

Restructuring and Regional Integration in Nigeria

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Abstract : *The centralization policy framework that drives the federal system in Nigeria is incongruous with federalism, and is therefore responsible for all the ills presently plaguing the country directly or indirectly. Restructuring is the response to the anti-federalist diversion, seeking for the re-ordering of Nigeria by granting more power, autonomy, resources and responsibilities to the states and local government and creation of new centers of growth and prosperity through regional integration. The process of doing this is not yet clear and agreed upon hence the fractious debate on the idea of restructuring. The community of experts in the social sciences is called upon to provide both the clarity and the galvanizing ideology built on multipolarity to guide the process. The confidence of the ability to do this lies in the fact that the challenge which restructuring seeks to address is not new and unique to Nigeria but part of the global crisis of contemporary democracy with available responsive tools which the country can benefit from. This policy guide note is a wake- up call to all the stakeholders, pointing out some suggested policy measures for the task.*

Keywords: *Restructuring, regional integration, centralization policy, multipolarity, debate and ideology.*

I. Introduction

The fractious, on-going debate on the idea of restructuring Nigeria may snowball into what Held and Hale (2017A and 2013) call ‘gridlock,’ with the possible consequence of the disintegration of the nation. The authoritative deflection and clarification of issues by social scientists at this point are both imperative and urgent. Indeed, prominent Nigerians, including the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria and now a first-class traditional ruler, the Emir of Kano, Lamido Sanusi (Abioye, 2017) demand henceforth, ‘intelligent dialogue’ that is ‘extensive and yielding lasting positive results’ (Olumilua, 2017). Two realities, that the restructuring of Nigeria has become inevitable but the current trajectory fraught with impairments of ambiguities, have prompted the latest calls for intelligent guide. The debate on restructuring Nigeria has within its short history of resurgence been intense and evolutionary. As is conventional with social movement, at its vortex, the underlying idea must be clarified, conceptualized and crystalized into common action perspectives or it loses its import.

Restructuring is an opportunity and the academia must not miss it to assert its relevance in contributing to national development. There is a possibility to misjudge the signs of time, given that some prominent persons, including a few members of the ‘club of presidency’ have said that Nigeria’s sovereignty is not negotiable (Odesola, Aworinde and Eniola, 2016). That the debate has been inflamed thereafter beckons on the social science community to work within the anticipatory perspective (Ukpog, 2017A) by heeding the warning of Foa and Mounk (2016: 5-6):

“The collective failure of social scientists, policy makers, and journalists to take seriously the possibility that the Soviet bloc might collapse should serve as a warning. Even the best-trained and most methodologically rigorous scholars are liable to assume that the recent past is a reliable guide to the future, and that the extreme events are not going to happen”.

Guiding the debate on the idea of restructuring Nigeria is feasible when it is considered that the issue or problem being confronted is not unique or peculiarly strange but located in the array of global crisis of contemporary democracy. In this context, existing tools, solutions and advancements made elsewhere can be adapted to deal with the challenges at hand in Nigeria. As Hale and Held (2017A and 2017B) have asserted, global issues penetrate deeply into core domestic concerns and therefore ‘focusing on the internal development of national politics alone, as has typically been the trend in academia, does not help us unlock the deep drivers of change’.

The current wide clamours for restructuring is an integral part of the crisis of contemporary democracy not unique to Nigeria. It has become this agitated because its symptoms were either denied, unseen or ignored. More fundamentally helpful here at this point is the assertion that guiding the enterprise of restructuring with 'ideology' (Harry, 2016) will provide a rallying point for all the stakeholders and away from the problem confronting the country.

The debate on restructuring Nigeria is depressingly disparate, promoting extreme proposals like the disintegration of the nation, for instance. There is near absence of agreement on what restructuring is, forcing most recently, some exponents to amplify on what restructuring is not (Olumilua, 2017). There are as many divergent objectives of restructuring as are the proponents. However, there is consensus on the key driving force of restructuring Nigeria. It is the federal government and its unitary, federalist centralization policies that have generated the resentment called restructuring. This is particularly traced back to the inception of military rule in Nigeria in 1966 and the subsequent abrogation of the independence and 1963 constitutions that entrenched regionalism in the country.

