

RESTRUCTURING THE NIGERIAN FEDERATION: WHICH WAY NIGERIA?

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Introduction

Restructuring is a song on the lips of many Nigerians today. It has trended for decades and seems to be a topical issue in Nigeria.¹ Nigeria as a sovereign State is one that has numerous ethno-tribal groups with large population and enormous land mass. Each ethnic group in Nigeria is endowed with one mineral or other natural resource with corresponding human resources (population). It is as a result of this that Nigeria practices federal system of government which ensures efficient administration of both the vast territories of Nigeria and its ethno-tribal heterogeneous population. Federalism has been put in place as a political mechanism for governance within the Nigeria polity.

The current Nigeria political structure which has its roots in the 1946 Sir Arthur Richard's Constitution of Nigeria, right from its inception till now has shown symptoms of administratively sick system of government resulting from such issues as the issue of resource control, outcry of marginalization, issue of ethno-tribal and regional discrimination, and issue of ensuring that every citizen irrespective of

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¹ Ideobodo, N., *etal*, Political Restructuring in Nigeria: the need, challenges and prospects obtainable at Ideobodo Nwafor@gmail.com accessed on 20/6/2021.

age, sex, religion, ethnic, linguistic, regional or tribal affiliation is given a sense of belonging to the country.² Most importantly, the issue of resource control *vis-a-vis* political restructuring has become a contentious issue in Nigeria body politics, having been a key problem facing the Nigeria State since the onset of ethnic politics.

The history of the struggle for restructuring of the Nigerian political structure shows that it is an age-long practice that has bred conflicts and formation of conflict groups within the Nigerian society. It has polarized the country into north and south divide with the southerners being the protagonists and the northerners being the antagonists.³ The protagonists argue that by the virtue of their contribution to general purse, the principles of justice and equity demand that they should be allowed to control and manage their resources since they bear impact of oil exploration while the antagonists maintained that oil exploration activities in the south were funded from the agricultural proceed from cocoa, groundnut, cotton, hides and skin gotten in the North.⁴ As already indicated, those opposed to resource control and political restructuring are mostly from the Northern part of the country. Recently, Alhaji Tanko Yakasai stated that the north has a reservation for restructuring because it aimed to deny the north revenue and representation. In his words: “the idea behind the agitation for

² *Ibid.*

³ Yaqub, N., What is Restructuring in the Era of change in Nigeria Politics?, being a paper presented at IASTEM International Conference, 2016 at Damman, Saudi-Arabia, pp 5-18.

⁴ Ahmed, B. A; *etal*, Resource Control and Political Restructuring in Nigeria, a view from South-South, Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, vol. 5(8), pp 8-25.

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restructuring is to demolish those two advantages that are naturally due to the north in terms of representation and revenue sharing”.⁵

The protagonist-antagonist stance on restructuring has resulted in the conflict of interest, physical violence between the two parties resulting to name calling, loss of lives and properties. Prominent among the restructuring-bred conflicts are the MASSOB versus Government conflict of 2005/2006 till date, IPOB versus Government conflict of 2014/2015 till date, the Lagos State Government versus Federal Government conflict of 2006/2007, the Anambra State versus Kogi State boundary conflict of 2016, the Niger-Delta Militants and Niger-Delta Avengers versus Government conflict of 2003/2004 till date, the Boko-Haram versus Government conflict, the Nigerian – Biafra Civil War of 1967-1970 amongst others.⁶

As a result of these restructuring struggles and its concomitant effects that this paper attempts to find the way forward of this struggle in order to proffer durable solutions to these problems to the best interest of Nigerian State and its citizenry.

Clarification of some Concepts

Before we go into the discussion on restructuring, it is important to achieve a clear understanding of some concepts including federalism, fiscal federalism, and devolution of power. These are terms that have been frequently used in our national political discourse but have sometimes been misunderstood or misapplied.

⁵ The Sun Newspaper of May 26, 2017.

⁶Ideobodo, N., *etal* footnote No. 1.

