

Review

Fiscal federalism, sub-national revolts and internal colonialism in Nigeria

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One subject that has remained contentious since the introduction of federalism in Nigeria has been how the revenue accruing to the nation will be shared between the federating units, namely, the federal, state and local government and among the states and the local government councils. The over centralization of power and resources in the first tier of government, has weakened other levels of governments, and undermined their capacity to fulfill the raison d'être for their establishment. The principle of independence and co-ordinate jurisdiction of different tiers of government that is a prerequisite of federalism has substantially been eroded, thus, exacerbating various forms of revolts. This paper reviews fiscal federalism, sub-national political revolt and internal colonialism in Nigeria. It utilized secondary data and content analysis as its methodology. The paper observed the structural imbalance in Nigeria's federal system occasioned by colonial experience amongst others as the causes of sub-national revolts and recommends restructuring of the Nigeria as the panacea for the survival of federalism in the country.

Key words: Corruption, federalism, fiscal federalism, sub-national, internal colonialism, Niger Delta, Revolt.

INTRODUCTION

"In the past 50 years, the structure of Nigerian federalism has metamorphosed from 3 regions to 36 states and from 299 local governments in 1979 to 774 currently (Omole, 1999: 75)." One subject that has remained controversial has been, how the revenue accruing to the nation will be

shared between these levels of government in the federation. The principle of independence and co-ordinate jurisdiction of different tiers of government that is a prerequisite of federalism has substantially been eroded in the country. This is caused by the numerous

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interventions of the military in politics and the emergence of dominant, sectional military bureaucratic clique within the power elite, whose survival depended on repression and unmediated management of the state power and resources. The over centralization of power has weakened the other levels of governments, and undermined their capacity to fulfill the *raison d'être* for their establishment. "The persistent mismanagement of this national resource; massive political corruption, reckless neglect of the oil producing/bearing communities as well as the absence of social equality, equitable system of power sharing and resource distribution have combined to create a fertile environment for internal colonialism and sub national revolt."

This paper therefore examines the relationship between fiscal federalism, sub-national revolts and internal colonialism in Nigeria. Furthermore, it interrogates the following:

- (1) the fundamental issues in Nigeria's fiscal federalism
- (2) how fiscal federalism instigate sub-national revolt and internal colonialism in Nigeria
- (3) the extent to which fiscal federalism in Nigeria promotes peace, security and development.

Finally, recommendations that would be a catalyst for peace, unity and development in Nigeria were advanced.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

The important terms that need conceptualization here to sharpen the focus of our discussion are fiscal federalism, sub national political revolt and internal colonialism.

Fiscal federalism

Conceptually, fiscal federalism could also be regarded as 'intergovernmental fiscal relations'. Federalism strive with a written constitution, which clearly delineates the boundaries of authority of each level or tier of government. The Federal Constitution is an amazingly important document that provides the framework for the relationship between the entities that make up a federation. It creates a boundary between horizontal and vertical power sharing. 'The constitution provides and creates a framework for the delineation of power in the united federation and states (Egobueze, 2020: 177)."

Richard Musgrave, a German born American economist developed the concept of fiscal federalism in 1959. Fiscal federalism connotes the financial relations between units of government that form the federation. It involves the dissection of governmental functions and fiscal relations between levels of governments. It is part

of broader public finance discipline (Kapucu, 2007). Ekpo (2004) contributes to the foregoing argument by noting that the evolution of fiscal federalism in Nigeria is determined by historical, political, economic, cultural, geographical, and social factors. However, controversies have trailed this fiscal arrangement since 1946.

Fiscal federalism could be conceptualized from economic, political and social perspectives. From the economic standpoint, it could be defined as 'governmental arrangement with more than one level with each having different legislations governing taxation and expenditure. The principles of fiscal federalism deal with the conjectural principle of intergovernmental fiscal relations and its encroachment on macroeconomic structures. They focus on the questions of efficient economic structures for multi-level public sectors. Hence, the pre-occupation of the theory of fiscal federalism is to answer the fundamental questions of the rationale for adopting a federalism in a country and the rules for the assignment of functions and sources of revenue to different levels of government. Theoretically, the concept essentially suggests that the main principles that have been elaborated for regulating intergovernmental fiscal relations are those of diversity, the federal capacity to achieve unity in a variety of diversities or pluralism; stabilization through the macroeconomic direction by a central authority, efficiency through minimum costs of resources allocation and provision of public goods, derivation through local control over resources to meet local preferences and the centralized redistribution of resources. Other related criteria of intergovernmental fiscal interactions are equalized to eliminate sharp regional differences, correction of intergovernmental externalities; and neutrality in order to minimize the distortions arising from allocational interference with differing resource endowment and tax capacity.

