



FEDERALISM AND AGITATION FOR STATE BALKANIZATION IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY: WHITHER NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

A federation is composed of federating units, which could be single or admixtures of either region or state and local government. The units form the basis for political administration, distribution of federal revenues and projects. A federation with ethno-religious diversity (like US, India, Germany, Nigeria) experiences structural inequity in the federating units and it poses a great challenge to national integration. It is more so for nations that did not form federation on consensus but where it was imposed by the exigencies of colonialism. The political governance in post-colonial era has often transformed into asking critical questions on how the structure of the federation facilitates equal stake in national political leadership and in sharing resources. The question, for many reasons, engenders agitation for state balkanization, and oftentimes hinders national integration. This paper examines the practice of federalism in Nigeria and “the why question of surge in state balkanization”. The essence is to outline the implications for national integration. The research dwells on documentary method and applies descriptive analysis. The study further adopts elite theory as a framework for explaining how the competition among the elites results in agitations for state balkanization to offer them operational spheres of influence. The findings show that structural disequilibrium in federating units and struggle over scarce resources are critical in the agitation for state balkanization and therefore, affects national integration. It recommends vertical and horizontal restructuring of the federating units, to ensure equity and inclusive commitments to national integration by Nigerians of all classes.

Key Words: Federalism, Agitation, State Balkanization, Diverse Society, Whither National Integration

INTRODUCTION

Federalism is an institutional arrangement, creating relatively autonomous levels of government, each able to act directly on behalf of the people with the authority granted to it, (Kincaid, 1975:391-392). In other words, federalism is the most relevant factor of modern constitutionalism, (Rout, 2018). Nigeria adopted federal system of government in 1954 based on the provisions of Sir Oliver Lyttleton constitution. It provided for two-tier system – the center and regions. The regions comprised Eastern, Northern and Western regions respectively, (Okibe, 2000). The core objectives of federalism are unity in diversity, devolution in authority, and decentralization in administration. Through federalism, the State pursues the goal of common welfare in the midst of wide diversity in socio-cultural and economic spheres, (Rout, 2018).

Although the 1954 constitution during the colonial period in Nigeria shared powers between the centre and regions, overtime, each region lost its powers to colonial policy of domination and exploitation, which tactically transformed the system into a unitary form of administration, by concentrating much powers and resources at the centre against federal principle of devolution, (Okibe, 2000). Of course, the federal arrangement was a product of conciliatory process, mainly in response to agitation by the nationalist elites to address the challenges posed by the nation's diversity based on the prevalence of dissonant ethnic antagonism, emanating from the practice of regionalism when political powers and control over economic resources rested in the colonial domain at the centre.

Impliedly, the influence of colonial divide and rule policy thwarted the practice of true federalism in Nigeria by neglecting its key features like autonomy of the federating units and of course, resource control. The sustenance of the system after the attainment of political independence in 1960 made various ethno-religious groups to commence agitation for state balkanization for proper inclusion in leadership and justice in the distribution of national wealth. The agitation characterizes the form of support or opposition to every government in power and it exacerbates due to widespread disapproval of administrative structure and framework for distributing national resources, which successive governments, especially military administrations, put in place over the years. It makes the public doubt that the practice of federalism in Nigeria has fully realized the goal of dousing agitations for further balkanization of the country into more regions, states and local government. It has not ensured effective power devolution, inclusive governance and equal access to national

wealth, which are precursor to national integration (unity in diversity) among the ethno-religious groups in the country.

In most part, the structural inequity, which fuels marginalization of one group by the others, encourages opposition to the system based on the recurring interrogation of the legitimacy of the federal union, intermittent demands for restructuring the system and threats of disintegration in some instances. Perhaps, the nurturing of divisive temperament and hate by those who feel cheated in the lopsided arrangement owe their roots to injustice in Nigeria federal units, disproportionate distribution of administrative institutions and elective positions. The study, therefore, examined the structure of Nigeria's federal system, the extent it is a negative portent force inciting balkanization agitations, its roles in influencing conflict or national integration among the competing ethnic forces, the various policy efforts towards redressing the anomaly, including their past and present impacts on the system.

CONCEPTUALIZING FEDERALISM AND STATE BALKANIZATION FEDERALISM

The origin of federalism has diverse references but the Greek has been profound in this regard. In the United States of America, federalism crystallized into a model of state organization and constitution of administrative structures sequel to the historical evolution of the country during the 1787 Constitutional Convention, which invented a federal system that divides power between multiple levels of government – often, state and national, ([lumenlearning.com/american government](http://lumenlearning.com/american-government)). In Nigeria too, the generic process started from 1946 through 1951 to 1954, when Oliver Lyttleton finally provided for constitutional power sharing between the levels of government, (Ugwu, 1998).

Although the ontological roots of modern federalism lay in US, different scholars define the concept of federalism in various ways, (Ugwu, 1998:1). They view the concept from varied considerations and thus disagree on any uniformity in its practice. However, each definition expresses the following:

- ❖ existence of two or more levels of government (federal or regional/state), operating side by side
- ❖ constitutional division/distribution of powers between the two levels or more of government
- ❖ non-interference in the affairs of each level in the areas it has constitutional powers to act
- ❖ neither the central nor the regional/state governments are subordinate to each other
- ❖ the various levels of government are coordinate and interdependent in their operations
- ❖ each level deals directly with the people and none arbitrarily arrogates powers to itself.

