### FISCAL FEDERALISM AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA

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#### **Abstract**

This paper examines the connection between fiscal federalism and insecurity in Nigeria. Many scholars have identified strong links between fiscal federalism and different types of conflicts that breed insecurity.Since independence, the demand for true fiscal federalism, fiscal and political restructuring by different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria has not abated. The paper argues that these agitations have contributed to violent rebellious reactions by aggrieved ethnic groups in the country, endangering the security, unity, and corporate existence of Nigeria as one country. It has also contributed to the alarming level of insecurity in the country. To ensure peace in the country, the State should adopt a proper fiscal federalism with appropriate system at various tiers of government, as a solution to some of the current problems confronting the country, including the insecurity it is facing now. Also if decentralization is conceived, planned, implemented, and sustained as a structural arrangement to devolve fiscal powers and responsibilities to subnational governments, then it stands strong chances of promoting peace and preventing insecurity.

Key Words: Fiscal Federalism, Fiscal Decentralisation, Insecurity, Security.

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### 1. Introduction

Fiscal federalism refers to the principles that define the allocation of fiscal powers and responsibilities to the various tiers of government, while fiscal decentralization is the actual practice of the principles offiscal federalism (Ewetan, 2012; Taiwo, 1999; Aigbokhan, 1999). There is a general consensus in the literature that the Nigerian federation is quite highly centralized, and this has been linked to long years of military rule (Elaigwu, 2007). The over centralization of powers and unhealthy struggle for control of state resources have contributed to violent intra-state conflicts and insecurity challenges that have dogged the African states that nearly turned several states, Nigeria inclusive into failed states. These conflicts involved states well endowed with natural resources. Various studies posit a close linkage between natural resources, conflict and insecurity. Scholars have therefore suggested the devolution of powers as a strategy to manage the resulting conflicts and insecurity for struggles to control state resources. Thus fiscal federalism expressed through decentralisationhas become a useful conflict and insecurity mitigating mechanism by accommodating diversity and managing historical grievances with centralized government.

A federation is not about sharing revenues generated from a part, it is about creating wealth in all its parts. The current fiscal arrangement promotes indolence, militancy and insecurity, false population figures, corruption, and enriches a parasitic class. Under the Canadian constitution, the provinces and federal government legislate on natural resources and the provinces have considerable control over their own natural resources. In the US, states have control over their resources and are subject to federal taxes and laws on strategic resources. Every part of Nigeria will benefit from fiscal federalism.

The state exists primarily to provide security (Omoyibo and Akpomera, 2013; Thomas Hobbes, 1996) asaptly demonstrated by the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which specifically states that "The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government".Security is one of the areas fiscal federalism is being abused in Nigeria. Nigeria is the only federal system in the world that is using unitary police. Unitary police is part of the insecurity challenges in the nation. The present security challenges confronting Nigeria call to question the capacity of the federal government to manage the alarming level of insecurity in the different parts of the country, inspite of huge budgetary allocation to defence and security in the

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last ten years, and the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011 (Ewetan, 2013). Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high, and a confirmation of this is the low ranking of Nigeria in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012). This has compelled the Nigerian government in recent time to request for foreign assistance from countries such as USA, Israel, and EU countries to combat the rising waves of terrorism and insecurity.

The lingering developmental challenges facing the country, particularly insecurity are traceable to over concentration of power at the centre which can be resolved by the adoption of true fiscal federalism. Despite the realization of the appropriateness of the federal system for Nigeria, stakeholders are yet to properly apply the principles of fiscal federalism to solve the numerouschallenges confronting the Nigerian state (Odubajo, 2011).

Against this background, this paper therefore seeks to examine the connection between fiscal decentralization and national insecurity, a crisis of the Nigerian state.

#### 2. Conceptual Issues

Fiscal federalism refers to the allocation of tax powers and expenditure responsibilities between the levels of government. Thus under fiscal federalism, any one individual is subject to the influence of the fiscal operations of different tiers of government (Ewetan, 2011). This is akin to what Boadway (1979) referred to as economics of multilevel or federal systems of government when he opined that the public sector is stratified into more than one level of government, each having a different set of expenditure responsibilities and taxing powers.

