

# Democracy, Fiscal Federalism and Challenge of Development in Nigeria

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**Abstract:-** Wheare's classic definition of federalism as the method of dividing powers (political and economic) in such a way that the general and regional governments are each within its sphere co-ordinate and independent seems to anticipate that development, which is the *raison d'être* of governments, can better be facilitated by the people on whom the development will directly impact. By implication, the powers divided among the federating units as extrapolated from Wheare's description are powers to engage in such multidimensional processes geared towards the improvement of the living standards of the people, achieved by paying immense attention to the people's needs and interests. This paper investigated the relationship between democracy, federalism and development, and adopted the Overlapping Model of Wright's Theory of Intergovernmental Relations which focuses attention on the relationship between and among federating units in a federation in respect of power and jurisdictional scope determined by the units' income and expenditure capabilities, as the theoretical framework. The work is largely a desk study. Specifically, data was mainly collected from secondary sources, while content analysis was adopted as the method of data analysis. The paper argues that development is more likely to occur when the necessary powers are directly domiciled with the people, and the surest way to bring these powers closer to the people is essentially through the judicious implementation of democratic federal principles. It also argues that essentially, for heterogeneous democratic states like Nigeria to attain development, they must review their federal systems to be suited to the historical and existential realities of their societies. This is because the role of the modern federal state in development is mainly dependent on the form of federalism obtainable in that federation.

**Keywords:** Development, Federalism, Democracy, Intergovernmental Relations, Politics.

## I. INTRODUCTION

It is common knowledge that federal systems are basically faced with the twin problems of democracy and development. That is to say that management of federal systems is a sensitive task, if development must be engendered. Most ethnically-segmented federations such as Nigeria are constantly grappling with problems of disintegration, occasioned by the lack of democracy, valid federal options and development. Hence, federations that seek to retain their relevance to their societies had better engaged in the process of constantly reviewing their federal systems. Of note, this review process is not, in any way, a sign of weakness.

The premise of federalism is that federal institutions are designed to particularly meet the unique needs of the

federating units (Ramphal, 1979). Generally, federalism's minimal promise is to allow the various nations and peoples forming the federation to gain their own self-determination and nationalism. This is more probable in a democratic setting. However, this promise is usually endangered, especially in undemocratic federal states like Nigeria. This is much so because the civil culture which is germane to the success of federal systems is conspicuously absent in Nigeria. Again, there is non-existence of independent power centres which enable local people to decide on local priorities (Amuwo & Hault, 2004). In other words, democracy is essential for federalism. Federalism, in this sense, demands governmental arrangements that have the features basically associated with free government, or if you like, democracy. Territorially-based power and resource distribution, limited-responsible centre and pragmatic leadership are some of the basic attributes of federalism. It therefore follows that it may be nearly impossible to entrench, maintain and consolidate a true federal system in the absence of the foregoing attributes.

It is imperative to observe that the culture (political and economic) of a federal system vis-à-vis its values and facts of governance can be diametrically opposed to the goals of the federating units and individuals, depending on the nature and features of the federal state. This may explain Linz's (1997) position that "federalism can only assure that nobody could be fully unhappy, but certainly not that everybody will be happy with the solution". Be that as it may, when a sheer patrimonial federal logic only makes state officials and cronies happy, many others could be fully unhappy, and development could hardly occur in such a federal state, even if the state officials and their cronies cut across regional, ethnic, religious and gender divisions. This is the case with Nigeria, as Olukoshi & Agbu (1996) noted that "it is necessary to recognise that the crises of Nigerian federalism is not just about bickering tribes but also about social injustices that are rooted in cross-national class conflicts". That is to say that, much as federalism seem to have succeeded in bringing several nationalities within the Nigerian state together, federal practise has not succeeded in developing and keeping them happily together, owing to the undemocratic disposition of the Nigerian state.

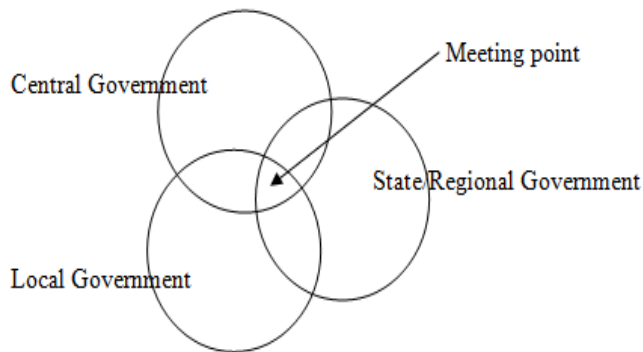
## II. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ELUCIDATIONS

Democracy, federalism and development are among the most studied concepts in the field of Political Science in particular and Social Sciences in general. The reason is

simple. Federalism is a governmental arrangement and the real essence of governance is to facilitate development by ensuring the greatest happiness of a greater majority. Happiness of a greater majority is proven to be better secured when a greater majority is involved in politics. Politics is here defined as comprising the process by which individual members of a collective, directly or through their representatives, act together with other members of the collective to reach decisions and take actions concerning what is in the best interest of all members of the collective (Ekekwe, 2015). Development, on its part, cuts across all the disciplines in the Social Sciences, given its natural social disposition. We shall attempt brief overviews of the concepts for our purposes here, but not before clarifying the theory guiding the study.

