

Federalism in Nigeria: Accommodating Diversity and Promoting Stability

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Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned Ides Mildred Aziegbe hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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Abstract

This comparative and historical analysis of the United States of America and Nigeria examines the question on why federalism has not succeeded in managing and accommodating diversity in Nigeria. This is because federalism is presented as a panacea in organizing distinct political identities under a state. In Nigeria, there are different and distinct ethnic groups brought together by colonization. Federalism then took its root before independence because it was confirmed by the colonial administrators and subsequent indigenous governments to be the appropriate system of government. However, differences between ethnic and religious groups continue to be sources for crises and tensions since independence until date. This then begs the question, why has federalism not succeeded in managing and accommodating diversity in Nigeria despite several years of practice?

Through a comparative analysis of the USA and Nigeria, this question was adequately analyzed by establishing that necessary conditions have to be in place for federalism to succeed. These conditions were taken from the historical context of the USA. This is because the USA is the most successful and mature federal state in the world. Conditions such as the independence of constituent actors, desirability and partnership, minimal interference from the international community and a weak central government were highlighted and deemed exportable to any part of the world, Nigeria inclusive. This study finds out that the inherent instability highlighted by the absence of these pre-existing conditions are the reasons why federalism has not succeeded in Nigeria.

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Chapter One

General Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

One of the critical problems facing Nigeria today is accommodating diversity in order to foster stability and promote development. Ethnic and religious divisions continue to be sources for crises leading to violence in the past and now. For instance, the aftermath of every election since attaining independence in 1960 from the British imperialists has always been violence between groups who do not agree with outcomes: religious crises between Muslims and Christians, majority and minority ethnic strife, civil agitation and insurgences.

After independence, various differences that were hitherto hidden and subdued by the colonial rulers began to raise their heads in an independent Nigeria. Political elites exploited these differences for their interests and demands. Nigerian leaders and civilians were killed in the coups and counter coups during the era of military dictatorships that had religious and ethnic undertones. This culminated in the outbreak of a three-year bloodied civil war in 1967, when the eastern part seceded to form another country (Biafra). The civil war saw the death of more than 1.5 million people leaving behind a hell of destructions (BBC 2013). Remnants of this war continue to make Nigeria a fragmented and unstable society.

In the year 2000, after the introduction of Sharia in the northern and Muslim part of the country, there were tensions resulting in the death of both Christians and Muslims. Down south, inter-communal violence in the oil rich Niger-delta region has left it largely unsecured due to grievances and agitations on the issue of resource control. This crisis seriously affected the production of oil and gas that are the main stay of the economy. Recently, terrorist attacks

killed scores of people which many have attributed to ethnic and religious grievances (Popoola 2012).

Groups within Nigeria continue to “demand certain powers of self-government which they say were not relinquished by their ‘involuntary’ incorporation” (Kymlicka 2005, 272). “Issues that generate fiercest contestation include control of state resources, resource allocation and citizenship because of fewer points of convergence and consensus amongst various groups who sometimes adopt winner take all strategies” (Osaghae and Suberu 2005, 4). The belief is that the group that takes control of the center has more benefits from revenues and resources. The results are characteristics of a failed state that Nigeria has consistently been categorized (AllAfrica 2014). Currently, Nigeria hangs on a balance of either staying together or falling apart.

Due to the “complex nature and web of ethnic groups, religion, history of political differences and civil war, Nigeria can be said to be one of the most deeply divided States in Africa” (Osaghae and Suberu 2005, 4). Ethnicity is generally regarded as the “most basic and politically salient identity” (Osaghae and Suberu 2005, 8). According to a survey carried out by Lewis and Bratton in 2007, 48.2% of Nigerians choose to categorize themselves based on their ethnic identity compared to 24% who opt for class identities and 21% religious identity (Osaghae and Suberu 2005, 9). Based on recent classifications, there are over 600 ethnic groups with each group distinct and living in a historic homeland with its own demands (Osaghae and Suberu 2005).

There are three main majority groups: Igbo and Yoruba in the south and Hausa/Fulani in the north with the rest termed as minorities. For categorization purposes, analysts demarcate Nigeria into a predominantly Muslim North having minorities as Christians and a predominantly Christian south (Oranika 2004). In the south, ethnicity forms the basis of

division and not religion. In the north, despite the predominance of ethnic minorities, religion is the driving factor: Christians vs. Muslims. This reflects in the political situation in the country as parties are formed along ethnic and religious lines and government activities implemented in the same manner. With a population of over 160 million (2006 estimate) people, cohesion has thus always been a challenge.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One arrangement with which to manage this challenge of diversity is federalism. “Political leaders and theorists have seen federal arrangements as one of the best options available to reconcile ...the reemergence of minority-nationalist movements and the multiplication of identity-based demands” (Karmis and Norman 2005, 3). This is believed to be an “attractive alternative” to secession fueled with interethnic violence. It has been promoted as a solution to end long lasting civil crises in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Sudan crises and in Ethiopia.

Federalism rests upon a principle of distribution of power and authority between the central government and sub-national regions (Wolin 1964). As an “alliance among individuals and collectivities, it aims at the promotion of specific and common interests” (Karmis and Norman 2005, 6). Due to various trends such as globalization and migration, increasing demands for minority protection, and regional trading blocs and its relative success in mature and developed federations such as Switzerland, Australia, the classic model in the United States of America, in addition to recent federations such as Spain and Belgium, this form of government is considered appropriate in heterogeneous and diverse societies. Modern texts on federalism can be traced to the passage from the Articles of Confederation of 1781 and the eventual drafting of the constitution of the United States of America in 1787 (Riker 1964; Tarr 2005; Karmis & Norman 2005)

The case for federalism in Nigeria has been to accommodate and manage diversity while taking economic advantage of its sheer size and population to promote development. This seemed to be the default option given its heterogeneous nature. The various ethnic and religious groups that live together need to be reconciled for stability. Although a relatively young democratic country, it is categorized as one of the long lasting federal systems in Africa even during the military dictatorships (Riker 1964, Elazar 1991). The only exception was a brief period in 1966 when the military decreed a unitary system of government (Okpanachi and Garba 2010). Given the benefits of federalism and several years of practice, it is then surprising that federalism has not succeeded in accommodating diversity in Nigeria despite the long experience.