Although the practice of fiscal federalism has been circumscribed by a variety of historical, political, cultural and economic factors in most federations, it is possible to discern the essential features of fiscal federal practice. First, is the 'allocation of functions between the center and the regions. Second, is the freedom that both the center and unit governments exercise in the disbursement of revenue. Third, resources available to the various levels of government must be adequate as much as possible, to meet the needs and responsibilities of each government. Fourth, is administrative economy and efficiency'. In conclusion, the arguments are not at variant with Egobueze and Ojirika (2018: 198) who opined that, "one of the most contentious issues in Nigeria is the problem of fiscal federalism." The contention of these scholars is propelled by the consistent struggle for the change of revenue allocation formula in the country, the clamour for resource control in the Niger Delta Region and the vociferous call for restructuring in

general.

Sub-national political revolt

Political revolt evolved when people within a state or system are oppressed and demand for justice through legal or illegal means. It is most often an illegal and violent attempt by a group of people to change certain political order, norms or legislations in their country's political system that are viewed to be oppressive and repressive to a certain group within the state. The aim of such revolt is to protect the interest of the oppressed people. The explanation of political revolt falls within the family of political violence. In whatever form it occurs, political revolt is a mark of instability within the political system. It is a rejection of a prevailing circumstance that is viewed as anachronistic to natural justice. Revolt, in the first place, is a physical injurious expression of conflict. Thus, political revolt is "the use of physical force so as to damage or injure a person or persons or their property for political reasons. Sub national political revolt is the violence initiated by a group or people from the lower units of government like states, provinces, or cantons in a federalism against the federal government.

The government's response to sub-national revolts have been repressive rather than the use of dialogue; the state has consistently applied the rod in the management of revolts. This approach of the Federal Government to managing sub-national revolts do not permit the expression of grievances on round table, rather, they allow the revolt to escalate, resulting to frequent clashes between the affected sub-national groups and the government security agencies. The effect of this, is, the breakdown of laws and orders and loss of lives and properties. The government's strategy has centred on clampdown on the leadership of these organizations and their possible incarceration in detention cells. Such reactions have not succeeded in abating, rather they intensified the conflicts.

Internal colonialism

The concept of internal colonialism has been given different interpretations. It is the undue exploitation of the resources of the minorities by the majority ethnic nationality. That is, it is an economic exploitation of the minorities by the major ethnic groups. Slavery is a critical example of internal colonialism, and this seen expressions in draconian regimes like the Apartheid South African. The first mention of the concept was in 1957, in a book by *Leo Marquard*, regarding South Africa. However, the word was publicized by Pablo Gonzalez Casanova in 1965, which was equally criticized, but his

work thereafter influences research on the concept.

It is indeed the domination of the minority groups in a state and characterized by uneven development caused by their exploitation of the majority groups. It is, therefore, the subjugation and the exploitation as well as control of the economic, political and social resources of the minority groups by the majority groups in a nation. In Nigeria, this is exemplified by the domination of over two hundred and fifty ethnic other nationalities by the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibos. It is like the relationship between the colonizer, like the British, France, Portugal and Spain and colonies, like in Nigeria, Brazil, India, etc.

An internal colony naturally bears the wealth and resources that feeds the state. The Nigerian example presents a case where the wells of the black gold located in the Niger Delta Region feeds the rest of the country and the decision on how to spend the wealth is determined basically by the majority tribes found in the Northern, Western and Eastern Regions of Nigeria. The Niger Delta thus, becomes the goose that lays the golden egg which is selfishly shared by the dominant trio that form the oligarchy. The internally colonized who are not masters of their destinies are constantly dominated and the resources of their land used to developed Lagos, Abuja to name but a few, while they wallow in abject poverty, precipitating resource led violence and conflicts which remain the signpost of the Niger Delta region. However, the oil bearing communities are willfully excluded from prestigious social and political positions, which are determinant of the decisions that shape the sharing of the resources exploited from their soil. This uneven exploitation led to revolutionary pressures and acrimonious contestation as well as agitations for resource control in the Niger Delta due to their economic and political domination by the majority ethnic nationality.

FISCAL FEDERALISM, SUBNATIONAL REVOLT AND INTERNAL COLONIALISM IN NIGERIA

Some of the reasons for the adoption of federalism in Nigeria are the diversity of the nation and the desire for political, cultural and social identity of a people of over 250 ethnic groups, several languages, diversities and a lot of political traditions; the desire for some form of political unity in spite of these diversities; and the desire for economic and political viability and development in a nation of uneven distribution of human and natural resources. The deeper ends of the reasons for this option of federalism are economic development, security, equity, equality and justice. Incidentally, the recent contradiction in the Nigerian federal experience marked by the sub national political revolt, militancy and insurgency from the Niger Delta to the Sambisa forest; the agitation for resource control and the allegation of internal colonialism

on the minority ethnic groups by the majority ethnic groups using the apparatus of state power provides argument for the review of the Nigeria's federal system. Adesina (2000) was right to observe that the nature and condition of the financial relations in any federal system are crucial to the continued existence of such a system. Fiscal matters transcend the purview of economics. They have in most cases, especially in plural societies, assumed political, religious and social dimensions.

Fiscal Federalism is one of the most discussed issues in Nigeria due to its impact on the stability of the state. Consequently, what accrues to each level of government is of major concern to every individual stakeholder. Critically, revenue sharing is a major question in a federal arrangement, and it has become persistent amber that fans conflicts.