### 2.1. Theoretical Guide

Choice of theories guiding researches is a function of the nature of problem under study and the ideological perspectives of the researcher. In this case, the theory that portrays the nature of the research problem is Wright's Theory of Intergovernmental Relations (Overlapping Model). Attention in this theory is focused on the relationship between (and among) component units of a federation, in respect of power and jurisdiction, determined by the components' income and expenditure capabilities. The Overlapping Authority Model provides a new and better approach to intergovernmental relations (Usman & Erunko, 2013). Here, relationships among the governmental units concurrently occur in a correlational form. The circles of functions are overlaid based on character of collaboration. See figure 1.



Source: Researcher's construct

This model, according to Wright, most represents intergovernmental practices with modest and limited powers for each component, joint completion of government functions, exchanges and negotiations to arrive at consensus (Azu, 2017). In this circumstance, any discussion or analysis on this model should pay special attention to the level of cooperation among the component units of the federation. This is the basis on which social analysis consider the differences among different levels of government, vis-à-vis the programme areas. It is imperative to note that the Overlapping Model of Intergovernmental Relations gives a

clear insight into the patterns of authority in a federation as well as how these authority patterns affect the intergovernmental relations. In any democratic federal structure therefore, intergovernmental fiscal dealings is the most delicate issue. In other words, how best to manage a federation is greatly dependent on the form of fiscal federalism in place.

### 2.2 Democracy

Democracy, as opposed to authoritarianism, simply consists in "government by the people" (Almond et al, 2007). That is to say that, in very small political systems, such as local traditional communities, the masses may be able to directly share in the debate, decision-making and implementation of public policies. In relatively large political systems (such as modern states), democracy is largely achieved through indirect participation (representative democracy) in the policymaking and implementation process. Governmental functions are here performed by officials chosen by the mass of the people, and the political system is characterised by elections, free mass media, political parties (competitive), representative assemblies at different levels and other socio-centric political structures.

There is no ideal indirect democracy in the world. Every society showcases a version of democracy that corresponds with its material conditions. For instance, in less economically developed societies, opportunities in participatory democracy only makes sense to the few educated elites, and sometimes to the other few that live close to the seats of government. Those majorities of average citizens in the countryside have little or no interest in the political structures of the society. That is to say that political participation in less developed countries appears to be lower than in more developed ones. That also suggests that the political systems of the latter are more democratic than that of the former and the reason is simple: the more citizens are involved in policymaking, the more influential their choices, and the more democratic the system will be. In democratic systems, the opportunity of citizens to be involved in shaping the policies of their state is offered by competitive elections. It is through elections that the citizens select or reject key policy makers. In other words, one of the necessary conditions for a meaningful democracy in large political systems is competitive elections, with various suffrages.

World politics, in the last forty years, have been characterised by transitions towards democracy. This trend is readily discernible from the politics of Southern Europe, Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and former Soviet Union in the past four decades. This may explain why Huntington (1991) referred to this transitional movement towards democracy as a "Third Wave" of worldwide democratisation. In all, the overall number of democracies in the world has grown over the time, despite some of the reversals that followed the two previous waves. Historically, the first wave is traced to the 19th century and ended with the establishment

of many budding democracies. This followed the victory of the Allied Forces in the First World War. The second democratic wave encompassed many newly independent states and the defeated authoritarian powers, after the Second World War. This third wave has succeeded in eroding the legitimacy of many authoritarian regimes across the world. It was also facilitated by the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

### 2.3 Federalism

K. C. Wheare, referred to as the father of federalism, offered a classic definition of federalism. To him, it is the method of dividing socio-economic powers in such a way that the central and regional governments are each within its sphere coordinate and independent (Wheare, 1963). Building on Wheare's foundation, Tamuno (2004) posited that federalism is a particular form of government where the component units of a given political organisation participatorily share functions and powers in a cooperative manner. To him, this arrangement subsists where the twin factors of cultural diversity and ethnic pluralism, among other things, tend to pull the people of a state apart. This explains why federalism is loosely regarded as pursuit of unity in diversity. In other words, federalism is a delicate arrangement, considering the delicate nature of such states that have diverse ethnicities. Where carefully worked out, federal arrangements provide adequate room for the peaceful co-existence of contending forces. Also, where the system works properly, the conflicts and frictions that occur within the system are resolved through effective and timely intervention of state institutions and appropriate organs of government.

Hoping that the works of Wheare (1963), Tamuno (2004), Ogali (2012) and other federalist pundits have done enough justice to the description of federalism, it is imperative to move a bit further to note that there are other issues that provoke controversies in the subject of federalism. One of such issues is types of federalism. There are strong and weak forms of federalism. Within the same system, there could also be periodic variations of strength and weakness at different times. For instance, the strength, weakness, theory and practice of federalism may be altered in civil war period and other secessionist threat eras, including military coup regimes. Let us now try an understanding of fiscal federalism.

