Inclusive Governance, Leadership and Insecurity challenges in Nigerian States

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Abstract

The exclusionary governance and the dominance of a particular ethnic group in Nigeria political system has made socio-political and economic crises a regular feature of Nigerian nation states. Beginning from her independence to the present time, socio-political system has experienced crises as a result of ethnic divisions, regional politics, inequality, ethnic conflicts and insecurity. This paper explores political leadership in Nigerian nation state under different divisive ethnic politics, groups and the challenges of security. It argues that experience of ethnic divides has given reason for persistent demand and agitations for fairness and equity by those who feel they have been marginalized, and seek self-determination as option. The paper suggests the need to renew mechanisms while at the same time advocate inclusive governance under an exemplary leader who is more of unity of the diverse ethnic groups to ensure a more equitable share of power, resources and security free nation.

Keywords: Inclusive, governance, inequality, federal character, insecurity, Nigeria

Introduction

Over the years the experience of socio-economic inequalities and divided identities has remained major identities that deeply divided Nigeria society with several lines of social divisions and bases of groups identification. These lines of division as ethnicity, regional affiliations, religious sentiment, political nepotism

reflect on the number of ethnic and regional groups that make up Nigerian state. It was commonly assumed that Nigeria is segmented into about 250 ethnic groups. while one Nigerian social anthropologist revealed that, there are 374 ethnic groups in Nigeria (Otite 1990:44-57,175-183). The composition of these ethnic groups varies with composition of the three largest groups which constitute more than half of Nigeria's entire population while the eight largest groups are almost a two-third (Nnoli 1995:27). The composition of population disparity coupled with the differences in the identities and political influence of the ethnic groups broadly divides the groups into two – the majority and minority ethnic groups.

The majority ethnic groups are the Hausa-Fulani with (28% of the population), the Yoruba (18% of the population) and Igbo (16% of the population) (Agbiboa, 2017). Apart the three major ethnic groups, there are other sizable groups which include Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, Ogoni, Igbira, Jukun, Tiv. Nigeria can thus be described as an assemblage of independent native states. All the other ethnic groups fit into the minority category, with varying degrees of political status, depending on their numerical size and political influence. The major feature of ethnicity in Nigeria is that each ethnic group live in an identifiable geographical region/zone. For instance, the three largest ethnic groups are concentrated in the Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest zones respectively, while the smaller groups reside mainly in the South-south, North-central and North-east zones. The result of the geographical concentration of ethnic groups in Nigeria is that it permits the overlapping of ethnic cleavages and other bases of group identification such as region and religion. For example, the Hausa- Fulani and other communities residing in Northern Nigeria are mainly Muslims while the Igbo and other groups in the South are predominantly Christians, Yoruba in Southwest combines Christian and Islamic faith.

Prior to the incursion of the British explorers and merchants, the area now called Nigeria was inhabited by these various ethnic nationalities, which interacted among themselves, particularly in commerce. They were organized and governed on the basis of the principles of kingship, family, clans and age, which later developed in many different directions. Some remained communal democracies. Others became kingdoms, emirates, and empires (MAMSER, 1989). These traditional institutions of governance included, for instance, the kingdoms of the

Opobos; the Jukuns; the Sokoto caliphate, comprising a number of emirates; and the empires of Kanem Bornu, Oyo, Benin, and Kwara. In the mostly chief-less societies in the Eastern part of the territory, the main political authority among the Igbo rested with the age grade or family (Ifemesia, 1979).

Nigeria a very large country with population of over 200 million was a creation of colonial diktat (Agbiboa, 2017). The country which is composed of over 300 ethnic groups is divided by religion as well as ethnicity and history. The British colonial master and her government in pursuit of their economic ambition and expeditions through conquest crystallized in the rather artificial creation called Nigeria in 1914; subjugating these people from diverse culture, traditions and ethnic nationalities and organized them to construct the Nigerian state. This union has been described as a forced brotherhood and sisterhood otherwise regarded a mere geographical entity (Adeosun, 2011; Awolowo, 1974). Ever since its creation, Nigeria has been confronted with the challenges of accommodating diversity, fostering inclusiveness and promoting national unity among these diverse groups that make up the country. Nigeria's vast ethnic, linguistic, religious and regional diversity has been an abiding source of societal tensions and conflicts.

The decision in 1914 to merge Northern and Southern protectorate largely for administrative purposes, created a single political entity from two regions with limited common history and cultural ties. The Colonial rule exacerbated their differences, solidifying religious and ethnic identity as salient political distinctions and creating conditions for persistent instability. The amalgamation and its effect, produces two Nigeria with different social, political, economic and cultural background and development within the country. Its artificial origin, coupled with other socio-political and economic factors, had given it a number of fundamental problems, which has turned to be a challenge to its socio-political and economic development. Nigeria today is beset by strings of socio-political problems which stemmed from the asymmetric nature of the political structures of the country, uneven economic development and the type of the existing federal system and the spirit in which it operated, hence the question of exclusivism rocking the unity of the country.

The North– South divide continues and is marked by serious variations in economic development and access to basic social services. Contestation about religion has periodically provoked tensions between the regions and within communities, especially since the rise of more fundamentalist strains of Islam during the 1980s to the recent and emergence of Boko Haram insurgency (Agbiboa, 2013). Nigeria's political regional structure and ethnic divisions has also fueled competition between ethnic groups especially the majority Northern Muslim and Southern Christaian (Suberu, 1993). Thus, post-independence Nigerian state was turbulent marked by a succession of socio-political crisis as parties and each ethnic group violently struggled for political power and resources of the center; embroiling the institution of the state in the battle against each other. Ordinarily, the complex cleavages in Nigeria do not pose a problem however, it is the tendency of the political elites to manipulate the multifaceted identities (ethnic, regional, minority-majority, and religious divisions) during political competition that has given rise to conflicts and instability in Nigeria (Nnoli 1978, Ake 1985, Ekekwe 1986, and Jega 2000).