The observation of scholars on the promblematique under interrogation is instructive, particularly in Nigeria, where the percentage of revenue allocated to a tier of government most often affects its performance. In Nigeria, governance functions as practiced by both the national and federating states is worrisome, especially in the nation's fiscal regime. The federal government is more endowed by the fiscal laws against the federating states and this has increased the dependency of the federating bodies on the Federal Government. State and local governments are suffocated in generating revenue internally by the overbearing powers of the Federal Government vested in her by the Exclusive Legislative List. Based on this, they are unable to withstand the shocks from the ethnic nationalities within their jurisdictions. Consequently, there is anger, which ignites conflicts between the federating units against the federal government for self-reliance. This paper therefore calls, for fiscal decentralization and good financial autonomy which is deficit in Nigeria.

The adoption of federalism and the creation of regions in Nigeria provided a framework within which the dominant regional elite sought access to regional power as a basis for their exclusive control over the regional cash crop economic base, and for defending it from extra-regional competitors. Thus, Obi (2000: 263) opines that "a critical flashpoint of tension, conflict and struggle was the issue of revenue allocation, and fiscal relations between the tiers of government." The issue of revenue allocation in Nigeria has been contentious and highly debilitating and has been at the epicentre of some of the 21st century conflicts in the country.

The history of revenue allocation in Nigeria could be traced to the Richard's constitution of 1946. "Although the constitution was not strictly federal, the creation of the regional level of government immediately raised the question of allocating revenue among the central government, the new regional centers and the old Native Administration."

Since 1946, many Revenue Allocation Commissions have been set up to solve the problem of revenue sharing in Nigeria and different principles have been adopted by the various commissions in the distribution of the revenue, but none has been generally accepted by all. Historically, the following revenue commissions have been set up in Nigeria, these are the Phillipson commission of 1946; the Hick-Phillipson commission, 1951; Chicks commission, 1953; Raisman commission, 1958; Binns commission in 1964. On the recommendations of these commissions, the principle of derivation was prominent. "After the military takeover of government in 1966 and the subsequent creation of twelve states, the Dina commission of 1968 was set up to take care of the dislocations in the equitable distribution of national resources arising from the creation of states in 1967." The recommendation of this commission was implemented, thus, creating a vacuum in which the federal military government effectively centralized the allocation process. Consequently, "through decree 15 of 1969, 13 of 1970, 9 of 1971, and 6 of 1975, the balance of control and access to revenue tilted towards fiscal centralization at the federal level (Obi, 2000: 265)." The process of alteration was effected through a progressive decrease of the principle of derivation and the strengthening of the principles of the Distributable Pools Account (DPA).

It is, however, important to note that fiscal centralization was partly informed by the influence of oil as the chief source of the economy, the lesson of the civil war; to reduce the power of the regions and prevent them from being strong enough to challenge the centre, ensuring that a 'neutral' centre could mediate relations and provide equal access to resources to all tiers in the pursuit of balanced development. Most fundamentally, perhaps, was the transfer by the ruling junta of the military culture of the single command to issue of governance.

In 1977 and 1979, the Aboyade and Okigbo Commissions were set up by the Obasanjo and Shagari's regimes, respectively to restructure the revenue allocation system with a view to enabling each tier of government to discharge its constitutional functions. "It is remarkable that at this time, oil has become the most important national resources and therefore, the management of the revenue allocation scheme became highly politicized (Adesina, 1998: 235)" leading to the establishment of the National Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission in 1988 by General Ibrahim Babangida. "Among other things, the modified recommendations of the commission that was accepted in December, 1989 allocated 2% of the value of minerals produced to each state and another 1.5% that was managed by the federal government for their development (Adesina, 1998: 240)." The Babangida regime further increased the derivation principle to 3% and finally the

1999 Constitution of Nigeria, put the minimum allocation at 13% to mineral producing states.

The Nigerian Constitution guarantees fiscal federalism. This is provided in Sections 16, 80 and 162 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (As Amended). The main Section that dealt with fiscal federalism is Section 162 which authorizes the Federal Government to maintain a special account known as "the Federation Account" into which shall be paid all revenues collected by the government of the federation except the proceeds from the personal income tax of the armed forces of the federation, the Nigerian Police Force.

Incidentally, the constitution did not limit the principle of derivation to 13% but since the adoption of the constitution, only 13% had been paid with respect to the derivation. It is important to state that President Obasanjo attempted to deny the oil bearing states of the Niger Delta the 13% when he introduced the onshore/offshore dichotomy before the supreme ruled against the federal government on that matter. This caused a lot of upheaval and stimulated discontent which later snowballed to the Niger Delta crisis.

