



**THE RESTRUCTURING QUESTION
IN NIGERIA:
ASSESSING THE ECONOMIC
IMPLICATION OF A
RESTRUCTURED FEDERATION**

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Executive Summary

Countries maintain peace because of political settlements which determine what development is possible. (Kelsall and Hickey 2020) and not the volume of calls or agitations for restructuring. The authors define political settlement as “a tacit agreement among powerful groups about the rules of the political and economic game that keeps the peace by providing opportunities for those groups to secure a distribution of benefits (such as resources, rights, and status) they find acceptable.”

In this paper, ‘restructuring’ in Nigeria is about adjusting the rules of the political and economic games played by the elite to secure and maintain an altered distribution of benefits from available resources, rights, and status that they find acceptable. The tactics employed vary from the peaceful to the violent.

According to (Khan 2010) “At the highest level, a political settlement is a description of the ‘social order’ that describes how a society solves the problem of violence and achieves a minimum level of political stability and economic performance for it to operate as a society.” Nigeria urgently needs a political settlement.

According to (Kelsall and Hickey 2020) “In all societies, there are powerful groups, whether based on gender, class, ethnicity, religion, or some other identity. Some of these groups, acting alone or in concert with others, have the power to make, break, or shape the basic rules of the political and economic game. Governing elites can respond to these groups in two basic ways: co-optation, or repression. Groups who are co-opted receive benefits and are settlement ‘insiders’. Groups that are repressed or marginalised are ‘outsiders’ forced to acquiesce or not strong enough to overturn the settlement...In [their] terminology, the larger the share of the powerful population that is co-opted, the broader the social

foundation. The broader the social foundation, the more committed governing elites will be to deliver inclusive development benefits.”

At the crux of the restructuring debate in Nigeria is how the incumbents in political office and groups allied to them use or misuse the power at their disposal.

This paper examines aspects of the history of the calls for restructuring and classifies them using a framework for examining power from Michael Mann. It analyses the picture that emerge using the theory of political settlements. The paper concludes that ***there are no policy options that can be applied outside of leadership, the negotiations they must make with powerful groups and the political settlements that result.***

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's unified entity was formed with the amalgamation of Northern and Southern protectorates under Frederick Lord Lugard for the British Crown on January 1, 1914. British Imperialists successfully implemented a divide-and-rule strategy in their colonies. Hence, this move, which brought into proximity the trajectories of hundreds of indigenous peoples, made it easier to exploit mutual suspicions and tensions among them. However, this was probably just a 'happy' but unintended consequence of the British action, intended to balance the accounting books.

Before this action, at the Berlin Conference of 1884, European leaders and their allies met to share Africa amongst themselves. The geographical location subsequently named Nigeria was arbitrarily carved out, and its ownership was reinforced by protecting British commercial operations in the area. This was done without regard to the history and aspirations of the peoples who lived there. Some tribes in West Africa, like the Fulani, existed along a longitudinal seam from the Futa Djallon highlands in present-day Senegal through the north of Nigeria to the Central African Republic. The Hausa traded more with caravans that came in through the desert from North Africa, particularly Sudan. The Yoruba and the Beni people to the South of Nigeria had empires that spread laterally to present-day Benin Republic, Togo, Ghana and beyond. Today many tribes in Africa have been carved into countries that cut across the grain of their existence before colonial intervention. The new artificial entity of Nigeria has trapped a mixture of peoples into a structure very different from what they had been used to.

This structure, according to historians, existed at least fifty years before the amalgamation. By the time Nigeria gained independence in 1960, that geographical structure had been imposed for 100 years. After British rule in Nigeria, the configuration was inherited along with its locked-in benefits, problems, opportunities, and disadvantages. There are historical reports that the amalgamation was viewed with suspicion by elites in the South of Nigeria who had received western education exposure. There have also been those who suggested

the structure was handed over to the Hausa/Fulani elites in the north in a poisoned-pill-move by the retreating British to ensure the emerging State could continue to be controlled by the divide-and-rule principle. Elites from minority groups within the structure (like in the Niger Delta) have been dissatisfied with the arrangement arguing they were marginalised even before independence. The discomfort of various groups with the system has been well documented in the decades since independence.

Theoretical approach & research questions

The theory of political settlements suggests that where power is concentrated in a few hands and leadership enjoys broad social support, there would be room to take on broad-based development and implement decisions accordingly. This seems to be the case in Rwanda under President Paul Kagame. Neither the political elite nor the military rulers of Nigeria have achieved expected levels of development over the years; this has led to deafening calls for re-structuring the Nigerian entity. But is grievance the only reason for such calls? Could political greed for the actualization of selfish ambitions or pure mischief not also be present in the formulation of some of the calls for restructuring?

Then there is the religious front where Islamic agitations that have taken on a fundamentalist, insurrectionist hue seeking to dominate whole sections of the country's north. Intertwined with or masquerading as farmer-herder conflicts is the Islamic state in the Sahel (Boko Haram). Is this an isolated, simple international dimension or a vector on which foreign interests seek to maintain Nigeria in an unstable low economic equilibrium?

This paper sets out to identify the various articulations of the call for restructuring the Nigerian State, what it means, who the likely winners and losers would be and what seems to be the motive behind the call. It would also examine the implications of going ahead with each flavour of restructuring. Finally, it would attempt to answer the functionalist question, "Is there a form of restructuring that could deliver the greatest good for the greatest number within the current configuration?" If not, what are the scenarios that appear to have the

most traction amongst those who could realistically push for its actualisation, and what would the implication be for the Nigerian State as we currently know it?

The expectation is that this political-economy analysis would help frame public debate around the issue, especially amongst policymakers.

Research activity

The study will be carried out by employing the following steps:

1. Desk review of the literature to produce
 - a. A timeline of the calls for restructuring since independence
 - b. A list of themes of restructuring
 - c. Stakeholder identification around each theme
2. Analysis of likely winners/losers from each piece and motive of key stakeholders
3. International relations, international actors, technology changes and the pressures these forces exert on demand for restructuring in Nigeria.
4. Analysis of most likely scenarios of restructuring under the current configuration and implications for the Nigerian State
5. Analysis of restructuring scenarios that involve a change of configuration and the implications for the Nigerian State
6. Range of recommended policy options

THE TROUBLE WITH NIGERIA

Nigeria was created by colonial extractive interests for their benefit. The purpose of Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 was to find a way to reduce conflict between European powers who had staked a claim on parts of the African continent, particularly in or around the Congo basin. This was a scramble over how to share Africa's resources by dividing it up into territories to be controlled by them. It is important to note that no African participation or representation was thought necessary. The region was negotiated and carved up, and the resulting artificial geographical boundaries were imposed on the peoples of Africa. These boundaries were contrived and did not consider the pre-existing trading patterns, tribal homelands or other anthropological factors (cultural, social, political, natural, and environmental influences at play at the time). *Global elite struggles over control of Africa's resources led to the emergence of synthetic or inorganic structures imposed on the peoples of Africa. Colonial and local elites' squabbling and accommodation patterns, at the expense of the people, have defined Africa's emergence since the Berlin Conference, at which it was said, "Humanitarian sentiment became the guise for massive exploitation,"* (Encyclopedia.com). Since African countries gained independence, no significant voices have raised the need for the wholesale restructuring of boundaries between African countries despite their inorganic emergence. Any attempt to change these was feared could lead to severe political instability and intractable conflict -African politicians of the 1960s likened such attempt to opening the proverbial 'pandora's box,' (DW.com 2015).

Nigeria's geographical and central revenue structure were adopted for colonial convenience and not for the benefit of her people. On January 1, 1914, Lord Frederick Lugard consolidated the Northern Nigeria Protectorate, the Lagos Colony, and Southern Nigeria Protectorate into one entity. This enabled surpluses from the south to be used to subsidize deficits from running the north. According to the council on foreign relations, (Campbell and Blogger 2018) this

was done "...to reduce the administrative burden on the British and allow the rich south to effectively subsidize the much less economically prosperous north."(Mohammed 2013) suggests that Lord Lugard took such action because of the move within the West Africa Office in Britain to define budget deficits in running colonies as a reflection of poor estimating capacity on the part of the Governor and an error which could only be forgiven if revenues exceeded expenditure. ***The amalgamation, brought together in more formal ways, the administration of peoples trapped within the geographies of present-day Northern and Southern Nigeria. This imposed a geographical structure and foisted shared economic fortunes on peoples who had hitherto not been governed as one entity.*** According to (Falola and Heaton 2008), the Southern elites distrusted this move and tried to undermine it.

