective geo-political zones explain the continued agitation for resource control. This is not forgetting the continued environmental degradation caused by oil exploration and exploitation. Thus, a situation whereby resources are expropriated from one zone for the development of another while the former remains in squalor can only accelerate demands for self-determination, resource control and perhaps, rebellion against the state. This is the basis for the call for restructuring Nigeria into a true federalism. By this is meant, largely, the complete overhaul of the revenue allocation process and system, and the consequent redistribution of responsibilities to different levels of the state.

2.10 Threats of Secession

One of the most notable claims made for the federal system of government is that it provides negotiated accommodation to diverse nationalities. Presumably then, it would be difficult for it to come unstuck. So how these federal entities are formed is critical for it implies that the federating units each gave its consent and agreed, more or less, to the condition of the federation. In the case of Nigeria, more than 394 ethnic groups can be identified within its borders (Otite, 1990).

The colonialists simply cobbled these hitherto independent entities together without their consent. It is no surprise, therefore, that many of the leaders of these entities from time to time, question their place in the federation, especially given the inequities and injustice they believe they suffer. Here, it is obvious what gives rise to such extreme demands for secession. This kind of political tension has always characterized Nigeria. The country's history shows that calls for extreme restructuring has come often from the Northern part of the country, with a notable instance being Gowon's assertion in a national broadcast on July 29, 1966, that there was no basis for Nigerian unity. Added to this is perceived marginalisation by the government at the centre. Prominent among these groups in Nigeria are the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Boko Haram sect.

The Nigerian Civil War (1967 – 1970) was fought to stop the attempted secession of Biafra from the Federal Republic of Nigeria. A rebellion that the Yakubu Gowon regime, at the time, expected would be quelled through a famous 'police action', but which stretched for about three bloody years. The gory details of the war have been well-documented (Gbulie, 1989; Aneke, 2007; Obi-Ani, 2009; Forsyth, 2011; Ezeani, 2013; Achebe, 2013). The defeat of Biafra by Nigeria (even though a 'no victor, no vanquished' verdict was given) did not appear to have put paid to the secessionist ambition. For whatever one may make of it, the current Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the demand of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), have their roots in the history of Nigeria.

Unfortunately, the military government which led the civilian war at the time preferred to present Biafra to Nigeria and to the world as the problem. On the contrary, Biafra was only the most prominent of the symptoms of a badly structured federal system in which at first, the old regional and now the federal (with State) governments turn the commonwealth into fiefdoms. The rulers cannot contrive a common vision that unites them on one hand, and the ruled on the other hand. The war against Biafra was won, thanks to Britain, the United States and Russia.

The war for national unity, however, is yet to be initiated. Initiating such a war would be problematic given that the military version of unity has dominated the narrative of Nigeria's existence since 1970. Since then, Babangida, Obasanjo and Jonathan during their administrations, respectively, in conceding the need to discuss Nigeria's political future have all come to insist that national unity was not negotiable. This would be easily understood if they had a clear vision of what the future should look like.

There is also the Boko Haram sect which, at some point, expressed the desire to establish an Islamic Caliphate within Nigeria. Being religious fundamentalist in nature, the Boko Haram sect, among other things, believes that Western education is evil. Not only that, the Nigerian state represents everything that the Holy Qur'an (as understood and interpreted by them) represents. The sect employs terrorist tactics to achieve its aims. At the moment, the activities of the sect appear to be infrequent but not entirely contained. Suffice it to state that justice is yet to be meted out to the terrorists, considering the suffering inflicted on Nigerians, as well as funds used to maintain camps of internally displaced people (IDPs).

The IPOB and Boko Haram cases are mere instances of how discontent translates to outright desire to divide an 'indivisible' entity. There is also the Movement for the Emancipation of the

Niger Delta (MEND). It should be stated here that employing the state apparatus to quell these uprisings will be inconsequential unless the root of the discontent is addressed.