#### 2.3.1 Fiscal Federalism

Fiscal federalism reflects the level of financial responsibility and autonomy accorded to the various sub-national governments. It deals with the revenue and expenditure relationship between the central and lower level governments. National rules and standards are therefore enforced by governments, using fiscal powers. It will suffice to quickly observe here that fiscal federalism, as a concept, is also applied and relevant to other forms of government, other than federal – unitary and confederal. In other words the concept is not to be confused with fiscal decentralisation in federations alone. It also applies to non-federal states which

have no formalised federal constitutional arrangements. This is because every form of state encompasses distinct levels of government that have various decision-making authorities. However, this does not, in any way, suggest that all forms of government are fiscally federal. Rather, fiscal federalism is just a set of principles that are applicable to any country of the world trying out what may be referred here to as “fiscal decentralisation” of any magnitude. In succinct terms, Oates (1999) explained fiscal federalism in terms of general normative framework for assignment of functions to the different levels of government, including appropriate and corresponding fiscal instruments for carrying out these functions.

Sharma (2005) noted that fiscal federalism constitutes those guiding principles and concepts that help in designing financial relations between the national and sub-national levels of the government. As noted earlier, both federal and non-federal states have sets of fiscal federalism principles. However, they differ in the way in which the fiscal principles are applied. Because federal, confederal and unitary governments differ in their legislative and other political contexts, application of fiscal federalism principles also differ thereby providing various avenues for different levels of fiscal decentralisation that leads to development.

### 2.4 Development

Development is a multifaceted concept (Rodney, 1972) that means different things to different people, according to their ideological leanings. It can be viewed from an individual level to mean an increase in skill and capacity; greater freedom, self discipline, creativity, responsibility and material wellbeing. It can also be seen in a broader sense, at a social group level, to imply increase in the ability of a group to guarantee its independence and indeed infringe on the freedom of other groups. More so, when members of a particular society have collectively increased their capacity for dealing with the environment, it is termed economic development (Rodney, 1972).

Development, for the modernisation theorists, entails being modern; being like the global North (advanced capitalist economies). This requires transformation from a pre-modern to a modern society. For instance, W. W. Rostow advocated for a six-stage development process, viz: traditional society, pre-conditions for take-off, take-off stage, drive towards maturity, age of high mass consumption and search for equality (which is the last stage of development of society). According to him, little or no production takes place in a traditional society. The pre-conditions for take-off stage is characterised by significant economic changes such as the development of new elite that values economic modernisation and sees it as both desirable and possible. These are men who mobilise savings and carry out motivational rules. The take-off stage witnesses the structural triumph of the new changes over the traditional forces, and growth becomes an integral part of the society. This stage, according to Rostow, lasts for

about 20 years. Drive towards maturity which also lasts for about 20 years is characterised by an economy that demonstrates that it has the technological and entrepreneurial ability to produce not everything but anything it chooses to produce. At the stage of high mass consumption, emphasis shift from the production of primary to secondary (luxury) goods. It shifts from functional to aesthetic goods. Finally, the sixth stage which comes after about 10 years is the search for equality. This is when the society has conquered poverty and moved on to develop the feeling of citizenship.

While many other bourgeoisie scholars (Rogers, 1976; Meier, 1976) erroneously equated development with economic growth, Seers (1969), Todaro (1981), Sen (1985), UNDP (1990), Ake (1996), Nwaorgu (2005), Ibaba (2010), Ohale (2018), Ekekwe & Ukachikara (2018) have argued that development transcends mere economic indices. Development represents the entire process by which a given social system transforms from an unsatisfactory condition of life to a materially and spiritually better condition of life (Todaro, 1981). For him, development entails the ability and capacity of a social system to meet the primary needs of its population, improve the sense of self-respect and worth of its citizens; and emancipation from servitudes of men and nature. For Seers (1969) and Nwaorgu (2005), inequality, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, violence and corruption are clear indices through which development can be measured.

It is deducible therefore that development is a multidimensional process affecting all aspects of a society's life (Ohale, 2018; Ekekwe & Ukachikara, 2018), including political freedom, security, self-determination, national and cultural identity, human rights, productive employment, health, education, access to good water and transportation, shelter, clothing, food, etc. That is to say that development, as the Marxists hold, is a means to an end. It is a many-sided process that allows the creation and recreation of people and their life conditions, to enable them achieve higher levels of progress that are in tune with not only their value but also their choices (Ake, 1996). It is a multidimensional process geared towards the improvement of the living standards of the people, achieved by paying good attention to the people's needs and interests. Development in this sense is portrayed to be what the people must do for themselves owing to the fact that the people are both the means to, and end of development.

### III. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The paper largely required desk work considering that it's an analytic and descriptive study. As such, data needed for it were secondarily sourced. Documents, which include textbooks, government publications, scholarly journal articles and other internet-based materials were veritable data sources for the study and were collected from different libraries, including e-libraries. Materials collected from the foregoing sources were analysed using the Content Analysis

Method. Here, the data were carefully analysed to establish an acceptable logical trend. North (1963) buttressed the significance of Content Analysis Method. He argued that Content Analysis is primarily used for analysis of records, aimed at discovering the perceptual preoccupations of policy makers. At this juncture, it will suffice to x-ray the nature of federalism in Nigeria in order to understand the fiscal federal pattern.

