

## **NIGERIA'S EXPENSIVE DEMOCRACY: A CONFEDERAL OPTION FOR DEVELOPMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Democracy in Nigeria, rather than popularize governance and widen the sociopolitical and economic space, has succeeded in fostering elite rule, plutocracy, official corruption, subjugation of popular wishes, politicization of ethnic diversity, and the entrenchment of an expensive governance project. Similarly, the federal government has become too centralized and powerful, pushing the constituent units that are closer to the people into oblivion. However, while federalism may be suitable for Nigeria because of its size and diversity, a weaker centre and stronger component units may turn out to surgically address the fundamental flaws in Nigeria's democracy for the betterment of all Nigerians. The present democratic system in Nigeria favors the centre and weakens the ability of constituent units to meet the needs and yearnings of their constituencies thereby creating the present kaleidoscope of social, political and economic crises threatening to submerge the Nigerian state. Confederalism, according to this paper, seems the better option at this juncture in Nigeria's democratic evolution to address the myriads of challenges facing the country especially by reducing the cost of governance at the centre, and freeing resources that could be channeled into other critical projects in the state; thus guaranteeing its development. Unless and until the federal system as presently constituted is changed, development efforts may become disproportionate and belated. This study has tried to analyze the confederal system and how it can be adopted in Nigeria. It also made relevant recommendations that can be useful for policy makers, the political leadership and Nigerians.

**Keywords:** Democracy; Nigeria; Confederalism; Option; Expensive Project.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The performance of the democratic system of government in Nigeria has raised concern over its sustainability and survivability in the country. The ennui and frustration created by this style of governance, touted by its Western and third world apologists as the ideal system of government, have triggered mixed feelings concerning its entrenchment (and justification) in Nigeria. While some have argued for the indigenization of the liberal democratic orthodoxy to reflect the unique features and experiences of the Nigerian peoples (Ake, 1994; Aina, 1996; Jinadu, 2007; Prah, 2007), others have observed that issues like corruption and poor value systems, ethnic violence and intolerance, masked elite rule and domination, resource mismanagement and lack of accountability, political and electoral violence, militarization of government and subjugation of the popular will and the expensiveness of the democratic project itself, among others, are nemeses that can hamstring the positive impacts democracy could portend for Nigeria (Imhonopi and Urim, 2011a and 2011b).

Sadly, it has been a little over eleven years since Nigerians embraced democracy (the largest uninterrupted period ever in its history), but Nigerians are yet to bid farewell to the very situations that characterized the military era such as poverty, corruption, infrastructural decay, social menace, rising unemployment and violation of basic human rights (Polygreen, 2007). This worrisome situation has encouraged large-scale emigration especially among Nigerian youths to other countries perceived to offer better social and economic conditions. Generally, Nigerians are disappointed with what democracy has had to offer them for more than a decade of its practice and as Polygreen (2007) observed, citing an Afrobarometer survey by the New York Times, 84% of Nigerians were satisfied with how democracy was practiced in Nigeria in the year 2000 but the figure has continued to dip since 2005.

However, one area where the democratic system in Nigeria has remained shamelessly scandalous is in the area of the expensive cost of managing the democratic structures of the state and the people that run them. From the entrenched corruption at the centre down to the constituent states and local authorities, the multiplication of government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), the bloated civil and public services, the self-approved jumbo pays and perks for members of the executive and legislative branches, and the boiling internal agitation arising from ethnic mistrust and suspicion within a tensed climate of religious and ethnic cleavages, spiced by unpopular rule, poor standard of living and grinding poverty, Nigeria's democracy has remained not only a disappointment to the Nigerian people (who are the true custodians of the country's sovereignty), but it is becoming increasingly a burden with no benefits in sight for the masses of the country.