3.0 CONCLUSION AND THE WAY FORWARD

The crisis of state-building in Nigeria is one which appears to have defied every solution. From the nationalist period until 1963 when the Midwest Region was created, it seemed that the solution was in simply creating new States. Experience has shown that this was not the answer. Even when it was tweaked with the creation of the Federal Character Commission, little changed. In the same vein, increasing derivation allocation to resource-rich States from 1% to 13% has not calmed the militant demands for resource control and true federalism. Most of the States so far created are not viable. Viability here relates to the ability to generate enough revenue internally to keep it from full reliance on federal allocation as is currently the case for most of the States. Furthermore, the tendency for some political elites to hijack the new states for personal aggrandisement is very high. Creation of new States, therefore, may be seen as a popular but essentially false solution.

Flowing from this point, the logical suggestion would be the dissolution of the existing 36-state structure in a radical but plausible option. If anything suggests itself beyond this, it is that Nigerian leaders and scholars have not been asking the right questions. The British who cobbled the Nigerian state together could afford to muddle through so long as they source raw materials and market for their products were assured. They do not live here. The nation's nationalist leaders, in adopting the British contraption, not only showed little imagination and applied little thought despite their acknowledged wisdom, and forfeited the honour and responsibility of being known as the country's founding fathers – one is not the founder of what one merely inherits.

The government may also wish to consider diversification of the economy. The over-dependence on mineral resources will always draw undue attention to what fraction is given to states based on the derivation principle. Over-dependence on mineral resources equally seems to have made the component states less likely to pursue other means of income generation. An instance is the agricultural sector which is not just capable of providing food, but is also able to employ labour and generate raw materials for industries.

There is also need to reform the oil industry, especially as it relates to the ownership of oil blocs. Part of the agitation in the Niger Delta is the fact that most oil wells are allotted to northerners. A review of such is necessary to make for equitable distribution.

This suggests the urgent imperative not just to restructure, but to first re-imagine Nigeria, and re-conceptualise Nigeria. The prior questions in that process would be to decide what kind of Nigeria is desirable: one that largely serves foreign capital and their local collaborators, or one that serves the Nigerian people. What, in the language of corporate organisation builders, would be the country's vision and mission statements? The next question would be to agree on what the country's federating units would be: states, zones/regions or nationalities. When the British quit the country, it was presumed that the old regions were the constituent units of the federal system. But that was never specifically discussed and agreed. But if the presumption was there, the subsequent creation of states by military fiat made nonsense of it. The States which emerged were never placed on the same status as the regions. They were ab initio inferior

to the federal government, especially so since the centre appropriated what resources could have made the states viable.

Upon deciding what the constituent units would be, their representatives then ought to sit in a constitutional conference to structure the association. For what it was worth, the constitutional conferences of the regional leaders during the nationalist era provided some opportunities for then leaders to negotiate, even in a limited fashion, how to co-exist. Subsequent conferences under the Abacha, Obasanjo and Jonathan administrations did not go beyond the level of political farce. They produced no result that answered the questions leading to demands to restructure Nigeria. The same may be said of the effort led in 2014 by the National Assembly on restructuring.

Finally, any restructured system that does not reflect some recognisable degree of equity and justice is bound to return the country to square one, just as did the previous efforts. It is instructive that in spite of the massive structural changes Nigeria has witnessed, the very questions that plagued it from the earliest nationalist days persist, and even become more urgent. Nigerians sometimes think the country is too big or diverse to be one, but this is essentially false. India and Indonesia are a lot more diverse than Nigeria and yet remain successful federal states.

In addition to other factors, this may have something to do with the degree of equity in which power is divided between the centre and the constituent entities, as well as the degree of justice with which resource ownership and revenue sharing are handled. Unless Nigeria addresses these issues squarely, sincerely and logically, the question of whether or not to restructure and what is to be restructured will persist.

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