

FEDERALISM: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF POWER DISTRIBUTION IN NIGERIA

Sunday Okungbowa Uhumwuangho

Institute Of Public Administration and Extension Services, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

Christopher Ekpu

Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Nigeria nation, more than anything else, the greatest obstacle to the nascent democracy is the pervasive insecurity of lives and property, as evidenced by the spate of armed robbery attacks, political assassinations, power distribution coupled with the seeming helplessness of security agencies to handle criminal acts. The situation is worsened by the increasing number of unemployed Nigerians some of whom are ready recruits for criminal activities. The above statement from an editorial comment by a national daily in Nigeria indeed, epitomizes the central focus of this paper, the aim of which is to analyze the nexus between democratic nurturing, sustenance and eventually consolidation via-a-vis the battles with one of the major ills of federalism. Fifty one years after Independence, Nigeria still battles with one of the major fall-outs of federalism, the politics of trying to appease all sectors of the polity. This paper highlights and assesses the nature, quality and value of particular issues and matters that have dominated the Nigerian federal polity and which have created untold unpleasant experiences and pains at one point or the other since independence. Such issues include religious crises, the Zamfara debacle, that is, the adoption of Shariah penal code, recourse to emergency powers in settling issues in a democratic federal setting, resource control, the lopsided revenue allocation formula, creation of states, inadequate representation of the various ethnic groups at the centre. This is as a result of the multi-ethnic nature of the society. Different governments that have governed this country have at one point or the other derived various methods to cope with this ever present problem of power distribution in both the political and economic spheres. There have been accusations and counter accusations from all sectors of the polity as to how powers are being distributed or how they ought to be distributed. The paper painstakingly appraises many of these issues and concludes that all stakeholders in the federal polity should thread softly, be objective, rational, altruistic and magnanimous in order not to make the existence of true federalism (social, political and economic cohesive existence of the people, peace and tranquility) a fleeting illusion and a mirage. It also focused on critical analysis of the problem of power distribution, the kind of crisis it has generated and the kind of measure that can ameliorate the ugly trend.

Keywords: Federalism, Battles, Fragile Society, Secession, Nigeria, Minority.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria sovereign nation, more than anything else, the greatest obstacle to the nascent democracy is the pervasive insecurity of lives and property, as evidenced by the spate of armed robbery attacks, political assassinations, religious conflicts and federalism coupled with the seeming helplessness of security agencies to handle criminal acts (Uhunmwangho and Epelle, 2011). The situation is worsened by the increasing number of unemployed Nigerians some of whom are ready recruits for criminal activities (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2002). The above statement from an editorial comment by a national daily in Nigeria indeed, epitomizes the central focus of this paper, the aim of which is to analyze the nexus between democratic nurturing and to sustain the current debate on sustainable development and security which is a topical issues in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular.

The Nigerian federalism is a creation of the British. Before the arrival of British colonialists, the area now known as Nigeria was inhabited by peoples who belonged to different empires, kingdoms and societies, which were traditionally administered. The relationship between these various entities was characterized by much conflict and little co-operation. Furthermore, such vices as cannibalism, ritual murder and the killing of twins were rampant among some of the peoples (Adigwe, 1974).

The arrival of British and other European explorers, merchants and religious missionaries tempered and eventually reduced these vices to the barest minimum. After a series of efforts at pacification and conquest, effective British occupation of the area took place from the Royal Niger Company, whose charter was revoked in that year. Consequent upon this, three separate territories emerged. These are Lagos, the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (Wikipedia, 2010).

Lagos Colony and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated in 1906 by Sir Walter Egerton. The resultant territory then took on the title “the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria”. In 1914, the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Northern Nigeria Protectorate were amalgamated by Lord Frederick Lugard. In 1919, the resultant administration was styled “the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria”. So much significance has been attached to the 1914 amalgamation exercise that we can assert with some degree of confidence, that not only that 1914 marked a turning point in the evolution of the Nigerian State, but also that Nigeria as a political entity, was created in that year (Anifowose, 1999).