Nationalist agitations led to the establishment of a Federal Structure, with consequences. The British favoured a system of indirect rule where local elites were chosen to manage the administration of the colony (Isichei 1983). ***Colonisation gave some Nigerians the opportunity to study abroad. This exposed them to democratic processes which existed in Britain and caused them to question the authoritarian rule being forced on them back home (Isichei 1983).*** It is believed that out of colonialism grew a new privileged class in Nigeria who were so only through their Western education. ***It changed the structure of how Nigeria's leadership class emerged with a new crop developing through education as opposed to the traditional institutions of the people (Ekeh 1975) and by the 1930s and 40s, nationalist movements were started and driven by them.*** To appease them and ostensibly to slow down the movement, some were incorporated into the senior levels of the civil service while others became teachers and leaders of parastatal and government trade unions (Ake 1987). This also put more and more of the daily running of Nigeria in the hands of Nigerians (Falola and Heaton 2008). In the run-up to that, and particularly after WWII, the nationalist movements contributed to the rise of a local elite between 1945 and 1954 when three constitutions were developed

which gave freedoms that moved Nigeria closer to independence. These constitutions broke Nigeria into three administrative regions (Northern, Western and Eastern). ***Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe vehemently denounced the Richards Constitution of 1946, which led to the creation of the MacPherson Constitution of 1951 providing for elected representation on a regional basis – the start of political and administrative restructuring (in the form of devolution and decentralization).*** It was these federalist forces that compelled the British to accelerate the process of political and administrative decentralization (restructuring) in Nigeria.

The Federal Structure fanned competition among Nigeria's elites. Experts speak of centrifugal forces¹ as dominant in the making of Nigeria's Federation (Suberu 2010). According to information gathered in an interview with a leading light from the north (SPARC/SAVI 2009), the perceived gap in education between northern (represented by Kaduna) and southern elites (represented by Ibadan) in 1960 was at least 10 years. In 1960, Northern Region, despite the fact that it was the region with the highest population, accounted for only 9.7% whilst Western & Eastern Regions accounted for 41.2% and 49.1% respectively of total primary school enrolment in Nigeria (Odumosu, Nelson-Takwor et al.). According to this respondent, the killing of the Premier of the Northern Region, Ahmadu Bello and the Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa, in the military coup of 1966 led to elites in the north becoming worried about a possible southern domination. This made them to come together to start an informal organization that would ensure national appointments into public service of any kind, revenue allocations, expenditures and movements within the service and armed forces take place only with their express knowledge and consent. This resolve, according to the same observer, gave birth to what came to be known as the '*Kaduna Mafia*'. The observed gap in education was thought to give an advantage to the south. By 1979, the same analysis according to him, showed a 40-

¹ "Centrifugal forces" are forces within a country that work to pull that country apart. They are more common in larger states, particularly states that contain a large number of different nationalities competing for control and/or self-determination.

year gap² in education, which made the PRP government in Kaduna at the time develop policies to try to close the gap. Even if this account of the *Kaduna Mafia* is disputable, the gap in human development indicators across the country, particularly between north and south, are not.

Fear and distrust arising from differences in educational attainment together with the fear of southern domination, fuelled the competition between northern and southern elites for control of the Nigerian entity, especially after the civil war. The push by the northern elites to retain political control and keep the country as one, was also fuelled by the need to maintain economic viability of the entire entity. This drove the post-civil war politics and policy choices to centralize government as much as possible. The battle for supremacy was between the Hausas and Fulanis (Arewa) in the north and Yorubas and Igbos in the south. The oil boom of the early 1970s quickly enticed Nigeria into oil-led development policies which extracted rents from the lands of the minorities in the Niger Delta to cater to the 'National' interest, like Frederick Lugard had done in 1914 with surpluses from the south. This was to the chagrin of ethnic minority groups in the country.

The competition between North and South in Nigeria may have begun with mutual fear of domination of one by the other, with starting positions being education on the one hand (and with it the moral arguments of progress via merit and entitlement) and political power on the other (by sheer weight of population in Northern region and the consistent appeal to equity giving rise also to a sense of entitlement). With the rise of the PDP, described by Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa as the new *Class Mafia* that replaced the *Kaduna Mafia* (SPARC/SAVI 2009), it seemed for a while in the third republic that the north-south divide (playing to culture, religion and ethnicity) was becoming less pronounced and other cleavages becoming more apparent, such as those with access to the oil rents vs. those

² This refers to the perceived number of years it would take for Northern Nigeria to be at par with Western Nigeria on 37 education. The criteria and projected growth rates were not disclosed.

without. During Goodluck Jonathan's era when it was perceived a Southerner had usurped the turn at presidency of a Northerner, the north-south divide became more pronounced as elites who had banded together in the PDP and boasted of ruling Nigeria for a 60-year period (the statement was credited to former PDP Chairman Ogbulafor (Odunsi 2016), echoed by Dame Patience Jonathan (PremiumTimes 2015) and confirmed by former military Head of State, Ibrahim Babangida (Alofetekun 2017) had to wrestle with the idea of their rotational presidency and other principles which they had held as sacrosanct. According to the BBC Hausa Service, "It is the first time in Nigeria's recent history that election result has exposed the huge division between the Muslim north and Christian south" (bbc.co.uk 2011).

From time to time when the elites who form the majority of the PDP leadership across the country had their quarrels, some would seek temporary accommodation in other parties and return as soon as the coast was clear or they had gained additional leverage. The motivating force driving politics has not consistently ideology (if at all), and neither has it been the national interest; personal elite interest seems to drive the competition amongst them. A citizen journalist summarizes the situation in this way, "...carpet-crossing has also been the bane of our democracy. The unrestricted deflection of selfish politicians to and from our political parties has boosted PDP's dominance. In a nation where a good and coordinated opposition is needed, carpet-crossing only becomes inimical to our democratic progress. Somehow, we need an impressive balance in our parties following a massive exodus of influential politicians from PDP for opposition parties and not the other way round." Today, there is little difference between APC and PDP as the same characters swing through the revolving doors of party membership.

Elites supplanted the Colonial Masters and behave like Nigeria is an aristocracy - a form of government in which power is held amongst a small, privileged, ruling class. This group of persons moved for independence and the key strategy they employed was to encourage non-cooperation of the

people with the colonialists in order to sabotage their rule (Ekeh 1975). The ordinary people were encouraged to show up for work late, evade taxes, be insubordinate and resist their white employers, embark on strike action where possible (Ekeh 1975) ... misuse government property, leak official secrets and engage in unsanctioned activities (Oladoyin, Asaolu et al. 2005). We learn from Isichei that this would not have been hard to achieve given the depth of ill-feeling ordinary people had towards the colonialists especially because of the imposition of taxes and the perceived inequities in society.

By 1949, the centralized system of administration established in 1914 was stretched in terms of its ability to cover the geographical extent and heterogeneity of the administrative regions. The growing centralization of industrial unions and the disarming impact of the first nationwide strike action of 1945 made the British see the need for decentralization as compelling (Olaopa 2009). Indeed the story is told of the trade union leader, Michael Imoudu, who became a hero in colonial Nigeria for encouraging these strikes against the British (Ekeh 1975), a practice that earned him strong resentment from his former collaborators, now in government, when he repeated it against his own independent nation, with the British gone." (Ekeh 1975)

"At independence, the mask was removed. The African masses confronted an indigenous ruling class, which was content with inheriting the colonial economy and disinclined to transform it ... besides ... the only way to mobilize the economic resources which would allow the local political class to initiate any kind of development strategy and begin to challenge foreign capital for the control of the economy was through statism." According to (Simmons), for the process of colonisation to work as efficiently as it did for so long, a very centralised and "totalitarian" state (Isichei 1983) needed to be created by the colonising Europeans. When African countries gained independence, this was what they inherited. Single party systems with authoritarian centralised governments are essentially what Africans had been living with for the previous seventy to eighty years. It would have seemed logical for this form of government to continue. "They could not

consolidate their power without creating a material base for it for which they used their political leverage to appropriate wealth with state power” (Ake 1987).

The new privileged class, having displaced the colonialists, related to the people in a manner reminiscent of but often worse than the colonialists had done, therefore, the strategy of non-cooperation and sabotage continued until it became a habit and part of the socially constructed reality of many citizens. Today, ***Nigerian Elites gain and retain power through corporatism. A combination of elites with power from business, politics, labour, civil society, religious and traditional institutions come together to take control of the state. This unique power combination determines the direction of state policy and produces a society different to that envisaged by the constitution which assumes principles of social justice and egalitarianism through democratic institutions. The power circulates amongst the elites while their rhetoric gives the citizens false hopes. Competition for this power creates pockets of grievance, greed, and agitation for further accommodation after each cycle of intervention. The grievance, greed and demands for further accommodation are often expressed in calls for various forms and rounds of restructuring.***

Nigeria’s civil war and subsequent military rule returned the country to a unitary structure. The need to end corruption and ethnic rivalry was cited as major reasons for January 15, 1966 military coup in Nigeria but the net effect it had was to worsen both conditions (bbc.com 2016). This was followed by a countercoup and eventual announcement of secession of Biafra from Nigeria and the civil war that followed. The military government of General Yakubu Gowon then acted to “free minorities” from Igbo domination and break the resolve to actualize the Republic of Biafra by creating more states out of Nigeria’s four regions according to Alex I. Ekwueme, a former Vice-President of Nigeria, (Ekwueme 1999). Having suspended the constitution, these 12 states of Nigeria were run under a unitary system of military governance immediately restructuring the mode of revenue mobilization and fiscal allocations. The structure changed

from having regions that ran their own affairs to a country governed as one unit, from the centre, as originally imposed by the colonial masters. This was the first time a democratically elected government in Nigeria had been overthrown but it happened again in 1983 when General Buhari came into power ousting the Shehu Shagari administration, and in the 1993 elections that almost brought MKO Abiola to power that was truncated by the military government of Ibrahim Babangida. Civil rule did not return to Nigeria until 1999. The years in-between periods of civil rule were littered with military coups. This was the primary way Nigeria's elites changed administration and with each administration, how they changed what they did not like about the structure of Nigeria.