### IV. NATURE AND CHARACTER OF FEDERALISM IN NIGERIA

It is quite debatable whether Nigeria is a federal state. However, to the extent that the extant constitution of the Nigerian state provides for a federal republic, let us examine the form of Nigeria's federalism. Justice Atanda Fatayi-Williams, Nigeria's Chief Justice (1979-1983), during the May 1976 International Conference, had this to say about Nigerian federalism:

“Unlike most of the older federations, what we did in Nigeria was like unscrambling scrambled eggs. We started as a unitary state and then opted for a federation afterwards. The problem of Nigeria originally in 1951-52 was one of devolution of powers, but when the constitution which was given us by Macpherson broke down, we opted for a federal constitution. Very little was known by most of us about the theory of federation at the time. They were always quoting Wheare at every constitutional conference. It may well be that if we knew more about the theory at the time, we would have emerged in our effort to provide our people with a federal constitution that took account of all the peculiar circumstances of our country and our peoples. When things began to fall apart, those of us in the know quickly realised that ours was the tragedy of assumptions. We assumed everybody, both federal and regional governments, the opposition, the electorates, the courts, the civil servants, the generality of the people and even the boy academician would play the game according to generally accepted rules. Well, because of the interplay of political forces which were beyond their control, they did not; the result was emergence of military rule. It became clear to us all thereafter that all the time there was no total commitment to the concept federalism” (Amuwo, Suberu, Agbaje & Herault, 2004).

Above Fatayi-Williams' comments on the origins of Nigerian federalism is quite instructive. It is discernible that



reliance on academic authorities and theories had (and still has) serious implications on Nigerian federalism. Lack of understanding, adaptation and domestication of theories partly explains the controversies shrouding Nigerian federalism till date. While certain theories talk about building federal structure of a socio-political entity from its bottom or top, social critics, especially in Nigeria, wonder whether the federating units are nationalities or territories. From 1954, unfortunately, instead of nationalities (ethnic groups), territories were the major focal points of Nigeria's federal arrangements (Tamuno, 2004). These forms of arrangements were so complex, coupled with long and chequered history, thereby confusing the concepts regarding the building of a federal structure of a socio-political organisation, from bottom or top of the ladder.

Moreover, Nigerian federalism presents a classic example of the general notion that economics is the paramount concern of a federalist arrangement, while political considerations are basically secondary. In other words, economic factors are emphasized (manifestly and latently) over political factors in Nigerian federalism. Hence, issues bordering on revenue and expenditure seem to be front-runners of common interest, while strict political issues tend to divide communities which are heterogeneous and seek separate and common identities (co-operative governments).

Historically, the politics of federalism in Nigeria has been mainly for economic gains. This, indeed, started with the amalgamation theories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates in 1914 was Britain's idea of employing minimal resources to optimise colonial control. In other words, it was their new way of doing old things (Tamuno, 2004). The hitherto separate protectorates and colonies were administered with funds from both imperial and local sources. As their holdings enlarged, British tax-payers became unwilling to bear heavy tax burdens for the administration of these holdings. This and other economic considerations became the reasons for the amalgamation in Nigeria, without seeking nor obtaining public opinion of the locals. That is to say that the amalgamation exercise in Nigeria was just for the economic interest of Britain. They were determined to offset their precarious financial standing in the less-flourishing Northern part of Nigeria with the funds obtainable from the wealthier South. This was to enable a reduction in fiscal reliance on the limited imperial grants and aids.

From the mid-1950s, development of federalism in Nigeria was elite-based. This was expressed by the views of leaders of the political parties at the time, expressed in such constitutional conferences as the Ibadan (1950), London (1953, 1957), Lagos (1958). It is not clear whether the mass of the people were in the same page with the elites on issues of Nigeria's federalism. What is glaring is that both the mass of the population and the elites contributed to the various crises that rocked Nigeria's federalism at the formative stage.

However, the federalism did not eventually hit the brick wall because of sheer good luck but the crusade of "what unites and dives us". The elites campaigned that what united Nigeria far outweighed those that divided her. What then are these centre-seeking factors? Let us attempt a historicisation of these factors "that unite us".

The many factors ranged from appropriation of peasant surpluses, market-related population factors, crude oil export revenues etc. These are probably the cases for a federation that lessened the potency of confederation in the 1950s, and strengthened the struggle against the Biafra movement in the late 1960s. It is also imperative to comment briefly on constitutional issues of Nigerian federalism. The various independent Nigeria's constitutions have been more controversial than the colonial ones. It is obviously difficult to classify the 1960, 1963, 1979, 1989 and 1999 constitutions. Whether they were to be called true-federal, pseudo-federal, quasi-federal, militarist, centralist etc. is not clear. It appears that Nigeria's has always been a unique type of federalism invented with Nigerian emphasis, in an environment of severe fears and doubts about the commonness of political identity. This is evident in the continuous call for a sovereign national conference to right the observed wrongs.