Generally, federalism connotes the existences of two levels of government, each constitutionally or jurisdictionally empowered to make decision independent of each other within the legislature sphere assigned to it. The classic definition of a Federal Government, as provided by Sir Kenneth Wheare, is a system of government in which sovereignty is divided between the central and state governments. Wheare then went on to add that in this form of government, central and regional governments are co-ordinate in the sense that neither level of government is subordinate to the other in legal authority. He then concluded that in this system of government, each level of government should be limited to its own sphere and, within that sphere, should be independent of the other. This system of government can therefore be contrasted with a Unitary System in which the component units are legally subordinate to the central government (Wheare, 1967). This form of government is more suitable for societies with complexity of diversities viz, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, racial, religions and so on, as well as other cleavages which are territorially defined. However, the nature of diversities helps in a nation’s

decision to adopt the aggregative or dis-aggregative type of federalism. Nigeria therefore falls into the latter because of the wide diversities. Under this type, there exist a ballcanization of formerly unitary state near disintegration and its diversities which progress to a state. Thus, from 1914 to 1946, 1963, 1967, 1976, 1987 and 1993 the Nigerian Federation experienced a great deal of splits. The demand for state creation increased during the Second Republic (1979-1983) due to lack of proper attention to all sections of such communities and such inequality could only be corrected if states are further divided (Ajagun, 2004).

I
n 1976 when the late General Murtala Mohammed was creating additional seven states, he stipulated that the demand for state had been on the increase because of poor leadership. Such poor leadership results from deficiency in satisfying all sections of the community (Mohammed, 1975). A disaggregative federation is therefore a reconciliation mid-point between the polar perils of imperium and anarchy.

On the 15th January, 1966 military coup marked the entry of the military into the body polity of this nation. The dust raised by that coup had not hardly settled when the late General Aguiyi Ironsi, intending to bring the various diverse groups in the country under one authority, imposed the unitary system of government on the country. But he was later to discover that Nigeria was too diverse culturally, ethnically and geographically to be administered from one centre. This is because the unitary political system in a plural society can only function in an atmosphere of racial exclusion, coercion and inequality. General Ironsi's government was however short-lived and he was replaced by another military officer.

General Gowon not only restored the federal structure but went ahead to divide the nation into twelve states structure from the four regions into which the country was originally divided. It can therefore be said here that federalism is crucial to the existence of this country. To this extent, federalism is a system meant to integrate diverse groups, especially when these groups are characterized by institutional diversity and organized into a single polity.

However, in theory, Nigeria is said to be practicing Federalism since 1954. Infact, evidence on ground points to the opposite direction. That is that the government is tending progressively toward a unitary state. This is especially so in the area of sharing of functions and resources available in the country between the central government and the component units on the one hand and between the government and citizens on the other (Ajagun, 2004).

THE PROBLEMS

The Federal structure of Nigeria is believed to be "a bad marriage that all dislike but dare not leave, and that there are possibilities that could disrupt the precarious equilibrium in Abuja" (Ogbe, et al 2011:196). The dominant conceptual and legal foundation for Nigerian internal political geography is federalism. A federal arrangement was expected to be instrumental for forging national unity out of the plural society and at the same time in preserving the separate social identities cherished by its component parts. Adoption of federalism notwithstanding, Nigeria's political system has continued to operate with minimum cohesion (Ola, 1995). Rivalry fundamentally instigated by ethnic mutual suspicion increasingly weakens the fabrics of Nigerian Sovereignty. This has culminated in the Nigerian Civil War. It has also dragged

the nation-state into the turbulent June 12 political crisis which has completely made Nigerian sovereignty frail and fragile (Ojo, 1989).

Fifty one years after independence, Nigeria still battles with one of the major fall-outs of federalism, the politics of trying to appease all sections of the polity. This has become necessary because success to national positions and resources are limited at the individual level. This is as a result of the multi-ethnic nature of the society. According to Ola, different governments that have governed this country have at one point or the other derived various methods to cope with this ever present problem of power distribution in both the political and economic spheres. Therefore, there have been accusations and counter accusations from all sections of the polity, as to how powers are being distributed or how they ought to be distributed (Ola, 1995).