Federalism

This is a system of government in which constitutional powers are shared in one national political entity between a central government and sub-national units, such as regions or states in such a manner that one tier of government is not superior to the other. Examples of federations include the United States of America, Canada, Australia, India and Brazil. Such countries usually have two tiers of constitutionally recognized federating units, but India is a notable exception with its Panchayats and Municipalities that are a third tier of the federation. This India distinction has important implications for a constitutionally restructured Nigeria.

There are also variations in the strength of federal powers in relation to sub-national units in many countries. The United States, for example, went through conceptual battles between its founding fathers in the country's early years, with the "federalists" favoring a strong centre that nevertheless left the States with enough space and powers to grow without suffocation, and the "anti-federalists" that wanted stronger States and a weak centre. The federalists won. In the European tradition of federalism, the sub-national units or regions have tended to be more powerful than central governments.⁷

⁷ Kingsley Moghalu, How to Restructure Nigeria, why, what, how and when obtainable at file: /iic:/ users/Digital photos/documents/how to restructure Nigeria - why, what, how and when, - by Kingsley Moghalu medium intel accessed on 18/6/21.

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Fiscal Federalism

This is an aspect of public finance. Fiscal federalism is the study of how expenditure and revenue side are allocated across different (vertical) layers of the administration. An important part of this subject matter is how a central government deals with transfer payments or grants from its revenues that it shares with lower levels of government. Understanding this conceptual nuance is important because in much of Nigerian public discourse we assume that fiscal federalism necessarily or exclusively means a federal system of government that may not necessarily be a federal one.

Devolution of Powers

This concept means the surrender of powers from a central government to sub-national units, but this in itself is not necessarily federalism because it can as well occur in a unitary system of government, as is the case in the United Kingdom. The implication for us in Nigeria is that we must not conflate devolution of powers with the federalism that I and many others argue is necessary for Nigeria. The two are not necessarily the same.

Concept and History of Restructuring in Nigeria

Several decades after Lord Lugard amalgamated the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914,⁸ and 61 years into the nation's political independence,⁹ there is still agitation by certain individuals and some groups of people in their desire to determine the nature of the political

⁸ Apata, Z.O., Luggard and creation of provincial administration in Northern Nigeria, *African Study Monographs*, 11(3):143-152, (1990).

⁹ Olanrewaju, J.S., Understanding Nigerian Development Crisis, *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1):1-16, (2015).

system in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation.¹⁰ After many years of military dictatorship, many expected that the advent of the Presidential System of Government, which was ushered in by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), would actually address some of the concerns about national unity and the economic prosperity of the nation.¹¹ But almost two decades into the adventure, it would seem that Nigeria is still far from achieving this. In proffering solutions to this issue, many recommendations have been advanced, many of which support the concept of "restructuring", which has become one of the most popular terms in the Nigerian political milieu today.¹²

Although, the word "restructuring" had been within the political lexicon for the last three decades or so, there has never been any time that its demand in the Nigerian polity has been this audibly pronounced. Whether invoked as political campaign strategy or used as a ploy to oppose the government in power, restructuring has sparked debates from different angles. Nevertheless, it would appear that there is no consensus yet on what restructuring means.

¹⁰ Ikemintang, S., Does Nigeria really need political restructuring? Punch Newspaper, June 30, 2017, retrieved July 15, 2018 from <http://punch.ng/does-nigeria-really-need-political-restructuring/>.

¹¹ Eras Osita-njoku, A., The Political Economy of Development in Nigeria: From the Colonial to Post Colonial, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science 21(9):9-15, (2016).

¹² Ogih, M., (2017) Restructuring Nigeria; Meaning, Reasons, Problems and Prospects, Info guide, retrieved July 14, 2018 from <https://infoguidenigeria.com/restructuring-nigeria/>.

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The Minister of Information, Lai Mohammed has revealed: it is not the government that is not clear about what restructuring means, rather it is the people who are asking for restructuring who are not clear about what restructuring means.