Based on empirical cases, federalism severally differs from one political community to another, and manifests attributes, challenges and problems that depict dissimilarities in its operations and impact across continental, regional and countrywide scale. In the foregoing context, Umbach (2002:2) observed that European federalism is more than an administrative and ‘technical’ problem that can be solved by experts – it is eminently political. Combinations of historical experience, national memory and ideology shape its meaning, and the word federalism means different things in different cultures. For example, in Britain, federalism is often taken as a synonym for the threat of a bureaucratic European super-state. In Germany, the same term is used to describe an ideal of diversity within unity, emphasizing the element of devolution, (Umbach, 2002:2). In Nigeria, it implies might is right, where ethno-religious group that commands control over national leadership and control of the economy appropriate state powers according to their discretion, in negation of the constitution. These varieties show the challenges in conceptualizing federalism to douse the universal disagreements, but it can be perused by highlighting the key indicators and scaling them along each country’s experience.

FEDERALISM AND CONCEPT OF POWER SHARING

In a federal system, powers that government exercise on behalf of the federation are constitutionally shared between or among the federating units in such manners that none is dependent on the other but interdependent in the performance of their duties. Even among the organs of government, the constitution delineates power and functions discreetly with jurisdictional boundaries. Thus, absence of concentration of governmental powers and authority in a particular level or branch of government means that there is devolution and separation of powers. However, negation of devolution and infusion of structural disarticulation, which obfuscates the essence and universality of federal norm, exemplifies or typifies the internal dynamics of each political system. Some case citations suffice.

The Indian typology exhibits such distortion by containing major features of both a federation and union. Rout, (2018) describes the model as quasi-federal system, whereas Schoenfeld, (1959:52), states that it can be better phrased as ‘federation sui generis’ or federation of its own kind, derived from Article 1 of the Constitution of India which states that ‘India that is Bharat shall be a union of states’. Similarly, Brazil provides another example of rivalry between federal and unit governments. Kincaid and Alan Aarr, (2005) posit that Brazil is composed of 26 states and a federal district. It is a three-tier federation, whereby the 1988 Constitution provides that the states and municipalities are independent units of the Brazilian Federation. Both have independent taxing powers and share with the federal government

responsibilities for public services and development policies, (Souza, 2005). However, a growing direct relationship between the federal and local governments is a source of intergovernmental conflicts and increasing complexity in fiscal relations. Similar cases of intergovernmental conflict in fiscal relations are commonplace in US, Mexico, Germany and Nigeria.

From this backdrop, it becomes apparent that each nation's experience in the practice of federalism manifests different characteristics despite the fact that, "Under a federal system, one characteristic is that people agree (consent) to cooperate under terms of a written constitution that defines how they will work together and hold each other accountable", (Kincaid, 1975:391). In the views of Riker (1975:93), "It keeps people in control of the government by providing numerous points of access; hence federalism (a federal structure) increases access opportunities". An ideal example in the spheres of devolution of power, which increases access opportunities in leadership, is the US that divides governmental power in two general ways—vertically and horizontally, (Kincaid, 1975:392).

Horizontally, the US shares power among three branches of government – the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. Vertically, it also shares power between levels of government: national and sub-national (state, parish, county, local, special district), (Kincaid, 1975:392). In Mexico, Guerra (2016) asserts that the federation is formed by thirty-one states and a Federal District that are free and sovereign with respect to their respective territories. The constitution shared powers between the federal and state governments, and clearly indicates that the powers that are not expressly granted by it to federal authorities are deemed reserved for the authorities of the Mexican states.

Similar conditions apply in Germany where the constitution (Basic Law, or Grundgesetz), reserves topics such as foreign affairs and defence, as the exclusive responsibility of the federation (i.e., the federal level), while others fall under the shared authority of the states and the federation, (Gunlicks, 2011). The states retain residual legislative authority for all other areas, including "culture", which in Germany includes not only topics such as financial promotion of arts and sciences, but also most forms of education and job training. Despite the fact that India provides a dissimilar example, where federation was not a product of coming together of states to form the federal union but a conversion of a unitary system into a federal system, Rout (2018), argues, "The federation of India comprises Union Government and State government that share governmental powers. Thus, the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution contains three lists - the Union List, State List, and Concurrent List".

Nevertheless, the contradictions in federal system in developing political systems, pose great challenge to its unbiased operation based on the divisive influence that ethnicity exerts on national integration. Rout, (2018) lists the problematic factors in India to include regionalism, problem of division of powers, absence of fiscal federalism, unequal representation of units, the indestructible union with destructible units, single constitution and citizenship, centralized planning, language conflicts, and issue of religion, economic incompatibility of the units, physical environment and external forces, etc. Some of these challenges also typify the situations in Nigeria, hence India and Nigeria's federal system and national characteristics share similar features, starting with their colonial background, ethno-religious and linguistic diversity, to politico-economic heterogeneity.

The Nigerian 1999 Constitution, as amended, (Second Schedule Parts 1&11) provides for Exclusive Legislative List, assigned to the federal government, Concurrent Legislative List, which both the federal and state exercise cognate power but federal possessed overriding powers in case of conflict with states on any of the subjects. As a federation comprising 36 states and 774 local governments, including branches of government such as executive, legislature and judiciary, none passes for demonstrable sovereignty or freedom from federal control. The federal interference on state domestic affairs amidst conflicting diversity is viewed pejoratively in every interaction between the ethno-religious group that controls the center and the others outside. It disparages state's operational scope and induces many disadvantaged or displaced groups to agitate for divesting the centre of much power vested in it, through state autonomy, resource control and fiscal federalism to absorb the crisis emanating from the lopsided federal structure and stem the rumbling quests for state balkanization.

Essentially, lack of adherence to power sharing in the constitution engenders confrontation among the executive, legislature and judiciary. In addition, inequities in structure and powers exercised by the federating units appear to be another major trigger for provocation of ethno-religious sensitivity to regime of injustice and flagrant abuse of federal or state authority, against federal norms. Devolution of power generally implies that power is not centralized but distributed across the administrative centres. Structurally, parts of the units consist of levels of government (federal, state, local government, etc) and organically, the organs of government (executive, legislature and judiciary).

