



The making of Nigeria as a sovereign state - A theoretical prognosis and analysis of a balanced federalism

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Abstract

This paper presents a critical analysis of federal balance in Nigeria from the introduction of the federal principle through the 1954 constitution to the present day. The paper shows that federal balance is distorted in Nigeria federalism due to the interplay of eco-centric, ethno-centric and theo-centric forces inherent in the Nigerian body polity. The paper depended on secondary data sourced from text and related archival materials. The analysis in the paper reveals that there exists a socio-structural imbalance in Nigerian federalism marked by the preponderance of the federal government over sub-national units and of some ethnic groups and regions over others. This imbalance or disequilibrium threatens the very essence of the Nigerian state and propels Nigeria towards potential disintegration. The paper recommends the invocation of a Natu-centric force as put forward in the Bassonian theory through the introduction of a domiciliary policy as the only way to attaining unity, integration and development in Nigeria which will result in a federal balance. The invocations of such a Natu-centric force through the introduction and implementation of a domiciliary policy as practiced in the United States of America is expected to ameliorate and eradicate other forces acting against the attainment of true federalism occasioned by a federal balance, which is one of the fundamental determinants of the future of Nigeria as a sovereign state.

Keywords: eco-centric forces, ethnocentric forces, federalism, federal balance, natu-centric principle, theo-centric forces

Introduction

The history of Nigerian federalism can be traced to the 1954 Lyttleton Constitution which first provided for the division of powers between two levels of governments, namely: Federal and Regional governments. In the said division of power and function, each level was autonomous in its own area of jurisdiction. The promulgation of 1954 constitution marks the actual take-off of formal inter-governmental relations and interaction between levels of governments within Nigerian polity. The federal principle introduced since 1954 in Nigeria survived to present day despite contemporary political development in terms of crises and restructuring.

One of the major intricacies of federal system of government is the issue of “balance” between and among competing forces and level of governments. This issue has become a major subject of debate among scholars in the field of political science and political sociology. The issue of balance in Nigerian federalism is an important factor that will determine the continuity or discontinuity of the Nigerian project. Every part and ethnic group in Nigeria desire preponderance over another. This type of desire manifests in all facets of life in Nigeria, from political structuring, revenue allocation, appointment and representative positions, to allocation of social infrastructure and amenities. The impact of it is federal imbalance resulting in various entities desiring equity in allocation and representation.

The word 'federal' is derived from the Latin word '*feodus*' meaning covenant. The word was borrowed from theology by German and French social contract theorists. Federal denotes basis of coordination rather than subordinative relationship and emphasizes partnership among parties with equal claims to legitimacy who seek to cultivate their diverse integrities within a common social order. This condition is achieved by extensive intergovernmental functioning and collaboration within the framework of separate governmental structures. Federalism as in Nigeria is characterized by written constitution and non-centralisation of all functions of government.

This paper examines federal balance in Nigeria from 1954 to 2013. The basic problem necessitating this investigation can be summarized in terms of the following questions: what are the factors influencing federal balance in Nigeria? What is the nature of power distribution? Which level of government and section of the country is power tilting to? And, how can balance be ensured in Nigerian federation? The main task of this study was to provide answers to these pertinent questions. The fundamental task of this paper is to attempt to provide answers to these and other issues.

This paper starts with introduction which entails background and statement of problem and proceeds to conceptual clarification, theoretical framework, overview of forces of federal balance in Nigeria, constitutional power sharing to issues in federal-state relations such as; military rule and revenue allocation. The paper provides strategy for maintaining federal balance and prospect of Nigerian federalism, before conclusion. The aim of the paper is to prove the nature of federal balance in Nigeria, whether there exists a relative equilibrium or disequilibrium.

Nigeria presently consists of 36 states and a federal capital territory which in almost everything enjoys the status of a state. Also among the federating units are 789 local government councils being government at grassroots (Constitution, 1999). Despite this number of sub-national unit, there exists agitation for more states and local government areas to be created due to observed imbalance (Bassey, Omono, Bisong & Bassey, 2013). Agitation also exists in terms of allocation of resources (revenue), and occupation of presidential and other representative positions. The current demand by the north for power shift from the south which currently occupies presidency is a clear example of this problem. The nature of federal balance is a major determining factor of the future of Nigeria as a sovereign state. This is the reason why this study was designed to examine federal balance in Nigeria.