The picture of Nigeria's democracy is full of ironies and menacing paradoxes. Fat and well-fed political appointees and elected public officials in their bulletproof chauffeured cars, living in bulletproof houses and sleeping in bulletproof beds, with their team of well-paid and obese security personnel, drive around menacingly in siren-blaring government-owned expensive automobiles on aging and potholed roads past slums and squalid streets where many Nigerians call their homes, sometimes stopping to give some political and soapbox speeches, promising to deliver more democracy dividends to the people. This scenario summarizes the state of democratic politics in Nigeria and throws up questions about the survivability and continuity of such an invidious political invention which promotes elitism, aristocracy, plutocracy and unpopular rule. Tied to the present skewed democratic system of governance in Nigeria is the problem of a marble cake federal system that continues to condone corruption in the states, promote ethnic sentiments, partisan politics and elite rule, inspire laziness and lack of competitiveness among its constituent units in the area of resource generation, and evolve a rigid centralized system of governance that is distanced from the very people it should represent. Meanwhile, this same federal government controls a significant chunk of the resources of the commonwealth and only dispenses what it feels should be enough to meet the needs of the component units. Thus, as Ochonu (2010) contemplates, the democratic system practiced in Nigeria now (within the present federal arrangement) is fractured beyond recognition because it does not represent Nigerians' expectations based on what they signed up for in 1999 and therefore urgently requires prompt reversals if it is not to consume the entire polity.

In this study, the authors are advocating the need to address Nigeria's expensive democratic experience situated within a rigidified, centralized and complex federal matrix, and are proposing a confederal ideological option for development.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

### **Democracy, federalism and confederalism**

Democracy has been viewed as the morally legitimate and best form of political system invented by man (Arowolo and Aluko, 2010; Dahl, 1989; Fukuyama, 1992; Prah, 2007) because it fosters the rule of law, constitutionalism, human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom of the press, transparent and periodic electoral process, majority rule and minority rights, equality among citizens, individual and collective freedom, separation of powers, civil liberties generally, and universal adult suffrage, and others. In fact, according to a report, democracy has been argued as the only form of government that is capable of fully satisfying international covenants on civil and political rights because it is not essentially a rule by individuals, but a rule by laws (EOD, 2010). In defining democracy, Oke (2010) argues that it involves the opportunity for citizens to participate in decision making in the political process and repudiate arbitrariness and authoritarianism, while extolling the consent of the governed and protecting human personality and values (Ake 1991). Democracy, whether liberal, African or modern includes a fundamental recognition of popular sovereignty, equal opportunity for all, majority rule, representativeness, minority rights, right of choice between alternative programmes, popular consultation, consensus on fundamental issues and more essentially periodic elections (Oke, 2005). Thus, the concept of democracy provides all adult citizens the opportunity to participate in decision making and in the political process in the state. Nevertheless, while all these attributes are not exhaustive of the elements of democracy when talking of the variant manifestations of democracy throughout history, they are common characteristics found in true democracies.

### **Federalism**

Federalism as a system of government shares the attributes of a unitary system of government and a confederal system. This model has a strong central government, typical of unitarism, but also possesses strong local governments as well, *a la* confederalism. Specific powers reside in the central government, specific powers reside in the state and local governments, and specific powers are shared between the two. In theory, this model would provide uniformity when necessary, a strength of the unitary system, but allows for diversity and local rule when needed, the strength of a confederate system. According to Fenna (2006), federalism is a system of government where power and administrative responsibilities are shared between the central government and its constituent units. However, as he notes, the key to making federalism work would be in knowing what powers or decisions need to be centralized to make sure the nation works smoothly, and what powers or decisions need to be left in the hand of local or regional entities so that the specific needs of the people are met. This is, however, not an easy task because the nature of federalism is in constant refinement, and many cases that come to the Supreme Court involve how powers of the states and national government should operate. The federal system of government has remained one of Nigeria's albatrosses limiting the country's development due to poor leadership, concentration of immense powers and resources at the centre, the rabid jostling for political positions at the centre, the poverty and estrangement of the constituent units who live at the mercy of the centre, and the neglect of the numerous responsibilities of the central government to the constituent states and local authorities. Thus, the federal system of government has failed Nigeria and may continue to do so

until the country decides to deconstruct the existing federal arrangement and construct a confederal style of administering the democratic system of governance in place.