When Nigeria's socio-political and economic failure is examined today, one would easily discover that ethnicity, religion bigotry is central to its current under developmental syndrome. It seems to thrive in inflexible and confrontational social and political environments; the endless picture of which is irreconcilable differences and struggles between groups over access to socio-political and economic power and the opportunities that go with it. Ethnicity, is a negative force that utterly destructive to civil society and consensus building; it negates development, undermines a country's stability and flouts the rule of law. Adetiba (2012) opines that ethnicity when mobilized and manipulated can be the root causes of internal socio-political problems connected with disrespect to human rights and social justice. On the other hand, if appropriated properly, it could be the ingredients required for the realization of the ideal society, political integration, participation and common good. Ethnicity refers to a selected cultural and physical characteristic used to classify people into (ethnic) groups or categories considered to be significantly different from others. Issues arising from ethnicity in Nigeria have been of immense concern to Nigerians both at home and in the diaspora.

Often, an ethnic group is oppressed, exploited, marginalized, or discriminated against by leaders from one or more ethnic groups in a stronger political, economic, or social position. Resentment to such disability, the resultant desire for justice and equity, and a consequent struggle to have ethnically manifested wrongs righted, is not ethnicity. Rather, Toyo argued:

> It is a cry or struggle for the human dignity of people who form an ethnic group. It belongs to the category of contention or struggle for human rights. Freedom from oppression, exploitation, or other injustice on the ground of ethnic difference is a human right. It also deserves to be a citizenship right in Nigeria." (Toyo, 1999).

The on-going agitations by various ethnic groups today are a direct result of what has widely become known in Nigerian lexicon as "marginalization." For example, the Hausa/Fulani of the North are complaining about marginalization in the area of education and economic development. The Igbo are crying marginalization in almost every aspect of national endeavor, including political and senior civil service appointments, as well as economic, infrastructure and social development, therefore taken secession as option. The Yoruba are displeased, among other things, with the early retirement of their qualified and experienced nationals from the political leadership especially, the military dictatorship like the annulment of popular June 12 president election that believed to have been won by Moshood Abiola, the presidential candidate of Yoruba extraction and the reason for recent entitlement metaphor; *Yoruba Lokan* by Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the APC presidential candidate (*Guardian Newspaper*, 2022). The South-South, which comprises the oil-rich states of Nigeria, are pushing for full control of their natural resources.

Against this backdrop, this paper explores antecedent of Nigeria political history and structures. The extent to which Nigeria's adopted federal model has promoted pluralism in accordance with the current experiences with desire to recognize diversity, and promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the people of the Federation. To what extent have mechanisms, policies and political arrangements since 1966 have mitigated inter-group grievances rather than serve as a site for unwell ethno-religious sentiment and political competition or rivalry? In light of persistent regional socio-economic inequalities, and the emergence and

reach of "homegrown" religious radicalization in northern Nigeria, the occurrence of insecurity experiences as that of farmers headers conflict and the banditry, how effectively has the Nigerian federal state coped with, or adapted to new challenges of insecurities. The paper starts by exploring the political development of Nigeria's original colonial three-region federal system, with particular reference to its inherent asymmetric structural defects; that is., ethno-regional cleavages. It then explores efforts to rework Nigeria's ethno-regional federalism from an unstable unit of three unwieldy ethnic regions, prebendal politics into a more integrated multi-ethnic federation which involve inclusiveness of composition of present 36 units. In conclusion, the paper examines role of political leaders, while suggest the need to create inclusive governance under a proactive leader that devoid sentiment and to build inter-ethnic accommodation and promote pluralism in Nigeria.

Nigerian political history, structures and instability

Nigeria no doubt is the most populous black nation in Africa and deeply divided in terms of its ethnic composition. The major religious groups are Muslim, Christian and indigenous beliefs. The official language is English; this is as result of the British colonization that lasted for more than one hundred years, whereas, the other language peculiar to the three major ethnics groups are Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. Nigeria is located in Western Africa bordering on the Gulf of Guinea, and lies between Benin Republic and Cameroon. The country has a total of 923,770 square km, 13,000 square km of which is covered by water. The boundaries of Nigeria extended for 4,047 km and countries with co-joining borders include; the Benin Republic (in the South West), Cameroon (in the South South), the Republic of Chad (in the North East) and Niger Republic (in the North West) (Ijeoma, 2010), the three major ethnic groups being Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo with other sizable ethnic groups which include Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, Ogoni, Igbira, Jukun, Tiv and others.

It was less than a century ago that the heterogeneous peoples of what is now called Nigeria were geographically enclosed according to the grid of the colonial masters and administered as one territorial unit against their wish (Brain, 2009). Nigerian state was a colonial construction that ignored the large number of different and competing nationalities (Elaigwu, 1973). The British colonial masters super-

imposed the amalgamation on the diverse peoples of Nigeria, not out of consideration for the future welfare and political stability of Nigeria, but for the economic wellbeing of Britain and also for its own administrative convenience (Ochocha 2006). The colonial power that laid the foundation of Nigerian state also work against the formation of common national identity (Mandani, 1996). Consequently, Nigeria's ethnic and linguistic diversity has remained an abiding source of communal, regional, and national tensions and discord today (Graft, 1988). Although three "majority" ethnic groups—Hausa Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba—combine to make up about two thirds of the national population, some of the so-called "minority" groups constitute important (numerically and otherwise) segments of the political economy (Orji, 2001). The incessant minority agitations for recognition, their refusal to concede the political terrain to majority groups and their divisive battles for national control and supremacy, serve to both enrich and complicate the ongoing struggles to resolve the national question and reinstitute democracy in Nigeria.