1.3 Contribution

This issue has been widely studied in the Nigerian and federal literature with a focus on the structure of federalism. Some scholars in Nigeria attributed its failure to colonization where the rulers exploited differences for their administrative convenience and gain. (Osaghae and Suberu 2005, 15; Ekekwe 1986; Afigbo 1991). That is to say, political saliences and large-scale destruction between ethnic groups evolved within the Nigerian state, which included the “divide and rule” strategy and rival administrative practices (Afigbo 1991). Elazar (1991) supported this crucial point because arbitrary boundaries were created in African states and otherwise ancient rivals were forced to live together. He termed states of this kind “procrustean” because they do not reflect any pre-existing homogeneity.

Others have pointed at past military dictatorships in Nigeria during which “federalism was more honored in its breach than in delivery due to an absence of a civil culture in deciding local priorities” (Amuwo and Heralut 1998, 1; Afigbo 1991). They expounded on the problems at the foundation and subsequent structures of federalism in Nigeria. Nevertheless, the inherent instability, highlighted by the lack of enabling existing conditions for federalism

to thrive at the foundation and consolidation of the Nigerian statehood is a critical aspect that needs to be studied. This is because analyzing the origins and background of federalism in Nigeria provides valuable insights on the root cause of its failure. The interpretation of these insights will be useful in arriving at conclusions and finding appropriate solutions to the challenges. This will be the focus of this research.

This is carried out by analyzing the history of the United States of America. That is to say, the conditions necessary for the success of federalism in any state can be found by taking a look at the foundation of the originator of modern federalism and the most successful federal state in the world – the United States of America. As the longest and most mature federal state, its history and foundation mirror the logic and principles of federalism. The historical context and background typify the pre-existing enabling conditions at the time federalism was implemented and consolidated. Conditions such as independence, autonomy, desirability and agreement between constituent units of the federation. They will serve as a basis in determining the success of federalism.

1.4 Research aims, question and Methodology

This research aims to answer the following question:

Why has federalism not succeeded in managing and accommodating diversity in Nigeria despite several years of practice?

This research argues that the inherent instability in Nigeria as a result of the absence of the pre-existing conditions for federalism are reasons for its failure to accommodate and manage diversity. Through its pre-colonial history until it gained independence and after, there has never been suitable platforms and circumstances to enable these conditions take root and give federalism a chance to succeed.

In answering the research question, it is necessary to address the first question on federalism: why federate? (Karmis and Norman 2005) What reasons are there for political communities to federate? By looking at the history of the United States of America, answers are provided to the question of why it decided to federate. With these answers, it becomes obvious that the reasons it decided to federate are in line with the federal principles and logic. This historical context is then used to highlight and form the conditions that were in place for the success of federalism. These conditions will be placed side by side with the historical context of Nigeria to first of all, answer the question on the reason why Nigeria decided to federate. Secondly, verify and judge if these pre-existing conditions were present.

The study is carried out through a comparative approach of the history of Nigeria and the United States of America. The thesis analyses the historical context of Nigeria and the patterns of change in the federal structures. Firstly, it examines the theory and principles of federalism. These principles are then placed within the historical background and context of the United States of America to establish the pre-conditions. This method is particularly appealing because the “founding fathers” of the union clearly gave reasons in the “federalist papers” (Larson 1936).

The history of pre-colonial Nigeria, developments before and after independence will be studied to see if these conditions exist. The analyses of the history of the various pre-colonial ethnic groups is apt to indicate the independence and autonomy of ethnic groups that were brought together under one country. Studying the period of colonialism until the formation of the Nigerian state at independence will provide reasons on the choice of federalism. In addition, taking a critical look at political activities before and after independence will give more insights to federalism in Nigeria. These insights form the frame of reference in examining the existence of these conditions and will be the basis of this research in order to answer the main question.

1.5 Limitation

This research does not proffer absolute solutions to the problems in the federal structure and political conflicts in Nigeria, as they are multi-faceted, neither does it claim that the factors highlighted are the sole reasons for the failure of federalism – all other factors pointed out by scholars above are pertinent. However, in bringing out the challenges in the foundation due to the absence of enabling conditions for federalism to thrive, it gives insights and information to understand the complex situation in Nigeria and by extension, most African states ridden with conflicts.

Further, in prescribing federalism as a solution to states experiencing conflicts from diversity, political elites and scholars can take note that the pre-existing conditions and requirements expatiated in this research exist. While acknowledging that situations are not similar, this research can guide in decision-making. In addition, in underlining the benefits of federalism to heterogeneous societies and highlighting the pre-existing conditions, it contributes by adding its lone voice against the call for the disintegration of Nigeria as the only solution to its ethnic and religious conflicts.

1.6 Thesis Organization

To understand why federalism has not succeeded in managing and accommodating diversity, one has to understand what federalism is as a theory and how it purports to accomplish this goal. This will be the focus of chapter two. It examines the federalism theory and enunciates possible reasons why nations decide to federate. It then analyses the foundation of the federal structure in the USA and highlights the pre-existing conditions that enabled federalism to take root and thrive.

The third chapter answers the research question by exploring the history of ethnic groups before colonization, before and after independence. This exploration chronicles the inherent

instability at its foundation because of the colonial past and the resulting challenges in the military regimes. The fourth chapter further sums up the findings on the research question by an analysis of the Nigerian history and a comparison with the USA. This chapter also launches an advocacy for a platform where constituent groups in the country can willingly negotiate its future and be a part of.

2 Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Theorizing Federalism

This chapter defines what federalism is and the logic behind the theory. It enunciates the benefits of federalism and why states might decide to opt for it instead of other systems of government. Further, it analyzes the history of modern federalism in the United States of America in order to establish the context within which it was adopted, its benefits and the pre-existing conditions needed for this theory to take root and succeed. As established earlier, modern federalism can be traced to the foundation of the USA. This form of government has been as a model to many federal countries and is considered the most successful federal state. The historical analysis will show that the model, the reasons and pre-existing conditions in the USA are in line with the theory and logic. The conditions enunciated are therefore taken as prerequisites for the success of federalism in any modern state.

Defining the term “federalism” has taxed the minds of academics for centuries (Hopkins, 2002; Kymlicka 2005; Elazar 1991). Authors tend to focus on a comparative perspective with most being a compendium of federal states in the world (Karmis and Norman 2005). This research thus gives a general understanding of the theory and establish common principles. The word “federalism” is derived from the Latin word “foedus”, which means an alliance among individuals or collectivities aiming at the “promotion of both specific and common interests” (Karmis and Norman 2005 p. 6).