Between the two, structural differentiation has been a major concern in many federal states, thus rationalizing the advocacy for state balkanization, which safeguards the diverse aggregate interests of the component units from outward untoward manipulation. It is

debatable that competition and unhealthy rivalry between and among elite class over access to national resources and leadership incubates agitation for state balkanization. The phenomenon is incontrovertible when a federal system suffers from dearth of fiscal responsibility, state autonomy in any scale, or resource control generally. They make for a compromised integration among the ethnic diversities in a federal system. Thus, Nigeria presents itself in the peculiar, unlike many other federal unions cited in this work, in terms of structural composition, or in vertical and horizontal division of powers, necessary for national unity.

Apart from espousing the ideals of federalism theoretically in the constitution of many federal states, particularly in developing world, in practice, they tend to disregard basic principles of the system. Evidences show that sidelining those regulatory principles usually produce constant conflict among the competing forces. It includes disagreement over parameters for exercise of governmental powers, setting of jurisdictional boundaries among the administrative units; explosive ethno-religious pressures heaped on the system, and tendency to provoke centrifugal forces through absence of structural equity in federating units. Others are disparity in representation at national leadership and glaring injustice in economic distribution among the constituent units, which set stages for conflicts.

STATE BALKANIZATION

Balkanization appears a bit complex in view of the stream of meanings associated with the concept. Taken from a macro dimension, it means break-up, and refers to subdivision of sovereign states into many independent countries. Among the examples given for such form of balkanization include the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, which led to the emergence of several new states, many of which were unstable and ethnically mixed, and subsequently enmeshed in violence, (Pingle, 2019). Although this version depicts many separatist moves in Nigeria, it does not as well form a subject for discussion in this paper.

The emphasis on State balkanization as applied in this study draws inference from micro perspective, which narrows the meaning to fractional division occurring within a federating unit, where the country's leadership commands sovereign powers over the subdivided groups. In this context, balkanization is a geopolitical term for the process of fragmentation or division of a region or state into smaller regions or states that are often hostile or uncooperative with one another (Wikipedia). In the same context, Pingle (2019) posits that balkanization is division of a multinational state into smaller ethnically homogenous entities.

Moreover, the term can also refer to the disintegration or break-up of other things such as companies, Internet websites or even neighborhoods, (Pingle, 2019).

Etymologically, balkanization as a term was coined at the end of World War 1 to describe the ethnic and political fragmentation that followed the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, particularly in the Balkans, (Briney, 2019). The contemporary use of balkanization is to explain the disintegration of some multiethnic states and their devolution into dictatorship, ethnic cleansing, and civil war, (Briney, 2019). Vitaly, this study differentiates balkanization as break up of sovereign state to form other independent state(s) from mere subdivision of existing federating units, which it adopts. In this regard, balkanization, in actual fact, describes the fragmentation of states or regions in a federation and therefore synonymous with state creation in Nigeria, which forms the central thesis of this paper.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopts Elite Theory. The roots of elite theory lay in the works of Weber (1922), Pareto (1935), and Mosca (1939). Gomes (2019:18) asserts that Pareto, Mosca, Weber and Michels are the originators of elite theory. Of course, Vilfredo Pareto introduced the term 'elite' to the vocabulary of the social sciences in the late nineteenth century, (Korom, 2015:390). In other words, Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Robert Michels developed classic elite theories in opposition to the Marxist belief that a popular proletarian regime would yield democratization. A ruling minority, so the basic theorem goes, will always out-organize large majorities, (Korom, 2015:390).

These authors describe how a small minority creates and adopts rules, means and practices in order to continue controlling power, co-opting a few non-elite members, and assuming the principal role as political and social actors, (Gomes, 2019:18). Apparently, they popularized the adoption of elite concept to distinguish forms of access to leadership, control over decision-making process in both political and economic sectors of a society, and to illustrate how power concentrates in a clique in political systems, in contradistinction to variants of argument for power distribution by "Group and Pluralist Theorists". In fact, they were assertive in their fixations on elite power monopoly and dominance over class of majority in a society. López, (2013) gives further illuminating emphasis thus:

The concept of 'elites' is based on the notion that every society holds a ruling minority, a group that controls and disputes the most important power sources. Not only do elites dispute power (reaching different levels of conflict and violence), but new elites also enter the game through different mechanisms of elite recruitment. Thus, the core of elite theory relies in explaining elite behavior, elite interaction, elite

transformation and, ultimately, the connection between those instances and state outcomes, (López, 2013).

It buttresses the fact that elite theory focuses on how small number of elite groups concentrate and dispute power in specific societies and historic periods and how the elite actions in political, economic and status power relationships shape both the past and the future, (Gomes, 2019:17). In same vein, Johnson (2005) posits that politics is best understood through the generalization that a relatively small and wealthy group of people sharing similar values and interests and mostly coming from relatively similar privileged backgrounds holds nearly all-political power. In that context, current elite theory defines ‘elites’ as actors controlling resources, occupying key positions and relating through power networks, (Yamokoski and Dubrow, 2008). Such power networks involve the interplay of two groups described as ruling elites and non-ruling elites, or governing elites and non-governing elites. The difference between the two according to Brezis and Temin (2014:4) is that,

Ruling elites are composed of those few with the power of decision in various sectors of the polity or economy. These ruling elites include the economic elite (the top entrepreneurs and CEOs as well as the bureaucrats and civil servants who rule the macro-environment) and the political elite that govern and operate the executive, legislative and judicial structures. Non-ruling elites comprise the members of media, academia and intelligentsia, (Brezis and Temin, 2014).