### **Confederalism**

The alternative system of administration being proposed in this study is confederalism. In this system, power rests in the local entities, like states, and the central or national government can only do what the confederate association allows it to. The basic assumption for adopting a confederal system is that government closest to the people would be better fit to understand what needs to be done, when, where and how. Put differently, confederation is a system of government in which sovereign states delegate power to a central government for specific purposes e.g. defence and the regulation of trade (Nef, 2004). According to Dumont and Drooghenbroeck (2007), confederalism is an association among several sovereign states, founded on an international and constitutional treaty and formed with the aim to organize the common management of a determined set of matters. In a confederal system, sovereign powers rest with the constituent units, meaning that the units are stronger than the centre. Power is decentralized, government is nearer to the people, and there is room for components that want to leave the union to do so by conducting a referendum or plebiscite. Examples of confederations that date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were primarily the Swiss, American and German confederations. However, Switzerland is a modern example of a confederation while Belgium exhibits traits of some of the fundamental tenets of confederalism. The rationale for preferring the confederal typology of government administration to the present federal system is because Nigeria's present situation under the latter has not led to even development touted as one of the reasons for adopting federalism. The country is more polarized and divided than it was at the pre-independence and early independence periods and, more often than not, the citizens of the country owe their allegiance to ethnic, lingual, religious and regional entities other than to the federal government. Consequently, sustaining the pursuit of a federal agenda may not represent the wishes of the Nigerian peoples as more and more citizens are calling for a national conference or dialogue, and are demanding political and constitutional reforms.

### **CRITIQUE OF FEDERALISM AS A SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE**

As far back as 1939, Harold Laski, one of the leading political thoughts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century predicted the obsolescence of federalism (Laski, 1939). According to him, federalism, in promoting the existence of equally legitimate and endowed political jurisdictions within a nation-state leads to what he called "government constraint triggered by divided jurisdiction" and what Borzel and Hosli (2003) refer to as the double legitimacy trap. Thus some countries with the federal system of government tend to oppose Unitarians and favour anti-centralists who support the autonomy of component units within the framework of the federation like Switzerland (Nef, 2004) and Belgium. Gradually, it seems that modern federations even in the Western hemisphere are becoming chagrined with the federal system and are advocating a weakening of the centre and an increasing autonomy of the component units on one hand, while advocating for the total embrace of the principles of confederation, on the other hand. This is the situation in Belgium, a leading federation in Europe, where there is a growing impetus in favor of confederalism (Dumont and Drooghenbroeck, 2007). These writers advocate, among other things, the defederalization of several sensitive powers presently held by the federal authority, the rewriting of the existing constitution to limit the powers of the centre and an inversion of the residual powers which are to be transferred from the centre to the

communities or regions. These same anti-federalism sentiments are gradually gaining recognition in Australia too. As Fenna (2006) suggested, scholars, writers, politicians and citizens of Australian descent are beginning to show growing disenchantment with their federal system, raising the question of what is worth saving in Australian federalism. The dissatisfaction with the performance of state governments in Australia, like what we see in Nigeria, has raised the question of what use federalism is anyway. Consequently, the growing disillusionment with the practice of federalism by modern governments has continued to accentuate the obsolescence, *a la* Laski, of this system of government in delivering its avowed benefits to members of such a political configuration.

### **EXPENSIVE DEMOCRACY AND FAILURE OF THE FEDERAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA**

It is evident that democracy in Nigeria, as well as in many African countries, has not fared better than even military dictatorships. However, while an attempt to critique the poor performance of democracy is not akin to and should not be considered as approving militarism in all its hues and colours, the present democratic system of government as constituted in Nigeria has become a heavy burden rather than a blessing to the Nigerian peoples. As Mailafia (2010) observed, the different democratic structures in the country like the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government are typified by money politics, blackmail and financial shenanigans. The Lt. Gen. Theophilus Danjuma (rtd)-led Presidential Advisory Committee (PAC) also expressed its concern over the increasing cost of governance in the country and advised President Goodluck Jonathan to work towards reducing the number of bloated Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and other overheads incurred in running government business (ThisDay, 2011). While PAC's observation is generally an infamous fact, the scandalous nature of Nigeria's expensive democracy is nauseating, incredible and malevolent in a country where many of its citizens, according to the United Nations Human Development Report (UNHDR) published for 2007/2008, live in abject poverty, while government finds it hard and unjustifiable to even pay workers the paltry sum it considers as minimum wage (Saturday Sun, 2008). The report disclosed that 92.4 per cent of Nigerians live on \$2 per day while 70.8 per cent live on \$1 per day.