Section 7 and 8 as well as 162 of the 1999 Constitution (As Amended) subordinates the Local Governments to the states. It removed the financial autonomy of the Local Governments. Subsection 6 of Section 162 of the constitution provides inter alia: 'each state shall maintain a special account to be called *'State Joint Local Government Account'* into which shall be paid all allocations to the Local Government Councils of the state from the Federation Account and from the government of the state (CFRN, 1999).' The implication of this subsection is that there is no direct allocation to the Local Governments; hence, their financial autonomy is eroded. This is an aberration to the spirit of true federalism. As applicable to State Government, Local Government Councils' Allocations should be paid directly to their accounts, instead of the current system in which their allocation are charged into 'States Local Government Joint Account.' Currently, financial autonomy of the Local Government Councils is a topical subject of debate in the country because of the undue interference by most State Governments on the Local Government allocations. Funds meant for the Local Governments are often diverted into other services and in most cases, controlled directly by the State Governors, while the councils are given stipends to pay salaries and very minimal allowances.

It is instructive to state that before 1970 when agriculture was the mainstay of the Nigerian economy, agricultural activities revolved around the three major regions, namely, Northern, Eastern, Western and later, Midwestern regions. During this period, the revenue sharing formula was based on the principle of derivation which was put at 100% and later, 50% to the regions.

This situation made the regions to be buoyant and economically active. It appeared this situation was possible because the revenue were derived from the majority ethnic groups (Obulor, 2013: 66). This inference became clearer by the 1970s, when the ascendancy of petroleum as the mainstay of the country's economy. Petroleum is derived from the minority Niger Delta region (Obulor, 2013, p. 66). The revenue sharing formula as mentioned earlier slide seriously to as low as 1.5% and later rose to 3% and now 13% in the 1999 Constitution (As Amended). Under the oil economy, (Obi, 2000: 265) opines that 'fiscal federalism has gone through several convulsions which culminated in the tightening of the grip of federal power over the entire process, with the concomitant increase in the struggle for access to, and control over federal power.' For the people of the Niger Delta, no explanations short of minority status of the region in the political equation of the country can account for this anomaly in the revenue sharing formula. From that period till now, it has been the exploration and exploitation of oil and gas in the Niger Delta without restraint. In 1969, the Federal Government assumed the role of the sole owner of all mineral resources in the country which was opposite of the prevailing order when agriculture was the main source of revenue for the Federation. The aim of the government is to effectively own and manage oil and gas resources from the Niger Delta region which is a minority ethnic nationality. Towards achieving this, the federal government enacted some decrees and regulations that practically ceded the ownership and control of the resources from the Niger Delta region. These include: The Exclusive Economic zone Act, Cap 116 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990 as amended by Act, No. 42 of 1998; Land use Act, Cap 202 of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990; Oil Pipelines Act, Cap 338 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990; Petroleum Act, Cap 350 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990 as amended by the Act. No. 22, 1998; the Minerals and Mining Act No. 34 of 1999 (Obulor, 2013: 68-69).

With these laws in place, it is easy for the federal government (controlled by the three Major ethnic groups, namely the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo), to have unhindered access to plunder the resources from the minority Niger Delta. As Oyeranmi (2020, p.275) observes, between 1970 and 2010 it is estimated that between \$300 and \$400 billion of oil revenue has been stolen or misspent by corrupt government officials. Obviously, no conscious efforts were put in place to give special attention to the development needs of the Niger Delta region from where the resources that finance the Nigerian State are derived. Instead, the resources derived from the Niger Delta are used to feed the nation and develop cities like Lagos and Abuja and the personal estates of individuals from other parts of the country while

the people of the Niger Delta region suffer from serious environmental degradation and ruin as a result of oil exploration and exploitation. Currently, some of the states suffer from the soot pandemic which is occasioned by gas flaring and associated activities. There are also oil spillages, industrial pollution, bush burning and erosion, noise pollution, bio-diversity depletion, poor farm yield and poor health conditions of the people.

A number of alliances are discernible in the processes of the plunder of the resources of the Niger Delta region. These include the alliance between the Nigerian state and the oil multinationals; the alliance between the Nigerian state and the three major ethnic groups of the country that preside over the revenue allocation, and the alliance between the local elites and the oil multinationals/Nigerian state. These alliances have over the years been singly or collectively responsible for the state of despoliation and underdevelopment of the region. For instance, the alliance between the Nigerian state and the oil multinationals provides and guarantee security for the oil companies to exploit the resources of the region in complete disregard for industry best practices. This tends to embolden the oil companies operating in the region to deny their host communities claims on compensations and social amenities as a result of the destruction of their ecosystem and basic means of livelihood. It is significant to note that while the areas of operation of these multinational companies are provided with basic social amenities such as good road health facilities, pipe borne water, electricity, etc., the surrounding communities where the oils and gas are exploited are left in total darkness, obscurity, poverty and obviously undeveloped. More than anything else, the alliance emboldens the oil companies to always invite the Nigerian security forces at will to unleash violence and terror on the host communities at the slightest provocation or misunderstanding. Typical examples are the destruction of Umuechem community in 1990, Ogoni massacre in 1993, Egi communities in 1993, Egbema in 1996, Odi in 1999, and Zaki-Bian in 2005. Till date, oil exploitation has stopped in Ogoni land because the Ogoni people stood steel and demanded for environmental justice. The cost of this struggle led to the loss of the lives of many prominent Ogonis and the socio-economic impact of this is the loss of great revenue to the Federation Account. This alliance has led to the full militarization of the Niger Delta region in a democratic era. Gun trading is becoming a daily norm. It makes the region look as if it is in war-fare as echoes of the guns sound unhindered, and this has dampened peace and made the people more disunited than ever. The action has desecrated the region locally and discredited it globally, as most foreign government at one time or the other have placed red-alert in the area and limited the movement of their nationals to the area for both investment and or tourism.