Thus, struggles for power among them naturally dovetail into incessant attempts to balkanize a region, state or local government, and form a separate political enclave for control and domination. The agitations for state balkanization, in this regard, are too common in developing countries like Nigeria where primitive accumulation based on access and proximity to corridors of power constitute a major qualification. Such separate area of prominence, in terms of governance and authoritative allocation of state resources, is conceived to be exclusively reserved for control by the benefitting elite class who carved it out, without much expectant rivalry and challenges from other contenders.

Therefore, power relations among the elite class is sustained when each group is satisfied with the power sharing, revenue sharing and how other benefits from government are justly distributed, otherwise each group is compelled to seek an isolated political and economic empire where they control these resources with less interferences. The dissatisfaction and urge to possess a separate area of dominance has made agitation for new states transform from a political mechanism for assuaging ethnic minority fears into a generalized strategy in the competitive struggles among diverse constituencies for federal resources, (Suberu, 1995: 56, in Adetoye, 2016:37). It is also observed that,

The use of ethnic, religious and other communal bases for political and economic competition and legitimization among status quo beneficiaries has become the strategy in the hands of the ethnic populations in Nigeria to etch themselves in critical positions in resource allocation process in the country. In this process, the elite manipulate regional, state and local government apparatus for class and communal competition and personal aggrandizement, (Adetoye, 2016:37).

The implication is that agitation i.e. demands for state balkanization appear to be prerogative of elite class that aspires to entrench firm control over a geographical area, or desirous of controlling both political power and allocation of resources in a particular territory where it exercises jurisdiction. The fact that elite theory surmises the dynamics of power play in a political system and elaborates the interplay of competing elements (majorly the elites' conflicting interests), which the ultimate goal is self-preservation and perpetuation in positions of influence (short of any risk to the class extinction), informs the adoption of the theoretical framework for this study. The facts are shown subsequently.

FEDERALISM AND STATE BALKANIZATION IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY

Most federal systems experience one forms of state balkanization in the federation or vesting powers over resource control in the composite units. Many factors or reasons contribute to the phenomenon, and both developed and developing federations are vulnerable to internal conflicts that fertilize the agitations for state balkanization but it is spectacular in the latter. They include misunderstanding among elite class based on exclusion or marginalization in governance, corrupt political leadership, denials/deprivation, nepotism, religious fanaticism, ethnicity, unfavorable government policy, political emasculation of ethno-religious minority, desire for protection of unique cultural ties, conflict of interests over scarce resources and positions of authority, rivalry among elite class, and political competition among ethno-religious diversity in a country. They affect national integration.

Evidences in historical records show that countries, which started statehood with few administrative units, have increased the number overtime. The United States of America, which started as 13 colonies, has subdivided the federation into 50 states. Nigeria started with three regions but have 36 States at moment. The causative factor could be attributed to divisive instinct or separatist push and pulls altercation on national issues. It manifests in any slightest provocation as experienced during the Donald Trump's post election protests where some states opted to secede from the union or supported the breakup of America, (Issenberg, 2018). Germany presents another proof of threatened national integration sequel to forces of state balkanization of the country into Eastern and Western Germany.

However, prior to the German reunification on 3 October 1990, the East German states were reconstituted close to their earlier configuration as the five “New States”. The former district of East Berlin joined West Berlin to form the new state of Berlin. Therefore, the 10 "old states" plus 5 "new states" plus the new state Berlin adds up to current 16 states of Germany, (Uwe, 1999). Nonetheless, Gunlicks (2011) contends that several proposals have failed so far to stem the tides of agitation; thereby making territorial reform to remain a controversial topic in German politics and public perception. Though commonplace in most diverse federal states, but the case in Germany is such that,

A new delimitation of the federal territory keeps being debated in Germany, in contrast to how there are "significant differences among the American states and regional governments in other federations without serious calls for territorial changes" in those other countries, (Gunlicks, 2011).

In the case of Indian federation for example, the agitations for Gorkhaland, Bodoland, and KarbiAnglong have been an ongoing demand. This is apart from the new demands for a separate Vidarbha State in Maharashtra, and Harit Pradesh and Poorvanchal in Uttar Pradesh”, (Rout, 2018). Thus, the more the number of states the more the centre was held hostage to state parties on matters of national importance, and the more the threats to national integration among the regional groupings.

Recent demands like four-fold division of Uttar Pradesh and the creation of Gorkhaland from West Bengal are instances of aggressive regionalism that pose a threat to the federal structure of India, (Rout, 2018).

The foregoing few examples of the consequences of state balkanization on national integration among some federal states, extrapolate the assumption that no political system (federation to be more precise) is precluded from agitations for state balkanization but each country differs only in terms of structural maintenance mechanism and coping strategy, amidst elite induced political agitations in the system.

THE SURGE OF STATE BALKANIZATION IN NIGERIA

Prior to effectuation of phenomenon of colonialism in Nigeria and its widespread influence the world over, many of the federating units that constitute present day Nigeria were independent in many respects. Therefore, their sudden fusion under one government during colonization and the consequent inability to consummate the integration rekindles every facet of efforts to reinvent their original titles either singularly or in association with those with whom each shares cultural ties. The separatist agitation preceded era of regionalism in colonial Nigeria, hallmarked the introduction of 1954 Lyttleton Constitution but defied the various policies aimed at stemming the divisive tendency.

The common thread that runs through the entire colonial constitutions centers on the efforts at reforming the federating units and system of governance. It also includes addressing forms of political representation and formula for sharing revenue, which the public view as panaceas to demands for state balkanization. Notwithstanding, it is glaring and perhaps indubitable that most of them did not find solutions to the myriads of problems preying the nation. It made demerger of previously knitted federating units become more pronounced and made reforms in Nigeria's federal system and other sundry issues relating mainly to revenue sharing formula and contestation for power among elite class from across the diverse ethnic nationalities to remain rallying points in the politics of state balkanization. These are evident in most emergent 36 states created in Nigeria during the 1967, 1976, 1987, 1991, and 1996 military administrations. The details are sequentially presented below.