What happened was that with a military fiat, the military transferred resources and huge responsibilities from the regions, and later States, to the central government and delivered dismally on both fronts subsequently. This is demonstrated in two sectors for example. Gen. Yakubu Gowon's military regime introduced 'the culture of robbing Peter to pay Paul' which has recently been christened by the Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, as 'feeding bottle federalism'. Gowon's military regime dropped accruals to federating units on the basis of derivation principle from 50 percent at independence in 1960 to 45 percent in 1971; and the downward trend continued to zero percent in from 1979-1981 and raised upward to the present 13 percent in 1999. This policy in essence translated into 'a culture of creating more shareable/free monies for all, irrespective of their input into the federal purse. Still wonder why agriculture and agriculture are dead?' (Anichukwu, 2014). It is established from Nigerian experience that asymmetry revenue allocation kills competitiveness and engenders conflict and decay (Walter and James, 2016).

Education provides the second example. In 1977, with a stroke of pen, the Federal Military Government implemented the Schools Takeover (Validation) Decree, where all missionary secondary schools were unilaterally expropriated. The Federal Government has since established 104 Unity (secondary) schools and owns 40, out of the total 152 universities in the country. But the assessment of the policy considers it 'disastrous' with 'negative impact'. For instance, the results of the May/June 2015 West African Senior School Certificate Examination is depressing, showing that no candidate in four of the 104 unity schools obtained the five credits required for university admission. This year, the body responsible for admission into Nigerian universities, the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) had lowered the cut-off mark to 100 (out of 400) - the lowest in the history of Nigeria to accommodate the laggard zones of the country. The sector is in 'disarray' and recent attempts at further 'centralizing education' only deepens the crisis (Punch Editorial, 2017).

The policy framework that drives the federal system in Nigeria is largely said to be 'incongruous with federalism' since the latter is 'designed primarily to protect the minorities, take care of diversities, distribute power vertically and give priority to the aspiration of the people at the grass roots since the federating units are closer to the people than the government at the center' (Punch Editorial, 2016). Polycarp (2017) concluded by asserting that 'all the ills presently plaguing the country are directly or indirectly a consequence of the anti-federalist diversion Nigeria took in 1966' and accordingly must retrace the wrong pathway. 'The solution to the mess is to grant real autonomy to the states, local government to play their parts by whittling down the powers of the Federal Government' and to adopt 'policies that promote solutions, not chaos' (Punch Editorial, 2017). This affirmed a seminal direction earlier conceived by the Governors of South-South Nigeria expressed at the end of the Second South-South Economic Summit held in Asaba, April 26-28, 2012. They recommended that 'the Federation should be restructured and unbundled, including the review of the current revenue allocation formula to give more powers, responsibilities and funding to the States and Local Government as centers of growth, as well as reviewing the current policies and regulations' (Ukpong, 2013:444).

Beyond this point of adopting by consensus restructuring as an approach to addressing a malfunctioning federation, there is no such clarity in the meaning and process of the approach. This applies equally to the task of identifying the nature of the policy framework that will drive the desired restructuring and its outcomes. As earlier noted, Nigeria has a deficient policy milieu (Ukpong, 2017B and 1989). This is where 'enlightened Nigerians' are called in to provide 'modern thinking' on the way forward on restructuring Nigeria (Adegoroye, 2017). There is a dearth of such lead so far. There are too few empirical studies available on the subject matter. This paper, being a wake-up call, sensitizes the relevant stakeholders to the urgent task that beckons.