Violence as a tool for demanding the restructuring of perceived inequities in the revenue structure of Nigeria was tested early. Shell Oil company began commercial oil production in 1958 in the Niger Delta, and by 1966, the activities of the multinational oil corporations and the government were challenged. In the words of Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro to his 150-man unilaterally declared Niger Delta Republic, e "Let us examine with some latitude whether the state of development is to any extent commensurate with a tint of the bulk of already tapped mineral and agricultural resources...Therefore, remember your seventy-year-old grandmother who still farms before she eats; remember also your poverty-stricken people; remember too, your petroleum which is being pumped out daily from your veins, and then fight for your freedom," (Courson 2009). The perception that democratic systems were not addressing the urgency and/or depth of feeling certain actors attached to their grievances with the structural imbalances in the way revenues were being allocated and managed appears to have run deep even as far back as during Nigeria's first republic.

The Niger Delta crisis is one example of where the elites used violence to restructure revenue mobilization and fiscal allocations (arguing resource control, the derivation principle, onshore-offshore dichotomy etc.). In the run up to the 2003 elections, certain governors of the South-South states, a sub-set of the Niger Delta States, armed many of the youth groups and, as

Environmental Rights Action (a local NGO) put it, the 2003 elections in the South-South was a “low intensity armed struggle” (Courson 2011). The political competition for control of constituencies in Niger Delta in the lead up to the elections was intense. Politicians use election period to manipulate ongoing or latent conflicts to galvanize support (Hazen and Horner 2007). They act upon opportunities to sort out political differences with other party members and opposition candidates, and by whatever means available. Some commentators (Douglas, Okonta et al. 2004) identified contributory factors to the armed violence around the 2003 elections. First, the efforts led by a number of Delta states for “resource control” meant expanded local access to oil and oil revenues. For the elites, control of a state also meant increased possibilities for self-enrichment. Second, the struggle for self-determination for minority people and the clamour for a sovereign national conference to rewrite the federal constitution, potentially meant greater power and leverage for the people of the region. This is related to a third point: the emergence of what is called a South-South Alliance linking the hitherto excluded oil-producing states in a bulwark against the ethnic majorities. Finally, there was a crisis of rule in the region as some states and local governments were rendered helpless by militant youth movements, growing insecurity, intra-community, inter-ethnic and state violence. The struggle was to make the governors immensely powerful after the 2003 elections as they had the four sources of social power identified by Mann (1986): control over economic, ideological, military (use of force), and political (control of state policy) resources. It was in the interests of various elite Niger Delta groups that youths were armed in support of their political campaigns and elections. Through this process, there was a proliferation of arms in the region.

On the issue of the derivation principle and the onshore-offshore dichotomy, the littoral states of the Niger Delta wanted this dichotomy abrogated for the return of political, economic and fiscal federalism eroded in the prolonged military rule of Nigeria. Finally, they reached an out-of-court settlement with the Federal Government (after the Supreme Court had decided in favour of the Federal Government) in which the definition of the extent of Nigeria’s continental

shelf was amended to stretch beyond 200 nautical miles (Dibua 2005). Formal submission on the limits of Nigeria's continental shelf were made to the United Nations in 2009 (Nigeria 2009).

Nigerian elites constantly short-circuit the process of achieving a democratic state that provides good governance because of the incessant and impatient agitations for changes to the structure of Nigeria. Richard Sklar, a well-known commentator on Nigerian politics puts it this way (Sklar, Onwudiwe et al. 2006), "Decades of avaricious military rule have left the Nigerian political landscape dominated by powerful "godfathers" who sit atop vast patronage networks at the local, state, and federal levels. Political outcomes are primarily a function of titanic struggles among these magnates who bargain among themselves—and at the expense of the impoverished greater public—within a political context of multiple ethno-religious divisions. If Nigerian democracy is ever to consolidate, most of these elites must perceive that the democratic system serves their interests better than extra-systemic alternatives such as coups or militancy, and that the system must be able to check elites who conspicuously break the rules. Sadly, since the 2003 elections, these power brokers have grown increasingly bold in circumventing the democratic system, even to the point of attempted constitutional manipulation." There is a link between the insatiable thirst to control Nigeria's emerging democracy, growing militancy and the emerging terrorist threat in Nigeria. since 1999. These forms of violence seem to have been preferred to the re-introduction of military rule through coups and point to the fact that elites do not as yet believe that the Nigerian democratic system, on its own, will serve their interests. Indeed, the escalation in the levels of insurgency, banditry is now threatening the State and, in certain parts, challenging the monopoly of the State over the use of force.

WHY NIGERIAN ELITES ARE ABLE TO SHORT-CIRCUIT THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Citizens do not have much leverage over the processes through which their leaders emerge and are no match for the power wielded by the elite. They are very often forced into the role of perplexed onlookers. “Nigeria emerged as a post-colonial politically unstable and economically underdeveloped African State with structures for allowing the emergent petit-bourgeois to tighten their grip on the rest of society. With the aid of the imperial lord, who does not want to loosen the grip on Nigeria, the petit-bourgeois continually determine the fate of the rest of society. Pushing the masses to the background, active politicking has always been characterized by intra-elite contests, compromises and negotiations. The masses, as a conscious social class have never been able to determine its own political fate.”

Although the EndSARS protests came very close to challenging Nigeria’s elites, the conditions to achieve mass mobilization in terms of resources, manpower, coordination, leadership, and political opportunity are not easily met. Proponents of the Political Opportunity Theory of social movements like McAdam “argue that success or failure of social movements is affected primarily by political opportunities.” The theory when applied to the #EndSARS movement suggests:

1. Insurgent Consciousness – The presence of citizens who feel deprived, mistreated and have grievances directed at a system they perceive to be unjust. Where a collective sense of injustice develops, they are motivated to become movement members. The theory suggests that the issues around which movements emerge are stressed by the political context. The Occupy Movement had this in common too.

2. Organisational strength – Presence of strong, efficient leadership, and sufficient resources especially from outside the movement. This requires ability to

collaborate with existing organisations with the capacity to recruit and motivate actors to join and participate in the movement. The Feminist Organisation spearheading the movement appears to have used young celebrities with large followings to amplify the issue and leverage its organizational capacity as a springboard for the movement, which between October 8 and 14 had raised N37m, USD11k, CAD5k, GBP6k, EUR875, GH\$1.2k and spent N12m.- Nigerians in the diaspora also played a major part in this. When the CBN allegedly blocked their preferred payment platform, they switched to Bit Coins and immediately raised 9.9 Bit coins worth \$126k at the time. In the Occupy Movement, we saw contributions in kind everywhere the protest took place. The #EndSARS movement appears to have surpassed it in sophistication of fund raising and transparency around fund utilization. It also surpassed the Occupy Nigeria movement in the way it has leverage international celebrities and Nigerians in the Diaspora

3. Political Opportunities - The opportunities arose arising from a perception of decline in repression as most of the protesters were too young to know the levels of repression the Nigerian State is capable of. Impetus was also got from the division within elite. Whilst northern elites appeared to be against the emergence of the movement, many in the south were at least neutral if not openly supportive, which might have created space for the movement to emerge.

4. The Protest Frame³ - Besides articulation of messages that transmit a sense of injustice in ways that bring urgency to the need to act (which the Occupy Movement also had), dissemination of the messages mostly by video in this case was a more powerful feature Twitter did not have in 2012 but which was

³ Framing is the process of selecting certain aspects from the perceived reality and placing them prominently within messages in order to promote a particular definition of the situation, a certain causal interpretation, a certain moral evaluation and a proposal for some remedies. – Daniel Curiel, 2017.

available to this movement. "Framing is a dynamic process, consisting in collective and ongoing shaping and reshaping of frames by protesters and audiences in order to mobilize adherents, appeal to authorities and silence opponents. Social media has been used very effectively in frame dissemination"⁴ as we have seen in both Occupy Nigeria and #EndSARS movements. The emergence of the #EndSARS movement, mobilizing thousands of Nigerians in many cities across Nigeria and many countries around the world in a matter of days shocked the Nigerian elites who initially responded with a level of awe and amusement. The speed was enabled by the already heightened sensitivity of Nigerians in the diaspora against bad governance about which they have been increasingly vocal. This is apart from the powerful use of human stories to evoke emotion and indignation. It is a major differentiator of the #EndSARS movement from many before it.

In the end, when leaders with whom the elites could negotiate from within the movement were sought; The lack of preparedness of the organizers for such an eventuality became apparent. The movement lost steam and initiative and the elites were able to shut it down with force.

Benefits derived from the State by elites are personal and pecuniary so, the process of governance creates many more losers than winners. This strengthens the yearning of those who lose out to find a way to topple those in place so they can get their turn at the table. "Many of the political parties operate more as fronts or instruments for the advancement of the selfish interests of powerful individuals in the state. It is these influential individuals who usually stand for elections or sponsor people into political offices. Thus, elections have failed to empower the genuine representatives of the people. Instead, they have served only as mere instruments for the political elite to short-cut their ways 'to political power'."