Historically, federalism was used to unite people in different political units who might share the same culture and language but is now being used to unite people who are of different cultures and beliefs. Montesquieu was one of the first political scholars to underscore the necessity of federalism as a solution to accommodate diverse peoples. He opines that since this form of “government is composed of small republics, it enjoys the internal happiness of

each component” (Montesquieu 2005, 56). For states “characterized by the plurality of identities, it is an institutional panacea” (Karmis and Norman 2005, 13). As a system of government, it provides the most “appropriate mechanism for accommodating the increasingly ‘multicultural’ nature of modern societies” (Kymlicka 2005, 269). States have experimented with the federal arrangement as a way of accommodating the demands of internal diversity (Elazar 1991; Earle 1937).

Federalism is considered a new theory because it differs from the 1950s and 1960s where the unitary form of government and the integration of minority groups into a strong central state were promoted. Elazar (1991) posits that as a new theory of political relationships, it is different from the old theory which he calls the center-periphery model - a system of government where power concentrates at the center. Contrary to the old model, federalism divides power and authority among a network of arenas and regions and he captures it as the “matrix model”: a “matrix of overlapping, interlocking units, powers and relationships” (Elazar 1991, 12).

2.2 Principles of Federalism

As a principle, federalism links individuals and groups in pursuit of a common purpose. It distributes power and authority in order to maintain the integrity and identity of each constituent party. In a federal state, authority and power are limited because the exercise of sovereignty is divided between the federal government and constituent units (Trudeau 2005). It is termed very flexible because “it can accommodate the desires of different groups by forming various forms of self-government” (Kymlicka 2005, 276). Nonetheless, “federal structures do not resolve problems, at best it enables them to be managed” (Forsyth 1989, 5).

Generally, the essential principles are as follows:

- A central government and set of governments of member units in which both kinds of government rule over the same territory and people
- Citizens are dual citizens in both the federation and their constituent states
- Each level of government has the authority to make decisions independently of each other
- The constitution is the supreme law of the land
- There is some guarantee (even though merely a statement in the constitution) of the autonomy of each government in its own sphere (Riker 1964, Elazar 1991; Kymlicka 2005).

In practice, there are varieties to the structures and practices of the model and each nation-state has the option in the arrangement of the power and authority (Elazar 1991).

2.3 Logic of Federalism

In the modern 21st century where the use of force to keep a country together is actively discouraged, the core of the federalism argument is the logic behind it: for the unity of the sub-divisions, the willingness of all parties to compromise must hold. Riker (1964) accents this importance by stating that the bargaining acts of making federal constitutions should display the main feature of the willingness of all parties to make them.

Federalism reflects a “partnership, established and regulated by a covenant” (Elazar 1991, 15). In its very essence, “federalism is a compromise and a pact” where the area of consensus are things that bind the union together (Trudeau 2005, 221). Regional leaders must see that the “benefit for joining a federal system exceeds what they will receive from opting out” (Volden 1994, 92). In addition, if the benefits are not large enough to keep them together, the federal system created tends to fall apart. Regional entities would prefer to remain in an independent separate state.

2.4 Reasons for a federation

Why do nations “federate”? Why do citizens of a nation choose to be in a federation and not secede? These are questions that underline the nature of all federations and unpack the realities on ground. Historically, most federations like the Greek and Roman empires were formed as a result of military threats: smaller independent states were either forcefully assimilated to form a greater united government or voluntarily joined other states to combine military force in order to prevent attacks and wars. Thus, the threat or the use of military force was the underlying unitary factor binding sub-divisions together or used as a bargain (Riker 1964).

Other than the use of military force/threat as a bargaining power, leaders of constituent units could come together due to economic reasons and an access to a wider range of taxes (Riker 1964). This is mostly voluntarily and federalism is seen as one of the feasible means to accomplish this objective. This reason can be attributed to the formation of the European Union through the signing of the Maastricht treaty in 1992 (Volden 1994).

In addition to the above, Riker (1964) observes that sub-divisions that were successful rebels in an erstwhile empire can either seek to stand alone and govern themselves in separate entities or be joined together in some kind of federation in order to take advantage of the large political power and technological advancement left behind. In this sense, federalism is an alternative to an oppressive empire. This reason can be attributed to most post-colonial states that were under one form of rule or the other.

One of the most touted virtues of federalism has been that it gives the best of both worlds (Karmis and Norman 2005): small homogeneous nations are able to keep their identity together and also belong to a larger entity. Montesquieu was apt in capturing this point by stating that “this form of government is a convention by which several small states agree to

become members of a larger one, which they intend to achieve (Montesquieu 2005, 55). Each group can look to different spheres of government for identity and affiliations to assure the preservation of their identities while in harmony with different groups. Minority groups that are concentrated in a region can be granted a sub-unit and an extensive self-government that “guarantees their ability to make decisions in certain areas without being outvoted by the larger society” (Kymlicka 2005, 272). Switzerland and Belgium are examples that fit into this categorization.

2.5 Federalism of the United States of America

The political system of the United States of America is a federal government. It is the world’s oldest, continuing, modern federal democracy. It is made up of fifty (50) states, a federal district that is the capital, eleven (11) island territories and some six hundred (600) federally recognized Native American tribes that have the status of “domestic dependent nations” (Tarr 2005, Elazar 1991). From the analysis of the context in its origin and foundation, one can establish the conditions that were in place that have enabled the continued success of federalism.

2.6 Pre-existing conditions for a Successful Federal State

2.6.1 Independence and autonomy of Constituent Units

The national constitution of the United States of America is termed federal at foundation because the constituent units were seen as independent and sovereign. The union formed a national (federal) government to which every citizen belong (not just the state or political bodies) and quasi-independent regional (state) governments (Karmis and Norman 2005). The states wanted to continue safeguarding their power in a larger and stronger union. To buttress their independence and sovereignty, Rhode Island, a state in the USA today did not send any delegate to the convention of 1787 because it did not see the benefit of being part of the union.

It was not compelled to join, neither was it subjected to the use of military force by other states or the international community.