The second alliance involves the Nigerian state and the three major ethnic groups of the country: Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo who ensures that the revenues derived mainly from the Niger Delta region are expropriated from them through the instrumentality of the Nigerian State and its policies in order to develop these major groups, while impoverishing the Niger Delta region. This accounts for massive poverty, unemployment and underdevelopment in the Niger Delta. This is what Okowa (2006: 6) refers to as 'Matthewnomics' or the 'Matthew Effect'. Matthew principle, or Matthew effect, is sometimes summarized as "the rich get richer at the expense of the poor that get poorer." This situation is what we refer to as internal colonialism in Nigeria. We contend here that the economic marginalization of the minority ethnic groups by the majority ethnic groups, state neglect, repression, poverty, political corruption and recklessness are some features of internal colonialism and the main causes of sub-national political revolt in Nigeria.

In interrogating revolts in Nigeria, it is imperative to underscore the underpinnings that crystalline conflicts. The over dependence on the Petro Dollar is the core cause of conflicts in Nigeria, and this engender internal revolt. The Elites spread between the political and economic fronts see the Oil and gas business as a 'do or die' affairs, thus, they employ both cruel and unprofessional means to forcefully appropriate the common wealth to themselves. More often than not, these power Elites are from the major ethnic groups in the federation. They massively accumulate and squander the treasury and corruptly enrich themselves, families, friends and cronies to the disadvantage of the locals, whose land and water bear the natural resources, and environment is polluted as a result of the exploitation activities. Of all the attributes of the resource curse, corruption seems to have had the most profound negative impact on development in Nigeria. The issue of corruption has become so proverbial in the country. Other than the huge development resources that are stolen and laundered locally and abroad, corruption weakens the state and its institutions and undermines the prospects of development. 'It is estimated that Nigerian elites stole between 400 billion and 600 billion dollars between 1960 and 1999 and that the amount stashed in foreign accounts rose from 50 billion dollars in 1999 to 170 billion dollars in 2003. We can imagine the impact of such a gargantuan amount on electricity supply, health care delivery, educational development, and infrastructural expansion (Naanen, 2015: 44).' Alapiki (2015: 36) has observed that an indication of just how corrupt Nigeria is being documented in the worldwide Corruption Perception Index (CPI) published by Transparency International. In 1998, Nigeria was ranked as the most corrupt country in the world. It also toppled the list of most corrupt nations with respect to the conduct of

business, followed by Bolivia, Colombia, Russia and Pakistan (Transparency International, 1998).

Four main features that are discernible from the nature and operation of the Nigerian federation and political economy as earlier discussed are corruption, inequality, injustice and domination of the major ethnic groups in leadership position which cause unbridled discontent of the sub-national groups in the manner the government is run. The entrenchment of those features in the socioeconomic and political system of the country has equally generated feelings of dissatisfaction within the entire system of the country and dissatisfaction in this regards desires essentially from the skewed nature of the system of distribution and allocation of socioeconomic and political goods, a role excluding within the confines of the state (Obulor, 2013: 57). The end product of the aforementioned imbroglio is dissatisfaction by individual as expressed in the form of strikes, demonstrations, riots, robbery, kidnapping for ransom and political assassination. Dissatisfaction at the sub-national level is expressed in the form of ethnic militia uprising or sub-national revolts. Consequently, there remains unhindered echoes of guns and revolutionary pressures in the country raging day and night, and leaving the citizens sleep with thwir two eyes open, and the seemingness of the Hobesian state of nature described as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short (Munro, n.d)" and characterised by "war of every man, against every man (Munro, n.d)." Internal revolds in Nigeria, could be critiqued centripetally; it is exemplified by the Buko Haram uprising in the North-east, the MASSOB and later the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the South-east, the Niger Delta Militants in the South-south O'dua People Congress (OPC) in the South-west, the raging Herdsmen or Pastoral uprising in mostly North-central, and others are scores of revolts prevailing in the nation today. All these are pointers to the dissatisfaction of the sub-national groups on the structure and nature of Nigeria's brand of federalism. It is obvious from the foregoing that the Nigerian Federation has been characterized by extreme violence. For those whose rights and resources are denied through acts of state violence, the recourse to counter violence becomes a means to their salvation.