As noted previously, balkanization of Nigeria has remote origin. In 1946, Nigeria was carved into three administrative centres, namely: Eastern, Northern and Western regions. Midwestern region was added to the three to make it four regions in 1963 after Nigeria had attained both political independence and republican status. State balkanization became periodic exercises when military assumed political leadership in the country. For example, General Yakubu Gowon in 1967, created 12 states, which include North-Western State, Kaduna State, Kano State, North-Eastern State, Kwara, Benue-Plateau State, Western State, East-Central state, Lagos State, Mid-Western (Bendel) State, Cross River State and Rivers State. Subsequently, General Murtala Mohammed, following the overthrow of General Gowon's administration in a coup, restructured the existing 12 states into 19 states in 1976 and comprised Oyo, Ondo, Cross River, Rivers, Niger, Sokoto, Borno, Kano, Kaduna, Bendel, Ogun, Lagos, Kwara, Gongola, Bauchi, Imo, Anambra, Plateau and Benue, (Ibenegbu, 2019).

However, in 1987, the administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida created additional two states – Aka Ibom and Katsina, to make the total number 21. In 1991, the administration restructured some boundaries of existing states in addition to creating new ones to make the number of states 30 and they include Yobe, Taraba, Oyo, Osun, Kogi, Kebbi, Jigawa, Enugu, Edo, Delta, Anambra, Adamawa, and Abia. Finally, in 1996, General Sani Abacha led administration created more 6 states, Nasarawa, Ebony, Ekiti, Gombe, Bayelsa and Zamfara, (Ibenegbu, 2019) to come to the 36 states and 774 local governments in Nigeria at moment. The various stages of the state balkanization exercise in Nigeria culminate in lopsided numbers of state and local governments unevenly distributed between

northern and southern parts and among the six geopolitical zones in the country, as shown below.

Table 1: Six Geopolitical Zones created in Nigeria during 1994-1995 Conference

North Central Zone	North East Zone	North West Zone	South East Zone	South-South Zone	South West Zone
Benue	Adamawa	Jigawa	Abia	Akwa Ibom	Ekiti
Kogi	Bauchi	Kaduna	Anambra	Bayelsa	Lagos
Kwara	Borno	Kano	Ebonyi	Cross River	Ogun
Nasarawa	Gombe	Katsina	Enugu	Rivers	Ondo
Niger	Taraba	Kebbi	Imo	Delta	Osun
Plateau	Yobe	Sokoto		Edo	Oyo
FCT, Abuja		Zamfara			

Sources: Compiled by the Authors

The authoritarian military regimes dominated by officers from the Northern part and sharing same ethno-religious alignment, illogically created and imposed these states and local governments on the nation, without reasonable consultation. Similarly, the same class of military oligarchy delineated State House of Assembly constituencies, Federal House of Reps constituencies and Senatorial districts without vital inputs from the critical stakeholders. The corollary is that Northern region was favoured in the exercise with more states, local governments and other consequent elective offices, with the attendant economic advantages, thus fueling constant agitations for further balkanization of the federation into more states, local governments and administrative units, to achieve a balanced structure and harness the economic benefits. The economic driving force in state creation demands portends gridlock on the path to entrenching national unity; and the glittering fundamental problem in elite class mentality does not help matters. Gana (1987) cited in Adetoye, (2016:37) posits that given the character of the Nigerian political economy, in particular the central role of the state in the process of accumulation, it is not difficult to understand why the creation of states has served to expand the material base of the agitators in their aspiration to transform themselves into effective competitors.

Table 2: Numbers of States & Local Govts created in each State in the Northern & Southern Zones

North Central Zone		North East Zone		North West Zone		South East Zone		South-South Zone		South West Zone	
No of States	No of Local Govts	No of States	No of Local Govts	No of States	No of Local Govts	No of States	No of Local Govts	No of States	No of Local Govts	No of States	No of Local Govts
Benue	23	Adama wa	21	Jigawa	27	Abia	17	Akwa Ibom	31	Ekiti	16
Kogi	21	Bauchi	19	Kaduna	23	Anambra	21	Bayelsa	8	Lagos	20
Kwara	16	Borno	27	Kano	44	Ebonyi	13	Cross River	18	Ogun	20
Nasarawa	13	Gombe	11	Katsina	34	Enugu	17	Rivers	23	Ondo	18
Niger	25	Taraba	16	Kebbi	21	Imo	27	Delta	25	Osun	30
Plateau	17	Yobe	17	Sokoto	23			Edo	18	Oyo	33
FCT	6			Zamfara	15						
6	121	6	111	7	187	5	95	6	123	6	137

Sources: Compiled by the Authors

In this way, agitation for state balkanization becomes apparent in nation-states where each ethnic nationality bemoans colonial experience that integrated them into strange political marriage with incompatible groups. It is worse case scenario in post-colonial states where there are evidences of discomfiture in structural equity while reconstituting the federating units and administrative centres (shown in table 2 above) through which government shares public revenue. It tends to revive consciousness of the original structure of the previously separate but forcefully integrated political communities by inciting agitations for state balkanization, which guarantees their separate power and economic base. However, the experience at state balkanization sometimes does not reflect emphases on similarity in background or cultural affinity but premised on nepotism and misconceived personal motivations to undue power challengers. In this case, the creation of 12 states by General Yakubu Gowon in Nigeria in 1967 provides an example, based on his assertion that “the creation was to protect the rights of minorities in the event of a civil war” (Edigin, 2010). Such awkward action frustrates national integration programme and inspires unceasing struggle for state balkanization in Nigeria. As such, “A multiethnic state requires potent integration mechanisms because multi-ethnicity is a potential political ‘time-bomb’ which may explode at any time”, (Idowu and Sayuti, 2016:67).