⁴ Social Media enables social movement activists and participants to organize offline protests and to expand repertoires of action. Online platforms (social networks, etc.) facilitate dissemination of collective action messages and recruiting of supporters. Also, social media influence frame alignment processes of social movements – Daniel Cuiriel, 2017.

Some elites are benefiting while others are not. They mask their losses in ethnic or sectional colours that appeal to public support. To divide and rule the masses, the elites exploited the cleavages in society along the lines of ethnicity, religion, generational politics, gender, geography, identity and indigene politics. They also employed use of force, ideology, political party doctrines, entitlement by history, position power (civil/public service). This keeps citizens from coming together to create a critical mass independent of them as they are encouraged to see their differences first rather than any common interests they may have. The elites would rather create a bloc around something they represent so the public is unable to see leadership or their future without the elites. According to (Knight, 1998: 42) cited in (Alabi and Festus 2018) "Even if we concede that mass publics without elite leadership are invariably ineffectual, we must also recognize that elites need mass publics and are, to varying degrees, constrained by their demands." Sadly, whilst the elites may be very aware of this, the mass public does not have that awareness. Mass mobilization to wrest power from or share power with the elites, short of via a 'spontaneous' revolution then becomes very difficult to achieve.

(Sklar, Onwudiwe et al. 2006) speaking on *Godfatherism* in Nigeria remarked, "...the Big Men have shown surprising capacity to negotiate compromise solutions that serve most of their ends, often at the expense of the public good, but their penchant for displays of brinkmanship could inadvertently—or in some cases deliberately—send their political struggles spiralling out of control and into the streets." (Sklar, Onwudiwe et al. 2006) calls it the *ethnic-security dilemma*, "This dilemma arises when ethnic categories become the primary lens through which the public views political events, thereby constraining and aggravating the choices of political elites. In the absence of other viable social categories for the protection of group interests, others view one ethnic group's apparent political gain as their potential loss. This zero-sum prospect creates an incentive for elites to maximize their ethnic group's position, which in turn makes other groups feel insecure and forces them to follow suit. Consequently, Nigerian politics occurs within a broader

context of ethnic insecurity and an ethnic calculus of “who’s up, who’s down?” in terms of relative power within the federation.”

Those not benefitting or not benefitting enough employ strategies to gain the power to get to the “table” where these decisions are made.

According to the Elite Bargains and Political Deals Project of the UK Government (Cheng, Goodhand et al. 2018), “transitions from war to peace are shaped by the interaction between three dynamics: (1) the underlying distribution of power – or political settlement – on which a society is based; (2) elite bargains, and (3) formal peace agreements.” Calls for restructuring are calls for power to be redistributed amongst the elites. Some who no longer trust formal processes take matters into their own hands and sponsor acts against the state but the elites still seem unable to create a consensus around which they can agree for peace to reign. There is therefore a constant agitation and creation of new alliances that rebalance the powers and cause ruling elites to make some accommodation or restructure the society. All these changes take place outside the formal and democratic processes and institutions. In the current state of play, keeping Nigeria one still works for the northern elites whilst calling for the country to either break up or be reconfigured along some regional basis with a weak centre works for the southern elites.

THE RESTRUCTURING DEBATE

The restructuring debate is amongst Nigeria's elites, and it boils down to who has power and how that power is used to control access to resources.

Based on the earlier parts of this paper we see that not all elite groups came into this power game from the same starting point because Nigeria's colonial history had bequeathed some with residual power through structural inequities at, before or since independence. Moving forward, those who have power have historically done what they could to consolidate and hold on to it while those who felt disadvantaged or aggrieved either agitated for restructuring or acted in some way to tilt the power balance and force a restructuring or rearrangement of how power and resources are accessed in Nigeria. ***At the crux of the restructuring debate in Nigeria is how the incumbents in political office and groups allied to them use or misuse the power at their disposal. The debate strengthens feelings of deprivation, how loud and frequent the calls get and the urgency attached to calls for redress,***

Many scholars have reviewed and critiqued Nigeria's brand of federalism as a source of the structural inequities from which has flowed issues like fiscal federalism and resource control and how instruments like Nigeria's constitution, or policies like federal character or institutions like Resource Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission have impacted on the subject. They typically agree that there is a problem but proffer solutions that ignore the fact that there are incumbent powerholders who would not willingly relinquish any advantage they have, given the mutual distrust amongst the elites. ***The scholars also tend to speak of restructuring in the future tense while in this paper I contend that perhaps the restructuring is already taking place but concede it is probably not in the way those who are watching expect.***

Theoretical Framework

Since the public and political elites view everything within the calculus of who wins or loses, who is up or who is down in the power game, I adopt the

framework from Michael Mann (Mann 1986) which proposes four sources of power: control/monopoly of state policy; control/monopoly over economic resources, control/monopoly of the use of force, and control/monopoly of ideology. These four lenses would be used as a taxonomy of the calls for restructuring and to examine the state of play. The results would then be considered in the light of the theory of political settlements to understand the opportunities there are for development and what policy options might be available.

Monopoly/Control of State Policy

Piecemeal changes to the Constitution and several important laws have taken place under the Buhari administration changing the structure of how things are done in government. By presidential fiat, the balance of posts between the north and south were restructured in favour of the north. While scholars and the public were busy clamouring for wholesale change and platforms to express what is needed, has the restructuring of Nigeria already begun through changes to state policy?

Constitutional Arrangements

After WWII, nationalist movements had contributed to the rise of a local elite, and between 1945 and 1954, three constitutions were developed, which gave freedoms that moved Nigeria ever closer to independence. These constitutions broke Nigeria into three administrative regions (Northern, Western and Eastern). Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi

CONSTITUTIONS OF NIGERIA

1922 – Clifford Constitution
 1946 – Richards Constitution
 1951 – MacPherson Constitution
 1954 – Lyttleton Constitution
 1960 – Independence Constitution
 1963 – Republican Constitution
 1979 – Presidential Constitution
 1989 – Presidential Constitution
 1999 – Presidential Constitution

Azikiwe vehemently denounced the 1946 constitution, which led to the creation of the 1951 constitution providing for elected representation on a regional basis. The 1954 Constitution made Nigeria a Federal State. For a summary of the evolution of Nigeria's constitutions, see (Ekwueme 1999). There have since 1999, been calls for a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) and not just any Constitutional Conference. It is not surprising that it is the Yoruba nationalists who have been loudest in calls for an SNC – people like Prof. Wole Soyinka, *Afenifere*, Chief Afe Babalola are some notable examples. This is in the interest of those who want wholesale change within formal and controlled means to resolve Nigeria's inequities, but this is not the call from those who feel they may lose out. What if the conference recommends Nigeria's break up as some stakeholders have been agitating for? ***In the meantime, some piecemeal reforms to the constitution are going on (Oladipupo 2022). In March 2022, 68 amendments were voted on (PLAC 2022).***

Not surprisingly, amendments to allow diaspora voting were turned down as it can dissipate elite power in ways they probably cannot predict, but independent candidates were recognized (which the elites can all benefit from) though lawmakers chose to turn down a bill to control carpet crossing by politicians (which many would like to keep as an option). All five bills to strengthen the rights of women were turned down (patriarchal gatekeepers were not ready to give room to women) (PLAC 2022). The rules of the political

competition were amended. For example, a VP completing the term of his/her principal can now only stand for election for one term thereafter. Contentious issues like local government financial autonomy (passed), revenue allocation (adjustment included a procedure for reviewing the revenue allocation formula) and some items on the exclusive list were placed on the concurrent list like the issue of running/establishing railways (which passed), power generation (which passed) to share this responsibility with states. Indigene politics was adjusted to reflect that a woman can claim to be an indigene of where her husband is from but a separate bill on citizens' residency rights (PLAC 2018) now attempts to give rights to anyone who has lived and paid taxes for five consecutive years in a place to be voted for as a resident of the locale. This is great news for southerners who live in northern areas and have long argued this point but how would they feel about Fulani settlers becoming residents of Umuahia, Ibadan or Lagos in large numbers? The restructuring conversation, it appears, could continue to oscillate for several constitutional adjustment cycles.

Creation of States

According to Alex I. Ekwueme, a former Vice-President of Nigeria, (Ekwueme 1999), the country has over 400 ethnic groups and fear of minorities has always been about being dominated by the larger ethnic groups in their geographical vicinity. The 1954 Constitution recognized (Northern, Western, and Eastern). Over the response to agitations, these have been further reach the 36 States and a Federal Capital the first growth spurt of regions from four to military government claims it acted to “free from Igbo domination and break the resolve to actualize a Republic of Biafra (Ekwueme 1999). The minorities in Western State had been “freed” earlier in 1963 with the creation of a Midwest State. The cost of running states has been enormous and calls for more state creation are not as loud as they used to be as most now agree Nigeria cannot afford to have more states. Instead, many are

Year	Number of States
1949	3 Regions
1963	4 Regions
1967	12 States
1976	19 States
1985	21 States
1996	36 States

three regions years in subdivided to Territory. In 12 states, the minorities”

calling for a consolidation of states into a few regions as Nigeria had in the sixties. Those calling for this are again southern and middle belt interests that feel this is a better compromise than the calls for a breakup of Nigeria. Having said that, the former Senate President, David Mark calls for the creation of an Apa State (Eze 2014) out of Benue State. The calls for new states are typically from within the Middlebelt and southeast. Rules around state creation were adjusted amongst the recent constitutional adjustments of 2022.