The first point worthy of note is that delegates to the convention of 1787 were representatives. Secondly, they were not compelled to remain in the union since there was none in the first place. This independence enabled the delegates to negotiate based on their freewill inclusive of benefits they stood to gain from joining the union. Further, they had the freedom to opt out and stand alone if outcomes from the convention were to be unfavorable.

2.6.2 Desirability and Agreement

In line with the principle and logic of federalism, the union was based on an agreement between the constituent states. The outcome was the 1788 constitution that bound and consolidated the partnership and agreement made by the fifty-five state delegates. Before the new constitution, the Articles of Confederation of 1781 that served as the basis for unity had many defects and was considered not worthy enough to carry the burden the populace was facing at that time. The first was that they faced severe economic depression and disorganization after a revolutionary war with the British Empire. The states thus needed a new constitution to project a new government. Secondly, consistent with the reasons for choosing federalism, the states desired a strong ‘united national army’ that was able to repeal foreign military invasion, which as separate entities was difficult to achieve (Larson 1936).

Every state represented thus recognized the need for a total change and a strong union. This was not to be achieved through a gradual process of change in the Articles of Confederation of 1781 but a radical new structure. Alexander Hamilton, one of the founders of the convention and main opponents against the Articles of Confederation rightly captured this point in the federalist papers. He stated, that “The evils we experience do not proceed from minute or partial imperfections but from fundamental errors in the structure of the building,

which cannot be amended otherwise than by an alteration in the first principles and main pillars of the building” (Earle 1937, viii).

2.6.3 Minimal Intervention from the International Community

At the foundation and in the 18th century, interference from the international community was minimal. The interconnectedness of the world today can said to be absent and inexistent. Nation-states could adopt and construct any system of government without intervention from other countries. Potential dissenting voices in the USA who would have raised objections were the outcomes not favorable to them had been quieted through repression and violence (the Indian and Black community). Further, the new constitution was insulated from the trappings and inconveniences of democracy, which is promoted by the international community today. This thought is echoed in “the federalist papers” that “although the proposed government was to be representative in character, it was not to be democratic... democracy in 1787 was regarded as a radical creed even where it was entertained at all” (Earle 1937, 16). This minimal absence underscores the independence of political actors.

2.6.4 Creation of a Weak Central Authority

The powers of the federal government were defined, delegated and limited while that of the states residual and indefinite in spheres not allocated to the federal government (Earle 1937). This factor emphasizes the relative independence and importance of states within the federation. However, the federal government is entrusted to limit the powers of the states and act as a check and balance (Tarr 2005).

The agreed constitution vests the president with the power to veto legislation, appoint executive officials to implement his responsibilities. The central government has the power to raise taxes in their spheres in order to finance operations and responsibilities. However, this does not diminish the powers of the states to raise taxes nonetheless. Each level of

government cannot raise taxes in the instrument of the other or interfere in the financial activities of the other. There was no revenue sharing or equalization formula and revenues raised are at the discretion of the respective levels of governments. States cannot go into war but can defend themselves with their own organized police and militias. According to Tarr (2005), the states created their own militias to prevent federal tyranny and protect state liberty.

2.7 Current Status and Structure of federalism in the USA

As years moved by, the USA has become more centralized due to the Supreme Court judgments, an increase in the role of civil rights organization, the need of federal funds by states and new policy regulations (Volden 1994; Tarr 2005). The “increase in the federal power tallies with rules attached to grants to states and a federalization of some state criminal laws” due to recent and new developments (Tarr 2005, 391). It is important to note that the federal constitution made no mention of the local governments and these institutions are strictly under the responsibility and supervision of state government (Smith 1995; Tarr 2005).

The analysis above has shown the conditions in place for the choice and consolidation of federalism in the USA. The historical context is peculiar to the USA, however one can see the exportability of these conditions. The ultimate responsibility rests on nation-states to create enabling platforms for them to thrive. The constituent units must be independent and autonomous to be able to govern themselves in the midst of a larger entity and prevent tyranny of the majority. The USA achieved this by assigning a symmetry to all states: every state had the same level of authority and equal standing. This was one crucial factor in negotiating and building a consensus in line with the principle of federalism.

Desirability and agreement are the main glue that binds a federal state together in a democratic world. It can never be overemphasized. When the desirability is absent due to

non-agreement or consensus on demands, constituent units might perceive a “subordinate status and give vent to their frustrations through a wide variety of forceful means including violence” (Glass 1977, 31). To prevent an escalation of such crises, all groups involved must be able to “reduce their national consensus to a greatest common denominator” (Trudeau 2005, 221). Though it is difficult to rule out international interference today, this should be minimal in order not to undermine the independence and autonomy of sub-divisions.

Nigeria is characterized by such violent conflicts due to the lack of these enabling conditions for federalism. This has led to the escalation of violent conflicts creating instability in the process. The subsequent chapter analyses the origins of federalism in Nigeria and highlights the distinct nature of constituent groups. Despite of their distinct nature, they were not independent neither was the union built on partnership, agreement or desirability. Instead, the use of force before and after independence remain the glue that binds the country.

3 Chapter Three

History of Federalism in Nigeria

3.1 Analysis of federal pre-existing conditions in Nigeria

This section puts a searchlight on the chronology of events in Nigeria from its pre-colonial history to the current structure of federalism. It highlights the social and cultural subdivisions before and during colonization in order to establish their distinctiveness and diversity. It examines the different modes of administration employed by the colonizers during this period to further underscore the peculiarities of each group and their incompatibility in a strong central state. Political activities before and after independence including the civil war and subsequent military dictatorships show the lack of enabling federal conditions to let federalism succeed in managing and accommodating diversity. As earlier stated, an analysis of historical events and origins is necessary to establish this argument and draw conclusions.

3.2 Pre-colonial Nigeria: Distinct independent identities

Nigeria is a large country by any standards with 923, 768 sq. kilometers and a population of 177,155,754 (2012 estimate). It is the most populous nation in Africa with over 250 ethnic groups (Oranika 2004, 116; Otite 1976, 6). Although linguistic analysts have not developed a generally accepted classification scheme for African languages, Nigeria remains one of the principal crossroads of Africa (Coleman 1960). The most dominant include the Hausa/Fulani in the north representing over 28% of the total population, Yoruba in the west and Igbo in the east representing 21% and 19% respectively. The northern population is predominantly Muslim while the eastern and western population are mostly Christians. The ratio of Christians to Muslims is roughly 45:50 with others classified as animists or indigenous believers (Oranika 2004). Other ethnic groups of relative importance are Ijaw; mostly Christians, 9%, Kanuri, mostly Muslims 4%, Ibibio; mostly Christians 3.6% and Tiv, 2.7%.