Conceptual clarification and review

Sills (1993) defines federal as "mode of political organization which unites separate politics within an overarching political system so as to allow each to maintain its fundamental political integrity, which is achieved by distribution of power among general and constituent governments in a manner designed to protect the existence and authority of all the governments, where all policies are reached and implemented through negotiation". Nigeria is a federal state with the federal government as general unit, while states and local governments are federating units.

Balance in a federal context has to do with the distribution of power and resources among levels of government, in this case among federal, state and local governments. Federal balance is not static but a dynamic process. It requires constant change and adjustment. Federal balance reveals systemic tension, crisis, activities and changes. Federal balance may be a state of relative equilibrium or even one of disequilibrium. It may also be a policy on the part of government that deliberately aim at preventing the preponderance of any one unit and at ensuring an approximate equilibrium of power among major units (Sills, 1993). Federal balance is the policy in a federal state that aims at preventing the preponderance of any level or unit of the state and at maintaining an approximate equilibrium of power among the units in order to sustain peace, order and unity.

The primary function of federal balance is to foster peace, unity and social order, which are ultimate values of any society. In Nigeria today, peace is lacking, unity is not a desire and social order is seriously threatened in terms of people and other nations desiring the disintegration of Nigeria, predicted for 2015 (Chapelle, 2009). This shows that there is absence of federal balance in Nigeria, and that the present

government lacked policy focus to establish federal balance which is a necessary ingredient for the persistence and continuity of Nigeria as a nation.

Theoretical framework

The paradigm guiding analysis in this study is the Bassonian Theory of National Integration and Development. It is a model of analysis which explains society as being composed of competing and conflicting forces. Each force is an autonomous entity which can foster integration or disintegration. The combination of these forces makes for the development or destruction of a system. This theory viewed society as a dynamic system.

Bassey (2000) identified the following forces: eco-centric, ethno-centric, theo-centric and natu-centric. Eco-centric force resides at the individual domain and it is the force that propels a person towards achievement and accomplishment. Eco-centric force controls individuals to strive for self-preservation and accomplishment. This same eco-centric force compels a person to attempt to outshine another person. It promotes personal and private accumulation of wealth, private capital formation, security and protection. Eco-centric force operates at individual level and it accounts for why individuals compete with one another, even among siblings. The success of one person at the expense of others is due to high degree of eco-centric force. People with high eco-centric force controlling them tend to be more successful in business and professional vocations.

Ethno-centric force operates within a group. Such groups share characteristics of both secondary and primary group in the sense that, though relationship is formal, degree of solidarity and integration are comparatively very high. The type of group this force exists is the ethnic or tribal group. Ethno-centric force is the force that binds together members of ethnic or tribal groups as homogeneous entity. This force differs in its effect from society to society. In ethnically homogeneous society, this force promotes strong unity and ensures that the society exists as one indivisible entity with high rate of social solidarity and integration. In ethnically heterogeneous society, ethnocentric force draws dividing line between and among ethnic groups, acting as a divisive force.

Theo-centric force is the force that is controlled by religious sentiments occasioned by indoctrination and belief system. This force exists among and binds together members of the same religious faith, for example Moslems. In a society with mono-belief system, just like ethno-centric force, theo-centric force is a uniting element. In a society with religious heterogeneity, it is a divisive force as theo-centric force puts members of different religions apart, while it brings members of the same religion together.

Eco-centric force operates in every society as society is made up of collectivity of individuals. In this sense, individuals are the fundamental units of interaction at inter-personal level, and such interaction is guided by eco-centric force. Ethno-centric force exists in almost every society or community. From societies that are homogeneous, to those that are heterogeneous, ethnocentric force permeates, exerting different consequences as noted earlier. Theo-centric force also exists in every society in varying dimension, within members of same religious faith. Since ethnocentric and theo-centric forces exert divisive consequences in heterogeneous society, another force is needed to bind such societies together in terms of eliminating the divisive consequences of ethnocentric and theo-centric forces. This emergent force in highly heterogeneous society is natu-centric force.

Natu-centric force is the force that ensures stability in the society. Just like ethno-centric force that pulls members of the same ethnic or tribal group together, natu-centric force fosters integration and solidarity among members of the same nation, especially when the nation is ethnically and tribally heterogeneous. This force is required in every federal state and other systems of government which there is remarkable diversity and pluralism in ethnic and tribal composition. In a country which is racially or ethnically homogeneous, natu-centric force equates ethnocentric force. Natu-centric force is not natural to every ethnically plural society, but must be invoked through conscious advocacy, indoctrination and deliberate public policy formulation and implementation.