Civil Service Leadership & Structure

The Civil Service Commission and the Federal Character Commission are two very important commissions within the Nigeria Civil Service.

The Civil Service Commission was historically given “the authority to cover all posts (established or unestablished) for which funds were provided in the Federal Annual Estimates and ...the power to appoint, promote, transfer, second, dismiss or otherwise discipline officers belonging to certain grades” (federalcivilservice.gov.ng). Some changes, started in 1985, removed some agencies like Nigeria Customs Service, Immigrations, Prisons Service, Civil Defence Corps, and Federal Inland Revenue Service (as recently as 2007) from this arrangement by creating their own Boards.

The Federal Character Commission was set up to report only to the President of the Federation “pursuant to the yearnings of Nigerians for a reform that would address the thorny issues of inequality and ethnic domination in Federal agencies, by ensuring the equitable representation of different groups in all tiers of government, as well as monitoring the implementation of these righteous objectives.” (Vanguard.com 2021)

President Buhari since his coming into power has been accused of nepotism and acting to northernise appointments in the civil service. In quick succession, leadership of the NNPC, FIRS, AMCON, an expanded Ministry of Finance (which now covers National Planning), Chief Justice of the Federation and some service chiefs that were southerners in balance to other posts were all replaced by

President Buhari with northerners (Ademiluyi 2019). Even the Federal Character Commission itself had at a point under President Buhari a chairman from Kwara State and secretary from Taraba State, both from northern Nigeria (Vanguard.com 2021).

Under the Buhari administration, it appears that by presidential fiat; civil service leadership and structure has been adjusted to take on a northern tinge. Is this also a mode of restructuring taking place?

Monopoly/Control of Resources

The recent 2022 constitutional adjustments included a bill to refine rules around how Nigeria's revenue allocation formula may be revised. However, Zamfara State government with presidential blessing and patronage has broken the monopoly of the federal government over revenues derived from mineral deposits in a state. The CBN was ordered to purchase Zamfara's gold to the tune of N5bn but Niger Delta states cannot sell their oil to the federation. Is the restructuring taking place already?

Revenue Allocation & Derivation Principle

The need to look at the way Nigeria's revenues were apportioned did not end at amalgamation when Lord Lugard used southern revenues to balance northern deficits. In line with calls for restructuring via constitutions, creation of regions and subsequently states which were being evolved, the revenue structure of Nigeria had to be revisited several times by:

- The Phillipson Commission of 1946 that recommended 50% to be retained by the region of origin, 35% to be shared among the regions including the region of origin while the central government was left with 15%
- The Hicks-Phillipson Commission of 1951 that recommended derivation area of origin 50%, regions 35% and central government 15%
- The Hicks Commission 1953 that recommended 100% of rents/royalties to the area of origin

- The Ralsman Commission 1958 that recommended 50% to be retained by the region of origin, 30% to be shared among the regions including the region of origin while the central government was left with 10%
- The Binn Commission 1964 that recommended 50% to the area of origin.
- The Dina Interim Revenue Allocation Review Committee Report 1968 whose report was rejected as having exceeded the brief. This allowed the Binn Commission recommendations to continue.
- The Aboyade Technical Committee Report 1977 Provided the Federal Government with 57%, State Governments 30% and Local Government 10%. The 3% remaining is for Special Grants Account.
- The Okigbo Commission 1980 Increased allocation to Special Funds from 3% to 7% slightly reducing Federal allocation from 57% to 53%.

For a summary of what each of these ad-hoc committees proposed, see website of Nigeria's Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation, and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC 2022).

Pacification through Committees and Development Boards

In response to strong agitation for greater shares of revenues because of poor development in an area, the answer has not always been to review or revise the revenue allocation formula. Very often the response has included a piecemeal attempt to pacify the aggrieved communities through establishment of special committees and development boards

	DATE	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS (Samuel 2009)
1.	1957	Willink Commission - to recommend the best strategies for the development of the Niger Delta.	The report of this commission led to the setting up of the Niger Delta Development Board.
2.	1960	Niger Delta Development Board	The Niger Delta Development Board was at best moribund and did not achieve the lofty objectives for which it was established.
3.	1970 1976	Niger Delta Basin Development Authority. Preceded by the River Basins Development Authority in 1970. It was probably the failure of the NDDB that necessitated the setting up of the Niger Delta Basin Authority, along with other River Basin Authorities through decree No.37 of 1976.	While the terms of reference of the Basin Authorities were unequivocal, they failed to incorporate the provision of infrastructures and restitution of derelict land in the Niger Delta. Besides, the Authority was starved of funds as budgetary allocations were either meagre or slow in coming. Indeed, the little funds in the coffers of the Authority were grossly mismanaged.
4.		Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Fund Committee. This was stopped by a Supreme Court judgment.	The 1.5% fund was put in place under the allocation of revenue (federation accounts) and the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Fund Committee set up to oversee disbursement. The money set aside for the committee was forwarded to the state capitals and never got to the affected oil producing communities.
5.	1992	Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC). The OMPADEC was established through decree No. 23 of 19th July 1992 (OMPADEC Decree No. 23, 1992). This decree raised the limit of the derivation fund to 3% of the federation account. OMPADEC was different to the commissions and boards before it in that indigenes were selected to head and run the Commission to ensure closer involvement of the communities.	Section 11 of the decree which set out its objectives empowered the commission to receive and administer the monthly sums from the allocation of the federation account in accordance with confirmed ratio of oil production in each state for the rehabilitation and development of oil mineral producing areas and for tackling ecological problems that have arisen from the exploration of oil minerals. A.K. Horesefall and Eric Opia were two successive chairmen that were accused of gross acts of corruption. They were sacked in 1996 and 1998 respectively. Eric Opia was allegedly unable to account for some N6.7billion. Vice-Admiral Preston Omatsola took over as chairman however OMPADEC was soon after dissolved.

DATE	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS (Samuel 2009)
6. 1998	Maj. Gen. Popoola Committee. Formed by Head of State, Gen Abdusalami Abubakar to look into the problems of the Niger Delta. The members of the committee were the military administrators of the South-South zone, several ministers (military and civilian), and representatives of the Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund, the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission (OMPADEC), and other government figures.	To examine existing development initiatives and "to make appropriate recommendations on what can be done before the end of the current administration." Report was not implemented
7. 2000	Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). The National Assembly in accordance with section 58 (a) and 5 of the 1999 Constitution subsequently passed the bill establishing the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC). the NDDC Act provides for special bodies to supervise the activities of the Commission in order to avoid waste and corruption.	President Obasanjo implemented the 13% derivation as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution. The remit of the Commission is to accelerate economic development and provide the much-needed social infrastructures in the area, 'to facilitate the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful'. A significant shortcoming of the NDDC act is the failure to provide for prior consultation with oil-producing communities before initiating developmental projects (Dibua 2005)
2002	Lt. General Alexander Ogomudia Special Security Committee Report on Oil Producing Area	Recommendations of this Committee were not implemented.
2003	Presidential Committee on Peace and Reconciliation headed by Maj. Gen. A Mohammed (rtd), Chief of Staff to the president	No specific resolutions implemented
2004 April	Standing committee on good governance and corporate responsibility headed by Dr. Edmond Daukoru, Minister of State for Petroleum	No specific resolutions implemented
2004 July	Presidential standing committee on the Niger Delta headed by Gov. James Ibori of Delta State	Made recommendations to the Federal Government, the NNPC-Niger Delta Youths Standing Committee, the Major Gen. Mohammed Presidential Committee on Peace and Reconciliation in the Niger Delta, and the Niger Delta Peace and Security Strategy (PASS). All the committees made bold suggestions on how to tackle the Niger-Delta crisis, but government appears not to have had the political will to implement the recommendations

DATE	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS (Samuel 2009) (Urhoboland.com).
2006	Presidential Committee on the Niger Delta, headed by President Olusegun Obasanjo.	No specific resolutions implemented
2007	Niger Delta Peace & Conflict Resolution Committee	Major priority of the Yar Adua 7-point agenda.
2008	Establishment of the Federal Ministry of the Niger Delta	Effectively turning the NDDC into a parastatal under the ministry.
2009	Yar Adua's Amnesty Program August 6, 2009 and October 4, 2009.	Over N50 billion (fifty billion naira) was spent on this program. According to experts, political amnesty is usually a product of two contexts. The first is a negotiated settlement in which two warring parties have arrived at a dead-end in their conflict, and decide to settle their differences politically. The second context is one of a victor's amnesty in which a party overwhelms the other, claims victory and decides to be magnanimous in victory by offering amnesty to some or all of the combatants on the defeated side. Nigeria's situation did not fit into either of these: there was no negotiated settlement in the Niger Delta and it was not a victor's benevolence of any kind. It only went to pay off the most deadly of militants possibly encouraging others to be more radical.
2017	Northeast Development Commission (NEDC)	In response to the Boko Haram conflict in the Northeast, the Buhari administration has responded with a development commission to spur development in the area and stem the flow of willing combatants who could join the ranks of the insurgents. The North-East Development Commission (NEDC) is the focal organization charged with the responsibility to assess, coordinate, harmonise and report on all intervention programs, and initiatives by the Federal Government or any of its ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), states, and other development partners and for the implementation of all programmes and initiatives for the

DATE	DESCRIPTION	COMMENTS (Samuel 2009)
		North East states - Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe. (Nedc.gov.ng).