Restructuring is a subject matter of interest not just to students of politics but the policy making community, given the root cause of the issue in Nigeria. The paper identifies and briefly summarizes the broad issues of the debate on restructuring Nigeria and points to possible policy direction to follow in the immediate future. This is done devoid of theorizing and deliberately so to invoke common engagement in the conversation and suggested action framework. It is a policy note, to provide guidelines. Policy notes are known for simplicity and brevity.

Being an evolving issue essentially on the public domain, the data are drawn basically from newspapers and magazines and supplemented by data from troves of official documents. The qualitative analysis is drawn from the contents of the secondary data. Given the public interest and enthusiasm in the subject, everyday reporting on the issue is wide and rich. Representation categories was employed in the use of available literature.

II. Understanding the Restructuring Debate

How best can restructuring be explained, using simple, everyday language? This has become necessary given the apparent confusion and sometimes, imposed perspectives in the literature. Many analogies have been employed to draw this point home. As already indicated above, metaphors like ‘feeding bottle federalism’, ‘distant central government’ and ‘awoof-economy’ have been used to illustrate the kernel of the issue. Restructuring as an idea speaks of the existence of old and persistent problems that need new ideas as solution. It is about new thoughts and initiatives that will strength the nation and help to reposition the citizens’ mindset towards the strengthening of the union and cooperation to make the country function effectively in prosperity for all. Underpinning this is the imperative of ‘re-ordering’ or ‘re-starting’ and energizing a system that has come to a standstill or being in comatose state (Ogundowole, 2014).

Held and Hale’s (2017B) concept of ‘gridlock’ illustrates, with deep insights, this situation which restructuring covers. Gridlock occurs when there is a breakdown in cooperation and rational policy making. It freezes problems-solving capacity. It engenders the crisis of democracy as the politics of compromise and accommodation gives way to populism and authoritarianism. This in turn generates measures to contain the breakdown and consequent crisis. The emergence of ‘multipolarity’ is a logical response. Multipolarity is a positive sign of development and brings more voices, options, capabilities and interests to the table. This framework is best illustrated at the global or grand level but can be equally scaled down to guide a particular lower-scenario of a country (see figure 1).

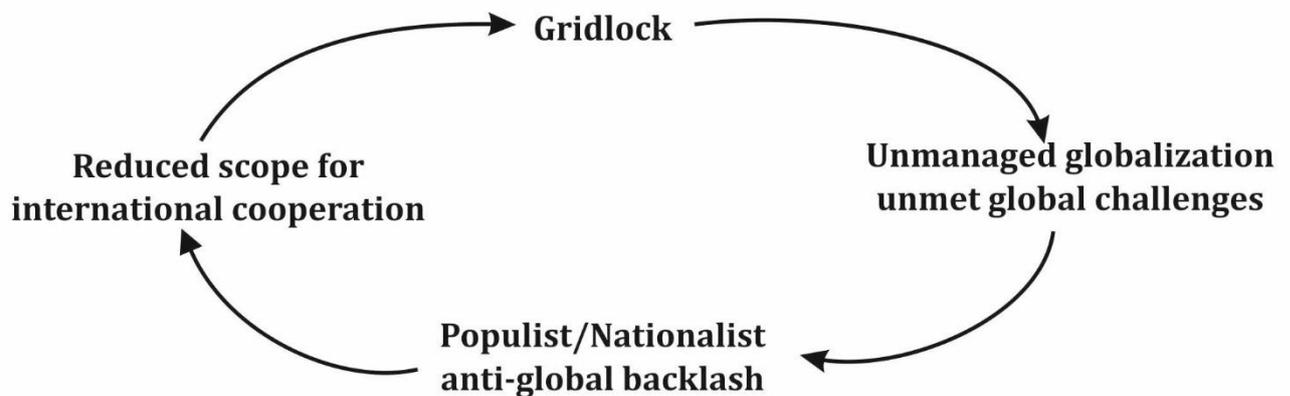


Fig. 1 Gridlock
Source: Held and Hale, 2017B

This model can reasonably facilitate answer to the question, why gridlock or as in this instance, why restructuring? This question has been a primary issue in the debate on restructuring Nigeria. Gridlock conceptual framework can limit the answer to specific boundaries to attain common perspective. Using the framework, answer to the question why restructuring as found in the literature is summarized here (see Table 1). A litany of reasons is found in the literature (Polycarp, 2017).