United States of America is a good example of a country that is able to invoke natu-centric force in the course of her development. Natu-centric force brings with it a sense of national unity, patriotism and commitment to national goals and value. This force once invoked dislodges the preponderance of other forces and redirect the citizens to work towards achievement of national values and goals. An American Indian Jew is primarily concerned with the success of America as a nation without focusing on acquiring power, wealth and fame for self or place of origin and indigeneship. This is so because natu-centric force produces sentiment which erased other prebendal and primordial sentiments associated with other forces which are natural to every individual and society. For a federal state to be stable and balanced, natu-centric force is required as a stabilization element and balancing strategy.

Governmental agency should be created to perform the function of re-orientation towards pursuing national values represented by equal right of every citizen in every part of the country, the citizen locates his or herself despite place of origin or indigeneship. Such agency strategized with advocacy and indoctrination of citizens. There should be legislation and policy directed at playing down on ethnic sentiment and consciousness. Ethnic affinity should rather be maintained through preservation of cultural heritage, as practiced in United States of America.

This theoretical model fosters unity of societies characterized by ethnic diversity. This is the reason for its development and adoption as a guide in this study. Nigeria is a plural society in terms of ethnic composition, with well over 374 ethnic groups, over 400 distinct languages, diverse belief systems, customs and institutions (Tamuno, 1998). This diversity impacts negatively on federal balance in Nigeria, resulting in power tilt and imbalanced structure, allocation of resources, location of infrastructure etc. It is in view of this that this paper expounds on and adopted Bassonian theory of National Integration and Development as a theoretical guide. In this regard, the creation of natu-centric force in Nigeria is expected to erase all structural and systemic distortion occasioned by Nigeria diversities which produces imbalance and distorted the practice of true federalism.

An overview of the concept and forces of federal balance

Before balance is obtained in a federal setting, three major principles as noted in Sills (1993) must be feasibly observed, namely: the strength of the federal polity does not stem from the power of the national government but from the authority vested in the nation as a whole; both the national and the governments of the constituent polities are possessed by delegated powers only; all governments are limited by the common national constitution. In view of this federal principle, federalism as a system of government provides a relative equilibrium of power among the major units, thus ensuring a frontier at which those units can expand and at which their occasional clashes are likely to be less dangerous to the continuity and development of the nation as a whole.

Certain forces determined the degree of balance which influences the degree of applicability of the federal principle within any polity. These forces are termed centrifugal and centripetal forces. Centripetal forces are those factors within a federal state that pull towards the centre, or necessitate the need for federal system. Awa (1976) while considering various issues in the Nigerian federation, identified two main centripetal forces namely; ethnic pluralism and economic benefits of the union to its component parts. On the other hand, centrifugal forces are those which tend to pull apart. Awa (1976) also noted centrifugal forces in Nigeria to include: military rule; size of the component units; and the growth of economic development.

Agi (1999) expresses the views that the strategy of federal balance is a formal effort to eradicate the fears and insecurities which dominates Nigeria's inter-community relations. Major issues arise from here, such as: How is this balance to be achieved? To what degree is the imbalance from the inception of federalism until present day? What are the effects of the conflicting forces on the sustenance of federalism in Nigeria? Determining the degree of federal balance in Nigeria from 1954 to present day involved finding answers to these questions in discussing topical issues in Nigerian federalism.

Constitutional/jurisdictional power sharing in Nigeria from 1954 to 2013

The government of Nigeria adopted a federal structure with the enactment of 1954 constitution. The constitution represents a union of individual regions as at then created by British colonial government for administrative conveniences. The constitution recognized the sovereignty of a central authority, while retaining certain powers of self-rule for the regions. Under federal arrangement, sovereign power was divided between a central authority (the Nigerian federal government) and a number of other units, as at 1954 three regions namely; North, West and Eastern regions. The power of each structure (level of government) was measured in terms of functions performed by it as provided in the constitution.

In 1954 constitution, there existed greater autonomy to the regions. The power of government were grouped under three headings: the Enumerated or Exclusive Federal List, the Concurrent List and the Residual List. The enumerated list contained such subjects like foreign relations, currency, defense, immigration, citizenship and aviation. The federal level was the sole authority here to legislate. The concurrent list includes such matters like education, health and industrial development, in which both regional and federal legislated where there was inconsistent with federal legislation, the federal legislation would prevail and regional legislation would be void to the extent of the inconsistency. The regional government held exclusive power to legislate on Residual list.