JAUNDICED APPROACHES TO RESOLVING STRUCTURAL IMBALANCE IN NIGERIA

There have been continuous calls for more states in Nigeria. Although this paper does not ignore the extant debates on the rationality or otherwise for state balkanization, it succinctly notes firstly that, “the agitators for more States argue that State creation brings development closer to the doorsteps of many Nigerians. Secondly, that such an exercise creates an opportunity for the marginalized people or ethnic groups to have access to power. Thirdly, that state creation gives some regions or ethnic groups more weight in their bargain for the allocation of values, and fourthly, that by creating new bureaucracies, it gives mass employment to youths and other qualified graduates” (Adeleyev, 2015). The debate remains manifest while the study refocuses on analyzing failed attempts in the system.

The policies that have sought to address factors that necessitate agitations for state balkanization during the colonial era included the Chicks Commission (1946); Hick-Phillipson Commission (1950); Chicks Commission (1954); Raisman Commission (1957); Jerem Bentham Commission (1957), (Okibe, 2000). However, none served as deterrent to elite power politics. The post-colonial era has witnessed the Binns Commission (1964); Dina Commission (1968); Aboyade Technical Committee (1977), Okigbo Commission (1980) and Dasuki Commission (1981), (Ugwu, 1998:88). Others are General Gowon’s Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference (August 1966); General Abacha’s National Constitutional Conference (1994-1995); President Obasanjo’s National Political Reform Conference (February-July, 2005), Justice Belgore Committee (2012), President Jonathan’s National Conference (2014) and several military decrees and administrative changes initiated by civilian administration.

In Nigeria prior to 1960, about 9-15 demands for state creation were expressed, including a Yoruba Central State, Ondo Central and Mid-West from the Western Region; Cross River-Ogoja-Rivers States from the Eastern Region; and Middle Belt State from the Northern Region. No other State apart from the Mid-West Region was created before the collapse of the First Republic in January 1966, (2014 National Conference Report, P.12). Many ethno-linguistic groups that had sought for new states to sever political ties with their host region or ethnic group but denied the opportunities were dissatisfied with the system. Apart from the consequent political instability and nurturing of vengeful buccaneering culture in the system, it encouraged repulsive politics that dominated the first republic.

The nature of inter and intra-ethnic relations and intractable politics tending towards balkanizing the country spurred military intervention on 15th January 1966, which resulted in

the abolition of federal system by Decree 34, and adoption of unitary system. After the counter coup of 29th July 1966, General Gowon summoned an Ad Hoc Constitutional Conference in August 1966 to discuss the future political development of the country, following the restoration of Nigeria's federal system. Consequently, the conference debated four critical issues: first, the issue of creating more States, arising directly from the problem of structural imbalance in the federation; second, the form and unit of association within the federation; third, the composition of the central authority and fourth, the issue of succession to national political leadership, (2014 National Conference Report, P.14).

Nonetheless, it skipped discussions on resource control and equitable formula for revenue allocation, which harboured greater percentage of pre-independence agitations. Furthermore, there was silence on each occasion on defense and foreign affairs, financing of the centre, judiciary, armed forces and police, and other functions of the central authority that have the potentials to stem the tides of separatist agitation and thereby promote national unity. It merely deliberated on proposals from the four Regions without deciding on any agreed programme for keeping Nigeria as an indivisible political entity, but opened the cankerworm of ethno-religious conflicts through unilateral decision to balkanize Nigeria into 12 state structures. It aggravated the already fractured existing mistrust, intensified fears, heightened tension and assumed a threatening dimension with the consequent massacre of Ibos across northern cities and in all the security formations. The displeasure of Eastern region, mainly, with the visible silence of Northern led military administration on the pogrom snowballed into a civil war in 1967.

Since the end of the civil war in January 1970, there has not been any freely convened political reform conference to engage the ethnic diversities in robust discussion on how to run inclusive governance and coexist peacefully. Rather, each military or civilian government convoke recurring unfruitful conferences with vague or cloudy objective, sometimes generally viewed as ploys to douse intractable sectional agitation for proper restructuring of the federating units through state balkanization, which will better accommodate excluded interests in the polity. It makes realistic redress of the dysfunctional system elusive, with persistence of the centrifugal underlying hitches and feuds. However, between 1994 and 1995, the military government led by General Sani Abacha organized a National Constitutional Conference (NCC) to redefine the structure of Nigeria but at last aborted the lofty recommendations because of conflict of interests. The conference deliberated on the issues of regional power rotation and zoning and loosely recommended that the presidency should rotate between North and South. In consonance, the six geopolitical zones –

Northeast, Northwest, North central, Southeast, Southwest and South-south, which Alex Ekwueme proposed was adopted, (Onwudiwe 2004: 273-74).

The overwhelming public approval of the zonal arrangement, which defied the enigma of ethno-religious boundaries, made General Abacha, in October 1995, “to support the creation of the six administrative regions within the country to share and rotate the six senior government posts”, (Gboyega, 2001:18). It includes the offices of President, Vice President, Senate President, Deputy Senate President, Speaker Reprs, Deputy Speaker Reprs, Secretary to the Government of the Federation and perhaps, others. Although dividing Nigeria into six zones offered opportunity to address the lingering marginalization syndrome among the ethno-religious divides, it has not found any expression in the constitution and thus represents mere fluid political fixture that lacks in legality.