Certain provisions of earlier mentioned Nigeria's constitutions seem anomalous for the Nigerian federal state. For instance, the 1963 constitution (and the subsequent ones) contained an appellation of "Federal Republic of Nigeria". However, how republican the federal state of Nigeria is has remained largely debatable. Irrespective of what these constitutions implied, Nigerian state has remained a multi-nation entity, with many traditional enclaves here and there, claiming national recognition and public attention. This is in contrast with what should be expected in truly federal republic arrangement. This implies that the independent Nigerian constitutions differed from their colonial counterparts in respect of creation of House of Chiefs in the regions, only in principle. Provision for the creation of a Federal Council of Traditional Rulers, as well as States Traditional Rulers Council, for advisory purposes, supports the argument that Nigeria's independence constitutions and the colonial counterparts are, in practice, no different in terms of errors on Nigerian's so-called federal republic.

People's sovereignty is another salient issue with Nigerian federalism. We are familiar with clauses such as "we the people..." in preambles of Nigeria's constitutions, 1963 – 1999. However, the ruling class, rather than the mass of the people in Nigerian society played major roles in making these constitutions, which are mere handiworks of selected few that were obviously non-representative of the interests in the Nigerian state. More so, before these concoctions became effective, neither referenda nor plebiscites took place. More often than not, a few top military officers revised and ratified them. That is to say that these constitutions took the same command disposition of the colonial constitutions. This is in clear contradistinction with the fact that, in the conduct of

federally-governed multi-ethnic nation-states, human element is the most decisive and primary factor, especially at leadership levels. This is also the significance of democracy. In this circumstance, all other factors simply play complementary (secondary) roles. In line with the foregoing thoughts, let us attempt a summarised link between Nigeria's democracy, federalism and development.

#### V. THE UNDEMOCRATIC NIGERIAN POST-COLONIAL STATE, POLITICS OF ANXIETY AND DIFFICULTIES OF REAL FISCAL FEDERAL OPTION

Ake (1996) unfortunately observed that the Nigerian post-colonial state is "inherently undemocratic". The Nigerian state has a non-conferring nature and therefore not democratic. As a result of this, it is not only regarded as restrictive but also repressive. Democracy can only thrive without participation of the masses as omelette can be tastefully served for breakfast without breaking an egg. If the actual custodians of social license and authority – the people – can consistently and successfully be estranged from matters that have direct bearing on them in a democratic dispensation, then, that democracy is either presumptuous or in dire need of a redefinition.

The feeling of alienation sustained in some regions by the real owners of both development and political authority – the people – in issues affecting their existence essentially contradicts the meaning and substance of democracy and thereby justifies the claim that Nigerian post-colonial state is characteristically undemocratic. Obviously but painfully, inherent in the Nigerian post-colonial state structures are various limitations to masses' involvement and participation. This is in flagrant disregard for, or ignorance of, the benefits derivable from the involvement of the masses in taking decisions regarding social, economic and political issues that affect them. Their activeness, acceptance and reception regarding such government policies in which they were involved would be unimaginably impressive. What may not be well known to the political class in Nigeria is that the posture of "Frankenstein's monster" (Nwaorgu, 2014) assumed by the Nigerian post-colonial state has not and may never reposition the state for sustainable development. The level of interaction between the ruling class and the governed is what largely determines the continued survival of a state, as much as it also determines the amount of democratic benefits that accrue to the masses. In this circumstance, democracy is simply elusive to a people that are perpetually estranged and alienated from the ruling class, and by implication, the state. This will in turn make the people much doubtful of the state's capacity to stand against their oppression. The high level of apathy witnessed during elections in Nigeria in recent times is suggestive of the fact that the people are becoming more sceptical about surrendering their powers and wills to a state that may never protect their interests but incessantly turns around to hunt its creator by inflicting psychological and physical pains on its citizenry. This type of state may exist

but can hardly survive. What is the point living when you cannot feel alive anyway?

Furthermore, another dimension to the undemocratic character of the Nigerian state is the irony of its legitimacy. Legitimacy of Nigerian state has been a highly contested issue. Many are of the view that the state, at various times in Nigeria's history, lacks legitimacy. As a result of its inability to build considerable level of confidence among the citizens, the Nigerian post-colonial state has always been established and run in total disregard to the people's mandate. Much as the mandate or consent of the people is not necessarily needed to establish or run the state, the political class acknowledges that the feasibility and stability of the state requires the people's consent. The people are central in governance issues. The elements of democracy which include social engineering, participation of citizens in political processes and involvement in other socio-economic activities of the society buttresses this point. People's centrality in governance also stems from the fact that they are the victims of social ills such as insecurity, conflicts and underdevelopment in its full ramification. Again, the state's legitimacy, ordinarily, flows from the people (Nwaorgu, 2014), which is why Nigeria's ruling class makes frantic efforts to manufacture legitimacy for the Nigerian post-colonial state.

In recognition of the great importance of the "square" as a component of the society (Nwaorgu, 2014), the ruling class continuously attempts to manufacture the consent needed to stabilise the state system by various means. They employ strategies such as garrisoning the social groups, in line with the repressive character of the Nigerian post-colonial state that is described as a tool for domination and oppression with the use of all available principles of Machiavelli to control, dominate, displace, exploit and confuse the society for the benefit of a few – the ruling class. Much as it is inconvenient, it is also true that majority of the people in a society as Nigeria can be conveniently oppressed by the wealthy minority who can keep in chains, the people as well as their representatives, through their wide influence consolidated by the state. One of the points gleaned from this explanation is that the state is functionally defined and characterised by the ruling class. Where repression fails or proves counterproductive, they attempt to float "make-believe" development programmes to fantasise the people while they continue with their much-desired cruel exploitation and primitive accumulation of capital in their regions (Ukachikara, 2018).