Subsequent constitutions notably the 1960 independence constitution maintain the federal system of government with the independence status, while the 1963 Republican constitution was on the same federal principle, but with overall power of the state removed. Another distinctive element of 1963 constitution was the creation of one additional region (Mid-West Region). Though federal principles were enshrined in the constitution, remarkable imbalance existed. Such include unification of northern Nigeria as one region and bulcanisation of south Nigeria to 3 regions creating distrust among southerners of ethnic line, while stimulating agitation for region among minority groups in the north. This marked genesis of imbalance in Nigerian federalism.

The problem of ethnic distrust and fear of domination promoted anti-federal policies at the regions like the northernisation policy. Party crises and sectarian killing emerged, which culminated in military intervention that led to the suspension of the 1963 Republican constitution that tended to tear the federation apart. The situation was worsened by the civil war and the operation of federal might to bring the units together. Once the constitution was suspended, the military took over. Military rule is unitary and not in line with the principle of federalism because of unitary command structure of military government.

Democracy set in again with the promulgation of the 1979 constitution, designed in line with the military 19 states (1976) federal structure as against regionalism. The 1979 constitution was very unique in the sense that it departed from the parliamentary system of previous constitutions and adopted the presidential system as practiced in the United States of America. It was the first constitution to recognize the third tier of government (local government) formally, with functional power in the Residual Legislative List (Amuwo, 1998). Inter-party conflict, corruption and ethnic crises that affected previous constitutions also affected 1979 constitution, leading to another military intervention in 1983.

Considering constitutionalism as a cardinal element of federal balance, basic areas of strategic concern were vested in the hand of federal government in the exclusive list. The termination of military rule and re-democratization in 1999 presented us with the 1999 constitution which follows the same trend in function distribution, except increase of federating units in terms of states (36) and local government areas (789). Strategic assignment of defense, immigration, police, mining and extraction concentrates power and wealth of the nation in federal government at the expense of state. Today federal government control police command in state, and state governments exist at the mercy of federal as all security agencies of government are controlled and directed by the federal, as can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Military and security organisations in Nigeria

S/N	Name of Agency	Funding	Supervisory Agency
1	Nigerian Army	Federal	Federal Ministry of Defence
2	Nigerian Airforce	Federal	Federal Ministry of Defence
3	Nigerian Navy	Federal	Federal Ministry of Defence
4	Nigerian Police Force	Federal	Federal Ministry of Public Affairs
5	Nigeria Prison Service	Federal	Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs
6	Nigerian Immigration Service	Federal	Federal Ministry of Interior
7	Nigeria Custom Service	Federal	Federal Ministry of Finance
8	Nigeria Security & Civil Defense Corp	Federal	Federal Ministry of Interior
9	State Security Service	Federal	Presidency

Source: Nigerian Constitution 1999 and Special Current Affairs (2013)

Table 1 indicates that the control of agencies responsible for the exercise of state coercive power rests with federal government. The state and local government as units or level of government only exists to bring implementation and policy formulation closer to the people. In this regard, there exists no balance in control of state coercive apparatus.

Federal balance under military rule in Nigeria

Military rule started in Nigeria on the 15th of January 1966, which marks the suspension of the constitution by the promulgation of military decrees and edicts, with which the country was governed. Military councils replaced elective legislative bodies. In the Aguiyi-Ironsi regime of 1966 to Buhari's regime of 1984-1985 was the Supreme Military Council, while the Babangida administration of the mid 80s to 1993 has the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), and the Abacha and Abubakar regimes operate with the Provisional Ruling Council (P.R.C.)