Restructuring is a noun derives from verb restructure. To ‘restructure’ according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary¹³ means to organize something such as a system or a company in a new and different way. To give effect that there is no generally accepted definition of the word restructuring; Lai Mohammed had this to say:

It is not the government that is not clear about what restructuring means, rather it is the people who are asking for restructuring who are not clear about what restructuring means.

Lai Mohammed’s statement alluded to non-uniformity in the definition of restructuring as provided by many of its proponents; it also suggests in clear terms that the current move towards the restructuring of Nigeria is not being championed by the government, but by certain individuals and organizations who wish that the government would buy into this movement.

Many of the definitions provided by authors and commentators only suggest areas that require restructuring. This is further attested to by Lai Mohammed when he stated thus:

¹³ A. S Hornby, Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English, 7th Edition, Oxford University Press, India, 2005, p.1296.

For some, it means creation of additional States... for others, it is about moving certain items from the Exclusive Legislative List to the Concurrent list, for some it means community policing, and for others it is about devolution of power.

Indeed, the call for restructuring has rested within the following headlines:

1. Devolution of Power

It has been argued that the present political landscape has concentrated powers at the center, making the States and Local Government very weak. As a result of this quagmire, many have advocated that the political structure be devolved from the center to the federating unit as against the current system, which tends towards unitary system of government.¹⁴

2. Fiscal Federalism

Resources control has been another burning issue. The proponent of this idea would readily cite the success story of the South West, which judiciously utilized its resources from the export of cocoa to develop region.¹⁵ Regrettably, with the over dependence on oil, these hitherto buoyant States are now more or less begging States.

¹⁴ Amah, E.I., Devolution of Power to Local Government: Appraising Local Government Autonomy under Nigerian Federation, *Beijing Law Review* (9): 275-293, (2018); Agboola, T.O., The Challenges of State/Local Government Creation in Nigeria: Critical Analysis, *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance* (7):1-18, (2016).

¹⁵ Arowolo, D., Fiscal Federation in Nigeria: Theory and Dimension, *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(2) 1-22, (2011).

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3. Creation of Additional State

There is agitation over the need to create additional States. The logic here is that State with large landmass may be unable to cover the needs of the residents.¹⁶ However, it is the view of the researchers that much more is required than State creation if Nigerians are going to truly enjoy the dividends of democracy.

4. Establishment of State Police

With the spate of killings in Nigeria and the inability of the security outfits to combat this crime,¹⁷ it has been suggested that the federal structure of the Nigeria police will be unworkable, going forward.¹⁸ Many have also advanced that States should be made to have their State-level police. The merit in this argument is that it would facilitate intelligent gathering. This could also encourage the State government to provide more support to the police. However, while State police might be helpful, if other issues affecting functionality of the police are not addressed, the situation might remain unchanged. For example, if the police remain unequipped, their capacities to combat crime remain unimproved and if the wanton corruption in the police force is not squarely addressed, it is unlikely that the restructuring of the police would achieve any meaningful result. By the way, the

¹⁶ Adewale, S.A., *Quest for State's Creation in Nigeria: A Harbinger of Development or Underdevelopment?*, *Journal of Culture, Society and Development* (4): 68-71, (2014).

¹⁷ Agwanwo, D.E., *State Policing and Police Efficiency in Nigeria*, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4 (25):165-173, (2014).

¹⁸ Eme, O.I., and Anyadike, N.O., *Security Challenges and the Imperatives of State Police*, *Review of Public Administration and Management* 1(2):203-218, (2018).

police could become the tool for manipulations by the State Governors.

5. Local Government Autonomy

The experience of many local government areas in the last five years now justifies the need to restructure the Local Government system. While many of the States in Nigeria only waited till about one year to the end of their respective administration before conducting elections into the various councils, these ‘appointed’ Chairmen are still tied to the aprons of their Governors who may suspend or remove the Chairmen at any given time. Suffice to state that the rhetoric for restructuring actually dates back to about two decades ago.¹⁹ However, despite the clamour over these years, the government seem not to have paid much attention, except of course, with President Jonathan’s regime which in 2014, held a National Conference (CONFAB) in which nearly 500 selected citizens, representing different parts of the country for over four months deliberated on wide ranging issues bothering on Nigeria’s existence. Incidentally, this enjoyed overwhelming support by members of the CONFAB.²⁰

Suffice it to say that in the last five years, the agitation for restructuring has become more amplified and aided through the deployment of

¹⁹ Bello, A., Restructuring Nigeria: A Critical Analysis, This Day, June 11, 2017. Obtainable at <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/06/11/restructuring-nigeria-a-critical-analysis/>.