The colonial master ensures that peoples of diverse culture were brought together under one country; most of whom were not properly integrated into their new states. The implication of which is the inability of Nigeria state to create an overlapping national interest disregarding parochial and primordial group interest even after many years of independence, hence the instrumentality of colonialism to the politics of exclusivism in Nigeria political system; the product of which is conflicts over the allocation of distributive socio-political and economic resources. Colonial rule exacerbated these differences, solidifying religious and ethnic identity as salient political distinctions and creating conditions for persistent instability (Mustapha, 2007). The designation of the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa/Fulani as dominant ethnicities within their respective regions has generated tensions with minority ethnic groups (Graf, 1988). The strong association of communities with particular territory has also created conflict between "indigenes" claiming nativity within a given area and other Nigerians, who are viewed as internal migrants, denied equal rights and granted limited access to land (Mamdani, 2001).

Nigeria's first post-colonial rulers inherited a state made up of three regional structures, which had been configured by the British to use the majority ethnic

groups as anchors for regional governments: the Muslim Hausa-Fulani of the northern region; the religiously bi-communal Yoruba in the southwest; and the Christian Igbo in the southeast. In an arrangement that could be described as "noncentralized" federalism, the colonial expectation was that the three-unit federal structure would grant regional autonomy and hegemony to these three major ethnic groups. Unbeknown to the architects, there were critical laws embedded in this ethnic tripod structure, which would become enduring sources of conflicts (Suberu, 1996). The wide territorial, demographic and economic power disparities between these major regions—in other words, the explosive contradictions and imbalances built into the tri-regional colonial federal system—quickly proved politically damaging.

Nigeria today is beset by strings of socio-political problems which stemmed from the lop-sided and asymmetry nature of the political divisions of the country, uneven economic development and the type of the existing federal system and the spirit in which it operated, hence the question of exclusivism rocking the unity of the country. What this suggests is that the Nigerian federation has been entangled in contradictions, inconsistencies, controversies and crises. These are subsumed in the national question, and social groups of varying ideological leanings cohere on the central issues linked to national unity, local autonomy and self-determination, equitable distribution of revenue, rewards, opportunities and power. Aside from the differences in the level of social and economic development of the ethnically based regions, there was a severe imbalance between the political power of the Muslim Hausa-Fulani of the north, the socioeconomic power of the Yoruba in the industrial southwest and the Igbo of the oil-rich southeast (Agbiboa, 2017).

Ethnic consciousness was so pronounced in Nigeria that the old national anthem adopted at independence read in part "though tribe and tongue may differ in brotherhood we stand ...." Subsequent events that plunged the country into ethnically enhanced political crisis showed that much more was needed than mere lyrics of a national anthem (Orji, 2001). The civil war, militarism, and military intervention in politics, enabled one ethnic group to perpetuate its domination of governance to the bitter exclusion of the other component nationalities. Human rights and fundamental freedoms suffered serious setbacks. The post-independence Nigeria was therefore full of turbulent conflict, it was marked by a

succession of socio-political crisis as parties and each ethnic group violently struggled for political power and resources of the center; embroiling the institution of the state in the battle against each other.

By and large, political parties and associations had sprung up. The ethnic diversity of Nigeria was greatly reflected by the fact that a total of 107 parties or associations emerged (Obaro 1980). Three political parties, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), and the Action Group (AG), dominated by the three major ethnic groups of Hausa/Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba, respectively, had remarkable impact at the national level. A dominant feature of Nigerian political parties in the 1950s and 1960s was their ethno-regional orientation. As Akinola (1989:114) puts it, the parties were:

> Severely limited in their capabilities to integrate the components of that great diversity of societies known as Nigeria. The National People's Congress (NPC) was the party of the Hausa-Fulani-Kanuri in the North, and did not extend its membership to the South; the Action Group (AG) more or less represented the Yorubas in the West; while the National Conscience of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) drew its support largely from the Ibos in the East.

The inherently flawed regional political system, combined with the equally problematic Westminster majoritarian model bequeathed by the British (complete with its winner-takes-all and dual executive arrangements), nurtured deep social and political tensions in Nigeria. Far from fostering national unity in diversity, Nigeria's regionalized political arrangements fanned the flames and intensified the thrust and impunity of centrifugal forces as driven by the ethnic majorities (Uzodike, 2010).

The late Alhaji (Sir) Abubaka Tafawa Balewa became the Prime Minister in 1960 when he won the office on the platform of the NPC. He was the deputy leader of the party, and so he had no alternative but to take dictations from his political boss, the late Sarduana of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello. The Sarduana was the Premier of Northern Nigeria. Because of traditional reasons, he Sarduana decided to remain in Kaduna, from where he directed the affairs of the nation. Chief Obafemi

Awolowo, the leader of the AG, became the Premier of the Western region; Dr. Michael I. Opara, the Eastern region; and Chief Denis Osadebey, the Mid-Western region. They all operated regional policies respectively. Soon, the incohesive political nature of the country ignited various conflicts that engulfed the nation. From that period, ethnic biases were born, and arguably still have full effect today in every department of government and among the ordinary citizens of Nigeria. The late Sarduana of Sokoto, through the Federal Prime Minister, Balewa, projected the political philosophy of his region resulting in discomfort in some parts of the country. His bid was always done at the center, seeing political power as a sure beacon of hope to pursue his political dream, he schemed and utilized it very effectively. Enjoying the numerical strength of the North, the Sarduana ensured that all elections held in the North, whether federal or regional, favored him and his political party. Though, the NCNC and the AG in the East and West respectively, also used their regional power to affect an impact at the federal level, the Sarduana's tactics nevertheless eluded them.

Researches have shown, until 1966, access to the federal government, though in principle open and competitive, was subjected to profound distortions (Dudley, 1973). These resulted from inequalities in the size, the population, the revenues and the spread of education among the three Regions carved out before independence. The Northern region alone accounted for 79% of the territory of the federation and 55% of its population - according to the 1953-54 census figures. While the British had expected that the geo-political and institutional preeminence of the North would establish an inbuilt systemic guarantee for stability, it generated increasing tensions. The broader educational and technological development of the South was constrained by the constitutional allocation of half of the parliamentary seats to representatives from the Northern Region. The contradiction between the constitutional allocation of power and its real distribution in society became an intrinsic source of agitation and violence and eventually produced the collapse of the first Republic in January 1966 (Sklar, 1965).