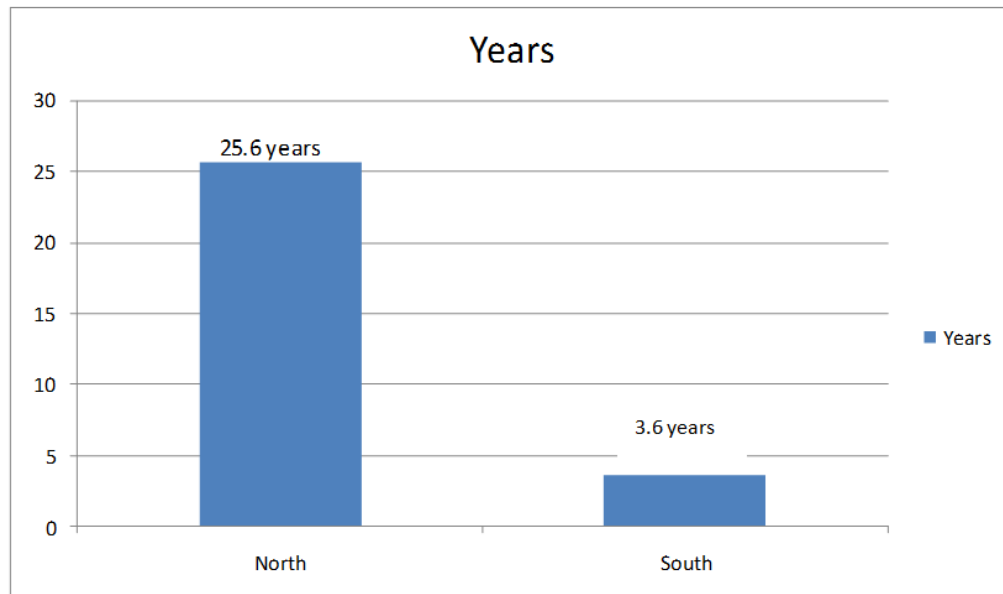
The peculiar nature and structure of military government rooted in unitary command structure is against the doctrine and principles of federalism. Unitary command structure is at variance with the concept of diffusion of power required in a true federal state. This condition negates the very attempt of the military to maintain the country as a federal republic. Hence, under military regime Nigeria was a federal structure in structural composition rather than practical federal administration.

Table 2. Military heads of state and their regions of origin

S/N	Name of Head of State	Period of Rule	State of Origin	Geo Pol. Zone	Tribe	Duration of Rule
1	General Aguiyi Ironsi	Jan- July, 1966	Abia	South East	Igbo	6 months
2	General Yakubu Gowon	1966 – 1975	Plateau	North Central	Luri	9 years
3	General Murtala Muhammed	July 1975 – Feb. 1976	Kano	North East	Hausa	7 months
4	General Olusegun Obasanjo	1976 – 1979	Ogun	South West	Yoruba	3 years
5	General Muhammadu Buhari	1983 – 1985	Katsina	North West	Hausa/ Fulani	2 years
6	General Ibrahim Babangida	1985 – 1993	Niger	North Central	Hausa/ Fulani	8 years
7	General Sanni Abacha	1993 – 1998	Bornu	North East	Kanuri	5 years
8	General Abdulsalami Abubakar	1999	Niger	North Central	Gwari	11 months

Source: Author's presentational construct, 2013

The post-civil war Nigerian military was lopsided in the sense that its rank and file was dominated by the Hausa-Fulani Hegemony. Other tribes and ethnic groups grumbled about marginalization by the Northern-military-controlled federal government. The Hausa-Fulani oligarchy used the military to perpetuate themselves in power at the expense of other groups. Table 2 presents military Heads of States in Nigeria and the region of origin.



Source: Author's analytical construct, 2013

Chart 1. Bar chart showing duration of military rule between northern and southern Nigeria

From Table 2. above, it is seen that people of Northern extraction occupied the position of Head of State and government in Nigeria for a far larger period than people from the South. Bar Chart 1. clearly indicates that North controlled the nation under military rule for 25 years and 6 months while the South ruled for only 3 years and 6 months. The duration of military rule by the north clearly depicts imbalance in occupation of headship of state between North and South. This imbalance further breeds disaffection between north and south; as a result of southern consciousness of domination and their subsequent desire for power shift to create the desired balance. The Federal Military Government's (Supremacy and Enforcement of Order) Decree No. 28 of 1970 enacted in response to the Supreme Court decision in the case of Lakanmi and others vs Attorney General of Western State further invalidates laws that promote true federalism and legal balance in terms of pulling excessive power to the federal government, which threatens state autonomy by creating an overlord central (federal) government (Ojo, 1987).

Under military rule in Nigeria, there was federal imbalance as against balance. This military imbalance occurred in many fronts as analysed above, which include: imbalance in personnel composition; imbalance in headship of military establishment and state (Commander-in-Chief); imbalance in structure of military formation and storage of military equipments; and, imbalance occasioned by unitary command structure of the military which promoted preponderance of the central government (federal) at the expense of sub-national governments (state and local). This imbalance which impeded upon the operation of true federalism in Nigeria necessitated the desire of democratization, and civilianization and re-civilianization (Nwankwo, 1990).