In the general scheme of things, the northerners are classified as mostly Muslims and the easterners/westerners are Christians and grouped as southerners. (Coleman 1960).

Before colonization, the Igbo were largely an egalitarian society. Oranika (2004) classified them as stateless because of the general absence of a centralizing authority. The largest political unit was normally the village group or clan with the head as the highest central figure. The Yoruba in the west had already established a centralizing authority and traced their ancestry to the Ife Kingdom. The belief in a common origin is the basis of this nationalistic consciousness. Another prominent group is the Benin Kingdom in the mid-west region. Coleman (1960) documents that when the Portuguese visited Benin, they met a very powerful kingdom. With colonialism, its power considerably declined because the imperialists granted autonomy to smaller groups under the kingdom. In the north, there were established states already developed by the middle of the eleventh century (Oranika 2004, 18). By early the 1800, Islam was already firmly established and was the binding and uniting force amongst various ethnic groups. Until the arrival of Europeans on the continent, the northern part was economically oriented towards North Africa.

This background is necessary to show the diversity, distinctness, and autonomy of each of the dominant groups that make up Nigeria. These differences are still very much present and have become salient. To emphasize further the distinctness of ethnic groups, different regions in Nigeria used to go by separate names under the colonial administration. For example, the British used the Colony of Lagos, the Niger Coast protectorate and territories of the Basin of the Niger and its affluent to describe separate administrative regions in the west. In the north, terms such as, Soudan or Nigrita, Houssa states, Niger Soudan were common. The name “Nigeria” was mainly for the northern region and did not include the south. Finally, in 1914, the British decided to amalgamate the northern and southern regions to form one nation for

ease of administration and for economic reasons (Osaghae and Suberu 2005, 15; Ekekwe 1986; Afigbo 1991).

The colonial rulers never took notice of the fundamental differences in languages, cultures, belief system or mode of administration. Ethnic groups were not consulted before the union. Although this unwilling partnership suited the imperialists, it was soon to become an unwholesome union for the indigenous people. This is first of all, a clear violation of the logic of federalism which espouses the willingness of all parties to agree to form a partnership or federation. A federal structure built on this wrong foundation was bound to be chaotic and doomed to fail in the long run. A subsequent analysis of events proves that were they consulted at the foundation of the union, it was very likely that some ethnic groups would have declined. This will be the subject of analysis in the next section.

3.3 Foundation of the Nigerian State

“Nigeria is a mere geographic expression” so says an influential politician and another termed it “the mistake of 1914” (Tamuno 1998; Akinyele 2005). “The artificiality of Nigeria’s boundaries and the sharp cultural differences among its peoples point up to the fact that Nigeria is a British creation and the concept of a Nigerian nation is the result of the British presence” (Coleman 1960, 14). The First premier of Nigeria also opined that “Nigeria has existed as one Country only on paper, and that it was still far from being considered as one country, much less think of it as united” (Sagay 2001, 3)

The mission of the British in Nigeria was never to build a nation but to trade. After trade grew rapidly between the indigenous peoples and the Europeans, the increased political interests of the home government and the Berlin conference of 1885 empowered them to “administer, make treaties, levy customs and trade in all territories of the Basin of the Niger

and its affluent” (Coleman 1960, 41). In the years to come, they raised an army, appointed consuls and acquired more territories in the hinter region by treaties and massacres.

After the amalgamation of all regions in 1914, the British further divided the south into the eastern and western region making it three (North, South and East). The only uniting factor was the alien colonial administrator. For ease of administration, the colonialists used the already established hierarchical structure and local institutions of the northern region. This worked very well in the north but the easterners fiercely resisted the system they were not used to. In the west, the system was gradually accepted due to the presence of Kings.

Whereas the impact of the English legal system, of missionary enterprise, and of robust commercialism drew the Crown Colony and the southern protectorate traditions closer together and virtually hammered them, in time, into one loose tradition, no comparable narrowing of differences took place between these Southern traditions and the Northern tradition. On the contrary, the gap that existed between them grew wider as time went on (Afigbo 1991, 20)

This unevenness in administration and structure and the piece-meal approach used by the colonialists to bring groups together added to the current problem of instability.

During the Second World War, due to a shortage of British administrators (Coleman 1960) coupled with an increased agitation for self-government and independence (Tamuno 1998), power was devolved to indigenous officials and regions resulting in the drafting of constitutions. Thus began the official federalization of Nigeria, although some scholars argue that Federalism in Nigeria started with the amalgamation of the two regions (Amuwo and Herault 1998; Ayau and Dakar 2005). The constitutions were from deliberations between the British and indigenous people. Recommendations from the deliberations confirmed that “that over-centralization would be a grave error in this vast country with its widely differing conditions and needs” (Sagay 2001).

The above chronology of events accentuates the fact that Nigeria covers a geographical space with distinct independent peoples brought together through force and violence. During the period, regions were governed with separate policies adapted to the cultural systems on ground. Due to the presence of a centralizing and forceful alien authority, it was relatively easier to bring different peoples together (Opello and Rosow 2004). With a considered outsider, the pre-occupation of political elites was to expel the common enemy. It was relatively easier to temporarily put aside any difference to accomplish the common goal of self-government. There was little thought on how to manage the country that would be left behind.

Aligning with federalism theory, early political agitators were convinced that for the distinct cultural entities to continue as a country, a federal system of government is appropriate. Although this choice was appropriate, it should be noted that agreements on the constitutions were not between the indigenous groups themselves, but between them and the colonialists. This is another violation of the pre-existing condition where the federal agreement is between independent actors themselves. Further, the colonialists were international actors which is a third violation of the federal pre-existing conditions. In all deliberations, the default option was to continue the union even though it was built on a faulty foundation.