²⁰ Akintoye, B., What is Restructuring? The Nations, (2017) Obtainable at <http://thenationonlineng.net/what-is-restructuring/>.

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digital, print, and electronic media.²¹ The reasons for the initial neglect are threefold:

1. One, some people believe that there is no guarantee that such an exercise will succeed in moving the nation forward, and that it may even be counter-productive or lead to unexpected consequences;
2. Prior to 2015, the people who were calling for restructuring never gave a clear definition of what they meant by restructuring, neither were they specific about the scope, modalities or even the timing of such an exercise;
3. Up till 2015, most of the calls for restructuring had been from individuals and groups from the Southern part of Nigeria, especially South-South geo-political zone. Others from the North probably think that the agitation is because the South controls the major mineral resources that constitute the bulk of Nigeria's wealth.
4. It has also been alleged that the ruling party capitalized on this agitation to coast home in the electoral victory to themselves.

Shortly after the 2015 general elections and after appointments were made again, the agitation for restructuring resonated again based on the following reasons:

1. Perceived Lop-sided Appointments

Notwithstanding the provision of the Constitution that guarantees Federal character, many have alleged favoritisms in

²¹ Farayibi, A.O., *The Structure of Nigeria's Restructuring Rhetorics*, National Discourse, September, 2017, Centre for Allied Research and Economic Development, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

the appointments into key positions in the present administration. More specifically, many have alleged that the security architecture of the nation is headed by persons from the President's geopolitical zone and religion and Security Council meeting could be conducted entirely in Mr. President's native language. In truth, the implication of such affiliations on the security level is that it becomes extremely difficult if not impossible to sanction non-performing security personnel. It has also been argued that the appointment into the security arm has been concentrated into a particular geo-political zone.

2. Increasing Level of Poverty

It could be recalled that the first major problem the current administration battled with upon assumption of power was economic recession. Many jobs were lost, civil servants and pensioners denied their regular pay and the attendant consequences of job loss and general reduction in the standard of living. There seems to be agitation over wage increase and other demands. Only recently, the World Bank revealed that the economy of Nigeria has not improved despite the exit from recession.²² To many, the currently political structure and the fiscal architecture can be attributed as the main causes of increasing problems.

3. Growing Insecurity

The level of insecurity in Nigeria has reached a crescendo. While many of these killings are unreported, the statistics provided by

²² Jenna, C., World Bank Backs IMF on Poverty Rate in Nigeria, Daily Post, May 3, 2019, retrieved July 14, 2018 from <http://dailypost.ng/2018/05/03/world-bank-backs-inf-poverty-rate-nigeria/>.

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International bodies such as Amnesty International buttress this. Amnesty International reported that not less than 168 persons were killed in the herders/farmers clashes alone in January, 2018 across Adamawa, Benue, Taraba, Ondo, and Kaduna States.²³ Many have suggested that the security system could only be overhauled when there is restructuring.

4. Campaign Strategy

One of the hallmarks of democratic ideals is for the opposition to constantly engage the party in power through the weapon of constructive criticism. Lately, this has been an issue of debate between the nation's ruling party and main opposition party. Even though the ruling party boycotted the 2014 CONFAB, some members of the party participated at the CONFAB²⁴ and had even gone on ahead to set up a committee to come up with the party's position on the issue of restructuring. Only July 1, 2018, Afenifere declared that the Pan socio-political group would only throw its weight behind any candidate/aspirant who commits to restructure the nation when elected into office.²⁵ Even though the ruling party (Action Congress of Nigeria) has

²³ Godwin, A., (2018) Amnesty International Reveals how many Nigeria Fulani Herdsmen Killed in 2018, Daily Post, January 30, 2018, retrieved July 12, 2018 from <http://dailypost.ng/2018/01/30/amnesty-international-reveals-many-nigerians-fulani-herdsmen-killed-2018/>.