Interestingly, it rekindled ethnic dialogue and relevant in all spheres of political consideration. It formed rallying points for aggregating ethnic interests in each agitation or debates for further balkanization of the federating units. Nevertheless, it is imperative to mention that the National Constitutional Conference (NCC), which the military regime of General Sani Abacha constituted, rejected the proposals for balkanization of the nation or a looser confederation as an alternative to federal system. In addition, it was reluctant to addressing the bizarre agitation for new states that nearly all the ethnic nationalities proposed one or two conflicting states and thereby shared internal disagreements among them, despite the fact that,

The committee on new states approved the creation of 20 new states and 438 new local governments, but the conference refused to endorse the recommendation for state creation, (Odinkalu, 2001:11).

The prevailing opinion was a strong support for the continuation of the federation, with gradual open discussion of identified societal issues and problems within the structure of a legitimate constitutional conference, (Odinkalu, 2001:11). The status quo apologists constitute mainly the beneficiaries of the flawed system that desired no change that would displace their hegemonic power bloc. After 1998, further search for feasible solution to leadership problems in Nigeria resulted in the adoption of the French model of hybrid parliamentary and presidential structures, an idea first raised by senior civil servants in 1990, but considered by many as simply a way to maintain some northern control by having multiple centers of power, (Gboyega, 2001:27). However, the idea was extinct thereafter.

The administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo convened a National Political Reform Conference from February - July 2005. Among the issues proposed for political reforms were: the federal structure, fiscal federalism (especially in relation to resource control), form

of government, citizenship, accountability and ethics in government, the Independent National Electoral Commission, political parties, reform of the electoral system, the economy, foreign policy and the environment, (2014 National Conference Report, P.20). In the end, the conference deliberated and treated more than 700 memoranda submitted by Nigerians, and arrived at near unanimity on 187 recommendations out of 189 subjects decided. The two areas that experienced serious disagreement include, “Resource Control” and the tenure of the President and Governors, (2014 National Conference Report, P.20). The conference resolved nothing significant and impactful at the end because of extensive third term politicking sponsored by the government and which distracted attention on the protracted problems.

Essentially, the 2014 National Conference organized by the administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, evidenced high-level mutual understanding based on its resolutions. Although the report of the conference amounts to writing a General Order and it can be better titled, “ABC of Policies for Governance at All Levels in Nigeria”, “It was unable or unwilling to isolate the main contentious issues which confronted the nation for debate and resolution”, (Akinyanju, 2017).

It sustained federalism as the mode of relationship; it rejected the creation of regions and zones as formal structure of government. It specifically said that the geopolitical zones should not be the federating units of the Nigerian Federation. It agreed to create 18 more states. It resolved that states shall be the federating units and shall have their respective constitutions, right to self-determination while simultaneously each ethnic group within a state shall also have a right to self-determination. Each state shall have a revenue sharing formula (apparently with its local government), (Akinyanju, 2017).

Additionally, the 2014 National Conference Report, (279-280) also recommended and finally endorsed the creation of eighteen (18) more States from across political zones in Nigeria, and include:

- ❖ Apa State from the present Benue State;
- ❖ Edu State from Niger State;
- ❖ Kainji State from the present Kebbi State;
- ❖ Katagun State from the present Bauchi State;
- ❖ Savannah State from the present Borno State;
- ❖ Amana State from the present Adamawa State;
- ❖ Gurara State from the present Kaduna State;
- ❖ Ghari State from the present Kano State;

- ❖ Etiti State from the present South East Zone;
- ❖ Aba State from the present Abia State;
- ❖ Adada State from the present Enugu State;
- ❖ Njaba-Anim State from the present Anambra and Imo States;
- ❖ Anioma State from the present Delta State;
- ❖ Ogoja State from the present Cross River State;
- ❖ Ijebu State from the present Ogun State; and
- ❖ New Oyo State from the present Oyo State.

The essence was to achieve structural balance and equity and end agitations for further state balkanization, in the nearest future. Although there are many other recommendations made by the conference and submitted to government for possible implementation after the intense inter and intra-ethno-religious confrontations with the prefacing disintegration innuendo, the PDP led administration implemented none of them before it lost re-election bid in 2015 to APC. The non-implementation combined with the infidelity of the ruling class towards efforts at finding an enduring solution to some problematic national malaise, has gone beyond the mere façade of state balkanization. This is because despite the increase of states from 12 to 36 by the military class, and allocation of more powers to the legislative list of the central government, the Nigerian states today have become as pauperised as appendages that they cannot even pay the salaries of their workers let alone their gratuities and pensions, (Ikokuwu – Vanguard June 30, 2017). This reality serves no caution to agitators for state balkanization; hence, it is common to observe in Nigeria that politics takes precedence over the prevailing national questions that leaders deliberately veiled the needed answers.

The truth is that agitation for state balkanization hinges on the resource distributive nature of the political economy. Once numbers of states, local governments and elective positions imply the amount of resources allocated thereto, the natural tendency is that elites from each geopolitical divides is compelled to demand structural equity. Presently, Nigeria’s federal structure embodies disproportionate allocation of states, local governments, State House constituencies, Federal House of Reps constituencies and Senatorial district to various states constituting the six geopolitical zones. It is apt to cite the composition of these administrative structures in tables 3 & 4 and thus illustrate the empirical synergy or networking of the consequential implications on national integration in Nigeria.