Thus, the democratic system in Nigeria has been perfected as a conduit pipe for perpetrating all forms of kleptocracy and self-styled perpetuation of the dominant class' interests in the country. The identified areas of Nigeria's expensive democratic system include the monthly security vote which has failed to secure the citizens of the country from internal and external aggressors, legislators' jumbo pay packets, expensive electioneering process, corruption of public office holders, over-inflation of contracts, duplication of aides and advisers of/to elected officials, duplication and multiplication of government ministries, departments and agencies and an entrenched culture of graft and bribery which has scandalized government business in all its entirety.

Specifically, the cost of running Nigeria's democracy and paying elected and public officers for managing the Nigerian state has been captured in these interesting scenarios. As Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, the Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria claimed, and he should know better, 25% of the nation's budget is used to service the National Assembly expenditure, trimming down the amount available for the badly needed capital investments (Saturday Sun, 2010). Meanwhile, the cost of running the entire US congress, including salaries of senators and representatives, is put at 0.2 per cent of its federal spending,

as Empowered Newswire reports. Thus, 500 Nigerians are paid one-fourth of the country's resources for their upkeep. The US government figures, based on increases made in 2010, shows that while the average Nigerian Senator receives an equivalent of \$1.7 million total package in a year and the federal representative collects the equivalent of \$1.45 million a year, the average US congressman, whether in the Senate or House of Representatives receives only about \$174,000. In fact, as Mailafia (2010) admits, not only are Nigerian legislators at the federal level among the highest paid in the world, a typical Nigerian senator also earns more than the President of the United States of America.

As Saturday Sun (2008) observed, the 2008 budget of the Federal Government was N2.6 trillion, but N1.3 trillion was to be spent on political office holders' salaries. Going by the figures from the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), between 1999 and 2007, not less than N5 trillion has been spent on political office holders in the three tiers of government. Aside the jumbo earnings of elected and public officers, operating the Presidency is also a drain on the economy, same for running state governments. Perhaps, the biggest drain on the public purse is the mind-boggling cost of over-priced government contracts. In short, government contracts are just avenues for milking the economy or minting new billionaires. For example, N21 billion was tabled as the cost of fixing the Abuja Airport runway (ThisDay, 2011). This is definitely bigger than the cost of building an entire airport complex in some countries. The implication of all these instances is that so much is lost to graft in official transactions and these wastages and corrupt practices stymie development. Granted that democracy is expensive everywhere, but the cost of running the Nigerian democracy has become simply an obscenity. Government manages wealth, and does not create it, and a society which rewards the most those who create the least wealth is an unjust one. By paying the highest set of salaries to its elected/political officials, Nigeria does not promote the principle of government as service and sacrifice, and hence is one that is bound to promote both "sit-tightism" and rank corruption when elections come around (Aluko, 2010). As a corollary, there is obviously something wrong in a democracy where public offices become the easiest means to acquire wealth.

### **FAILURE OF THE FEDERAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IN NIGERIA**

Compounding the failures of the present expensive democratic experience in Nigeria is a seeming inappropriate, obsolete or spent federal system that has outlived its usefulness. Even as Nigeria may not have a better option to the democratic system, Nigeria cannot afford to continue to administer the polity based on the existing federal arrangement, without tinkering (or altering) the present configuration. Even if it is true, as General Ibrahim Haruna (rtd) opined, that Nigeria's democracy is not expensive but that its operators have made it expensive to suit their vested interests (Gabriel, 2010), the point may not be true as well that federalism has not failed to deliver the expected benefits for its adoption. First, the lack of fiscal federalism which would have empowered constituent units with the right to control and generate their resources has led to a situation of robbing Peter to pay Paul. The Niger Delta, with its rich reservoir of crude oil deposits, remains the main provider of government receipts but the long years of abandonment of the region has turned the place into an ecological crisis zone. Second, over centralization of power at the centre means that a state government official can commit a crime and run to the federal government for cover. Constituent states and units within the Nigerian federation are the junior and inferior partners. Third, monthly allocation to states which does not allow for competitive federalism is another bane of the Nigerian federation breeding non-viable and laidback states within the union. Fourth, partisan politics at the centre has continued to generate bad