²⁴ Idris, H., Restructuring, Fiscal federalism, Core APC Agenda-Lawal Shuaibu, Daily Trust Newspaper August 28, 2017, Retrieved February 15, 2018 from <https://dailytrust.com.ng/news/politics/restructuring-fiscal-federalism-core-apc-agenda-lawal-shuaibu/211831.html> .

²⁵ Dapa, P., We'll see Proof of Restructuring before Endorsement-Afenifere, Punch Newspaper, July 1, 2018. Obtainable at <http://punching.com/well-see-proof-of-restructuring-before-endorsement-afenifere/>.

actually denied the allegation the party has included this in their manifestoes, and set up a committee, which aggregated a wide range opinions from nationwide deliberations.

While there are those who are averse to the restructuring idea, some of them have posited that Nigeria has, since the First republic, undergone a series of restructuring journeys without commensurate progress. Besides, the country has also failed to consolidate on the gains of restructuring and making a conscious effort to improve on the challenges. Therefore, they opined that those clamoring for restructuring are perhaps looking for avenues to position themselves for relevance and wait for the opportunity to milk the country dry.²⁶

Why Restructure?

Nigeria is not yet a nation. It is a country created by our erstwhile colonial master, the United Kingdom, made up of many ethnic nationalities, but a nation waiting to be born. In this Monograph, I will argue that, given the diversity inherent in our national make-up, the only form of government that can create national unity and cohesion, and enable Nigeria achieve the promise of its dynamic peoples, is true federalism. Such a form of government requires a fundamental overhaul of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) presently in force to achieve national unity and cohesion as well as the development of the component parts of the Federal state at their own pace. Nigeria today is called a “federal republic” but in reality is a unitary state. This reality is the result of military intervention in our polity through the first coup of 1966.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

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The case for restructuring, then, is clearly four-fold

Firstly, is the case for justice and equity. Anyone can make disingenuous arguments, but the current constitutional structure of Nigeria and concentration of power at the center in Abuja favors some parts of the country and disenfranchises others, in particular those parts of the country from which the natural resources rents support the current structure. It disenfranchises them because they have no control over these resources (which should not be the case in a truly federal state), and also because the arrangement places excessive political power in the hands of whichever groups that control power at the center.

The essence of a federation, such as we had under the 1960 and 1963 Constitutions, is an agreement to form it by its constituent units, and an appropriate balance of powers between the constituent units and the center. A perversion of this cardinal principle has created injustice, which has created disunity. It has led to a retreat from Nigerian-ness, egged on by these valid resentments at inequity and injustice, back to primordial identities that make a mockery of our nationhood. You really do want a nation in which everyone is essentially a happy camper on the basis of collective interest, not one in which some groups feel they are held “captive”.

Secondly, restructuring is necessary because of the destabilization that the current conditions have bred. We can either stabilize Nigeria by restructuring it, or continue to play the ostrich by insisting that our “processes”, not the structure, are the problem. Low intensity conflicts

will continue in various parts of the country, with the theatres of conflict shifting to different regions at different times (South-South, Southeast, and Middle Belt in the North-Central, Northeast, and so on). This would be a dereliction of the federal government's responsibility to protect the lives and property of the citizens of Nigeria. A derelict, vastly overstretched and over-centralized police force will not accomplish this task, nor will siege-style security governance in which our armed forces constantly deployed to check-mate internal dissenters.

Thirdly, restructuring is imperative in order to take care of what I call the "fundamentals." We need a peoples' Constitution. A constitution that was made by military dictators should not guide a democracy, if such a democracy truly is a government of the people, for the people and by the people. We need to address the National question, that which makes Nigeria's nationhood and the relationship between the nearly 400 ethnic nationalities and the Nigerian State. Here, I would recommend that, if we are to achieve real progress, we resolve this conundrum decisively in favour of Nigeria statehood rather than ethnic nationality, but at least it must be agreed by the Nigerian people.