The term "fiscal federalism" is rooted in a political arrangement called federalism. Wheare (1963) describes federalism as "the method of dividing powers so that general and regional governments are each, within a sphere, coordinate and independent". The fiscal relationships between and among the constituents of the federation is explained in terms of three main theories, namely, the theory of fiscal relation which concerns the functions expected to be performed by each level of government in the fiscal allocation; the theory of interjurisdictional cooperation which refers to areas of shared responsibility by the national, state and local governments, and the theory of multijurisdictional community (Tella, 1999). In this case, each jurisdiction (state, region or zone) will provide services whose benefits will accrue to people

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within its boundaries, and so, should use only such sources of finance as will internalize the costs.

Decentralisation is a generic term which covers a number of modes such as the following:Deconcentration which refers to the process of administrative decentralization whereby the central government designs a structure that enables its field agents and offices to work in close proximity to the local people. Delegation which is the transfer of responsibilities from central government to semi-autonomous bodies that are directly accountable to the central government. Devolution which is the process of transferring decision-making and implementation powers, functions, responsibilities and resources to legally constituted, and popularly elected local governments. Delocalization which is the spatial distribution of central government socio-economic development facilities and activities such as schools, hospitals, etc. in peripheral regions.

There are divergent approaches to conceptualizing security which is the antithesis of insecurity. Since the cold war ended several attempts have been made to redefine the concept of security from a state-centric perspective to a broader view that makes human beings the epicenter of the concept. At the heart of this debate there have been attempts to deepen and widen the concept of security from the level of the states to societies and individuals, and from military to non-military issues (Ewetan, 2014; Nwanegbo andOdigbo, 2013; Kruhmann, 2003).

In the theoretical literature the divergent approaches to the conceptualization of human security are categorized into two major strands. One is a neo-realist theoretical strand that conceptualizes security as primary responsibilities of the state. The second strand, a postmodernist or plural view, conceptualizes security as the responsibilities of non-state actors and displaces the state as a major provider of security. Proponents of this approach argue that the concept of security goes beyond a military determination of threats. They are of the view that government should be more concern with the economic security of individual than the security of the state because the root causes of insecurity are economic in nature (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013)

Some scholars in conceptualizing security placed emphasis on the absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country (Igbuzor, 2011;

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Oche, 2001; Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013).In the intelligence community there is a consensus that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the existence of a robust mechanism to respond proactively to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency, expertise, and in real time (Ewetan, 2014).

The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as: absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. According to Beland (2005) insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Achumba et al (2013) defines insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur. In the context of this paper insecurity is defined as a breach of peace and security, whether historical, religious, ethno-regional, civil, social, political that contributes to recurring conflicts, and leads to wanton destruction of lives and property.

### 3. Literature Review

Emuedo (2014) in a study on the greed model and insecurity in the Niger Delta, Nigeria posits that insecurity has been goaded by grievances connected to fiscal federalism rather than greed, as conflicts in the Niger Delta evolved through many stages of oppression, repression and exploitation. There are studies that establish strong link between natural resources, conflict and insecurity with oil at the apex (Khan, 1994; Karl, 1997; Coronil, 1997; Mbembe, 2001; Emuedo, 2014).Collier(1999) examines natural resource conflict nexus in his economics of civil war in natural resources endowed states. It links conflicts notably in Africa to economic driven rebellion, due to natural resources profusion. Resort to insurgencyhas been linked to the fact that natural resource dependent states do not embrace fiscal decentralisation, also these countries are bedeviled with a horde of economic diseases, political diseases and insecurity (Auty, 2001; Sachs and Warner, 1999; Leite and Weidermann, 1999; Gylfason, 2001). The Niger Delta conflict in Nigeria and the coercive approach by the Nigerian State instigated the violent reactions by the Niger Delta militants that led to serious security challenges until the intervention of President Yar'Adua through the amnesty declaration on June 25, 2009 to end the conflict and

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stem the security challenges (Emuedo, 2014). The comparative experiences of the countries implementing decentralization, however, reveal that the relationship between decentralization and insecurity is not linear, but rather complex.

Decentralisation has not always succeeded in resolving or preventing conflicts which breed insecurity. Some scholars have expressed skepticism of the peace-making consequences of decentralization and have indeed implicated decentralization in the outbreak of conflicts and insecurity (Brubakar, 1996;Kymlicka, 1998; Synder, 2000). Decentralisation is criticized for encouraging the promotion of ethnic, regional or communal identities that are antithetical to national identity and cohesion. It has also been argued that decentralization generates conflict and insecurity. For example, Suberu (2006) argues that Nigeria's federal structure, with its multiplicity of sub-federal constituent units promotes the decentralisation and compartmentalization of ethno-religious and regional conflicts which contribute to insecurity, polarization and destabilisation of thefederation.