In order to give a synoptic clarity of some of the groups that led recent sub-national revolts, we shall briefly discuss the activities of the following four groups, namely:

- (1) The O'dua People Congress (OPC)
- (2) Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign People of Biafra (MASSOB)
- (3) Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) and
- (4) Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF).
- (5) Boko Haram

(6) Herdsmen/farmers, conflict

The O'dua People Congress (OPC)

O'dua People's Congress (OPC) is a Yoruba Socio-Political Militant Organization whose activities cover the entire South-west geopolitical region of Nigeria. The OPC was formed in 1994 ostensibly to champion the course of the Yoruba ethnic nationality following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential elections widely believed to have won by one of their own, hief M. K. O. Abiola. The Yoruba people of South-west Nigeria saw the annulment as a calculated design by the Nigerian state controlled, then by the Hausa/Fulani hegemonic dynasty to deny the entire Yoruba race of their stake in the Nigerian Federation. It was received as a clear case of political deprivation, marginalization and rejection of the Yoruba in corporate Nigeria. It was in this regard that the OPC became the militant body of the region in order to bring about social justice for the people of the south-west region.

The OPC threatened to destabilize the country through bomb blast targeted at every strategic place of national interest and to cause serious social interest that would make the country ungovernable and possibly dismember the federation. Under the factional leadership of Chief Ganiyu Adams, and Fredric Fashenu, they intensified the tempo of social and political unrest in the country resulting in years of a possible break-up of the federation. The OPC was finally appeased when in 1999 another Yoruba man in the person of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was elected president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Obasanjo's election marked the beginning of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria.

It is important to note that the OPC was not only fighting against social and political injustice but for economic adventualism. They were conscious of the fact that if their son was the President of Nigeria, he will preside over the allocation of the national resources, thus, to that extent, the region would definitely get a fair share from the federation account. Collaborating with the thought, Obulor (2013) opined 'following the annulment of the June 12, 1993 election, the choice for the Yoruba was clear: access to the office and wealth of the nation or self-determination.'

OPC therefore fought for political relevance, economic opportunities and social emancipation of the Western region and this threatened the peace and national security of Nigeria.

Movement for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB)

MASSOB is a group that is seeking for political, social

and economic relevance as well as the sovereignty of the South-east people of Nigeria. It is assumed to be a successor of the stillbirth Federal Republic of Biafra that engaged Nigeria in a 30-months civil war (1967-1970) that actually produced the doctrine of no victors and no vanquished in principle. However, the war produced victors and vanquished. The victors were the Hausa/Fulani and the Yoruba, while the vanquished were the Ibo and the minority Niger Delta people (Okowa, 2006: 40). The disastrous effects of the war had attendant human and material losses that devastated the people and land of the Ibos, especially and the minorities within the Eastern Nigeria. The consequence of the war was the adoption of the three 'R' policy of Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reintegration which was poorly managed by the Nigerian state, led by the northern hegemony. Indeed, the Ibos were marginalized socially, politically and economically. This marginalization has continued to define the political and economic decisions over power sharing in the country. The statement of Joe Irukwu, President of Ohaneze Ndigbo, a sociocultural group of the Ibos that Nigeria started as a tripod, comprising the East, West and the North. The North had the Presidency for thirty-five years. The West will by next year (2007) have it for twelve years. But we had ruled for only six months (Obulor, 2013: 62).

Another instance of marginalization as argued by the leadership of Ndigbo is in the area of creation of states in the country. As the argument goes, while other geopolitical zones of the country, namely, the North-east, North-west, North-central, South-west and South-south have a minimum of six states each, the Southeast has only five states (Uduma, 2015). The zone also records the least number of Local Governments Areas and seats in the National Assembly. All these are reflected in the share of revenue allocation that goes to the States and Local Governments of the zone. They also complained that they are excluded from occupying important political and military positions in Nigeria.

It is therefore in consideration of all these that MASSOB was formed by some aggrieved people of the area. MASSOB is led by Chief Ralph Nwazurike and fighting hard for self determination by having a separation country in the spirit of the defunct Republic of Biafra. MASSOB undertakes its activities through violent protests, demand for a sovereign state of Biafra for the Ibos, the minting of Biafran currency and the hoisting of the Biafran flag in strategic places throughout the Southeast and engages the Nigerian security forces in shoot-outs, thus questioning the legitimacy of the Nigerian state.

In the final analysis, the agitation of MASSOB is rooted in the failure of the Nigerian state to engage in just allocation of resources and social good to the region vis-à-vis other regions.

Movement for the survival of the Ogoni people (MOSOP)

The agitation of MOSOP is basically rooted on environmental justice and protection of the land, water and air of the Ogoni area. Due to the fragile ecology of the Niger Delta region, oil production has the impact of upsetting the delicate balance between land, water and life (Obi, 1995). Apart from the threat to the ecosystem, most of the communities in the Niger Delta, especially, the Ogonis lack basic infrastructure, while their local economies are ruined by pollution. The contradiction arising from oil production and pollution, fueled demand for compensation, basic infrastructure, community development projects, employment of indigenes, payment of reparations for past exploitation and the degradation of the oil-producing environment. The refusal of the multinational oil giant to respond to these demands provoked tension. MOSOP thus, forced the Shell Petroleum Company to stop exploration and exploitation of oil and gas in Ogoni in May 1993, leading to a daily loss of millions of Naira. The leader of MOSOP, Ken Sarowiwa, an environmental right activist was subsequently executed with nine of his kinsmen by the Federal Government of Nigeria over a trumped - up charge of murder of four prominent Ogoni leaders. Till date, MOSOP has continued to resist oil exploitation and exploration till the areas impacted by environmental pollution in Ogoni land are cleaned-up.