Fourthly, restructuring also is the best path to economic transformation. A six-zone federal structure will offer economies of scale in terms of the ability of a regional government to mobilize adequate tax revenues and utilize these resources for development. It will do the same in the areas of manufacturing as well as intra-regional, inter-regional and international trade. A restructuring based on the current 36 – State structure will not work. Thirty out of 36 States in

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Nigeria today are fiscally unviable. Only six States outpace with internally generated revenue what they get in hand-outs (Federal Allocation Account Committee Allocations) from Abuja derived from oil rents. Paying salaries to State civil servants, as and when due, or in arrears, has become a government “achievement” in our country! With the reign of crude oil regressing into historical memory, the future is bleak and unsustainable, under our current fiscal structure.

Restructuring also is essential because it will help our democracy achieve better governance. The periodic rituals of elections have not necessarily improved governance. There are two ways this will happen. One, restructuring will bring greater accountability and transparency to governance because power and responsibility will devolve closer to the people. This will help devolve a better culture and quality of leadership and will also foster competitive development between the regions. Nigeria today is far more physically integrated than it was in the 1960s, and the six zones structure will prevent the extreme ethnic chauvinism that afflicted the First Republic. Restructuring ought as well to accomplish a reduction in the costs of governance at both the center and the regions.

The Way Forward

To work well, a restructuring exercise must make informed choices. We must choose between maintaining a unitary state²⁷ in which the central government is very powerful, with devolution of powers as is increasingly the case in the UK, a true federation in which regions could be the federating units and the central government and the

²⁷ Which is Nigeria today despite officially being a federation.

federating units are roughly equal in status as in the United States, Canada, Germany, India, Australia and Brazil, or a confederation in which the federating units are superior to the central government with Switzerland as a prime example.

The best arrangement for Nigeria is neither the “unitary federalism” the military leaders imposed on us, nor a confederation, but a real federation with a finely calibrated balance of powers and responsibilities between the central and federating units. In this scenario, the federating units can look after themselves more effectively without the “feeding bottle” of the central government. The center becomes less powerful, but not weak, because it will retain core sovereign responsibilities such as the armed forces and security services, citizenship and immigration, foreign affairs, and the central bank.

Based on this vision, a constitutionally restructure, truly federal Nigeria should have the following core characteristics:

The first is that the federating units in Nigeria should be the six geopolitical zones and not the present structure of States. Not less than 30 States in our present 36 – State structure are economically unviable if left on their own without federal allocations and a recent bail-out of these States by the Central Bank of Nigeria. This is partly because economic viability through fiscal sustainability was not seriously considered as a factor in State creation exercises in Nigeria, and partly because excessive reliance of natural resources (mainly crude oil) for fiscal revenues that are distributed by the central government has made

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States lazy for far too long. Many States in Nigeria still struggle to pay salaries of public servants.

A restructured Nigeria with the six geo-political zones as federating units will work much better because these zones each have economies of scale. Trade and manufacturing can happen inside each zone with a market large enough to meet demand, as well as to trade effectively with other zones in the federation.

The second, in my vision of a restructured Nigeria is that each region, not the central government, will control natural resources found therein, but pay 40 percent of the income from those resources to the central government for the functioning of the federation. This will spur development because the regions will now take on responsibility for how they use their natural resource income and indeed whether they choose to depend mainly on such income or build a more complex and productive economy. In a true federation, the central government should have no business owing the country's natural resources and "allocating" revenues to sub-national units.

The third is that there will be regional police, but with a constitutional provision for overriding security powers for the center, through the armed forces.

Fourth is that the balance of powers between the regions and the center will be deliberately designed to give component regions developmental; and policy space, but not to create an overly weak

center. The central government must nevertheless be lean in personnel and not bloated.