Revenue allocation and federal balance

This section focuses on the relationship existing between the inclusive and component governments in terms of financial allocation rather than sequence of revenue allocation in Nigeria since 1954. Prior to the early 70's, Nigeria depended on export of primary products as a major source of government revenue. The regions and states depended greatly on locally (internally) generated revenue through the activities of marketing boards. But, with advent of petroleum economy, emphasis on internally generated revenue by the regions, shifted to the federal government allocation. This was because petroleum as a major component of extractive industry was controlled by federal government exclusively. As fund accruing as oil royalty and license fee goes to federation account, it has to be redistributed to states. Various guidelines were invented to share the fund vertically between the three-tier levels of government and horizontally among the various sub-national units in different levels, for example different states and different local government areas. Allocatory imbalance presents another dimension in the development of inter-governmental fiscal relations in Nigeria.

Olowononi (1998) expressed strong fiscal dependence of sub-national governments on the federal government in Nigeria. The relationship is marked by crisis concerning an appropriate criteria for allocation between the federal, state and local governments. Such criteria as; derivation, population, landmark, equality, development need and social commitment, were used and units that were not favoured strongly criticized the process, calling for change of criteria. On the other hand, states that sources of revenue were located therein agitated for their direct control of such revenue from the federal government. Revenue allocation in Nigeria is marked by friction between the central and state governments and among state governments, for example Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State Revenue Allocation Crisis which was laid to rest through a Supreme Court decision. Fiscal federalism (Revenue Allocation) in Nigeria is a major area of federal imbalance as the federal government controls the fundamental sources of revenue, causing states and local governments to depend solely on federal government for revenue allocation.

Strategies of ensuring federal balance in Nigeria

Federal imbalance rather than balance is the context of Nigeria federalism as revealed by analysis in this study. Federal power in Nigeria clearly tilts towards the federal government at the expense of the states or regions as there were. There have been attempts to deal with agitations that tended to rock prospects of lasting federalism in an intense environment of serious doubts and fear concerning common political identity occasioned by structural and systematic imbalance in the body polity. The weight of agitations of recent led to the increasing calls for a "National Sovereign Conference" to redress perceived wrongs and imbalance. The government of Nigeria has not lost sight of the yearning of the people, it has institutionalized certain strategies to bring about federal balance. Such strategies include: state creation, rotational presidency, federal character and geopolitical zones.

States Creation and Geo-Political Zones: The first attempt of state creation came with the creation of Mid-western Region in 1963. This was followed by the change from regions to states with the creation of twelve states federal structure in 1967, and in 1976 number of states were increased to 19 by the Murtala-Obasanjo military regime. In 1987, the states were increased to twenty one, in 1999 increased to thirty and thirty six in 1996.

The purpose of state creation was to solve the primary problem of ethno-structural imbalance engendered by the disproportional size of the North. State creation was also to create federal structure (in terms of sub-national units) in which the interest of minority ethnic groups were protected. States and local government areas were also created to reduce the obviously insatiable distributive pressure in revenue allocation, as well as, bring government and development closer to the people. The utility of state creation as a strategy of national integration and federal balance left more to be desired.

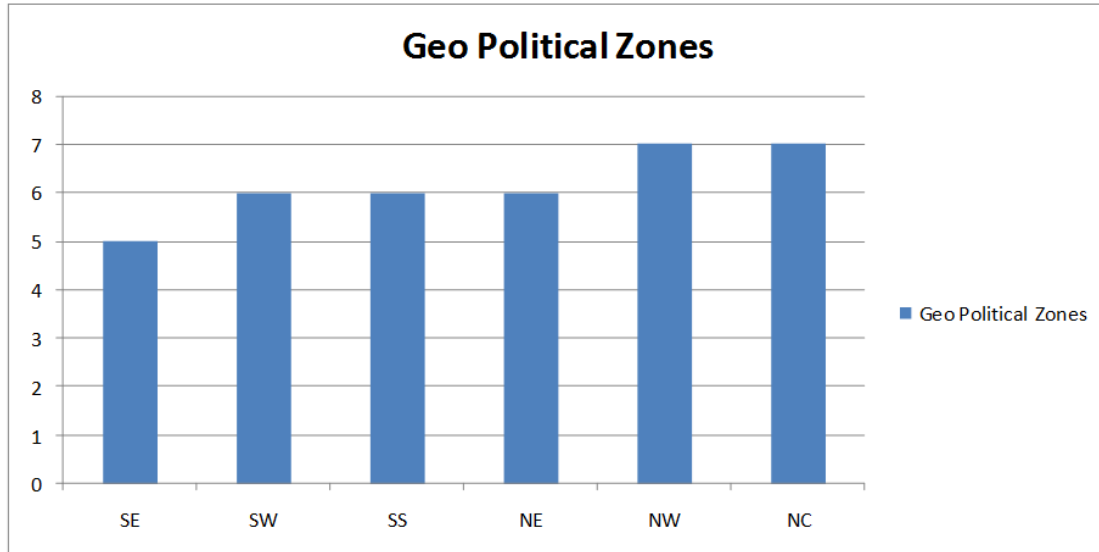
Suberu (1998) argued strongly that instead of state creation solving the minority questions and fear of domination, it increases it as new minority and majority arise with creation of new states resulting in a vicious cycle. The issue of some states being economically viable and others not poses new problems of fiscal relations on the federation. Bassey, Omono, Bisong and Bassey (2013) noted that demand for states proved dissatisfaction by ethnic nationalities, and lamented on the actual number of states that will be satisfactory to all concerned. In reality, state creation cannot solve the problem of federal imbalance, rather it creates ethnic imbalance which aggravates the problem of federal imbalance. State creation was politicized and hijacked by major political and policy actors to the favour of some groups at the expense of others, which worsens the crisis of structural imbalance in Nigerian federal polity.