The intense competition between the three dominant political parties' leaders and their ethnic groups led to serious electoral malpractices in the 1964 general election and the 1965 Western Regional election. The docile nature of the post-independence ruling elites also contributed to the first *coup* in Nigeria. In their

efforts to win electoral support outside their regional bases, the dominant political parties in the Western and Eastern Regions, the AG and NCNC have engage in fierce struggle, capitalized on the issue of creation of states (Suberu 2001:83). Both parties supported the demands for creation of states in other regions, but resisted the splitting of their own regions (Agbioba, 2015). No wonder, the government of first republic under the leadership of the then Head of State, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa was prematurely brought to an unexpected end in 1966 when the military assumed control of governance through a coup. The smoldering volcano of rampage, arson, pillage, and jungle justice, triggered off by the allegations that the Western region elections were rigged, provided a fertile ground for the military to seize power on January 15, 1966. Announcing the reasons for the *coup,* Major C.K. Nzegwu, said:

> In the name of the Supreme Council of the Revolution of the Nigerian Armed Forces, I declare martial law over the Northern provinces of Nigeria ... We seized power to stamp out tribalism, nepotism and regionalism ... The constitution is suspended and the regional government and elected assemblies are hereby dissolved. All political parties, cultural, tribal and trade union activities, together with all demonstrations and unauthorized gatherings, excluding religious worships, are banned until we established a strong, united and prosperous nation, free from corruption and internal strife **...** All treaty obligations previously entered into with any foreign nation will be respected, and we hope that such nations will respect our country's territorial integrity and will avoid taking sides with enemies of the revolution and enemies of the people .... (Ojiako,1979)

The first military government was headed by late General Aguiyi Ironsi and lasted for six months before it was abruptly sacked by another military coup that brought Gen. Yakubu Gowon to power. Nigeria federalism came under a serious threat with the outbreak of the civil war that lasted for thirty months. Though a military intervention suited the political grievances of the era, the manner of its execution engendered little tribal sentiment. And it did, indeed, trigger the first of a chain of

coups detat that Nigerians contended with for close to three decades, until the return to democracy on May 29, 1999

General Aguiyi-Ironsi, in the military tradition, announced decrees 35 for suspending parts of the federal constitution, the offices of the President and Prime Minister, and establishing a military government in each of the four regions (Ojiako, 1979) of all the reforms introduced by the new administration, the climax was the replacement of federalism with the unitary system of government. Though, he knew the ailments afflicting the country, his approach to them did not quite address the issues. Northerners felt cheated and unveiled their fear of the implication of Igbo (Ene 2001) domination by agitating vehemently for an abrogation of the unitary system. Ironsi's reason for the unitary system was that the federal system had forced politicians to play on tribal passions to cement their supporters and thus had driven a wedge between the country's regions. The abortive attempt by the first military head of state to replace the federal system with a unitary government in 1966 was followed by the secession of the Eastern region (due partly to pogroms against Igbos in the Muslim north), the self-proclaimed "Republic of Biafra," (Adamolekun, 1991).

The January 15, 1966 revolution was widely interpreted in many quarters, including the British Broadcasting Corporation ("BBC") in ethnic terms. The insinuations that the Igbo master plan was to dominate the polity and dictate the pace of events rather than a bid for clean government (in the language of the *coup* makers) prompted Northern officers in the armed forces to over throw General Ironsi's military government on July 29, 1966, while Ironsi was on an official visit to the Western region. The Northern officers mutinied, arrested General Aguiyi-Ironsi at Ibadan, and killed him along with his host, Lt. Colonel Fajuyi (Governor of the Western region), despite vehement resistance by the latter for the mutineers to spare the life of his guest. The killing that followed this coup across the country eventually led to the secession and the 30 months Nigeria civil war. Since the end of the civil war in 1970, nine military *coups* have taken place in Nigeria. While four succeeded and effectively ran governments, the rest failed due to timely intervention by the government in power to foil those attempting overthrow by force.

Nigerian state and Transformation Mechanisms under the Military Rule

The experience of civil war as well as reaction of Nigerians to General Aguiyi-Ironsi unitary system made military government to have instituted major political reforms in an effort to ameliorate interethnic relations within the institutions of the federation. To many Nigerians statesmen, among others saw the failures of the 1960s as a result of leaders who, in their inordinate pursuit of power, emphasized the part rather than the whole, allowing "regionalism, tribalism, sectionalism and ethnicity" to undercut the political process (Kendhammer, 2014:405). Alhaji Shehu Shagari, Nigeria's first executive president for example, asserts that the 1960s' system of autonomous regions had established a national culture of "ignorance and unfamiliarity, and therefore fear and mistrust." (Kirk-Greene, 1983: 58),

Thus, following the civil war, Nigeria's federalism became primarily "ethno-territorial," in an effort to balance the protection and recognition of minorities by dividing the largest ethnic communities among multiple states (Kendhammer, 2014). Consequently, in order to contain the pervasive tensions and conflicts that resulted from the lawed regional dichotomy of first republic, nearly every Nigerian government has devoted attention to issues related to the structure of the federal state. This is in consonant with Graf that, "it is a truism of Nigerian politics that the country's continuing existence as a nation -state hinge on its capacity to evolve and maintain an adequate system of federalism (Graf, 1988: 133)." The unsuccessful or counterproductive experienced by Nigerians from some of these measures equally agreed with Larry Diamond's point that Nigeria's cultural pluralism "defies successful management through any but democratic and rigorously federalist principles (Diamond, 1991:5).

Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a northern minority military Christian solder, who took over power after the second 1966 military coup that unseated Major-General Aguiyi Ironsi, reworked the country's federal structure to a 12-state arrangement (six in the North, six in the South) in 1967. While the 12-state structure could not avert the imminent secession of the Igbo dominated Eastern region as the Republic of Biafra, it nevertheless helped to weak the hegemony of the north, curtail the chauvinism and secessionism of the three major groups, and alleviate ethnic minority grievances (Suberu, 2006). General Murtala Muhammed further expanded the number of states to 19 states in 1976. General Ibrahim Babangida

increased these to 21 states in 1987 and 30 in 1991. In 1996, General Sani Abacha expanded the number of units yet again to the present figure of 36 states. During the same period, the third tier of governance in the federation, the local government authority, rose from about 330 units to 774 (Mustapha, 2007). However, far from reduced ethno-regional politics, the state creation process simply restructured it: Without their regional institutional backbone and now split into many states, hegemonic ethno- regional political elites adopted other symbols and rituals as rallying points, leaving the tri-polarity of the political system almost intact (Mustapha, 2007). Thus, the creation of 36 component states and 774 local government areas has not really solved the problem of ethnicity and group representation.

Military government in its quest to ensure national unity and ethnic integration particularly after the civil war of 1967-1970 had attempted an inclusive institution that will allow every ethnic group to be fully represented at national level when introduces federal character. The members of Constitution Drafting Committee in 1976 were of the opinion that fears of domination or exclusion were important features of Nigeria politics, and that it was necessary to prevent the predominance of persons from a few states, ethnic or sectional groups in government or its agencies. Consequently, the Committee members adopted the term federal character as the framework for promoting representation in government.

The crux of the federal character principle is to facilitate a visible balance in public life, ensuring that no community could claim that they had been unfairly excluded by those in power. The term "federal character," was introduced in 1976 by General Murtala Muhammed at the initial meeting of the Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC) he referred to "… the distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria a sense of belonging in the nation (Krik Grenee, 1983:62). The focus is that such socio-political mechanism will help to reduce or even prevent ethnic conflict and engender ethnic balance as well as socio-political and economic development; hence federal character as a socio-economic and political arrangement transcends ethnic loyalty and symbolizes the aspiration for national unity. Federal character principle become a logical framework into which nearly every demand on state resources is fitted and through which every grievance is expressed (Kendhammer,

2014). The principle seeks to ensure that appointments to public service institutions fairly reflect the linguistic, ethnic, religious, and geographic diversity of the country. The 1979 Constitution, for example, specified those major federal institutions including universities, civil service and indeed, armed forces must reflect the federal character of Nigeria (Mustapha, 2007; Mamdani, 2001). What it meant was that entrance to federal universities, the civil service and the army were to be driven by a quota system for each state and only Nigerians indigenous to a particular state would qualify for a quota.

What informed the adoption and application of federal character principle was partly influenced by experiences of the 1950s through 1960s and 1970s when the county's socio-political affairs was marred by inequalities in the distribution of socio-political power, wealth and status, and domination and oppression by bigger ethnic groups and other sectional groups and the fact that all ethnic groups no matter how small or big, economically poor or educationally backward needed to be given a fair share of socio-political representation through which national integration, national unity, and a sense of belonging to the country notwithstanding the diversity of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion would be promoted. Undoubtedly, the rationale behind the introduction and adoption of this socio-political and economic strategy is a laudable one. The reason is because it discourages socioeconomic and political imbalance within the polity and possibly stems down bias in policy making process.

Unfortunately, the laudable aspect of this mechanism is constrained by the fact that the political class – a relatively small group of people that is aware and active in politics and from whom the national leadership is drawn –degenerated the principle, incorporating the principles of socio-political strategies for regional, geographical, religious, and ethnic and sub-ethnic balancing at both federal and sub-federal levels. This class in Nigeria has, in a sense, cultivated alliances whose primary interest is their socio-political gains through the manipulation of ethnicity. What has been the bane of the realization of the objectives of federal character has always been the selfish interest of the old major ethnic groups in the federation. This is because the principle seems to have favored the tri-partite ethnic groups in the distribution socio-political and economic goods, thus making the policy to be counter-productive in some areas.

For example, while some from the North have praised the policy as the "cornerstone of ethnic justice and fair government, others from the South condemned it as geographical apartheid, with many southern civil servants viewing the policy as "a tool for depriving them of their jobs Suberu, 2001: 111). There were fears in the North that the more advanced South would dominate federal institutions and agencies. The second factor is that the North is geographically and demographically larger than the two major Southern groups (Yoruba and Igbo) combined. These factors have complicated Nigeria's political process, leading to intense rivalry among the three dominant elite groups as well as what is popularly known as the "North-South" dichotomy (Ibrahim 2002:185). Thus, the reason for the convergence of the interests of the dominant groups in favor of proportional office distribution can be summarized in terms of the mutual fear of domination by the dominant ethnic groups. More often than not, Nigeria's deep divisions have not only served as a decisive factor in driving instability in its political economy, but have also, in part, rendered fruitless all efforts at institutionalizing democratic values within the country (Agbiboa, 2017).

In the aftermath of the civil war was the search for elite consensus on how Nigeria should be governed to ensure political stability and equity in distribution of resources. The post-war era witnessed an elite consensus in favor of accommodation, equity, and stability in resource distribution and political governance. This consensus is informed by the relatively balanced elite power relations and the social position and preferences of the elites that made the post-war constitutions. Power-sharing was featured latter as the key modality for moderating elite struggles for power. To ensure that no one group dominates the apparatus of government, Nigerians experimented the principle of power sharing as a measure through which every ethnic group can be accommodated within the polity. The elite support for power-sharing is based on widely shared perception of the arrangement as the framework through which the various elite groups could realize their interests within non-violent distributive politics. The basis for power sharing in a multi-ethnic society is to minimize as much as possible, democratic competition within acceptable boundaries in order to avoid intergroup violence that would have resulted from socio-political differences, opinions and demands along ethnic lines (Awopetu, 2012).