Fifth is that there must be a real separation of religion and the State and public policy in a restructured Nigeria. While Nigeria is supposed to be a secular State (or, as some would argue, a multi-religious one), in practice, religion plays a large role in politics and public policy. Political power is often sought on the basis of religious allegiances, and is often utilized to assure the dominance of specific religions in public policy. This breeds conflict, as adherents of religious faiths that consider themselves politically marginalized resist the “hegemony” of politically empowered other faiths. An example of this situation is the practice of sponsoring religious pilgrimages from public funds. This is economically wasteful and is not essential for social security.

Sixth is that the restructuring of Nigeria requires a completely new constitution that is truly a people constitution. Tinkering with the 1999 Constitution as presently done by the National Assembly through amendments such as the devolution of powers (e.g State police) could result in a “dodge” that does not address the fundamental issue of the structure of the federation or even the national question. As I have noted earlier, devolution of powers is not necessarily the same thing as federalism and can indeed happen in a unitary system.

Seventh is that a constitutional restructuring will require a revamp of the exclusive, concurrent and residual legislative lists in the constitution to accomplish the characteristics above. There are, for example, 68 items on the Exclusive Legislative List in the 1999

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Constitution and a residual list that is far too small – the latter made up of a few items such as cemeteries and burial grounds, births and death registration, healthcare, traditional and chieftaincy titles.

Mines and minerals should be moved from the Exclusive List to the Residual List as an exclusive preserve of regions. Insurance, police and security agencies, prisons, taxation, trade and commerce and water should be moved from the exclusive to the Concurrent list.

Of fundamental importance, local governments should not be a constitutional tier of government in the new constitution. Rather, it should be the responsibility of regional governments to create and administer local governments. There should only be two tiers of government under the new constitution – the central government which will have exclusive responsibility for common services such as the central bank and monetary policy, foreign affairs, defence and the armed forces and immigration.

There should be regional constitutions (which cannot be in conflict with the national constitution but can address the peculiarities of various regions), regional premiers or executive governors and regional parliaments. State House of Assembly will be constitutionally abolished and may be combined to become new regional legislatures. The Office of the President (together with the Vice-President) of a constitutionally restructure Nigeria should be for a single term of six years.

Alternative Route to Restructuring

President Muhammadu Buhari on 19/6/21 has vowed that his administration will not restructure the country. He warned that those agitating for separation and canvassing for restructuring are naïve and ignorant of war. He stated thus:

“those who are doing that should go back and meet their representatives in the House of Assembly and ask for whatever amendment of constitution. Due process should be followed”.

The implication of the above statement coming from Mr. President is that Nigeria is not ready for restructuring. For us to come out of this mess, we must borrow leave from other countries of the world.

Lessons from other Jurisdictions

For those who do not know, what you call ethnic groups in Nigeria is called nations in Europe. There's nowhere in the world where the white man accepts domination from another white man in perpetuity. It used to be so under the Roman Empire and the like. Not anymore. The communists tried it, dividing society into Capitalists and Proletariats, but what followed? It failed completely.

The Communist edifices in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and the big brother, USSR, all collapsed, while the two Germans that are ethnically the same but split by Communism versus Capitalism were reunited, such is the power of ethnic nationalism.

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Czechoslovakia was made up of two ethnic groups, the Czech and the Slovaks. Both separated peacefully on 1st January, 1993. The former is today about 10.6 Million people and the latter 5.4 Million. Added together, they are not up to Lagos State. Yet, they split for peace because two masters cannot be in the same house.

Yugoslavia in 1991 was 23.3 Million, barely more than Lagos State population. It broke into six countries same year – all along ethnic lines, namely: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia.

Let us look at the big brother, USSR. It had more than 25 ethnic groups identified by their language. Today, your fingers will not be enough to count the number of countries that have emerged from the USSR. Why did we sit down and preaching unity in Nigeria as if you are the kindest gentleman on earth while you have no solution to the genocide in Southern Kaduna, and Middle Belt, the illegal but officially condoned arms in the hands of killer herdsmen roaming the country, and be condemning those better informed about the fact that the country is undergoing

Conclusion

From the above analysis, there is need to restructure the entity called Nigeria for the political, economic and social well-being of all Nigerians.