Zamfara State Bucks the Trend

In the case of the war against bandits in Zamfara State who are believed to have displaced villagers to allow mining of minerals to commence, the response has been surprisingly different. There are unidentified persons mining gold and precious stones samples of which were formally presented to President Buhari (PremiumTimes 2020). Zamfara State Government has since declared that minerals found in Zamfara are for Zamfara State and revenues will not be shared with the Federation as is done with Oil, Tax receipts etc. from other locations in the country. "The recent disclosure by the Governor of Zamfara State, Bello Muhammad Matawalle, that his state has reached a deal to supply gold worth N5 billion to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), has re-opened the contentious issue of resource control and by extension the demand for restructuring and federalism" (Onyekakeyah 2020). It is also fuelling renewed calls for resource control from the Niger Delta states who are currently not able to sell oil to Nigeria as it belongs to the federation by law as should the Zamfara gold. Even though the Minerals and Mining Act bars states from exploiting their mineral deposits as this is exclusive to the Federal Government, there has been no response by the federal government to challenge this. (Bin Othman, Nazariah et al. 2019) "...the current sharing formula for revenue in the federation which gives 52.68%, 26.72% and 20.60% for the federal (central), states and local governments respectively, is decried as largely skewed to and driven to the centre." The constitutional conference held during

the administration of Goodluck Jonathan recommended “a restructuring of the revenue distribution formula among the tiers of government (federal government – 42.5%, state governments – 35% and local governments 22.5%)” (Babalola and Onapajo 2019). Does the treatment of Zamfara indicate a de facto restructuring of the derivation principle and the revenue sharing formula since it is keeping 100% of what it is generating? Question is, has this been restructured by Presidential Fiat (breaking monopoly of the federal government over resource control) while stakeholders are awaiting a formal process to discuss revenue allocation and derivation?

Monopoly/Control of the use of Force

Niger Delta Volunteer Service

None of those recommendations of the Commissions on revenue restructuring cured the agitations even before independence. Shell Oil company began commercial oil production in 1958 in the Niger Delta, and by 1966, the activities of the multinational oil corporations and the government were challenged. In the words of Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro to his 150-man Niger Delta Volunteer Service (NDVS) fighters, “Let us examine with some latitude whether the state of development is to any extent commensurate with a tint of the bulk of already tapped mineral and agricultural resources...Therefore, remember your seventy-year-old grandmother who still farms before she eats; remember also your poverty-stricken people; remember too, your petroleum which is being pumped out daily from your veins, and then fight for your freedom,” (Courson 2009). The NDVS was no match for the Federal Government. The uprising was quelled, and Mr. Adaka Boro and his men were ‘absorbed’ into the army and he reportedly died under mysterious circumstances (HistoryVille.com 2022) during Nigeria’s Civil War.

Niger Delta Agitations

Unresolved calls for restructuring of Nigeria’s revenues led to a renewed struggle for self-determination in the Niger Delta since 1999. Arguments were made by various parties highlighting a North-South divide, majority domination of

Minorities, resource control and derivation principle, on-shore off-shore dichotomy. Violence against federal troops, local police, oil company installations was used to force debate and accommodation over the many revenue structure issues. On the on-shore off-shore dichotomy where the Federal Government had won its case in court limiting the derivation principle to on-shore oil, violence in the region forced a subsequent out-of-court settlement recognizing the continental shelf as extending beyond 200 nautical miles off-shore allowing littoral states to be recognized for derivation revenues to that extent. At other times, the agitations were met with the setting up of special committees of inquiry, development boards, development authorities, development funds, development commissions, and finally, a ministry for the Niger Delta and an amnesty programme by the Yar Adua Administration which finally brought an end to the militancy. For several years, the Niger Delta Elites broke the monopoly of the State over the use of force and through this won a restructuring of revenues in their favour.

The Nigerian Civil War

Widespread corruption and graft by politicians of the first republic, political crisis between SL Akintola (ally of the north and Premier of the Western Region) and Obafemi Awolowo (opposition leader), were cited as major reasons for the 1966 military coup to install Awolowo as Head of State. This is a copycat move in line with coups happening outside Nigeria, and personal ambition of using military power to correct societal ills (Ozeh 2019). Another writer suggests that at the heart of the coup was the fact that attempts were made to inflate the census figures to balance seats in Parliament to redress the majority seats given to the north through the 1946 and amended in 1951 constitutions by the British. The inflated census had apparently increased populations in the Western and Eastern regions by as much as 70% since the last one was conducted and by only 30% in the Northern region. The census was rejected and redone to show that populations had grown by a uniform percentage across all regions (DailyTrust.com 2022). It was felt that frustrations at not being able to restructure representation in

the Parliament were the primary reason for intervention through a military coup and the murder of statesmen who benefited from the arrangement. There was growing frustration with the state of neglect and the failure of the region's political representatives to secure greater autonomy and resources from the federal government and the Igbo-dominated Eastern Region governments. The situation was not helped by the military coup of January 1966 which promptly centralised power by replacing the federal arrangement with a unitary system under the overall command of a military ruler of Igbo origin.

Today, Nigeria has six geo-political zones which are unequal: The Northwest consists of seven states and the Southeast only five while all others have six each. What this means is that in the Senate for example where there are three senatorial districts per zone, the north has 57 seats plus 1 from the FCT making 58 while the South has 51 seats. Of Nigeria's 774 local government areas, North West has 186, North East has 113, North Central has 112 but South East has only 95, South South has 126 and South West 137. Some have wondered how this reflects equity in revenue allocation and representation (Nwafor-Orizu, Chinyere et al. 2018). The structural inequities in population distribution, state creation, representation at the National Assembly translate to how national resources are shared, and contributed to the first set of military coups which resulted in a fratricidal civil war and fuels calls by MASSOB and IPOB for the actualization of a Sovereign State of Biafra.

The Boko Haram, ISWAP, Herder-Farmer, or 'IRA' Insurgency?

According to Prof. Augustine Ikelegbe of the University of Benin, Nigeria in his much-referenced paper on "The Economy of Conflict in the Oil Rich Niger Delta Region of Nigeria," (Ikelegbe 2005) "...it is the hegemonic struggles between superordinate and subordinated groups and the nature of management and appropriation of resources that engender conflicts." In the case of Boko Haram, the conflict has arisen because "...politics in northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims. It wants to wage a war against them, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria generally, to create a "pure" Islamic state ruled by

sharia law” (Walker 2012). The marginalisation and exclusion they feel are neatly couched as a grievance. However, Boko Haram was founded by Muhammad Yusuf, a Salafist preacher with ties to Maiduguri’s elite (Brechenmacher 2019).

In Ikelegbe’s construct of “the nature of management and appropriation of resources engendering conflicts,” the effects of poor climate governance in the region seen in the dwindling water resources and opportunities for fishing are thought by some authorities (Omenma 2020) to be possible reasons leading to contention with the northern political elite and the Nigerian State. However, Richard Murphy reportedly asked the question, “What if oil is the true ideology of Boko Haram?” (Omenma 2020) As the perception persists that there are “...various federal, state, and local elites benefiting from the continuation of the crisis,” (Brechenmacher 2019) could there be more than just grievance at play here? Could greed, criminality, and elite political and economic interests also be shaping the Boko Haram conflict?

There would appear to be a natural resources nexus to the insurgency spreading to the Lake Chad Basin, and this would appear not to be about water, fish, grains or lush grasses, though all are important to the livelihoods of the people of the region. There is at least circumstantial evidence that it could be more about oil and gas. There are “estimated deposits of 2.32 billion barrels of oil...and 14.65 trillion cubic feet of natural gas in the Lake region” (Omenma 2020). Chad, Niger and Cameroon already exploit this resource, but Boko Haram (ISWAP in particular which according to (Crisisgroup.org 2019) is a Boko Haram splinter group) has managed to thwart or slowdown Nigeria’s ability to benefit.

As it became clear that Boko Haram fighters were able to retreat easily into Chadian territory, President Goodluck Jonathan took a trip to Chad in 2014 to discuss security issues around how to jointly deal with the Boko Haram issue only to find Ex-Governor of Borno State, Senator Ali Modu Sheriff (SAS) among those in the entourage of the President of Chad detailed to receive him at the airport. SAS has significant business ties with Chad and...” according to a senior government official who was privy to the president’s trip to Chad, Senator Modu

Sheriff is not only entrenched in the economic and political affairs of Chad, he also exerts influence in the highest office of the land” (Vanguard.com 2014).

“...Then, in late 2013, an Australian negotiator claimed to have made direct contact with the group [Boko Haram]. His report mentioned two sources of funding: Ali Modu Sheriff, Borno State governor from 2003, and General Ihejirika, Nigeria's Chief of the Defence Staff from 2010 to 2014. Though there was no concrete evidence linking these two, Brigaglia stressed, Nigerians were frightened by the thought that Boko Haram might have had support from within political structures” (UniversityofCapeTown 2015).