Kauzya (2001) in a study on the links between decentralisation, peace, democracy and development argued that decentralization provides a structural arrangement and a level playing field for stakeholders and players to promote peace, security, democracy and development. Also it offers opportunities for peace in situations where power sharing can mitigate severe ethnic, religious, and territorial conflicts inside a country that could lead to insecurity.

### 4. Fiscal Federalism and Insecurity in Nigeria

At independence in 1960 a federal structure was imposed on Nigeria by the British. Wheare (1963) conceptualizes federalism as a constitutional division of power between two levels of government which are independent and coordinating in their respective spheres of influence. The incursion of the military into governance, and the consequent imposition of military command structure in a federation set the tone for the distortion of Nigeria's federalism. Thus the practice of federalism in Nigeria no doubt has been distorted by overwhelming dominance of the federal government that distributes national resources to lower level government at its own whims and caprices.Since independence, the demand for true fiscal federalism, fiscal and political restructuring by different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria has not abated, and these agitations have contributed to violent rebellious reactions by aggrieved ethnic groups in the country, endangering the security, unity, and corporate existence of Nigeria as one country. Federalism

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that undermines the independence and autonomy of its federating units will only bring about conflict, insecurity, threat to national cohesion and peace, and ultimate disintegration (Ali, 2013; Adamu, 2005).

Fiscal decentralization has the potential to deflate national level inter-group conflict for power, resources and control, particularly in nations with diverse ethno-religious groups which are regionally concentrated. It can also improve contentious centre-periphery relations, particularly when there is a history of protest against centralized rule and forms of cultural hegemony as has been the case in both Indonesia and Nigeria (Diprose and Ukiwo, 2008).Decentralisation, when properly crafted, provides a structural arrangement through which critical issues such as those of insecurity, national unity and indivisibility can be reconciled.

Many scholars have identified strong links between fiscal federalism and different types of conflicts that breed insecurity in Nigeria(Ali, 2013; Okorie, 2011; Jega, 2002; Salawu, 2010; Onyishi, 2011; Ezeoba, 2011; Lewis, 2002). These different types of conflicts include:

**Ethno-religious Conflicts:**Ethno-religious violence has been linked to the inability of Nigerian leaders to distribute state resources equitably. Other causes are accusation, and allegation of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry. In all parts of Nigeria, ethno-religious conflicts have assumed alarming rates. It has occurred in places like Shagamu (Ogun State), Lagos, Abia, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Ebonyi and Enugu State respectively. These ethno-religious identities have become disintegrative and destructive social elements threatening the peace, stability and security in Nigeria (Eme and Onyishi, 2011).

**Politically Based Violence:**Violence is a universal phenomenon and the expression of hostility and rage through physical force directed against persons or property (Anifowoshe, 1982; Alanamu, 2005; Fakanbi and Raji, 2013).The aggression theory which postulates that frustration breeds aggression has been used to explain the discontent and frustration of the different components of Nigeria, especially the minorities with the refusal of the Nigerian state to embrace fiscal federalism (Anifowoshe, 1982). These frustrations are largely responsible for the various violence and insecurity problem that have been witnessed for some time in different parts of

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Nigeria. Because of the centralization of resourcespolitical contests are characterized by desperation, and violent struggle for political power among politicians. Recurring political violence in Nigeria could be attributed to over-zealousness and desperation of political gladiators to win elections or remain in office at all cost.

Economic-Based Violence:Eme and Onyishi (2011) note thatcries of resource control and revenue sharing regularly rent the air between proponents and opponents also leading to violent agitations among the contending actors and insecurity challenges. The Niger-Delta crisis in Nigeria presents a classic case of this violent struggle that has been on since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970. Although by no means limited to oil in the Niger Delta, the most prevalent campaign about the link between fiscal federalism and insecurity in Nigeria focuses on oil and the Delta region. It is however true those other types of resource driven conflicts have received less attention in the debate. Assets such as grazing and farming, and water resource, have tended to give rise to horizontal conflicts that involve communities across the geo-political zones.