In an attempt to solve the problem of imbalance occasioned by state creation, the federal military government in 1996 created 6 geo-political zones. For effective balance to be ensured, three geopolitical zones were created each for northern and southern Nigeria.

Table 3. States and geo-political zones in Nigeria

S/N	State	Old Region	Geo-Political Zone	Remark
1	1. Abia	Eastern	South East (SE)	5 states
2	2. Anambra			
3	3. Ebonyi			
4	4. Enugu			
5	5. Imo			
6	1. Ekiti	Western	South West (SW)	6 states
7	2. Lagos			
8	3. Ogun			
9	4. Ondo			
10	5. Osun			
11	6. Oyo			
12	1. Akwa Ibom	Eastern	South-South (SS)	Delta and Edo were part of Mid-Western region and before then western region
13	2. Bayelsa			
14	3. Cross River			
15	4. Delta			
16	5. Edo			
17	6. Rivers			
18	1. Adamawa	Northern	North-East (NE)	6 states
19	2. Bauchi			
20	3. Borno			
21	4. Gombe			
22	5. Taraba			
23	6. Yobe			
24	1. Jigawa	Northern	North-West (NW)	7 states
25	2. Kaduna			
26	3. Kano			
27	4. Katsina			
28	5. Kebbi			
29	6. Sokoto			
30	7. Zamfara			
31	1. Benue	Northern	North-Central (NC)	Made up of 6 states and FCT (Abuja)
32	2. Kogi			
33	3. Kwara			
34	4. Niger			
35	5. Nasarawa			
36	6. Plateau			
	7. FCT (Abuja)			

Source: Nigerian Constitution, 1999



Source: Author's analytical construct (2013)

Chart 2. Histogram representing number of states in a geo-political zones

For geo-political zones to be effective strategy of federal balancing which state creation was not, it supposed to come with equal number of states. Table 3. and Chart 2. indicate that out of thirty six (36) states and Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) making 37, North as a whole divided into 3 geo-political zones has 20 states while South with three geopolitical zones, also has 17 states. This shows structural imbalance between North and South in terms of number of states per geo-political zone. In this regard, neither state creation nor creation of geopolitical zones as governmental policy and strategy could solve the problem of imbalance in Nigerian federalism.

Rotational Presidency: The socio-political uproar generated by the June 12, 1993 election, in addition to the Nigeria civil war of 1967 to 1970, represents most frontal challenges to the existence of Nigerian state. The massive movement of people from their place of residence to their places of origin in the wake of the uproar in the mid-1960's shows the absence of National Essence and imbalance. The Constitutional Conference of 1990's where all segments of Nigeria's society and groups were represented refashioned a sustaining basis for the existence of the Nigerian state. The basis so fashioned was a symbolic proposal term for the rotation of key executive and legislative offices among the political zones in Nigeria in order to ensure the emergence of Nigerian state that is institutionally coherent, workable and stable. Though this was not inserted in the 1999 constitution, the political parties used it in their party process for chosen party candidates in primaries. This principle of zoning was utilized by People's Democratic Party (PDP) at all levels of election from federal to local.