It is worthy to note that in furtherance of its demand and pressure for social, economic and political emancipation as well as environmental justice, MOSOP got a judgment against the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) over the devastation of its environment, and UNEP in its Report made far reaching recommendations, which includes the total 'clean-up' of the Ogoni land.

Movement for the emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND)

This is the umbrella organization of the militia groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria fighting against the oppression and exploitation of the Niger Delta people. In November, 2005, following a series of meetings between representatives of different militant groups, which included the Federation of Niger Delta Ijaw Communities (FNDIC), the Niger Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Klansmen Konfraternity (KK), Greenlanders among others, led to the emergence of MEND. An agreement was made to start using militant force to attack oil installations with the aim of drawing Federal Governments' attention to the socio-economic, environmental and political injustice in the Niger Delta.

The aim was to destroy the capacity of the Nigerian government to export oil. The NDPVF led by Alhaji Mujahid Asari-Dokubo is one of the most prominent of all the militant groups in the Niger Delta. In 2004, the group threatened an all-out war against the oil industry which caused a spike in global oil prices (Alapiki, 2015: 40-41). Asari Dokubo was arrested by the Nigerian state in 2005 and detained, but was later released in 2007. MEND and other militia groups have continued to wage revolts against the Nigerian State, attacking human and installations of the Oil and Gas Industry in the region. To assuage the situation, on assumption of office, late President Umaru Yar Adua launched the Amnesty Programme for the Niger Delta Militant. It was a triple pronged programme of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). Indeed, 'available literatures suggest that the Amnesty Programme impacted the peace and stability of the region. Nigeria pre the Programme was drifting into the precipice. The nation was frail, peace and stability became a global concern. Kidnapping of all sorts became the order of the day, and as noted earlier, the Hobbesian state of nature was the order. The introduction of the Amnesty Programme was greeted with satisfaction by local indigenous Nigerians and friends of the country abroad (Ejiezie et al., 2020: 6).' Till date, the Niger Delta region is still boiling, and several countries, especially America and the west have put travel bans on their citizens to most part of the region.

Boko Haram

Boko Haram is a terrorist Islamist movement based in northeast of Nigeria, but also active in the Chad, Niger Republic and North Cameroon. The group is led by Abubakar Shekau. Estimates of membership vary between 5000 and 10000 fighters. They have been linked to al-Qaeda and Islamic State (ISIS). Report says Boko Haram killed more than 5000 civilians between January 2009 and June, 2014 (Alapiki, 2015: 45). Boko Haram literally means that '*Western education is evil and taboo*'. As it were, the sect admonishes its adherents to reject western education and possibly oppose its further spread in Northern Nigeria. Since its formation in 2002, its leadership has repeatedly vowed to make Nigeria ungovernable through violent attacks targeted at public properties and the Nigerian security agencies.

It is important to state that soon after the assumption of office by President Obasanjo, the North started to raise the feeling of disaffection against the government and its leadership. For instance, the government's re-organization of the military was immediately misinterpreted and alleged to be an exercise to undermine northern interest. The privatization programme of the administration was also alleged to be a calculated design to sell publicly

owned properties to the Yorubas with a view to empowering them more than people from other regions (Obulor, 2013: 77).

We contend that it is not enough to view the Boko Haram and the violence they unleash as purely religious. Underling the so-called religious crises in the north are heavy doses of political and economic underpinnings that express deep disaffection against the Nigerian state and its system of social production and reproduction. One of such fundamentals is the mass impoverishment of the people of the Northern region over the years. The northern elites dominated the political space of the country since 1960 and presided over the allocation of resources. However, this dominance did not translate to any meaningful improvement of the material condition of existence of the people of the region including their 'stomach infrastructure.' The North generally ranks highest in the incidence of poverty than the southern part of the country (Obulor, 2013: 79). This was aptly captured by the report presented by the then Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, Professor Chukwuma Soludo in 2008 in which the north ranked highest with 75% poverty level among the geopolitical zones in Nigeria. The point here is that the combined factors of power shift and mass poverty could have strong feelings of disaffection in the north, hence the Boko Haram.

Herdsmen/Farmers conflict

Nigeria is blessed with arable land that supports agriculture. This made quite a lot of her citizens to be engaged in the agrarian economy, which is the second major source of Nigeria's earning and employs about 70% of the citizens. As noted by Egobueze et al. (2020: 63) 'media reports indicate that there have been increases in the cases of attacks by Fulani herdsmen on several farmers in communities.' The Herdsmen and Farmers conflict is as a result of pastoralism. The conflict is a violent move over scarce resources and the use of natural vegetation and water resources within the grazing lane. Land, a natural gift from God is the major source of the conflict. Land ownership is largely responsible for the present-day tension and conflicts between herdsmen (nomads) and host farming communities within the Guinea and Savanah regions of the country, especially, the middle belts, known as North Central as well as some parts of South-east and South-south of Nigeria.