While the ruling class struggles to maintain its dominant position over the masses, similar form of strife also exists among the members of the ruling class. This "politics of anxiety" (Ake, 1985), as well as the persistent inter and intra class struggles, leaves the masses as the ultimate casualties (Nwaorgu, 2014). For instance, in the recent past, inept intra-class squabbles between two political gladiators in Rivers State resulted in total shutdown of the State judicial and legislative arms for more than one year. Innocent prison

inmates who languished while awaiting trial for over one year were some of the obvious victims of that struggle, in addition to millions of lawyers and other judicial workers who lost their only means of livelihood for that length of time. Again, politics of the budget process (and other allocation mechanisms) in Nigeria is instructive here. We have come to live with terms as “budget padding” in Nigeria’s national appropriation politics. This term and other related issues, including usual rifts between the executive and legislature over budget figures and allocations, can deny the masses their “dividends of democracy”, seven months into a given year. This is a subject of another study and needs not delay us here.

Suffice it to observe here that the form of federalism and the (intra) class struggles at all levels of the Nigerian post-colonial state are precipitated by the political economy of oil fuelled by the behaviouralists’ definition of politics to simply mean “authoritative allocation of values” or “process of deciding who gets what, when and how”, thereby equating politics with power in Nigeria. A federal state that is not only highly reliant on oil revenues for most of its capital and recurrent expenditures but also solely relies on the vehicle of the central government for the collection, distribution and redistribution of the oil wealth is most likely to be immersed in perpetual political struggle to secure the lucrative access and control of a desired proportion of oil wealth, and this goal is achievable simply by securing access and control of the state. In other words, the only attraction for those involved in this struggle in the form of seeking government offices is oil because it has become, as stated earlier, the major national wealth provider and of course the substantive benchmark (Sagay, 2001; Ukachikara, 2018) for projections in our national budget, which never translates to national development. This clarifies why the ruling class, who functionally define and characterise the state, are bonded by a common interest of domination, irrespective of their internal struggles. It is only with capture of state power that expropriation of capital for the ruling class is guaranteed. As a result of this, political associations are essentially built around political power capturing motives other than development ideologies.

Domination of the hapless majority of the population is what binds the ruling class together. As a result, the intra-class struggles never break them because what unites them is stronger than what divides them. They fight in the day in the full glare of the people and clandestinely wine together to celebrate their victory over the conquered people. This conquest syndrome (Ogali, 2012) is notably the effect of the manner Nigeria was cobbled (Ekekwe, 2012) together by European imperialism. Non-destruction of the European structures and legacies at independence (Ukachikara, 2011), as earlier noted, has meant internal colonialism where Nigerian post-colonial state and its ruling class have assumed the posture of internal imperialists subjecting the mass of the people to the position of the conquered colony with attendant underdevelopment consequences. This is the political

economy of intra-class struggles in Nigeria and by this position, the Nigerian post-colonial state seem to have missed the mark on the real essence of the state as the Marxists such as Engels presented. The stage in development of society where the state came into existence, in the Marxists’ view (as reflected in Friedrich Engel’s works), is the point of contradictory crossroads that separated society into two opposed and antagonistic classes. In order to save society from the negative effects of their antagonisms, the state arose from within and above it, for the primary purpose of impartially mediating and resolving the contradictory issues between these classes.

However, all evidences point to the fact that the Nigerian post-colonial state has entangled itself with the dominant class and has consequently become incapable of impartially mediating in the class struggles. Rather, it employs its authoritarian repressive mechanisms to subdue the dominated class and opposing members of the dominant class. The rumblings within the various sections of the ruling class is indicative of the obvious difficulty and inability of Nigerian post-colonial state to mediate, reconcile and coordinate these sections of her ruling class around one set of mutually-shared priority, in the interest of the Nigerian society. It has not succeeded in ensuring the least discipline among its elites; neither can it properly manage Nigeria’s economy in trust for the people nor create the desired avenues for social inclusion, participation and tolerance (Ihonvbere, 2000). Arising from this, Nigerian state has been seen as captured by a very little fraction of the ruling class who has succeeded in using same and its institutions to continuously terrorise hapless communities and mortgaging their future by plundering their common wealth.

Different shades of strife that exist among the elite class have continued to directly and indirectly hamper Nigeria’s development. We have situations in recent times, where two political gladiators succeed in holding an entire state to ransom in a bid to prove political points. The losses suffered by Rivers state within the past five to six years are immeasurable. The leader of APC in the state (who was a governor in the state) and the current governor of the state who is of the PDP extraction have immersed themselves in an unending political rivalry which has caused the state and its populace more fortune than imaginable. In Kogi state, the senator representing Kogi West senatorial district has been in similar altercations with the current governor of the state. This case is more intricate because they are both of the same ruling party in the state – the APC.