The death of President Yar'Adua without completing his 4 years tenure, which was completed by his Vice President and the election of President Goodluck Jonathan as President without the North completing 8 years (two terms), to the Northerners, brought about another imbalance. This imbalance motivates the North to desire return of federal power (presidency) to the North again. Today, political crisis in Nigeria is alarming, occasioned by killings in the North by the Boko Haram Islamic sect. The security situation in Nigeria is even graver than the pre-civil war crisis of the 1960s. Nigerian federalism is seriously distorted and the future of Nigerian state is at stake. Nigeria is moving towards disintegration than integration if the security situation is not put under control and social order restored.

Federal Character Principle: This is a government policy aimed at creating equity in appointment, representative positions, allocation of resources and location of social infrastructure among component units. The policy if well implemented would have corrected imbalances in the body polity. This enabling

law of this policy establishes the federal character commission in Nigeria, being a government agency and regulator of equity in allocation, distribution and redistribution in Nigeria.

Most Nigerians do not believe in the ability of the commission to correct the imbalance and preponderance of some units over others. The principle is considered to breed mediocrity, and acts as a disincentive to merit. The policy is seriously subverted by Nigerians as people simply claimed places other than their real place of origin in order to utilize the disadvantage position of the place and perpetuate such locality in the position of disadvantage. The policy rather than promoting federal balance, aggravates federal disequilibrium.

Theoretical prognosis and prospect of federal balance in Nigeria

The situation in Nigeria today occasioned by federal imbalance and absence of equity in Nigerian polity is moving Nigeria as a nation towards disintegration if something urgent is not done. The prospect of federal balance, integration, equity in distribution and redistribution in Nigeria is glaring if certain steps are consciously taken. The primary and fundamental strategy of restoring Nigeria is through invocation of natu-centric force which is going to strike out centrifugal and other socio-centric forces acting against success of federalism in Nigeria, as well as strengthen centripetal forces.

The most strategic way of promoting the preponderance of natu-centric force is by instituting domicile policy, which will replace or amend to a greater extent the current federal character principle. Eco-centric, ethnocentric and theo-centric forces will gradually lose their grips on individual and groups once natu-centric force is invoked. Domicile policy will reposition people in new places, instill in them new sense of patriotism and commitment which automatically eliminates old and other prebendal interests. Domicile policy involves putting in place a policy framework which enables any Nigerian to derive benefits of residence in any state after fulfilling laid down conditions such as a stipulated period of residence; crime free habitation and commitment to community development in any place other than the indigenous locality of the individual within Nigeria.

When this domiciliary condition and goal of community development as against personal aggrandizement is put in place, individual will not be self focused, that means, eco-centric force will fade away. Secondly, attachment to indigenous settlement will fade away and replaced by commitment to residential settlement thereby eroding ethno-centric force. Where the religion of place of settlement is different from indigenous locality, tolerance will be developed for domiciled religion. As this tolerance develop with time of occupation of the place, so will theo-centric force gradually release the individual for natu-centric force to take-over and dominate the individual.

The adoption of this theoretical prognosis will promote mobility of Nigerians from one town to another, causing cultural diffusion and assimilation which are major ingredients of social change, development, modernization and integration. Assimilation is the process by which minorities gradually adopt patterns of dominant culture, while diffusion involves borrowing cultural traits and elements from one culture to another. If this is considered and adopted for Nigeria, the political confusion of present day will be a thing of the past and only remembered in the history of Nigerian state.

Conclusion and recommendation

This paper considered the United States of America democratic constitution and federalism as ideal model, in terms of cultural diversity and ethno-racial heterogeneity of American society. Domiciliary policy is an integral element of American federalism. The Bassonian theory of integration and development presented domiciliary policy as a strategic solution to socio-structural distortions which produces federal imbalance in multi-ethnic or plural societies like Nigeria. The paper concludes that only the invocation of natu-centric force and its preponderance over other forces that will provide solution to Nigeria's problem by producing federal balance

Consequently, domiciliary policy is recommended as a proactive government policy and strategy to ensure Nigerian unity and equity in the distribution, allocation and redistribution of power, resources and opportunities. This policy direction will ameliorate, if not eradicate, imbalance and thus ensure federal balance in Nigeria polity. Such institutions like the National Orientation Agency should be revitalized to champion ethno-cultural integration and preservation of cultural heritage in view of the diffusion and assimilation which natu-centric principles will produce when a domicile policy is fully implemented. This strategic roadmap should provide an alternative option for the survival of Nigeria.

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