Furthermore, Northern domination which manifested most visibly during the late colonial and early independence period paved way for the principle of power sharing. For example, since 1959, a broad pattern of government composition showed that Northern elite dominated most civilian and military regimes., Most of the country's previous elected and unelected political leaders had come from the North gave credence to popular perceptions of the annulment as the handiwork of a Northern cabal intent on not handing over power to a Southerner (Oyeleye Oyediran, Adigun Agbaje 1991:227). The excess of the northern-dominated military has ever provoked a bitter southern-based campaign for a power shift from the North to the South, for the decentralization and restructuring of the federation and for the creation of a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) to decide on the desirability and modalities of Nigeria's existence as a multi-ethnic political community. Power-sharing has great possibilities in Nigeria. First, there is the belief in many quarters that a society as large and complex as Nigeria cannot be peacefully governed without some measure of inter-group consensus. Power-sharing features as the most acceptable modality for reaching elite consensus on how Nigeria should be ruled.

Power sharing system was informed by what Lijphat (1968) referred to as consociationalism; an institutionalized form of democratic governance to manage ethnic conflict in a pluralistic society. A system of government that socially, economically and politically accommodates every ethnic group in the country. A system of government that socially, economically and politically accommodates every ethnic group in the country. One major component of consociationalism is grand coalition, an inclusive socio-political system. With this system it means inter-ethnic harmony and socio-political integration can be achieved through unfettered accommodative democratic system even in a deeply divided society like Nigeria. The principle put into consideration and recognize the role and importance of each ethnic group as the platform through which social political development can be achieved in essence.

However, obstacle to power sharing in ethnically divided Nigeria is found on the presence of a strong majority that prefers pure majority rule to convocational governance, which informed the reason for which federalism was adopted in Nigeria as an attempt to promote group autonomy but its faulty application has

made it a problem to socio-economic and political sustainability of the country. Group autonomy is viewed as constitutional provisions for group's management over their socio-political affairs within the legitimate sphere of responsibility to the central government; here the central government performs a supervisory role to ensure the protection of every group, however this could not be properly managed as a result of the over concentration of power at the center in Nigeria.

Application of power sharing in Nigeria can be considered to be a source of political stability based on the fact that under explorable ethnic cleavages, a majoritarian system may not be applicable, hence preventing the danger of creating a permanent minority group through the politics of winner takes all. "The search for stable inter-ethnic relations among Nigeria's multiple ethnic nations has laid emphasis on sharing of political power" (Isumonah 2001:5). It has given birth to the division of the country into six geo-political zones of North West, North East, North Central, South West, South East and South South; with the view that at least the top echelon of Nigeria polity would be shared on the basis that will reflect the unity of the country. Also, it has been expanded further to zoning formula adopted by the political parties in the country as an instrument of ethnic conflict management. Nigeria no doubt is a federation and also a divided society. The only known practical and political formula that accommodates its ethnic division and diversities is the power sharing/zoning formula. Through zoning formula, the problems of divided society can be averted; it is a political strategy through which political offices are shared in such a way that all ethnic groups would be involved in governance.

Power sharing with political parties zoning formula seems to fit into the heterogeneous and federal nature of Nigerian state, helping to accommodate all groups as much as possible and therefore reducing complaints of domination and marginalization., It tends to make the political system in Nigeria more inclusive rather than it hitherto exclusive nature. Awopetu et al. (2012) observes that the importance of power sharing in Nigeria political system is informed because it is a phenomenon used to ensure the continuity and socio-political integration of the various ethnic groups in the country. The formula no doubt serves as a balancing mechanism over conflicting socio-political demands of every ethnic group. Significantly, the zoning strategy has in no small measure stemmed down the

struggle for political offices to intra-ethnic affairs and no longer making it inter-ethnic business. Therefore, a long period of peace and stability in multi-ethnic state of Nigeria is a function of effective and sincere implementation of the principle of inclusion, a mechanism for ethnic management in Nigeria.

Inclusive Governance under an Exceptional Leadership; panacea for Security free Nigerian Nation

The prevalence of ethnic conflicts in Nigeria as a result of inequalities experience in the heterogenous and ethnic divided society has given course for pertinent question if really the inclusive governance will impact national cohesion and ethnic integration? Inclusion is conceptualized in terms of degrees of representation that legitimately exclude either many or few political interests. On such a continuum, a more inclusive socio-political policy process generates a broader representation of every political interest (Adetiba and Rahim, 2013). Put in another word, inclusive governance will significantly impact socio-political development. The probability of conflict rises where horizontal inequalities are higher (Østby 2006; Mancini 2005). Inclusive (or power-sharing) government tends to reduce the likelihood of conflict. Perceptions of inequalities are what make people take action. Though broadly related to observed inequalities, perceptions of inequality can be enhanced or reduced by political leadership, media treatment and education.

Inclusive governance is directed towards restoring the socio-political and economic confidence of every ethnic group in the national government with the aim of creating progressive conditions for groups in decision making process. Inclusive governance allows improving the quality of socio-political and economic decisions/policies. There is need to state that where the political system favors inclusive governance, there is tendency for ethnic integration which in turn translates to a united and sustainable political system; however good governance will define the sustainability of inclusive governance in a multi-ethnic state. Key component of progressive socio-economic and political growth can be located in all-encompassing governance as the means of empowering the disadvantaged, with the aim of enabling them to overcome socio-political and economic deprivation.

Therefore, for accelerated socio-political development that breeds national cohesion in a multi-ethnic state like Nigeria, it is significantly important to hitch the horse of political system to the wagon of inclusive governance. The political mobilization of ethnicity and exclusive claims as we have experienced in Nigeria significantly, is a threat to national integration and emergence of corporate identity in a multi-ethnic state. National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country. It connotes that though we belong to different social group, religions and regions and speak different languages we recognize the fact that we are all one. This kind of integration is very important in the building of a strong and prosperous nation.