Although the regions were distinct, they were neither independent nor autonomous. They had no power and could not negotiate anything based on freewill, neither could they decide to opt out. This involuntary and forceful cohesion violates the federalism pre-existing condition of independence. Political elites thus agitated for the little they could get from the center not what power to give up as was the case in the USA. At this stage of Nigerian history, the only reason political actors saw as the benefit of federalism was becoming more independent (self-government), not economic reasons (access to a larger tax base) or military force (because the imperialists were still in control of that). Although the choice of federalism was appropriate,

the reasons and benefits do not conform, the principles not adhered to, the logic missing and the conditions totally absent. Federalism had taken its roots in the country, whether this led to the unity and division of the country will be the root of analysis in the next section. Obviously, a house built on a faulty foundation cannot stand.

3.4 Independence and consolidation of the Nigerian statehood

On October 1, 1960, Nigeria gained independence from its colonial rulers. However, it was not until 1963 that it became a Republic with the replacement of the British Queen as ceremonial head of state. The independence constitution was federal in structure and form being that it shared powers between the center and the federating units. Chapter 1 of the constitution aptly captured this by stating that “the federation of Nigeria shall consist of Regions and a Federal capital territory” (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1960, 1). The only basis of contact between the various ethnic groups was the constitution. It should however not be forgotten that this was still an agreement between Nigerians and the imperialists and not between the constituent groups. The British relinquished power and Nigerians took over the faulty union. The only difference between the two governments was that one was a foreigner and forceful invader while the other was indigenous. The structure and form remained the same.

As the same with the USA, the three Regions in the federal structure had their own Constitutions, in addition to that of the Federal Government. However, it did not give enough room for the creation of new regions to accommodate other ethnic groups because when in 1964 the federal government created the mid-western region, it encountered much difficulty. This is because the faulty structure clumped 250 ethnic groups under just three regions. Obviously, without the forceful foreign invader and the absence of federal conditions necessary for federalism to succeed, the differences were bound to manifest. This absence created instability that led to the outbreak of a civil war.

3.5 The Nigerian civil war and secession: manifestation of instability

Nigeria was “a sleeping volcano” waiting to erupt due to its plurality in geography and nation (Afigbo 1991, 15). Soon after independence, although the country was doing well economically, the cracks surfaced mainly due to the lack of agreement between pluralized people living under one country. The structure left behind did not mirror the reality on ground. The burden of this instability was left for the indigenous leaders who took over. There was fractionalization and agitation by minority groups for greater autonomy that were not in the constitution because of the generalization into regions. As earlier established, there was never any platform for constituent groups to determine their right and status in the union. In 1966, the first military coup took place suspending the 1963 constitution and replacing it with military edicts and decrees. This coup laid the foundation for a civil war.

“The Nigerian Civil War was between the Regions and over the right of one of them to secede from the Federation” (Lloyd 1970, 1). It was because of the struggle for leadership, power and resources between large (major) ethnic groups. Amongst the minorities groups, there was no coherence as they were numerous. Political parties formed were along ethno-religious lines and used propaganda to galvanize votes for their interests (Falola 1999; Panter-Brick 1970). This also manifested in the newly formed Nigerian Civil Service in favoritism and nepotism among senior staff members with some ethnic groups feeling marginalized.

Lloyd (1970) confirmed that the fundamental differences in cultural and educational systems was a critical factor. In the south, the major criterion for elite attainment is education due to a relative lack of entrenched aristocracy. In the North, the aristocratic system was well established and only royal families could attain political or career status within the civil service. “When southerners and Northerners are competing for elite-type offices, the lack of

agreement over the legitimate criteria for appointment and promotion leads to strain” (Lloyd 1970, 8).

Tensions reached a peak in 1966 resulting in a total breakdown of law and order. This became an excuse for a military coup orchestrated by officials from the eastern region. The constitution was suspended and the military institution took control of the federal government. This eastern region-led coup infuriated officers from other regions. They subsequently staged a counter coup as a revenge on the easterners. In the process, many people from the eastern region were murdered. Colonel Odumegwu-Ojukwu, the then Governor of the eastern region, not seeing any reason of being in a country where members of his ethnic group were killed with impunity, seceded and proclaimed the Independent Republic of Biafra in 1967. This resulted in a three-year bloodied civil war.

On the international scene, “The Biafra side was recognized by Zambia, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Tanzania and Haiti” (Oranika 2004, 24). Other nations such as Israel, France, Portugal, Zimbabwe and South Africa that did not formally recognize it gave tactical support (Falola 1999). The United Kingdom supplied war ammunitions to the Nigerian side and more supplies to the same side came from the Soviet Union who were seeking to gain a stronghold in Africa (Falola 1999). The United States of America was neutral but recognized the Nigerian government. The significance of international actions will be the focus of the next chapter in order to underscore how international actors affect the stability of a diversified and multi-cultural country. With this lopsided battle, the Nigerian side gained victory and the war ended on January 12, 1970 resulting in the death of over one million two hundred people mostly from the east (BBC Africa 2013). Once again, Nigeria was united through the use of military force and international intervention and not based on pact and agreement.

In the light of the above, it is glaring that ethnic colorations dominated all forms of political relationships in the quest for the control of the center. The constitution between the imperialists and the elites did not produce a federal structure that could lead to a peaceful co-existence. Unfortunately, indigenous leaders who took over power did not create any significant platform to organize themselves in order to produce a constitution based on desirability, willingness, compromise and agreement. The international community further contributed to this instability by fueling one side of the union to the detriment of the others.

The analysis of Nigeria's history until this stage has shown the absence of the logic and conditions for federalism as earlier outlined: constituent entities were not independent, their membership of the union was based on force before and after independence, the central government was stronger than the regions and the intervention from the international community was huge. Unfortunately, the war began the use of violence to solve political and ethnic crisis in Nigeria. Although the war ended, the problems created lingered.

3.6 Federalism under the Military dictatorship (1966 – 1999): Instability continued

The 1979 constitution stated that, "Nigeria shall be a Federation consisting of states and Federal Capital Territory: Section 2 (2)" (Tamuno 1998, 25). It recognized local governments as the third tier of government. However, federalism in Nigeria under the military dictatorships was a "military federalism: federalism with a Nigerian accent" (Tamuno 1998, 16). The same structure inherited remained unchanged and became more centralized due to the absence of a civil government. The Military ruled by decrees and any law court could not challenge the decision (Falola 1999). There was total disregard for the constitution and over centralization of government activities.