According to Ex-Governor Kashim Shettima who succeeded SAS in Borno State, “The oil that Niger Republic exploits is found in the Diffa region. Diffa is eighteen kilometres from Damasak, sharing this contiguous border, the same people, the land, the same topography. Ibrahim Shettima drew attention to the fact that Cameroon was extracting about 200,000 barrels of oil per day on the Nigerian border (Omenma 2020), so, you might not even rule out international fabrications to our quest for oil in the Lake Chad region...Richard Murphy, has argued that the attack on the Nigerian oil exploration team in the Lake Chad basin could not have been by happenstance, considering the precision of the attack and sophisticated war weapons used to execute the attack...The attack was attributed to the Abu Mus'ab al-Barnawi faction ... The al-Barnawi faction, known as the ISWAP, controls northern Borno, and a large part of the Lake Chad region, and this faction "is hiding in Chad, where Boko Haram defections peaked in 2017” (Omenma 2020).

President Goodluck Jonathan, when he took over after the untimely demise of his predecessor, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, uttered words to the effect that “there is Boko Haram everywhere, even in my cabinet!” According to the BBC, “Nigeria's president has said for the first time he thinks sympathisers of the Islamist Boko Haram group are in his government and security agencies ... Of the Boko Haram sympathisers, he said "some of them are in the executive arm of government, some of them are in the parliamentary/legislative arm of

government, while some of them are even in the judiciary. Some are also in the armed forces, the police and other security agencies” (bbc.com 2012)

In 2012, the erstwhile national security adviser, Owoye Azazi, in an unprecedented public statement blamed the PDP for Boko Haram attacks. He “...said the festering insecurity in the north-eastern part of the country, which has been exacerbated by the frequent and deadly attacks of the extremist Boko Haram sect across the country, could be traced to the politics of exclusion of the PDP in the region... The issue of violence did not increase in Nigeria until when there was a declaration by the current president that he was going to contest. PDP got it wrong from the beginning. The party started by saying Mr. A can rule, and Mr. B cannot rule, according to PDP conventions, rules and regulations and not according to the constitution. That created the climate for what is happening or manifesting itself in the country. Is it possible that somebody was thinking that only Mr. A could win, and if he did not win, he could cause a problem in the society...Let’s examine all these issues to see whether the level of violence in the North East just escalated because Boko Haram suddenly became better trained, better equipped and better funded, or something else was responsible.” Sadly, Gen. Azazi died in a fatal helicopter crash not too long after.

Nigerians have rumoured that there is State assistance to terrorists in the abduction of the Chibok girls, in many farmer-herder clashes and so on but to have the National Security Adviser put so plainly that there was complicity between the political elites and the insecurity in the country was unprecedented. Also unprecedented are the public utterances of former President Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida who has claimed there is a military wing to the PDP. First, he said military officers were solidly behind the party and then went on to say, “from formation stage, I saw the PDP as IRA (Irish Republican Army). We are the military wing of the PDP. We took a lot of interest. When I say we, I mean my boss, T.Y. Danjuma, Obasanjo, Gen. Aliyu Mohammed and I. We started it,” he explained. “I thank God we came up with the old concept. I believe one of our compatriots, who said PDP would rule for 60 years.” Babangida expressed

confidence that the party can still rule for 60 years, if they put their house in order” (Alofetekun 2017).

Over 8,000 “repentant” Boko Haram and ISWAP fighters have been received by the Nigerian army since 2015 (SaharaReporters 2021). Many were trained in different vocations and given a new lease of life while their victims continue to languish in IDP camps to the chagrin of the communities. Governor Zulum suggests they are insincere and end up as spies for Boko Haram and should be prosecuted instead (Owolabi 2021). The Nigeria Army denies absorbing them into its ranks (Olowolagba 2019), so the question is where are they now? In March 2022, terrorists/bandits bombed an Abuja-Kaduna train and abducted some 168 passengers (bbc.com 2022). The Nigerian government later blamed the attack on ISWAP and Ansaru (DailyTrust.com 2022). In July 2022, 879 detainees and the Kuje Correctional Facility were sprung from their detention by ISWAP and Ansaru and many of the freed prisoners are pioneer members of Boko Haram (Samuel 2022). There are strong suspicions that the jail break could not have succeeded without the help of Boko Haram sympathizers on the inside (PremiumTimes 2022). Two policemen stationed at the prison were identified as having communicated with Boko Haram after the attacks and have now been arrested (DailyTrust.com 2022). According to the lead negotiator for the release of the abductees from the bombed train, Tukur Mamu, “I can confirm without doubt that the Kuje Correctional Centre attack was executed and coordinated by the same group that attacked the Abuja-Kaduna bound train because they gave indications of imminent attacks to that effect which I shared” (Hassan-Wuyo 2022).

Suspicious of high-profile conspirators and collaborators for ISWAP, Boko Haram, Bandits, Herdsmen, and Terrorists continue to be rife. It is clear the northern insurgency is restructuring the way life is run in Nigeria and the State appears to be helpless in stemming it. The monopoly of the State over the use of force has been broken and these other groups that just happen to be northern appear able to wield the ultimate power of coercion unchecked.

State Police

Security is one of those issues on the exclusive legislative list in Nigeria's constitution making laws regarding it a federal matter." The Nigeria Police Force, established in 1930, has a long history of engaging in unprofessional, corrupt, and criminal conduct. Over the years, this unwieldy force—Africa's largest—has proved difficult to effectively manage and control and has become largely unaccountable to the citizens it is meant to serve" (hrw.org 2010). The Nigeria Police has even been known to turn a blind eye to vote rigging (Campbell 2019). They are typically available to be hired by Nigeria's elites as bodyguards and private security for a fee. As the crime rate has risen sharply in Nigeria the calls for state police have risen sharply. These calls have typically come from elites and governments in the south of Nigeria. Across the country, vigilante and hunter groups are being co-opted to strengthen neighbourhood security. They have also been recruited in the northeast to be part of a Civilian Joint Task Force against Boko Haram. The increasing banditry, kidnapping and farmer-herder clashes have pressured state governments, particularly in the middle belt and southern Nigeria to seek their own solutions to security. *Amotekun* is a state police outfit set up by the southwest governors in response to the heightening insecurity in the country. Although the constitutional amendment needed to legitimize these outfits was not passed in the National Assembly, elites from the middle belt and southern areas of Nigeria see it as a countervailing force to the Nigeria Police under the control of northern elites. *Are we seeing de facto changes to policing in Nigeria notwithstanding the absence of the laws needed to back such changes?*

Monopoly/Control of Ideology

Traditional & Religious Structures

Since 2015 when Buhari came into office, captured or surrendered Boko Haram fighters instead of being prosecuted are being "rehabilitated" - a programme some have suggested isn't working (Iroanusi 2020). Fulani Herdsmen have become more brazen in their attacks (Oriola 2021) and the ruga policy of the Federal

Government has received widespread condemnation (Taiwo-Hassan 2019), particularly from the South and Middlebelt. We are now witnessing the “turbaning” of known notorious bandit leaders in Zamfara State (Ahmad 2022) whilst in Sokoto State bandits have been installing district heads (Hassan-Wuyo 2021). ISWAP, Ansaru and Boko Haram want the whole of Nigeria to become an Islamic State, and it is at this time that President Buhari chooses to make overtures to the Taliban in Afghanistan with a gift of US\$1m under the auspices of a Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan through the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (tribuneonline.ng 2022).

In southeast Nigeria, there is an alleged plot to install an Emir (Ovat 2019), and the Oluwo of Iwo converts his title to that of an Emir (Oluwole 2018). This is coming at a time of heightened religious intolerance in Nigeria where Deborah Samuel was lynched in Sokoto for alleged blasphemy (Annabi 2022) after spurning the advances of a classmate; one Ahmad Usman was set ablaze for alleged blasphemy (Obiezu 2022) after an argument with an Islamic cleric. These are two cases in a long list where perpetrators kill in the name of religion and are not brought to book. The rule-of-law appears to have been suspended and mob rule installed in its place.

The structure of Nigeria today should be comfortable for any Muslim particularly one of Fulani extraction. This is worrying because the President’s actions and inactions run contrary to constitutional provisions that declare Nigeria a secular state run on the principles of social justice.

International Dimensions

In the main, China and France appear to be involved in helping northern Nigeria find and exploit mineral deposits and the British appear conflicted between the need to support the restructuring of Nigeria that is going on and remaining true to their values. The Americans appear not to be saying much about anything.

“Frontier basin is a basin where the exploration activities have not been carried out or a basin with short-term exploration activities and a significant volume categorised as undiscovered. The country’s frontier basins include Chad,

Anambra, Bida, Dahomey, Gongola/Yola and the Sokoto basins, as well as the Middle/Lower Benue Trough. The marching order came 30 years after past governments had spent \$340 million in search of oil in the northern region without commensurate result” (Kalejaye 2017).