Considering the implication of ethnicity as against socio-political stability efforts must be made to create a political atmosphere that will boost the confidence of every ethnic group in a multi-ethnic state of ours and allay the fear of individuals citizenry. Good governance however, is said to be the critical variable in the mobilization and utilization of societal socio-political and economic resources for the satisfaction of popular expectations and fundamental needs, protection and promotion of citizen (Jega 2007). Governance can either be good or bad, this is based on the extent to which government address the socio-political and economic needs of the people. Good governance has to do with the process of managing public affairs across all tiers of government; which is seen to be responsible and responsive to the basic socio-political and economic needs as well as aspirations of the people. On the other hand, bad governance is associated with impassive, irresponsible, corrupt, authoritarian, indecent, crude and exclusive process of management of public affairs (Jega, 2007). Bad governance is exclusivism, which in other words means that exclusive governance breeds fear and suspicion, the height of which is ethnic loyalty, nepotism, religion bigotry and conflict over the allocation of socio-political and economic resources.

Explaining inclusive governance in Nigeria political context, it is a process through which every ethnic group and particularly the traditionally under represented ethnic group participates in governance. The system seeks participation/representation from every group in a multi-ethnic state thus ensuring socio-political and economic growth of every ethnic group. What informs political inclusion in Nigeria is the degree to which the socio-political interests of

some ethnic groups are excluded from governance as in recent perceived by action and inaction of the government; the consequence of which is lack of national cohesion. Inclusive governance will ensure a healthy, constructive and mutually fruitful relationship between the various ethnic groups in the country. The assumption here is that inclusive governance will no doubt enhance equitable socio-political and economic growth as well as engender national cohesion.

Ethnic conflict management in multi ethnic state like Nigeria can take the form of inclusive governance under a proactive leaders' fort re-organizational or restructure approach with the intention of giving the various ethnic groups the room for participation and accommodation thus strengthening the socio-political and economic interest of the minorities in the business of nation building. Such proactive leader require ability to ensure socio-political arrangement which will engender the desired every ethnic group and socio-political stability. Managing ethnic conflict in a multi-ethnic state whether by local elites and governments according to Lake and Rothchild, (1996) is seen as a continuing process with no end point or final resolution. It is also an imperfect process that, no matter how well managed; it will still leave some potential for violence in virtually all multi-ethnic polities. In essence, there are possible ways of managing ethnic conflict such as democratization, power sharing, free and fair electoral system and proportional representation. All these can produce a good-natured atmosphere for the interdependence of groups, and political participation and prevent ethnic groups from being locked out of government (Glickman, 1995). This means regional autonomy, confidence building measures, promoting the rights of every ethnic group reduces the socio-economic and political factor that produces violence, insecurity as is experienced in recent times.

The perception of marginalization by many Nigerians which is informed by the ostentation show of political leadership' and the grinding poverty to which citizens are subjected to has added impetus to the violent rate and insecurity in Nigeria. Insecurity is conceived as a situation where human and national security of a state is compromised by internal or external forces or interests exacerbated by the incompetency on the part of country leadership, government, weak institutions or poor economic, military and human resource development conditions. What the current trend is imprinting on the psyche of Nigerians is that

the political leadership and government security apparatus is incapable of guaranteeing their safety and security, a reflection of leadership failure. This has impacted on the general human security in Nigeria as the situation promotes fear, domination and limits the peoples' ability to develop economically and limit the trust on government.

The security of the Nigerian nation-state has been reduced to that of the political leaders and their ethnic groups as the immediate supporters, thus, the security calculus of the Nigerian state has been bourgeoisie feed by the leaders as it does not include vital aspects of nation building, social and national development supported by the provision of basic social, economic or even military conditions necessary for effective national security (Egwu 2000). Leadership deficiency in Nigeria has contributed immensely to the grotesque pattern of ethical degeneration that led to the systematic and institutionalized erosion of personal and collective peace, safety, stability and harmony within the Nigerian society. Nigerians are suffering widespread and systematic terrorist attacks by mainly Boko Haram, the ISIL aligned Islamic state West African province ISWAP and unchallenged Fulani herdsmen and bandits' attacks. Over 2,287 persons were reported killed in Nigeria in the third quarter of the year from July to September 2021 in violent incidents including attacks by militia herdsmen, bandits' abduction and gang clashes (SBM, 2021).

The existing social structure in Nigeria is not something neutral nor objective: rather it is framed by asymmetric power relations between the component actors. Asymmetric power relations are embedded in a complex web of structural and material elements, which constructs the fabric of everyday life itself and causes conflict. As the deformed social structure derived from the asymmetric power relations between different groups is considered as a source of conflict, serious conflict being embedded in an unequal social, political and economic system that reflects prolonged exploitation backed by coercion. The structural state of inequalities unfairness and injustice has toughened many Nigerians, forcing them to take their destiny into their hands as the quest for secession increases. High increase of horizontal inequalities makes violent group mobilization and ethnic conflicts more likely. Group inequality provides powerful grievances which leaders can use to mobilize people, by calling on cultural markers (a common

ethnicity or religion) and pointing to group exploitation. Extreme consequences are civil wars, including attempts to gain independence (Mustapha, 2007). The quest for self-determination is in increase as a result of the inability to contextualize occurrence of crisis and drive appropriate inclusive response strategy, mobilize for national consensus and promote rule of law that appreciate, equality, the supremacy of law and civil liberty. The whole thirty-six state of Nigeria federation for example, are littered with remains of innocent, wounds of families/friends and agony of patriots; without sparing generation next to the needless legacy of vandalism, promoted through manifest nepotism flavoured with ultra-ethnocentric hegemonic policy option and the consequential hyper injustice – driven violent extremism that call for transformation.

Structural transformation asserts transforming relatively enduring asymmetric relationships between/among collectivities in a social structure to new sets of inter-ethnic and group relations where all groups can enjoy more equal control over political-economic resources within the society. It promotes formal means of securing inclusiveness and respect for diversity in the political systems, institutions and the law. Thus, transformation of the asymmetric power relations in which some groups enjoy social and cultural privilege, greater access to political power, and economic privilege into more civic polity wherein diversity and equality can be guaranteed, is essential for sustainable peace and social stability. unfortunately, because Nigerians do not understand government or have a perception that government does not care about their welfare, they become easy prey to centrifugal forces who co-opt, incite them to vent their anger on perceived enemies of the people and sometimes go to the extent of destroying national totems. All these manners of ethnic and religious primordial divisive mechanisms thus fueling the clamour for re-structuring of the country, and even a breakup of Nigerian state.