Federalism is a system meant to integrate people in a society who are diverse ethnically, culturally, geographically and even religiously. It therefore becomes imperative that once a government is in place, it must endeavour to adequately and equitably distribute powers, functions and resources among these diverse groups. But in Nigeria, there are instances where governments have openly violated this principles of federalism. Suffice it to say that in theory, Nigeria can be said to be operating the federal system of government, whereas in actual practice, the country is tending towards a unitary system. Therefore, the problem with federalism in Nigeria is the mix-application or non-application of this clause especially as it has to do with power distribution (Awa, 1976). Power distribution is a volatile issue which if not properly handled could lead to various forms of crises which are bound to crop up. Nigeria has not been forthright applying this principle to the letter and the result of this has been the heightening of ethnic tension, mutual mistrust among ethnic groups, minority problem, clamour for an answer to the National question et-cetera.

Ethnic tension in Nigeria is the resultant effect of improper distribution of functions and resources. This is because the people who now feel left out in the scheme of things see it as a necessity to rely with their ethnic groups which will provide them a good ground for competing with others for resources and against domination by the dominant ethnic groups. This can escalate further and lead to open confrontation among the groups. Also, ethnic politics has become the order of the day as it is believed that an alignment with one's ethnic group enables an easy access to resources (Uhunmwuango and Epelle, 2007).

There is also mutual suspicious and mistrust among the different sections of the nation. This is manifested in the fierce manner that positions in the country are contested for, and in the way elections are fought out among groups as no section wants to shift grounds due to this suspicion. The June 12 1993 issue is still very fresh in all our minds (Ajagun, 2004:6). Minority problems have continued to plague this nation from independence till date. This is as a result of the perceived domination of one section of the country over another. Between 1960 and 1964, political disaffection among the Tiv people in the Middle Belt area resulted in bloody disturbances and in early 1966, the opportunity for some little secessionist bid by the Igbo of the Eastern Region in 1967 was as a result of this perceived imbalance in the allocation of political power and resources. Also, secessionist bid was organized by the leadership of Isaac AdakaBoro for the creation of Delta People's Republic (Ajagun, 2004:6).

THEORETICAL EXPOSITION

The particular theory that can sufficiently act as a guide for the analysis of issues in this paper is group theory. The group theory framework is perhaps the most ambitious methodology in the study of social sciences. The most distinctive characteristic of the group theory to the conduct of political analysis is the theoretical assumption which sees society, the political process and the entire political process as nothing but a gigantic network of interacting groups. The exponents and principal promoters of the group theory are of the view that every society includes within it a large number of groups which remain engaged in perpetual struggle for power and domination over each other. For instance, to them politics could be understood only in terms of interactions between various groups. They tried to establish the group rather than the individual or the society as the basic unit of analysis in the study of politics. The first explicit and systematic development of the group theory as it relates to analytic study of political systems was provided by Ballard in his book "The Process of Government" which was published in 1908.

However, the work of Ballard was given boost nearly half a century later when David Truman advanced it further in his book *Governmental Process, the Analytical Impact of Group Theory* in 1951. Other scholars of this theory are Robert Dahl, John Starte Mill among others. Ballard was interested in de-emphasizing the institutions and re-emphasizing processes. He conceived the group as a mass of activity and not a collection of individuals. Accordingly, he defined a group as a certain portion of men of society taken not as a physical mass out-off from other masses of men, but as a mass of who participates in its form like in many other group activities (Ojo, 1989). In a nutshell, this framework is associated with this work because of the characteristic nature of the groups that make up the polity under study, for example, the nature of perpetual struggle for power and admonition over each other by major ethnic groups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many controversial issues with consequential painful experiences and centrifugal tendencies dominate the Nigerian federal polity. These issues centre around the various interests, cleavages and diversity in the system. These constitute travails, unpleasant experiences that unsettle the Nigerian federalism. Such issues include the incessant religious crises as a result of the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian federal state. Therefore, the Nigerian Constitution should be interpreted to the spirit and its letter. Constitution also means governance in keeping with the constitution. What this tells us with regards to Nigeria is that the practice of federalism is a distorted one. This view was echoed by Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the then Nigeria's first Executive President in the Second Republic when he said in a speech at the symposium on the National Constitutional Conference at the Music Society of Nigeria (MUSON) center in Lagos; that the Federal system which we have been operating since independence has been badly battered by the military command, and the system which the military rulers applied in the governance of the Federal Republic ... our country, has been ruled for 24 years on the unitary system rather than the Federal system and no doubt as a dictatorship instead of democracy (Ola, 1995).