**Organized violent groups:** Organized violent groups such as ethnic militia, vigilantes, secret cults in tertiary institutions and political thugs contribute significantly to security challenges in Nigeria in different dimension and forms. Their emergence have been linked to a number of factors which include the culture of militarism that has its antecedents in military rule, the failure of the state and its institutions, economic disempowerment, the structure of the state and Nigeria's federalism, non-separation of state and religion, politics of exclusion, culture of patriarchy, ignorance and poor political consciousness (Ibrahim and Igbuzor, 2002 as cited in Eme and Onyishi, 2011).

**Weak Security System:**This is a major contributory factor to the level of insecurity in Nigeria, and this can be attributed to a number of factors which include, a unitary police force for a federation like Nigeria, inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipment both in weaponry and training, poor welfare of security personnel, and inadequate personnel (Achumba et al. 2013).Nigeria is the only federal system in the world that is using unitary police. Unitary police is part of the insecurity challenges in the nation. According to Olonisakin (2008) the police-population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450 which falls below

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the standard set by the United Nations. The implication of this is that Nigeria is grossly under policed and this partly explains the inability of the Nigerian Police Force to effectively combat crimes and criminality in the country.Dimensions of insecurity include crime, criminality, armed robbery and insurgency. The level of insecurity in Nigeria is alarming. The table below shows available data on the level of some of the crimes from 2000-2008.

Table 1. Level of ethics from 2000 to 2000					
Year	Theft	Armed Robbery	Kidnapping	Assassination	Fraud
2000	29127	1877	243	1255	7927
2001	40796	2809	349	2120	10234
2002	35231	3889	337	2117	9134
2003	33124	3497	410	2136	9508
2004	37289	3142	349	2550	9532
2005	46111	2074	798	2074	9580
2006	<mark>419</mark> 01	2863	372	2000	6395
2007	21082	2327	277	2007	5860
2008	23927	2340	309	1956	5058
a		10 1 1	1 (0.0.1.0)		

**Table 1:** Level of Crimes from 2000 to 2008

Source: Adapted from Achumba et al. (2013)

Table 1 shows that on the average the rate of all the insecurity variables increased between 2000 and 2008 with the exception of fraud which decreased within the same period. In recent time there has been an increase in the rate of theft, armed robbery especially in the banks, kidnapping and assassination in different parts of the country. However these vices are not equally distributed in the country. For instance, the South East states of Nigeria have the highest incidence of kidnapping,the South South states of Nigeria have the highest incidence of armed robbery and fraud, while the Northern states are characterized by bombing by the Islamic sect, Boko Haram (CLEEN, 2012).

Available data on the violent attacks of Boko Haram from 2009 to 2012 are reported in Table 2

S/N	Date of Attack	State	Location of Attack	Impact
1	July 27, 2009	Yobe	Attack on Potiskum, Yobe State Divisional Headquarters.	4 people killed
2	March 13, 2018	Plateau	Another sect operation in the northern part of Jos, Plateau State.	300 people killed
3	Oct. 1 2010	Abuja	Explosions near the Eagle Square, Abuja.	12 people killed and many injured
4	Dec. 24,	Plateau	A bomb attack, in BarkinLadi, Jos, Plateau	8 people killed