Table 3: Nos. of State Assembly, House of Reps & Senate Seats created in each State of the three Geopolitical Zones in the North

North Central Zone			North East Zone			North West Zone					
States	No. of Seats in State Assembly	No. of Seats in House of Reps	No. of Seats in Senate	States	No. of Seats in State Assembly	No. of Seats in House of Reps	No. of Seats in Senate	States	No. of Seats in State Assembly	No. of Seats in House of Reps	No. of Seats in Senate
Benue	30	11	3	Adamawa	25	8	3	Jigawa	30	11	3
Kogi	25	9	3	Bauchi	31	12	3	Kaduna	31	16	3
Kwara	24	6	3	Borno	28	10	3	Kano	36	24	3
Nasarawa	24	5	3	Gombe	24	6	3	Katsina	34	15	3
Niger	27	10	3	Taraba	24	6	3	Kebbi	24	8	3
Plateau	24	8	3	Yobe	24	6	3	Sokoto	30	11	3
FCT	-	2	1					Zamfara	24	7	3
	154	51	19		156	48	18		209	92	21

Sources: Compiled by the Authors

Table 4: Nos. of State Assembly, House of Reps & Senate Seats created in each State of the three Geopolitical Zones in the South

South East Zone			South-South Zone			South West Zone					
States	No. of Seats in State Assembly	No. of Seats in House of Reps	No. of Seats in Senate	States	No. of Seats in State Assembly	No. of Seats in House of Reps	No. of Seats in Senate	States	No. of Seats in State Assembly	No. of Seats in House of Reps	No. of Seats in Senate
Abia	24	8	3	Akwa Ibom	26	10	3	Ekiti	26	6	3
Anambra	30	11	3	Bayelsa	24	5	3	Lagos	40	24	3
Ebonyi	18	6	3	Cross River	25	8	3	Ogun	26	9	3
Enugu	24	8	3	Rivers	25	10	3	Ondo	26	9	3
Imo	27	10	3	Delta	24	9	3	Osun	26	9	3
				Edo	32	13	3	Oyo	32	14	3
	123	43	15		156	55	18		176	71	18

Sources: Compiled by the Authors

If one compares administrative structures in table 3 with what exists in table 4, the glaring disparity in their numbers means that revenue and infrastructural facilities, which government share along these structures, lack in equity and social justice. In that regard, agitation for more states and local governments emanates from some power conscious elites who seek to disband the extant lopsided structures that skew domination in favour of some states and deny others similar opportunities. It is rare for a diverse society owing allegiance to one central authority that controls its commonwealth and power base, to succumb to dictates of national integration amidst unwarranted exclusion from scheme of things, especially where some groups benefit and other counterparts do not.

CONSEQUENCES OF STATE BALKANIZATION ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION

The logic buttressing state balkanization usually tilt towards enhancing labour mobility, infrastructural development, diversified economic growth, adequate political representation, human capital development and deepened shared national values. However, practical experiences at state and local government balkanization in Nigeria suggest something contrary and sinister because of the consequent effects on both individual members of the state and the new elite's class formation.

- ❖ It has been a dirge of unfriendly relations, conflicts and war of attrition between and among many old states and the new ones created out of them.
- ❖ It hallmarks indigene and non-indigene consciousness with government's supportive policy that becomes a watershed in inter-state relations.
- ❖ It engenders acts of discrimination and exclusion of those that switch to new states or local governments from the old ones where they formerly belonged.
- ❖ It climaxes disputes bordering on asset sharing, job loss (through disengagement policy of non-indigenes), insensitivity to political and economic cooperation or integration, discrimination in employment and other benefits associated with governance.
- ❖ It instills hate feelings among the indigenes and non-indigenes of the affected states, thereby weakening social bonding and promoting collapse of joint business ventures and investment opportunities.
- ❖ It instigates uncooperative behaviours towards government development policies, deliberate tax evasion, insubordination to constituted authority and incessant crime commission, usually blamed on frustration-aggression associated with loss of proper integration of non-indigenes.

In summary, the creation of states has rather engendered internal rivalries and conflicts between the major and minor ethnic nationalities within some states over access to state power and resources, (Eze, Elimian & Chinwuba, 2015:116). These are in spite of general consequences of the phenomenon in human relations, peaceful conduct of state affairs and overbearing damages.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study shows that demands for state balkanization are not peculiar to Nigeria but a common trend among nations that practice federalism. Although each country contends with its own peculiar problems emanating from operations of federalism, in terms of power sharing and pattern of distributing national resources, the peculiarity of the problem in Nigeria has influenced series of agitations and redress system. National integration is an

important policy goal in many nation states, (Okunogbe, 2018:2). In the case of Nigeria, “ethnic balancing has been pursued via different strategies: the creation of more states, the adoption a uniform system of local government in the country, the multiplication of local government units in the federation and finally the constitutionalization of a system of quotas for political appointments in the form of the federal character principle as well as the provision for revenue allocation”, (Idowu and Sayuti, 2016:74).

Sadly, their dysfunction results in situations where “minorities” in many parts of the country are agitating for state creation. Nonetheless, Vande (2013) reiterates, “Since 1963, state creation has not been a basis for resolving the national question and the attendant problems” and as more states are created, the more the problems emanating from them. The belief in state balkanization corroborates the assumption that each unit in a geopolitical zone, region, state, and local government has opportunity of gaining access to leadership positions, appointments, employment, infrastructural development projects, and in sharing of national revenue, which they would be statutorily qualified to benefit from. Facts show that elites from the minorities who feel excluded from the power chessboard usually lead agitation for separate states, where they would dominate and exploit.

Unfortunately, not every state creation forecloses minority phenomenon, because every new state quickly relapses into majority and minority syndrome. Thus, “the question remains whether the continuous balkanization of Nigeria into smaller, weaker and unviable units has actually brought government or power as well as development closer to the people”, (Vande, 2013). Additionally, state creation does not forge national unity or economic development but widens the complication of centripetal social factors that undermine national integration. Okonkwo, (2009) posits, “The division into more states has increased local loyalties and prevented the potential for unity among the larger ethnic groups”.

Based on the foregoing expositions, the study strongly recommends the practice of true federalism in Nigeria, in which each state will have autonomy, control its resources, develop at its own pace, and ensure inclusion of minority’s interests in governance. True federalism in this instance, is where government is made to be accountable to its citizens and no other. It is by so doing that agitation for state balkanization will become unfashionable.

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