The problem here is not in the struggle among members of the ruling class. Neither is it an entirely strange occurrence. Rather, one may be disconcerted here because these members of the ruling class that have immersed themselves in these perpetual struggles are those expected to engineer development for the benefit of the masses, in a developmental state. In both cases in point, we find two categories of characters – a federal political office holder and

a state chief executive. In more rational societies, one would expect that the two categories of characters complement each other in ensuring the provision of the greatest good to the greatest number in those states. The federal office holders are expected to attract federal government projects to complement the development efforts of the state governors, and vice versa. But in these cases, we have seen where a state governor had accused a federal minister of deliberating blocking development in the state in order to portray the governor as a non-performing one. These types of assumptions could only survive in the kind of “feeding bottle” fiscal federalism operational in Nigeria, anyway.

Furthermore, how can one explain a situation whereby members of the political class struggle among themselves to paint a picture of having the interest of the people at heart, however real or fake those pictures are? The question is, if the essential goal of those with which state power is entrusted is to bring about development in the society, what does it matter if the developmental strides are credited to party A or B? The point to be made here is that a situation where we find different members of the ruling class in various altercations of claims and counter claims on one developmental project or the other blamelessly leaves the masses with suspicious disposition. That will mean that the interest of the political class, after all, is not the developmental benefits accruable to the masses from such projects but the cheap political points accruable from such projects.

There have been occasions (in recent times), in certain states of Nigeria including Rivers, where the management of Niger Delta Development Commission and the State Government are pitched against themselves over claims of who executed which project. This was the case in areas such as Ikwerre, Etche, Obio-Akpor and Gokana Local Government Areas of Rivers State in 2015 when an acting Managing Director was appointed shortly after the inauguration of the APC-led Federal Government of Nigeria. The PDP-led state government remained at war with the management of the NDDC, led by a card-carrying member of the opposition APC in the state. In some cases, the state governments remove NDDC project billboards to replace same with theirs, and vice versa. At other times, the state governments have argued that their permissions are required, as a matter of necessity, before NDDC can embark on any developmental project within their domains.

One might attribute the foregoing to the nature of inter-party politics in Nigeria, which is not far from what is obtainable in many other African states. But how can one explain a situation whereby this struggle takes a different dimension, involving members of the same political party? It has become a very usual norm in Nigeria for two or more factions to exist within the same political party. What causes a split in a political party, which is meant to be one political family with one political ideology? What explains the fact that certain members of a political party makes conscious

efforts to scuttle a proposed party national convention where a national chairman was meant to be elected? Why would different persons make claim to the chairmanship of one political party at the same level and at the same time?

The intra-party rumbles that eventually produced the president of Nigeria’s senate in 2015 leave us with more questions than answers. The perplexity of political observers was comprehensible. The President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, who was alleged to be against the candidature of the then senate president, was a member of the same political party with him. Why and how, then, could he be in a meeting with other party members of Nigeria’s senate in his Aso-Rock office while election into the office of the president of the senate was being conducted? Political economy of that senate principal officers’ election makes more sense in the emergence of an opposition member as the deputy senate president.

Again, what political sense does it make for a select group of members of a particular political party to institute a legal action aimed at restraining their party from conducting various levels of congresses in a state, as was the case with the APC’s Rivers, Imo, Oyo etc. congresses in 2018? What have they observed in their party that necessitated such action, damning the consequences as enshrined in their party constitution? Why will some members take daredevil actions against the emergence of a particular party gubernatorial flag bearer, in favour of another? Could it be attributed to divergence in interest, as politics is often erroneously interpreted as a game of interest? What form of, or whose, interest is considered here? The factions within the All Progressives Congress in Rivers state, occasioned by the gubernatorial interests of some of the members, are case in point in 2018. Interestingly, the set of members orchestrating these revolutionary moves within the party are those removed from the positions of party leadership at the local government levels, some months earlier. Why were they “unduly” removed and by who? Why were they dissatisfied with their removal and consequent replacement with others? Who are those used for these replacements and what was the basis for their selection? In whose interest were they selected? The political gladiators in that political party in the state might just have either good or “political” answers to these questions.

The above positions (and many more) may compel one to argue without equivocation that politics of anxiety manifesting in intra-class struggles in Nigerian post-colonial state features more prominently than its inter-class counterpart. Class struggle in Nigeria has taken another deepened dimension, and this portends more danger to the polity than inter-class conflicts. The underdevelopment implications on Nigeria are better imagined than felt. Marx’s categorisation of the capitalist state into two antagonistic classes is vaguer in Nigeria (and other African states) than he had visualised. What accounts for these struggles for legitimisation of the political class and its variants, rather than focusing on providing the greatest good for the greatest



majority for which the state exists? The answers to these questions, as well as others including the reason for the impossibility of rancour-free elections in Nigeria, are deliberately concealed in the meaning of Ake's "politics of anxiety".