To solve the multi-ethnic challenge and the perceived defect in the federal structure, the military governments abolished regions and created more states: twelve states in 1967, 19

states (3 Feb 1976), 21 states (23 Sep 1987), 30 states (27 Aug 1991), and 36 states (1 Oct 1996) (Ayau and Dakar 2005). One of the justifications for the creation of more states was that of “a balanced federation” (Afigbo 1991, 26). This is a fallacy because the inherent instability highlighted by the lack of enabling pre-existing conditions remained. In the conditions, the central government was weak, but during the military era, power centered on the head of state who possessed law-making powers. In terms of fiscal relationship and revenue allocation, the share of the center was considerably larger. The state and local government had a very small domain from where to raise revenues and this led to over reliance on the center for financial resources and policies.

For thirty-six years of dictatorship, “military federalism” was neither democratic nor consultative. The creation of more states did not solve the challenge of peaceful co-existence but fragmented the society. Instead, it intensified calls from other ethnic groups to have their own state. If each ethnic group in Nigeria was to have a state, there would be more than 250 of them in the federal structure. This scenario will lead to disorderliness and further fragmentation of the country.

With the characteristics of dictatorships, there was large scale corruption and no development. Political instability, incessant strikes in educational institutions, human right violations, clamp down on dissidents were the order of the day. “The military was discredited both as an institution and as an agency of governance” (Falola 1999, 22). It eventually succumbed to pressure in 1999 by handing over to a democratic government. Contrary to the federal condition of desirability and partnership, there was no room for discussing grievances or negotiating the unity of the country. A comparative historical analysis of Nigeria and the USA in the next chapter will show the lack of federal pre-existing conditions in Nigeria in order to arrive at the conclusion that its absence is the reason why federalism has not accommodated and managed diversity in Nigeria.

4 Chapter Four

Failure of Federalism in Nigeria: Comparative Analysis

The history of Nigeria clearly shows that the enabling conditions for federalism to succeed in managing and accommodating diversity have been absent. While accusing fingers can be pointed at the imperialists for the foundation of the Nigerian state, this argument is no longer tenable after almost fifty-three years of independence because of the actions of Nigeria leaders. This chapter examines how the current federal structure fits into the argument of this thesis. It carries out a detailed comparative analysis of the federal conditions at the foundation of the USA and Nigeria. One underlying factor expounded is the interference of the international community. The world order of hard-border nations continue to inadvertently destabilize multinational and diverse countries by insisting on the central government being the only channel of communication and representation in international relations. This comparative analysis concludes the argument of this thesis and advocates for the current government to create federal conditions by setting up a conference or convention where all interests will be represented and reconciled.

4.1 Current Structure of Nigerian Federalism: 1999 Constitution

The current constitution of Nigeria is the 1999 constitution and is the fourth since independence. The military drafted it in a transition rule in 1998 while preparing for a hand over to a democratic government in 1999. Despite protests, there were no consultation with people or groups and the committee set up to draft the constitution did so without inputs from the various ethnic groups (Ayau and Dakar 2005). The constitution begins with the preamble “We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria” and section 2 (2), states that Nigeria shall be “a federation consisting of 36 states and a federal capital territory” dividing power between the central government and the sub-national units (Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). This preamble purports to show that its drafters consulted the

people of Nigeria whereas it was a document wholly drafted by a military regime that failed to consult the people – a situation that makes the claim contradictory and at best, laughable.

4.1.1 Weak States and a Strong Center

In contrast to the USA, there are no state constitutions in Nigeria. The federal government is still very strong because it retains the largest share of revenue and distributes to the state government based on a revenue formula. In terms of state independence, the states depend hugely on the center. The exclusive list of the constitution contains 68 items on which the federal government make laws and raises revenues while there are only 12 items on the concurrent list tilting power in favor of the former. States do not have the authority to raise their own militias and have to rely on the federal police. They thus have no real authority over the security, neither can they prevent the tyranny of the federal government. This situation is not in line with the pre-existing condition established in the USA where a weak center was created to prevent the tyranny of the federal government or of the majority.

In the constitution, there is no room for secession as it exposes a firm resolve of “Nigerians to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation” (Ayau and Dakar 2005, 254). This is to thwart any threat of secession from any quarter, which is reminiscent of the civil war. Ayau and Dakar (2005) wrote extensively on the defects of the structure and form of the 1999 constitution, which is not the focus of this thesis. In alignment with the argument of this research, firstly, the constitution was drafted by a military government which is an offshoot from a government that inherited an unstable structure from the imperialists. Secondly, by not creating any forum for ethnic groups to decide and determine their future, it creates a situation of an unwilling partnership, which does not fit into the federalist argument. Thirdly, it puts a question mark on the nation-state concept and the United Nations declaration of self-determination.

4.2 Un-intended Consequences of the “Nation-state” in the International Community

The modern state, which has its origin with the signing of the peace of Westphalia, entrenched the principle of state sovereignty. The state is understood as covering specific geographic locations and borders (Opello and Rosow 2004). It is the only legitimate framework for political life and interaction with international bodies and combines peoples of different beliefs, ethnicity, and race under one entity within a defined border. The success and legitimacy of a new state is guaranteed by the acceptance of the international community. Where the international community does not recognize this right, it becomes impossible for new modern states to consolidate their legitimacy and interact with other states.

The United Nations is the highest body of interaction between independent nation-states. Its declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples states that “All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (2) (United Nations Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries, 1960). The acceptance of these principles by sub-nationalities and its exploitation by their nationalist leaders within an arbitrarily created border contribute to instability.

As earlier established in this research, Nigeria is the creation of an imaginary and fortuitous boundary drawn at the Berlin conference. At the ascension to independence where Biafra decided to be independent and autonomous, most international states denied this status by non-recognition. More influential countries such as the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union supplied weapons to one side of the war. In addition, as an ex-colony, the United Kingdom had the interests of maintaining the unity of its former colony by heavily aligning with the Nigerian side (Blank 2005; US Department of States Archive 2009).

The implication of this in Nigeria is that disgruntled regions are living together in one nation-state through the use of force. The failure of Biafra furthered the division and instability as some actors still see the division of Nigeria as the only way to solve the challenge of diversity. Until date, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) remains an organization in Nigeria with the aim of secession. At the initial stage of the movement, they organized rallies and hoisted the Biafra flags at strategic places in the eastern region. Nationalistic movements continue to grow in their demand for more power and authority. Once again, this situation violates the logic behind federalism where the willingness of constituent units is uncompromised. Further, the interference of the international community greatly subdued the autonomy of the constituent units which was at best absent in the USA.