blood in the polity. For instance, the party in power may decide to favor state governments where such a party is in dominance as against states controlled by opposition parties. Fifth, through the display of the culture of patrimonialism, component units are forced to relate with the federal government in a father-son relationship which is against the spirit of federalism where equal partners are expected to co-exist. Sixth, the poor climate of security in the country is symptomatic of the absence of a state police which has not been considered apposite for the country by the legislators and drafters of the Nigerian federal constitution. The present constitutional system is warped because it does not draw its sovereignty from the Nigerian people but represents the interest of a powerful cabal of former military rulers, who are bent on foisting their vested interests on the Nigerian state. Lastly, federalism in Nigeria has failed to unite the country, cause rapid and even development across the length and breadth of the country and has failed to checkmate the many recent expressions of ethnic, religious and cultural bigotry that has led to deaths of many innocent and unarmed Nigerians, young and old. Like Dumont & Drooghenbroeck (2007), two Australian scholars, asked, what use is this federalism anyway if it has failed to meet the expectations of the people?

### **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

The conflict theory or social conflict theory derives from the seminal works of Karl Marx (1818-1883). According to this theory, conflict is product of a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical stance toward existing social arrangements, and a political programme of revolution or, at least, reform (Marx, 1971). The materialist view of history starts from the premise that the most important determinant of social life is the work people are doing, especially work that results in provision of the basic necessities of life: food, clothing and shelter. Marx thought that the way the work is socially organized and the technology used in production will have a strong impact on every other aspect of society. He maintained that everything of value in society results from human labor. Thus, Marx saw working men and women as engaged in making society, in creating the conditions for their own existence. The bulk of Marx's writing is concerned with applying the materialist model of society to capitalism, the stage of economic and social development that he saw as dominant in 19th century Europe. For him, the central thrust of capitalist society is private property, the system by which capital (that is, money, machines, tools, factories, and other material objects used in production) is controlled by a small minority of the population. This arrangement leads to two opposed classes, bourgeoisie (the owners of capital) and proletariat (workers), whose only property is their labor time, which they have to sell to the capitalists.

Owners are seen as making profits by paying workers less than their work is worth and, thus, exploiting them. Economic exploitation leads directly to political oppression, as owners make use of their economic power to gain control of the state and turn it into a servant of bourgeois economic interests. Police power, for instance, is used to enforce property rights and guarantee unfair contracts between the capitalist and workers. Oppression also takes more subtle forms: religion serves capitalist interests by pacifying the population; while intellectuals, paid directly or indirectly by capitalists, spend their careers justifying and rationalizing the existing social and economic arrangements. In sum, the economic substructure of society moulds the superstructure, including ideas (e.g., morality, ideologies, art, and literature) and the social institutions that support the class structure of society (e.g., the state, the educational system, the family, and religious institutions). Because the dominant or ruling class (the bourgeoisie) controls the social relations of production, the dominant ideology in a capitalist society is that of the ruling class. Ideology and social institutions, in turn, serve to reproduce and perpetuate the

economic class structure. Thus, Marx viewed the exploitative economic arrangements of capitalism as the real foundation upon which the superstructure of social, political, and intellectual consciousness is built (Wallerstein, 1980).

Since the dominant ideology in a capitalist or free enterprise society is owned by the dominant or ruling class, tinkering with or reforming such an ideology will be met with stiff resistance. Thus, the federal system of government in Nigeria is the ideology of the ruling classes and any attempt to reform or transform it, without the support of citizens or without the people leading the vanguard, will attract the odium and conflict from this class. Like what happened in North Africa, where the people had to revolt and fight the oppressive regimes in place before the dominant classes of those societies conceded to reforms that the people wanted, advocating confederalism within the present federal matrix, may remain a pipe dream as long as the Nigerian people do not see anything wrong with the existing federal arrangement.