The politics of anxiety presupposes that members of the Nigerian post-colonial political class are constantly enwrapped in a deep sense of alienation and suspicion because they do not have confidence in their perceived opponents and, therefore can do anything to consolidate their grip on state power and all that comes with it. Their greatest fear and anxiety is the thought of being under the controlling powers of their political adversaries. Hence, whatever is the cost of stopping opposition from taking over power, including numberless lives of the masses, is worth-the-while. Instances of this circumstance in Nigeria are not far-fetched. The increased cases of maiming, kidnapping and assassination during election periods in Nigeria speak volumes and remain informative. Factually but regrettably, this trend has been consistent in what is ever known as post-colonial Nigeria and may account for Nigeria's abysmal development level, when compared to her post-colonial contemporaries such as Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, etc.

Ironical as it may seem, it is instructive to note that the only way a faction of the ruling class can deceitfully package itself and sell to Nigerian populace is to accuse the oppositions as having failed the people. That is to say that the most frequently used and abused characterisation of the Nigerian post-colonial state is "a failed state". This failure is easily discernible from the abysmal development level as has been portrayed in Ukachikara & Asoka (2018). As noted earlier, it is ironical and sometimes ridiculous when the remark comes from those who are perceived to have failed Nigerians. One of the former chieftains of the Peoples Democratic Party, who has made several efforts in various ways to remain within the corridors of power but without much success, had come out to publicly pronounce that both PDP and APC have failed Nigerians in governance, therefore, calling for a reorientation of the masses to stand up against these failures. Well, whatever be the politics this self-acclaimed social campaigner plays with her "Red Card Movement" is unimportant here. What is significant to the study is that members of the Nigerian post-colonial ruling class who are probably not favoured by the recent political architecture have suddenly characterised the Nigerian post-colonial state as failed. More interestingly, other turns of intra-class struggles in Nigeria further proves the undemocratic disposition of the Nigerian state as claimed by other sets of Nigeria's ruling class who also seem not to be comfortable with the recent political equation of the state. Their observations are informed by the alleged actions of the Nigerian state during the electoral processes in Ekiti State in the July 2018 gubernatorial elections and Rivers State in March 2019. The undemocratic claims came from the then Ekiti State governor and his Rivers State counterpart.

However, this situation is not surprising, especially to any ambitious student of political science. If for nothing else, it has been established that the politics of any society is a clear reflection of the nature of the state and its power. Of course, politics essentially entails the pursuit and control of state power. If the nature and character of the state is well grasped, understanding and analysing the political intricacies of that state requires neither rocket science nor intellectual suicide.

It is somewhat clear that the ill-perception of politics in post-colonial Nigeria with the attendant unenthusiastic disposition of the masses towards so-called development efforts of the state is a consequence of the character of the Nigerian post-colonial state, vis-à-vis its undemocratic stature. This nature readily robs off on the vague federal option adopted by the Nigerian ruling class. There is preference for a fiscal federal option that concentrates huge power resource of the Nigerian post-colonial state on the centre to make for easier accumulation of economic resources, which are regrettably domiciled with particular regions of the country. This is sustained by extensively significant institutional corruption, as well as the exclusive control of the machinery of violence.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The attractiveness of political offices in Nigeria, reflected in the amount of wealth at the disposal of its holders, has greatly coloured Nigeria's political process, characterising the state as simply "Hobbesian", owing to the natural war-like nature of its ruling class. As a result, democratic governance is eroded, giving way to underdevelopment while social cohesion disappears because poverty reduction is substantially hindered by the weakening of state policies that have the capacity to engender growth and development that are socially inclusive. This process guarantees that considerable resources are seized by the few in positions of authority resulting to sub-delivery or non-delivery (Oxfam, 2017) of common good. It is within this context that majority of Nigeria's population keep wallowing in poverty while a small percentage swims in large oceans of wealth, amidst severe class struggles.

We have earlier established in this paper that development is a people-centred process and outcome. In other words, it is something that the people must do for themselves. If this argument is sustained, it therefore follows that the wherewithal for development must be domiciled with the people. Federalism, as noted in this study, is a form of governmental arrangement where the federating units of a particular political system share powers and functions in a participatory and cooperative manner. That is also to say that every state or region ought to be allowed to manage their resources in their best interest and remit royalties and taxes to the central government for the purposes of catering for such issues as immigration, citizenship, census, currency and defence. This is the real essence of fiscal federalism. This federal arrangement that guarantees fiscal independence of the

federating units does not only ensure sustainable development but also engenders national integration. Let us explain how.

If federalism is an institutional and organisational arrangement that adequately hold diverse states together while recognising and preserving their separate unique dispositions; if development entails the whole processes of action that improves the wellbeing of the people under just conditions of their choice, it may therefore not be presumptuous to argue that the unique dispositions of the federating units include their development needs. Recognition and preservation of this uniqueness would therefore include domiciling the resources with which they can pursue actions capable of justly improving their wellbeing under situations of their own choice. Having a feeling of taking full charge, and actually participating in their own development processes in any way, in itself, constitutes human development to the people.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conscious movement away from the federalism of oil proceeds should be encouraged. Usefulness of this recommendation is evident in the political economy of oil analysis espoused in this paper.
2. Strengthening of internal party democracies through necessary amendments in the extant electoral laws of the country.
3. Constitutional provision for what we may term “democratic fiscal federalism” in Nigeria.
4. Political education should be taken seriously and included in the various academic curricular of different educational levels.

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