4.3 Comparative Analysis of the USA and Nigeria

The historical analysis of Nigeria has established that federalism was chosen to accommodate and manage diversity. Nevertheless, the analysis glaringly shows the absence of the required conditions necessary for its the success. Constitutions drafted both before and after independence confirms the “inconclusive nature of the federal character” (Egwaikhide et. al 2004; 23) First, the unity of constituent ethnic groups was against their volition and was through the use of force. The very concept of Nigeria as a state is questionable and the inherent instability is evident. Its federal structure is not based on the willingness of constituent groups but through the use of force. The amalgamation and consolidation of statehood, the absence of dialogue and compromise contrast greatly with the federal foundations of the United States of America, where the independent states willingly sent delegates to the convention and those who saw no benefit of being in the union opted out based on their freewill. Their independence set the tone for dialogue, negotiation and compromise.

Secondly, since agreement, pact and compromise are unnegotiable conditions for federalism, their absence leads to failure. After independence and consolidation of the nation-state where the eastern region placed the benefits of opting out greater than being together in the union, the interference of the international community changed the dynamics. Opello and Rosow (2004, 25) refer to this interference as the “challenge by the forces of globalization”. Federalism in Nigeria is made up of unwilling partners bound together with force and the international community. Further, the civil war and subsequent military rule saw the strengthening of the central government to the regions or states. These two factors present in Nigeria are contradictory to that of the USA where the central government was weak and the interference from the international community minimal.

Thirdly, in most long lasting federal structures, the political institutions gradually reflect the ongoing societal changes. The federal nature was never concluded in a single negotiation but progressively as evident in subsequent amendments in the history of the USA constitution and the “federalization” projects of Canada, Australia and most recently Belgium and Spain. Government institutions become fluid rather than cast in stone or a prototype that institutions strive to emulate. This argument explains why the concept of government is not static (Forsyth 1989). In these cases, the constitution did not eliminate existing divisions but reflected them. The USA constitution did not emerge from unitary institutions, instead, the constitution and institutions had to change in order to reflect the existing realities.

In Nigeria, this is contrary because looking at the history, the structures did not reflect the multi-ethnic nature of the country but constitutions were written to eliminate differences. Societal forces that largely play a role in shaping institutions and transforming systems have manifested into conflicts, in most cases violently. Ignoring these fundamental socio-cultural differences and failing “to minimize the areas of tension” are threats to the unity of the nation-state (Oтите 1976, 15). At every stage of the Nigerian history, every condition for

federalism has been violated by the colonialists and subsequently, by the indigenous government. There was never any room or enabling factors for dialogue post-independence. Progressively through its fifty-three years, there was never a turning point to negotiate a constitution that represented the aspirations of constituent units and reflected a federal structure. It becomes almost impossible for federalism as it is conceived to manage and accommodate diversity in Nigeria.

4.4 Exporting and creating enabling Federal Conditions in Nigeria: Advocacy for a change

Although the foundation of the Nigerian state is questionable, the solution rests with finding a way forward to resolve the current challenges. The founding fathers of the American union agreed that minute changes in the 1780 Articles of Confederation was not enough but an “alteration in the first principles and main pillars” (Larson 1936, 55), which then produced a new constitution. The current structure of Nigeria cannot correct the fundamental errors but a radical transformation. There is a need to negotiate new relations among the various constituent groups who should have a platform devoid of the trappings of the international community.

This platform should aim at seeking practical solutions to the fundamental defects in the structure of Nigerian federalism and address identities that “can cause a lapse or relapse into violent conflicts” (Odendaal 2011, 1). This will then “identify and redress existing forms of perceived injustice” (Graham 1998, 1). This advocacy is a “call for continuing and widened dialogue in Nigeria to arrive at a new compact for social justice that is broad-based, consensus oriented and that people can identify with and claim as their own” (Ramphal 2011, 1). The outcomes will be a result of social partnership and agreement, where the willingness of every actor is involved. These are the bedrocks and conditions necessary for federalism to accommodate and manage diversity.

Conclusion

A federal system of government is used to accommodate and unite people who are of different political and cultural beliefs. As a principle, federalism divides power between the center and constituents units. These units can keep their identities and belong to a larger entity. Federalism is thus appropriate for a state as Nigeria that has plural identities along ethno-religious lines. This study established that Nigeria decided to federate because of its heterogeneous nature. Nevertheless, it found out that federalism has not been successful in managing and accommodating diversity because of its inherent instability due to the absence of federal conditions such as: independence of state actors, desirability and agreement, minimal interference from the international community and a weak central government. These pre-existing conditions were formulated by analyzing the historical context of USA being proponent of modern federalism and the most mature and successful federal state in the world. The glue that binds these conditions together is the logic of federalism, which espouses the willingness of constituent actors.

In analyzing the Nigeria's historical context and the patterns of change in federal structures, this research highlighted the lack of these conditions at every stage. Firstly, in its pre-colonial period, various ethnic groups had distinct identities that were incompatible. The Berlin conference of 1885 and the British interest in trade created arbitrary boundaries that fused these groups into one country during the period of colonization. Colonial administrators recognized this distinctiveness by implementing different policies to maintain social-cultural identities. However, due to the lack of consultation by the colonialists and non-agreements of the constituent ethnic groups, the foundation of the Nigerian violated the logic and all conditions for federalism giving room for instability.

Gradually through independence, the structural defects in the foundation were inherited by indigenous leaders who did not create the enabling conditions for federalism to succeed. The

resultant effects were a devastating civil war and military dictatorships that completely eliminated any condition for federalism. Although a federal system was in place, the logic and conditions continued to be absent. This continued absence has led to violent conflicts and challenges to the Nigerian state.

An analysis of the historical context of the USA demonstrates that the conditions highlighted are exportable to any part of the world, with Nigeria inclusive. This research advocates and recommends that the Nigerian government create a platform for these federal conditions to thrive. The platform will enable ethnic groups to fully negotiate their status in the federal structure as was done in the USA. The outcomes of negotiations will be reflected in the constitution of Nigeria creating a country in which everyone and every group feel a part of.

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