Political marginalization is not in the interest of one organization as every section has a right to self determination. This is the principle on which the Nigerian federalism is based. This principle has not been adhered to by governments that have ruled this country from independence till date.

According to Ojo, by this unequal sharing of power, Nigeria is transformed from a political community to an administered state (Ojo, 1989). He goes further to argue that a political community is one characterized by or is based on consociational values, while an administered state is a state where there is absolute a subjugation to an absolute centralized authority where there is a complete disregard for consociational political relationship. Every level in a federal arrangement derives its powers from the constitution and these rights, power and authority are justifiable whereby any level can seek redress against an infringement of these constitutionally stated rights and authority. In Nigeria, the powers and functions of each level of government are clearly spelt out in Second Schedule of the 1999 amended Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. There are two legislative lists, namely: The Exclusive Legislative List and the Concurrent Legislative List. The former is made of subjects on which the Federal Government alone can make and administer laws, while the latter deals with matters over which the Federal and State Governments have legislative powers (Ola, 1995).

There are sixty-six (66) subjects on the Exclusive List and twenty-eight (28) subjects on the Concurrent List. The constitution is silent on the residual list. However, based on the tradition in most federations, it is assumed that the residual powers are to be exercised by the State. Also spelt out in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution under reference, are the functions of the local government. The derivation of power from the constitution is a clear attestation to the assumption of the status of a third tier of government, but the local government is still hamstrung by the provision that its powers include such other functions as may be conferred on a Local Government Council by the House of Assembly of a State. The division of the legislative powers between the Federal and State Governments by the 1999 Constitution does not reflect the view according to Ola, that a federal state is one in which there is a central authority that represents the whole and acts on behalf of the whole in external affairs and in such internal affairs that are of common interest (Ola, 1995).

Awa emphasized this much in his book “Issues in Federalism, E.P.C. 1976” , when he did emphasize that the component units of the federation must be enabled to control some of their affairs in his own way and with their own resources (Awa, 1976). What this tells us is that in a Federal System of Government, there has to be both constitution and constitutionalism. The Constitution must be the fundamental reflection of the aspiration of wishes of people on how they wish to be governed at the time of its adoption, modification and amendment.

In his book, Party and Politics in Northern Nigeria, Dudley (1982) argued that the following factors were responsible for the adoption of a federal system of government by Nigeria:

- (a) The fear of ethnic domination by one group over the other;
- (b) The North-South conflict on the question of independence;
- (c) The expectation of rapid economic mobilization through autonomy; and
- (d) The regional nature of the major political parties.

Dudley’s views are similar to those expressed by Awa in his discussion on the determinants of federalism, generally (Awa, 1976:59)

ANALYSIS OF MEASURES TAKEN TO CORRECT THE UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION OF POWER

Importantly, the major concern of this paper is an appraisal of the various measures that have been taken by the different governments that have ruled Nigeria - measures which are aimed at correcting the imbalance occasioned by the uneven distribution of power and resources. Prominent among these measures is the Federal Character Principle introduced by the Murtala Mohammed administration which was later entrenched in the 1979 Constitution, the Revenue Allocation Formula, which has been subjected to various decrees of review by different committees which were set up for the purpose of reconciliation of aggrieved groups, state creation, etc.

Federal Character Principle: Different scholars and authors alike have at various times given varied interpretation as to the meaning of the term Federal Character. Operationally, and in Nigeria, Federal Character connotes the policy of equity in representation of all sections of the country in government bureaucracies. This principle is applicable in federal appointments and promotions and retrenchment, admissions and scholarships, contracts award, citing of projects, agricultural, industrial academic and research institutions, the army, sports and games, especially the most highly priced football team selection and field of play (Omo-Omoruyi, 1995). From the above therefore, it is quite obvious that the principle of federal character has not lived up to expectation, yet it is still entrenched in our constitution. The administration of General Sani Abacha acknowledged the shortcomings of the federal character principles on assumption of office. This was why he set up the Federal Character Commission to undertake a review of the principle of the federal character and identify its shortcoming (Oyovbaire, 1989).