**Table 2.** Attacks by Boko Haram Sect in Nigeria from 2009 to 2012

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	2010		State.	
5	Dec, 31,	Abuja	Explosions in Mogadishu Mammy Market,	10 people killed
	2010	-	Abuja.	
6	Jan. 21,	Borno	Attack on Borno state Governorship candidate	7 people killed
÷	2011		of all Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), for the	· F · · · · · · · · ·
	_011		2011 election, AlhajiModuGubio.	
7	Mar. 2,	Kaduna	Boko Haram killed policemen attached to the	2 people killed
/		Nauuila		2 people killed
0	2011	*7 1	Residence of Mustapha Sandamu, at Rigasa	
8	Mar. 30,	Yobe	Bomb planted by Boko Haram in Damaturu,	1 injured
	2011		YobeState, exploded and injured police officer.	
9	April 8,	Niger	Bomb at INEC office in Suleja	8 people killed
	2011			
10	April 26,	Bauchi	Army Barracks in Bauchi bombed	3 people killed
	2011			And many injured
11	May 29,	Abuja	Multiple bombings in different locations in	13 people killed
11	$\frac{2011}{2011}$	Bauchi	Northern Nigeria.	And 40 injured
	2011	And Zaria	Northern Nigeria.	7 md 40 mjuled
12	June 7		Sories of home blosts occurred in Maidwayni	5 killed and
12	June 7,	Borno	Series of bomb blasts occurred in Maiduguri	
	2011			several injured
13	June 16,	Abuja and	Nigerian Police Headquarters, Abuja, bombed by	7 killed and many
	2011	Borno	A suspected suicide bomber. A bomb blast also	Vehicles damaged
			Occurred at Damboa town, Maiduguri	
14	June 20,	Kaduna	Boko Haram stormed Kankara Police station in	7 policemen killed
	2011		Katsina state.	and 2 security men
15	July 9,	Borno and	A clash between Boko Haram and the military in	35 killed and many
10	2011	Niger	Maiduguri, Borno State, also in Suleja, Niger State,	injured
	2011	inger	a bomb was targeted at a church.	injuicu
16	July 12,	Borno	Boko Haram threw an explosive device on a moving	5 people killed
10	2011	DOIIIO		5 people killed
17		D	Military patrol vehicle	
17	July 15,	Borno	Explosion in Maiduguri.	5 people injured
	2011			
18	July 25,	Maiduguri	Bomb explosion near the palace of traditional ruler	8 people killed
	2011		in Maiduguri.	
19	Aug. 26,	Abuja	A suicide Bomber drove into The United Nations	25 people killed and
	2011	C III	building in Abuja	60 injured
20	Sep. 12,	Bauchi	A bomb attack on a police station in Misau	7 people killed
	2011		P THE REAL PROPERTY OF A	r - r
21	Sep. 17,	Borno	Brother in-law of Mohammed Yusuf, the slain leader	1 person killed
<i>2</i> 1	2011	Donio	of Boko Haram, BabakuraFugu, shot dead in front	r person kined
	2011			
			of his house in Maiduguri by two members of the	
			sect two days after he was visited by former	
			President OlusegunObasanjo.	
22	Oct. 3,	Borno	Boko Haram attacked Baga Market in Maiduguri	3 people killed
	2011			
23	Nov. 4,	Yobe	Attack by Boko Haram in Damaturu, Yobe state.	150 people killed
	2011			
24	Nov. 27,	Yobe	Attacks in Gendam.	7 people killed
	2011			r r
25	Dec. 24	Plateau	Bombings in Jos.	80 people killed
23		1 Iaicau	Domonigo in 105.	oo people killeu
	2011			

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26	Dec. 25, 2011	Niger	Christmas Day bombing in Madalla.	50 people killed
27	Jan. 6, 2012	Adamawa	Christ Apostolic Church was attacked and Igbo People were also killed in Mubi in the same state	37 people killed
28	Jan. 20, 2012	Kano	Multiple attacks in Kano.	150 people killed
29	Jan. 26, 2012	Kano	The SabonGari of Kano State witnessed another Explosion, which caused another pandemonium in the state.	Many injured and Some luxury buses damaged
30	Feb. 7, 2012	Kano	A bomb blast in Kano market and military barracks	5 people killed
31	April 8, 2012	Kaduna	Easter Day Church bombing.	38 people killed
32	June 17, 2012	Kaduna	Multiple attacks on churches.	12 people killed and 80 injured
33	Aug. 7, 2012	Kogi	Deeper Life Church.	19 people killed

Source: Adapted from Achumba et al. (2013)

The data in Table 2 above illustrate graphically the high level of insecurity in Nigeria from 2009 to 2012, and this situation has not improved but rather it is getting worse.

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Fiscal federalism is such a critical issue in Nigeria, such that it has become more contentious in the fourth republic. Agitation for the practice of true fiscal federalism has therefore become a thorny issue in Nigeria. The South-South and the South-West people are clamoring for fiscal federalism while the North is vehemently opposed against the adoption of fiscal federalism. This agitation has gone beyond verbal contest as it has witnessed militancy and kidnapping in the Niger Delta which has contributed to the alarming level of insecurity in the country. If decentralization is conceived, planned, implemented, and sustained as a structural arrangement to devolve fiscal powers and responsibilities to subnational governments, then it stands strong chances of promoting peace and preventing insecurity.

If Nigeria adopts a proper fiscal federalism with appropriate system at various tiers of government, it could offer the needed solution to some of the current problems confronting the country, including the insecurity it is facing now.Therefore power must be devolved appropriately to sub national government to reverse the centralization of power over the years which has brought Nigeria where it is now.

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