### **CONFEDERALISM IN NIGERIA: AN IDEOLOGICAL OPTION**

As has been identified in this research, federalism seems a jaded political concept and has outlived its relevance in Nigeria. Thus, the confederal approach seems an attractive option to meet the yearnings of Nigerians. From Ondo to Oko, from Igbira to Kaura Namoda, Nigerians of different cultural, religious and ethnic descents are asking for reforms to the present democratic federal arrangement. However, resistance to these reforms has only come from the ruling classes and their cronies and representatives who are bent on maintaining the illegitimate status quo because of their embedded political and economic interests. Consequently, the reasons for advocating a confederal approach to political administration in Nigeria include, among others, the unity question which has not been answered. Rather than being addressed, Nigeria seems to be enmeshed deeper and deeper in ethnic wars and conflicts as we see in Jos, a once peaceful town in Northern part of Nigeria. Again, confederalism will curtail the cost of governance because each region will be empowered and forced to generate and manage its resources for its own development. Because sovereignty now lies with the states or regions, elected officials who continue their kleptomaniac tendencies will have to answer to the people of their states or regions and this will be more effective because such criminals will not enjoy any cover from the central authority. Confederalism will also facilitate the quest of many Nigerian ethnic groups for sovereignty. Through the confederal system, sovereignty returns to regions and the centre exists at the expense of the regions and not the other way round. The need to decentralize power is another reason for the confederal alternative in governance in Nigeria. The federal government in Nigeria is becoming too powerful and arrogant and does not consider itself accountable to the people. By adopting a confederal system, decentralization of power will be made possible in Nigeria and there would be transfer of responsibility and commensurate authority to constituent units for better administration of the various sovereign polities within the confederation. With confederation, disgruntled members within the union will not be forced to endure an abusive political relationship in the union but have the choice of embracing secession if it is discovered that that is what their citizens want. While this option looks hypothetical in the least and utopian at best, the truth is, the Nigerian peoples have suffered so much as a united country within an unjust and rigid federal system and the time to offer practical solutions to remedy the present travails and injustices is now.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Implementing the confederal system in Nigeria will require certain procedures for the consideration of the political and economic managers of the state and for the Nigerian peoples to contemplate. First, there is need for a national dialogue. Some have called this a sovereign national conference and there is nothing wrong with this term because sovereignty belongs and will always belong to the people. Convening a forum for national dialogue has become paramount for the survival of Nigeria's democratic project due to the incessant ethnic violence and conflicts, political thuggery, expressions of religious fundamentalism and an embedded culture of tribalism within the Nigerian state. If Nigeria is to celebrate another centennial as a united country and is to convince its citizens that the amalgamation of 1914 was not an accident of history or a marriage of unwilling partners, then convening a national dialogue for representatives of the people will ensure that the constituent units that make up the present federal arrangement agree to how they want to be governed. An important follow-up to the national dialogue is for the government to hold referendums where the people are given the opportunity to decide in favor or against the existing federal configuration. This was what nipped the intractable ethnic violence experienced in Sudan when the people voted massively in favor of secession for the two territories leading to the naissance of Northern and Southern Sudan as separate independent sovereign polities. Another procedure is the revision of the current federal constitution as it is presently constituted. The 1999 federal constitution of Nigeria, a product of the military class, has not been able to capture the ideals of Nigerian statehood representative of the wishes and desires of the people. To construct a confederal system, the constitution has to be revised and transformed into a treaty to facilitate the expected changes supportive of a confederation. Lastly and rather revolutionary, there is need for the dissolution of the Nigerian state to accommodate landmark changes and reforms that a confederal system will usher in. Although this will be resisted by the dominant or ruling class, this style of political administration within an accepted democratic practice, has become an attraction to resolve certain injustices and contradictions that the present federal system promotes and to give back power to the constituent units such that they can determine the destiny of their people and the generation and management of their resources for the development of the respective constituent authorities.

For democracy to work in any given society, equality and freedom must be guaranteed. Nigeria as a multifaceted society with diverse cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds, has not flourished because its style of democracy is devoid of equality and freedom in practice. Besides, the ventilation of democratic practice in the country has been adjudged to be obscenely expensive even more than what obtains in more developed, much richer and more advanced countries of the world. Also noted is the fact that the present democratic practice seems to further enrich the ruling classes and pauperize the masses of the Nigerian population leading to the present unpleasant convolutions experienced in the body polity in the form of ethnic uprising, terrorism and internal aggression. This is made even worse by an insensitive, highly politicized federal system with concentration of much power and resources at the centre. With the inability of the federal system in living up to the expectations of the Nigerian people, the imperative this leaves behind is the need for alternative options of political administration. Thus, in this research, the authors contend that embracing a confederal system seems to be an attractive option for the survival and sustainability of Nigeria's democracy, to curtail the cost of governance and to foster rapid development within regions and states.

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