Revenue Allocation: Revenue allocation refers to the sharing of government's revenue (revenue in the Federation Account) among the various levels of government (Federal, State and Local) using a constitutionally or legally defined formula. It also entails the sharing of government revenue among the various units of a particular level of government. The former is vertical revenue allocation while the latter is horizontal revenue allocation (Umukoro and Okon, 2008)

Revenue allocation has generated so much conflict between the tiers of government and the centre. This is because the formula is a zero-sum game. The states and the Federal Government often disagree on the timing and amount to be disbursed. But the current source of disagreement is the so-called "oil windfall". In this regard, a number of questions need to be asked. Has the Federal Government the right to hold on to any funds in the Federation Account? Can the State Government force the disbursement of such funds as the "oil windfall"? Is the issue justifiable? Do any other bodies have interest? However, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and other bodies managing the macro-economic policy should have interest in this matter. From 1946 to 1980, we have had eight Ad-hoc Revenue Allocation Commissions. Each of the first five was a consequence of a constitutional change. Thus, apart from the Bins Commission of 1964 which was to a large degree set up on view of the economic and financial changes, all others are politically motivated (Agbebaku, 1995).

Currently, the revenue sharing formula from the Federation Account is as follows:

Table1: Revenue Sharing Formula

- (a) Federal Government = 50%
- (b) State Government=24%
- (c) Local Government=20%
- (d) Special Fund=6.5%
- Total= 100%

The Valued Added Tax (VAT) is also currently distributed as follows:

- (i) Federal Government=15%
- (ii) State Government=50%
- (iii) Local Government=35%

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, Benin City

The search for a generally accepted formula for revenue allocation has been a major concern in Nigeria. The former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo also acknowledged that “over-dependence on oil revenue is the cause of the unnecessary division amongst Nigerians. A situation where 94% revenue comes from one section of the country is too divisive, and must not be allowed to continue” (Idada, 2004:11). Though the Niger Delta produces well over 90% of the nation’s total revenue, it is entitled to only 13% of the revenue while the remaining is left in the federal pool which is divided amongst the whole constituent states and local governments on an almost equal basis. What an irony! Many commissions as per the previous section have been established over the years to consider the issue of revenue allocation in Nigeria. The reports of these commissions were used as the basis for revenue allocation at different periods of Nigeria’s political history.

The most important clause in the constitution is that “the principle of derivation shall be constantly reflected in any approved formula as being not less than 13% of the revenue accruing to the Federation Account directly from any natural resources” (Umukoro and Okon, 2008:81). It is worth noting that the people of Niger Delta or the nine oil producing States are not satisfied with this provision of the Constitution, hence the clamour for resource control.

State Creation

Another measure that seems to be very critical and popular with different governments in the country aimed at appeasing the neglected sections of the country has been the State Creation exercise. Nigeria has progressively moved from its original four region structure during the pre-1966 period to a thirty six (36) States structure in 1996 (Ajagun, 2004). In 1963, an additional region called the Mid-Western Region was created. Since 1954, State creation has been a major issue. That is why the colonial Government established the Willinks Commission to look into the fear of the minority groups. Although the commission did not recommend State Creation, the issue remained (Umukoro and Okon, 2008). State creation has been government’s reply to cries of neglect by the different sections of the country. State creation exercise began with the Gowon administration in 1967, when in the heat of the crisis that later degenerated into civil war. Gowon announced the splitting of the regions into twelve States. This was in a bid to encourage national integration and reconciliation. This exercise by

Gowon, seems to have been a clever political maneuver as it took away the necessary support that “Biafra Republic” would have had if the country remained in its former four-region structure (Ihonvbere, 2004).