Previous Nigerian administrations before Buhari claimed to have spent \$3 billion in the search for oil in the Northeast without any visible results or finds (Nwachukwu and Jeremiah 2017). Unconfirmed reports seem to indicate that the Frontier Exploration Services (FES), a wing of NNPC has over the last few years been seriously funded (over \$340 million) directly by the Presidency in order to bring to fruition the immediate and full exploration and sale of crude oil from the Lake Chad NE region. FES efforts have yielded some results with the Nigeria’s petroleum resources ministry in December 2016 announcing the discovery of oil reserves estimated at over one billion barrels in the region (Africa 2020), (qz.com 2017) which has led to FES beginning the process of allocating 45 oil sites to prospective bidders. High interest is reported to have been shown by major oil industry players as well as highly placed politicians.

President Buhari, in view of this success, has directed FES to expand its activities to the frontier Basins of Lake Chad, Gongola, Anambra, Sokoto, Dahomey, and Bida Basins, as well as the Benue Trough; to usher in more prospects for Nigeria (ThisDay 2019). Oil experts are wondering what is behind the new drive for oil in these areas. It is of note that the northern and southern parts of the country are locked in economic rivalry anchored on searches for oil discovery (ThisDay 2019).

There is an international dimension to this, as China is being fingered as a major bidder and country of interest in this regard. China since acquiring a major stake in ADDAX Nigeria Petroleum in the last 10 years has taken keen interest in becoming a big player in the Nigerian oil sector. They have, therefore, been expanding their holdings and acquisitions. The Federal government has also been increasing its economic dealings with China, especially in construction and agriculture which may further encourage China in its oil drive in Nigeria,

especially in the Northeast. It has been reported that “the NNPC has awarded the contract for seismic data acquisition of over 500 sq.km 3D seismic data to the Integrated Data Service Limited (IDSL), a subsidiary of NNPC and Bureau for Geophysical Prospecting, a subsidiary of China National Petroleum Corporation. Both companies have mobilised and commenced work in the affected areas” (qz.com 2017). On the other hand, France is a country accused of destabilizing the region in order to protect and consolidate its Lake Chad Uranium and oil interests. Northeast oil exploration may also pose some threat and competition.

It is being speculated that International Oil Companies (IOCs) and local ones have keen interest in the Northeast Oil and mineral resources. The IOCs are said to be opposed to full exploration of the NE oil as this is capable of eventually hurting their southern based oil businesses. They stand to lose their northern market which they supply refined petroleum products from Lagos and Port Harcourt. The supply to the north by the IOCs is a substantial part of their business. The same also holds for the local oil companies such as Unipetrol, and Forte Oil. It is therefore not surprising that we hear of donations by these companies to the Northeast for humanitarian causes. Reports state that “the IOCs were not interested to get involved in exploration activities in the Northeast region, they prefer to concentrate their energy and resources in deep water operations in the South, having gradually moved out of onshore prospects as a result of attendant security challenges” (Sanyaolu 2016).

Conspiracy theorists have argued that it is not only the IOCs that are against the Northeast oil exploration but also some regions in the country such as some elements in the South South (SS) who see the Northeast oil exploration as competition and capable of dwarfing the economic relevance of their region, as the oil found in the North East seems to be vast such that it may surpass that of the South-south.

In addition to oil, there is intelligence around massive finds of Cobalt and Lithium in the Northeast. No official government sources have announced such finds (the Ministry of Mines & Steel does have a placeholder page for Cobalt) (MinistryofMines&Steel) but SGS Nigeria is advertising its services around

Lithium extraction⁵ and some Chinese sites are offering equipment to extract Cobalt and Lithium, specifically from Northeast Nigeria⁶

China is officially silent over the reported involvement of its companies/citizens in the illegal mining operations linked to bandit-controlled areas in Nigeria. This includes activities in Zamfara (Maishanu 2020), Sokoto where a Chinese company has discovered gold (DailyTrust) and Shiroro in Niger State where some have also been abducted by kidnappers (Leadership.ng 2022).

The British are playing fast and loose on their position about whether IPOB and MASSOB members may be granted asylum in the UK. In the end they leave a crack by saying IPOB and MASSOB though proscribed in Nigeria are not proscribed in the UK (DailyTrust 2022). The UK has formally condemned the killing of a student in Sokoto over alleged blasphemy (icirigeria.org 2022) which seems to have angered elements in the north who say the High Commissioner has not come out to condemn the killing of a northern pregnant woman (Theguardian.com 2022) in the Southeast (Nnamdi Kanu is considered a British-Nigerian).

⁵ <https://www.sgs.com.ng/en/mining/services-for-industry-challenges/strategic-metals/lithium>

⁶ <https://www.mineraloresupportservices.com/the-nigerian-brand-of-cobalt-lithium/>

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

All countries at peace can maintain it because of political settlements. The precise type and nature of the settlement determines what is possible in terms of development in the country (Kelsall and Hickey 2020). They go on to define a political settlement as "... a tacit agreement among powerful groups about the rules of the political and economic game, that keeps the peace by providing opportunities for those groups to secure a distribution of benefits (such as resources, rights, and status) they find acceptable."

From the foregoing parts of this paper, we can see that the game of 'restructuring' in Nigeria is more about adjusting the rules of the political and economic games played by the elites to secure an altered distribution of benefits from available resources, rights, and status. The tactics employed vary from the peaceful to the violent.

According to (Khan 2010) "At the highest level, a political settlement is a description of the 'social order' that describes how a society solves the problem of violence and achieves a minimum level of political stability and economic performance for it to operate as a society." Nigeria urgently needs a political settlement.

According to (Kelsall and Hickey 2020) "In all societies, there are powerful groups, whether based on gender, class, ethnicity, religion, or some other identity. Some of these groups, acting alone or in concert with others, have the power to make, break, or shape the basic rules of the political and economic game. Governing elites can respond to these groups in two basic ways: co-optation, or repression. Groups who are co-opted receive benefits and are settlement 'insiders'. Groups that are repressed or marginalised are 'outsiders', forced to acquiesce or not strong enough to overturn the settlement...In [their] terminology, the larger the share of the powerful population that is co-opted, the broader the social foundation. The broader the social foundation, the more committed governing elites will be to deliver inclusive development benefits."

Based on this theory, the accommodation and tacit assistance received from powerful people in society by Boko Haram (ISWAP, Ansaru) fighters, herdsmen, and those carrying out extra-judicial killings in the name of religion, can be defined as co-opted insiders. Repressed groups include IPOB, MASSOB, and those calling for Yoruba Nation. There would appear to be a broad social foundation for the actions or inactions of the government that minimizes the costs for these groups and maximizes the costs to outside groups.

If the Buhari administration were to successfully pass the torch on to another Fulani leader, the new leader, particularly if from the PDP where there is a philosophy of emulating the Irish Republican Army, would be able to consolidate power and repress outside groups even more and with all the mineral finds and oil being drilled, call the bluff of those who call for secession. There would then be a state with broad social support in the north. If such a leader were successfully resisted in the south the social foundation would be moderated when viewed across the entire country.

If the Buhari administration were to successfully pass the torch to a southern leader, for that leader to be able to govern the country, such a leader must be able to reach settlements with elites from the north without the militant groups feeling repressed or marginalized. This is the opportunity for a broad-based social foundation for the administration.

The theory also speaks of a second dimension to political settlements which (Kelsall and Hickey 2020) refer to as the power configuration. "If the top political leader and his/her closest allies are strong relatives to their own followers and opponents, we say power is concentrated." President Buhari started out in 2015 with a concentration of power in his hands but which advantage he seems to have dispersed in his demystification of the office of the president over the last seven years. Right now, of the candidates emerging to replace him, Mr. Tinubu appears to have that power concentration. Mr. Atiku's power will be subject to the will of the self-proclaimed 'IRA' within the PDP and Mr. Obi appears to be coming in

without a concentration of power (except we count the voices of vocal youth on social media or if he managed to co-opt IPOB and MASSOB).

(Kelsall and Hickey 2020) suggest the interplay between the level of concentration of power and the broadness the social foundation produces four possible outcomes for development:

1. Broad social foundation and Dispersed Power Concentration - Elites incentivized to provide broad-based, especially social developmental benefits but struggle to build effective state institutions and fall back on clientelism and populism.
2. Broad Social Foundation and Concentrated Power - Elites incentivized to provide broad-based development and have the ability to make and implement decisions accordingly.
3. Narrow Social Foundation and Dispersed Power Concentration - Elites lack incentives to create institutions for broad-based development and instead compete amongst themselves for rents and perquisites.
4. Narrow Social Foundation and Concentrated Power - Elites lack incentives to create institutions for broad-based development. They are likely content with predatory rule. However, 'stationary bandits' or abstemious leadership groups may occasionally build developmental institutions, especially economic ones.

The best case for Nigeria would be in the emergence of a next leadership with broad social-foundation and power concentration. Right now, if Mr. Tinubu emerges, he is likely to have a concentration of power and a moderate (neither broad nor narrow) social foundation across the country. If Mr. Obi were to emerge, social foundation would be narrow, and concentration of power dispersed. If Mr. Atiku were to emerge, social foundation would be moderate, and concentration of power dispersed.

There are no policy options that can be applied outside of leadership, the negotiations they must make with powerful groups and the political settlements that result.

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