This conflict arose from the intensity of production activities that are propelled by increasing demand for land. It is believed that Nigeria has recorded several violent conflicts in many rural communities from 1999 till date associated with this factor and this conflict has resulted to some thousands of deaths and internal displacement of several others. This has distorted

farmer's livelihood since they live and earn their living from rural areas.

Dimelu et al. (2017) note that the conflict between pastoralists and farmers in agrarian communities presents a formidable challenge to both food and livestock production in Nigeria. It is associated with structural issues like population, cultural, political and ethno-religious differences as well as unproductive conflict behaviours and struggle for livelihood survival by the disputants. There are problems of incompatibility of livelihood strategies, competition for access and use of natural resources such as land and water between the pastoralists and farmers in the affected areas. All these are associated with the resource which defines power sharing and economic opportunities in the country.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the foregoing, that the Nigerian fiscal federalism has created a monster which is standing against the unity and development of the country. The principles of independence and co-ordinate jurisdiction of different tiers of government that are key prerequisites of federalism have been substantially eroded.

Military interregnum at different periods in the political historicity of the country has been the greatest undoing of the Nigerian federalism. Genuine federalism can at best be associated with democratic civilian regimes, since it is only under a civil democracy and popular participation that political and fiscal powers can be decentralized such that the States and Local Governments can enjoy relative constitutional and fiscal autonomy. Conversely, whenever federal constitutional and political powers have been emasculated by the military regime, there is very little possibility for fiscal federalism. That is why what we had since the military incursion till today is fiscal centralism, which is a feature of unitary government.

This study also revealed that the massive corruption among the political class over the year has alienated the people and exposed them to enormous hardship, poverty and unemployment. This is part of the reason for the sub-national political revolt across the country.

Finally, the study revealed that over the years, the majority ethnic groups who control the apparatus of state power both in democratic and military regimes have used their privileged position to subjugate, marginalize and plunder the resource of the minority ethnic group for their ethnic and class interest. This has resulted to internal colonialism and the agitation of the ethnic minority people of the Niger Delta region for resource control, and or self determination, It is from this region that much of the country's revenue is derived from. They seek answers to the question of economic, political and environmental justice and this has heightened the acrimonious

contestation for restructuring of the federation.

The Nigerian state appears to be in a keg with gun powder waiting to be ignited with fire for it to explode. The sound and consequences of the explosion would indeed be terrific. All hands must be on deck to ensure that the fire is not lighted for the keg to explode. Restructuring the centripetal structure is imperative at this juncture to minimize or finally forestall sub-national revolts, which is associated with internal colonialism. A stitch at nine, they say, saves ten.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no doubt that federalism is the best system of government for a plural society like Nigeria. For federalism to achieve the objective of national integration, unity in diversity, justice and economic development, fiscal federalism must reflect the need and desire of the people. When this is achieved, internal colonialism and sub-national political revolt would either be minimized or eliminated. In view of the foregoing, we advance the following recommendations:

- (1) The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (As Amended) should be restructured to provide for fiscal decentralism as against the current fiscal centralism which was inherited from the military. Fiscal centralism has caused a lot of havoc in Nigeria by making the States and Local Governments to depend on the Federal Government for their economic survival. This eroded the fiscal autonomy of the federating governments. Fiscal centralism also encouraged massive corruption and financial impropriety at the centre, which is still hunting the country. All regions and federating states in the country are highly endowed with natural resources, thus, they should participate actively in the economy by developing their potentials for the good of the country. They should have taxing powers over some subjects reserved in the exclusive list that will enable their economy to grow.
- (2) The principle of derivation should be the basic principle of revenue allocation as it was in the 1963 Republican Constitution. The 13% minimum benchmark with respect to derivation as provided for in the 1999 Constitution should be reviewed upward to 50%. The 13% derivation is grossly inadequate and inhibits corruption which is a desideratum to injustice and this is an eloquent testimony of internal colonialism. That is the reason why the people of the Niger Delta region are asking for resource control. If oil, which is the mainstay of the Nigerian economy was discovered in any of the major ethnic groups in the country, 13% would likely have been increased.
- (3) States and Local Governments should keep separate

accounts into which all revenues generated in their domain should be paid. Specified revenue for certain resources that cut across State boundaries should be paid to the federal government account in addition to a specified proportion contributed by other levels of government to the Federal Government in pursuance of its national economic and development goals.

(4) There should be a deliberate effort to restructure the political economy of Nigeria by diversification. The mono-cultural state of the economy, which is dependent on oil and gas cannot bring about economic development which the Federation is in dire need of. The economy as it is currently structured, is disarticulated and distorted. There is therefore need for forward and backward linkages to grow the economy. This means that all sectors of the economy, namely, solid minerals, agriculture, industry, manufacturing, to name but a few, have to complement each other for sustainability and development.

(5) Finally, there should be a vigorous fight against corruption and injustices to enable the people have faith in the government. This will go a long way to discourage sub-national revolt. The current war against corruption should be intensified and expanded beyond partisanship, it should be holistic.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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