In 1975, General Murtala Ramat Mohammed went on to create an additional seven states (7) to bring the total number of states to nineteen (19). This exercise as Murtala himself put it, “was to remove to a large extent, the fear of predominance of one region over another”. Shagari administration could not create more states during his tenure because of the intense politics that marred the administration. The regime was finally pushed out in 1983 by the military. Even though Babangida’s administration never wanted to be hurried into creating more states, it nevertheless set up the Dr. Samuel Cookey Political Bureau to design political programme suitable for the country. At the end of the exercise, two (2) more states were created and that brought the total to twenty-one (21). Even at that, the clamour for more states went unabated and so in 1987, the number of states was increased to thirty (30). The Abacha administration added six (6) more states to bring the overall total number of States to thirty-six (36). The question then become thus, has the creations of states in Nigeria helped to remove the crisis associated with the distribution of power and resources? Or how effective has state creation exercise been in allaying the fear of domination by one section over the other? Hence, state creation has been a major issue in Nigerian politics. It is also worthy to note that creating states which are not going to be economically viable will mean more developmental problem for the country as every state will now look up to the national government for its daily needs. This in turn leads to over dependence, which negates the very essence of Federalism. It must be stated here that this is already the case with most States in the Federation (Akpotor, 1995).

Secession

The issue of secession is caused by the inability of some sections of the society to co-exist peacefully with other sections of the country. This usually brings about conflict and the desire to secede. Nigeria had a first taste of an attempt of secession between 1967 and 1970 i.e. the period of the Biafra war led by Lt. Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. Any secession attempt is an aberration because it is against constitutional provision. According to section 2, sub-section 1 of the 1999 Constitution, “Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Religious and Ethnic Conflicts

Nigeria has witnessed many religious and political conflicts resulting in the loss of lives and properties in different parts of the country. Though it is a thing of the past, the issues of violent conflicts was very common in the Niger Delta whose militants have embraced amnesty provision by late President, Umaro Musa Yar’Adua. Also worthy of note is the Jos crises, implementation of Sharia penal code and currently Boko Haram.

The Prospects:

The nation unarguably has had a turbulent period since 1960 and even 1999 when the military handed over the reins of power to the civilians. It has however recorded significant improvement in a few sectors. For instance, the banking industry is faring better today because of the re-capitalization policy of the immediate past administration of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo . The

same feat was recorded in the telecommunication industry with the introduction of the Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM). The administration was able to plan various reforms in the country and made effective contributions to various economic policies, planning and overall development of some sectors. Part of his efforts yielded fruitful results especially with regards to the economy.

Before Obasanjo's administration, Nigeria's GDP growth had been low since 1987, and only managed a 3 per cent growth between 1999 and 2000 but doubled to 6 per cent until he left office. Nigeria's foreign reserves rose from \$2 billion in 1999 to \$43 billion on leaving office in 2007 (Federal Office of Statistics, 2007). Chief Obasanjo was able to secure debt pardon from the Paris Club and London Club amounting to some \$10 billion. Most of these loans were secured and spent by past corrupt officials.

We have learnt since the democratic dispensation that economic development depends on democratic advancement that derives from a good electoral process (CBCN, 2010). Many believe that despite the hiccups, the nation has relatively improved in the area of infrastructural development. Also for practicing democracy, Nigeria has removed the pariah status it had under the long years of military rule. The thinking of the optimists is that the nation is gradually but steadily consolidating on the democratic process.

A Genuine Federal System

While it is conceded that federalism is not synonymous with good and effective governance, the fact that Nigeria is a federal system suggests that we consider the properties of federalism as pre-requisites for good governance in a federal polity.

In restructuring Nigerian federalism thought must be given to the idea of basing it on ethnic nationalities. As a framework for a renewed federalism in Nigeria, we propose the construction of homogeneous federating units (states) for the top 10 most populous ethnic nationalities that have contiguous territories, and a maximum of 15 multi-ethnic federating units (states) for the other ethnic groups. Thus, there will be homogeneous ethnic-based states for the Hausa, Igbo, Ijaw, Kanuri, and Yoruba, etc., while the others will constitute a maximum of 15 multi-ethnic states (federating units), ethnic nationality in a heterogeneous state will constitute an autonomous region with due constitutional jurisdictions. An ethnic group with multiple kingdoms in a heterogeneous state will fuse into one kingdom to constitute an autonomous region in the given heterogeneous state. An autonomous region shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the heterogeneous state over natural resources (minerals, oil, gas, etc) found in its territory, but shall exercise exclusive jurisdiction over primary education, culture, language, and traditional institutions. Depending on its capability, an autonomous region may also establish its own Autonomous Regional Police Force. If an Autonomous Region cannot have its police force, it could contract the State police for its policing duties. A Charter of Rights and Freedoms protecting minority rights will anchor this renewed federalism.