IPOB separatist and his unrest in the southeast has particular resonance in Nigeria. A major issue fueling these agitations is the economic crisis and an interrelated crisis of confidence that is overwhelming the continent. The self-declared state of Biafra was a mainly Igbo secessionist enclave that existed from 1967 until its defeat by federal forces in 1970, in a war that may have claimed as many as one million lives. Separatist sentiment however, have continued to flow up again in the

southeast. It is believed that over centralization of government has added to the secessionist crises in Nigeria, for you cannot centralize too much without marginalizing someone. There is no doubting the fact that the fear of marginalisation, which characterizes exclusion, will be allayed with wider political participation.

Down the Southwestern Nigeria is the experience of unwanted infiltration and occupation of reserve forests by armed herdsmen with different reports of criminal ventures, including kidnapping, armed robbery, banditry, murder, and rape, which have all been traceable to Fulani ethnic militants. The Fulani herdsmen infiltration into southern Nigeria has been considered a Boko Haram in different form and shape to target the southern part of the country that Boko Haram could not penetrate (Obi, 2018). The Fulani hegemony tend to be viewed as a homogenous Islamic "terrorist" group – supported by the President Muhammadu Buhari, a Fulani himself, and his inaction to either arrest or punish the culprits- so the conspiracy theories. The vanguard of a fulanisation plot is perceived to have aimed at grabbing land, Islamizing a largely southwest region, and politically and culturally altering its demographics. The government ranching policy proposed to end transhumance movements and confine pastoralists to grazing reserves in an attempt to put an end to the conflicts has snowball to the rising perception of land grappling, ethnic invasion and the funalisation or islalmization agenda.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This work has explored Nigeria political structures and the experiences via the pre-independence and the post. Researches showed that since 1966, efforts to reform Nigeria's interethnic relations and create inclusive institutions have met with limited success. Although significant reforms since the civil war have transformed the Nigerian state, the problem of personalized use of these policies/ principles by the political leaders for political power, ethnic mobilization have exacerbated conflicts. In fact, Nigeria's distributive federalism holds a number of pathological outcomes: it has enhanced the ability of the political party already in power to enrich itself, precipitating authoritarian political centralism and the collapse of democratic pluralism. There have been increased conflict in the share of economic resources especially the experience of horizontal inequalities in

revenue sharing amongst the states and between the states and the federal government. Leadership deficiency as a result of prebendal politics and reward system have equally put Nigerian more divisive and breed more seed of discord. The structural state of inequality, unfairness and injustice has toughened many Nigerians, forcing them to take their destiny into their hands as the quest for secession increases.

The Nigeria successive leadership and governments as in the first republic, second republic fourth and present administration have been plagued by favouritism on the part of their leadership performance. Ironically, they have all failed to adequately incorporate and represent the ethnic diversity of Nigeria, they have unable to balance the four drives of Pirson, and we can describe their approach of leadership to nation building as exclusionary. Pirson, (2017) posits four basic drives that guide human decisions—the drive to acquire (dA) resources, the drive to defend (dD) against threats, the drive to bond (dB) in order to form long-term caring relationships, and the drive to comprehend (dC) in order to experience engagement and intellectual curiosity. These four drivers are strongly independent, frequently in a state of conflict, and need to be continuously balanced in our daily lives. To allow human flourishing and fulfillment to occur, leaders need to enable balancing of the four drives. Results of this balance are psychologically safe climate and respectful dialogue among units and colleagues, which is essential to challenge the underlying assumptions and rid conscious and unconscious bias (Isaacs, 1993; Schein, 1993).

To enhance our chance of keeping Nigeria one, consolidating democracy, tackling insecurity effectively, and achieving accelerated socio-political and economic progress, Nigeria needs to urgently adopt and function as a devolved federal system. Nigerian as followers and their leaders therefore need to learn from this experience and figure a new way of engaging among their diverse ethnic groups. Nigerian must start managing its diversity for prosperity. There is need to derive mental cohesion, not ethnic divides or nationalities. It is pertinent that government will need to direct more attention to addressing issues that gave birth to ethnic agitations. The need for well-designed federalism in the context of ethno-pluralism is imperative. In this respect, Nigeria's post-1966 federal reforms reflect its growing commitment to the idea that building inclusive institutions as federal

character, power sharing among others which recognize and amplifying minority voices, is perhaps necessary to be reversed as it remains the only path to popular political legitimacy and effective inclusive governance of diversity society. There is need to address and correct horizontal inequalities, both economically and politically the goal should be to ensure the legitimacy of governance and functioning law state

The challenge of insecurity in Nigeria revealed leadership deficiency of which has make Nigerian to become more distrustful, divided amid other challenges. Paying lip-service to the matters of insecurity in Nigeria, had resulted into coercive measure by government and its representatives. Sustaining personal or regime security will not secure government or its representatives if this challenge is not nipped in the bud. The governance process must be erected on the pillars of social cohesion, and dignity of Nigerian must be well protected by a moral leadership of great integrity, intelligence, competence and visionary; that will strive to secure the commitment and support of all citizens to make the Nigerian project a true success. Nigerian leaders who is capable to address the fundamental reasons for agitations, by listening, understanding, removing prejudices, and allowing for open national dialogue without preconditions, but with one goal, build one cohesive mental for, just and equitable nation for all not for a few or for any section.

Fostering social cohesion is about striving for greater inclusiveness, more civic participation and creating opportunities for upward mobility; it is the glue that holds society together, Nigerian leaders must highlight humanistic principle and promoting human dignity and the wellbeing of the citizenry. Nigeria needs exceptional leader who believes in inclusion, promotion of ethnic unity. Nigerian leaders should be able to understand the diversity of tribes, tradition, customs, and languages of the different people in Nigeria to enhance a better and comprehensive leadership style and effectiveness in governance of the people.

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