Constitutional Provisions

The constitutional processes through which Nigeria was transformed into a Federation should, however, not convey the impression that the introduction of the Federal arrangement in the country was solely the responsibility of the British colonial

officials. In other words, Nigerians themselves also influenced the evolution of Federalism in their country. For example, our nationalists freedom fighters in the persons of Mr. Herbert Macaulay, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Alhaji Ahmadu Bello, the Saduana of Sokoto, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Anthony Enahoro, Alhaji Adegoke Adelabu etc, not necessarily in the order of prominence; and one of the frontline nationalists of the 1940s and 1950s advocated some form of federalism because, according to him, “Igbo-land was being deliberately neglected by the British” (Wikipedia, 2010) . With the introduction of the elective principle by the Hugh Clifford Constitution of 1922, the first political party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) was formed in 1923 under the leadership of Herbert Macaulay who is popularly referred to as the father of Nigerian nationalism (Ekeh, 1989).

Similar views favouring federalism for Nigeria were expressed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Furthermore, other eminent Nigerians who contributed to the actualization of federalism in Nigeria apart from the Lyttelton Constitution of 1954 seen by the West African Pilot, one of the Nationalist papers, were the Nigerian students within and outside Nigeria who also asserted that federalism is “the handiwork of Nigerians”. In a nutshell, the 1954 Constitution was the “kernel” of all further constitutional changes, which culminated in the establishment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on 1st October, 1960. The current 36 States in Nigeria can be seen in the political map in the next page.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria Map - Political Map of Nigeria



Source: Wikipedia caught 20th June, 2012

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, the Nigeria sovereign nation, more than anything else, the greatest obstacle to the nascent democracy is the pervasive insecurity of lives and property, as evidenced by the spate of armed robbery attacks, political assassinations, religious conflicts and federalism coupled with the seeming helplessness of security agencies to handle criminal acts (Uhunmwangho and Epelle, 2011). The situation is worsened by the increasing number of unemployed Nigerians some of whom are ready recruits for criminal activities (*Nigerian Tribune*, 2002). The above statement from an editorial comment by a national daily in Nigeria indeed, epitomizes the central focus of this paper, the aim of which is to analyze the nexus between democratic nurturing and to sustain the current debate on sustainable development and security which is a topical issues in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular.

We, the people of Nigeria, can no longer afford to stand by and watch while brazen, mindless and feckless official corruption, political instability, religious strife and rudderless administration, flagrant wastefulness, tribalism, maladministration and administrative lapses, overloaded judiciary, bloated, corrupt and unwieldy civil service, and unbelievable personal greed demoralize our society and negate any advances we have made so far. Therefore, the present administration of President Goodluck Jonathan should as the current Chairman of ECOWAS, harness all the administrative, political and military resources at its disposal to ensure that there is sustainable development in African and also halt this perennial bloody federalism contention that clearly stands out in our traumatized country in particular and African in general.

It is true that the issues which are enumerated above constitute the travails of Nigerian federalism, which are highly inflammable and bear centrifugal tendencies. It is also the fervent hope and sincere belief of the authors that in order to preserve the federal unity, promote cohesive existence in all ramifications, promote peace, tranquility and security, all stakeholders in the system must thread softly, be objective, rational, altruistic, magnanimous and demonstrate the spirit of give and take (Idada, 2004). For most Nigerians however, the pressing problems of everyday survival remain the highest immediate priority.

This, in a nutshell, is the kernel of this paper. To devise an alternative to the present system of sharing power so that the country can be at peace with itself, avert crisis associated with unequal distribution of power and resources and still remain as a Federal Republic, upholding the cardinal principles of federalism. It is also hoped that the power sharing agreement, which appears to be the most conscious effort on the part of government to share power evenly among the various segments of the population will bring about the much needed stability to the system.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Sunday Okungbowa Uhunmwangho: Institute Of Public Administration and Extension Services, University of Benin
Benin City, Nigeria.

Christopher Ekpu: Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.