Table 1: Reasons for Restructuring Nigeria

	Reasons	Expressive Quality and expectations
1	Restoration of Effective governance (not politics)	Nigeria positively restored to golden era and ‘conditions’ of restoration stipulated. ‘Our demand is therefore NOT for a previously unknown Nigeria; we only demand a return to a Nigeria that worked for human progress and development’.
2	Reinstatement of Regionalism	Raising of regional development ethos and building of local leadership capacity for the assignment. ‘Indeed, the rivalry for regional success resulting from a truly federating Nigeria will boost sustainable development across all zones of the country’.
3	Delivery of Responsibilities	Strengthening of government at all levels-federal, state and local to discharge assigned responsibilities. All federating constituents must be strong and for the right reason.
4	Quality of Policy choices	Removal of current perverse incentive system - ‘the Awoof-economy of unearned monthly allocations’. End the situation where the central government will no longer +be able to automatically pool funds unevenly from different parts of Nigeria, while redistributing the same funds unfairly and inequitably (at the expense of the larger contributor).
5	Enthronement of competitiveness and achievement values	End forced equalization among federating units and instead prioritize wealth creation through innovativeness, R&D and economic value chain. ‘A restructured Nigeria will make every region/zone/area of the country an economic growth and wealth creating zone’
6	Towards a true federalism	End centralization in all forms as state policy. Move away from ‘political solutions’ to pragmatic socio-economic drivers and structures. A forward looking enterprise with the goal of change. ‘In all, we must devolve more powers and resources from the Federal Government and de-emphasise federal allocation as a source of sustenance of states. We need to start producing again and collecting taxes’. The new economic efforts also include regional integration.

The salient impediments to national development which restructuring seeks to unblock are presented in the framework of reasons and relevance above. The ambivalence in the Janus’ dual face of restructuring is also not hidden. The duality in restructuring of both looking backward and forward can present conceptual problems, leading to faulty actions. Over all, restructuring functions to ‘allow all the federating units to have the latitude to develop at its own pace for the overall development of the entire country’ (Adegoroye, 2017). It engenders peaceful co-existence and rapid development (Harry, 2016).

III. The Restructuring Debate

The on-going debate is occasioned by the inherent duality in the idea of restructuring as already illustrated (see Table 1). Restructuring connotes change, ‘change not chaos or anarchy or destruction’ (Olumilua, 2017). Change is perceived differently. These two attributes undergird the debate that has characterized the resurgence of the idea of restructuring. The broad issues of the debate have been identified and categorized (see Table 2). A very brief summary of the issues by categories is presented in this sections. This is at the risk of oversimplification and omission.

Restructuring has become inevitable at this point in the country, given the official endorsements it has received from major stakeholders-government, non-state actors, traditional rulers and institutions, pan socio-political-cultural organizations, ethnic nationalities, etc.-as shown in the selected literature. The convocation of the National Conference on March 17, 2014 by the then President Goodluck E. Jonathan and the current consideration of the provisions of its report for possible inclusion in the 1999 Constitution Amendment by the National Assembly (NASS) represent the highest form of endorsement of the restructuring enterprise so far (NCR, 2014; Ameh, 2016; and Abioye, 2017). This overwhelming approval dwarfs the minor but vocal voices of rejection of restructuring, whose main argument is that what Nigeria needs now is good governance, good leadership, reorientation of citizens’ mindset and elimination of dictatorship rather than restructuring (Baiyewu, 2016; and Ibrahim, 2016).

Table 2: Suggested Matrix of Restructuring Nigeria

Issues	Perspectives	Conceptual Clarity/Ideology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dimensions of Restructuring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total • Political • Economic 	Weak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressive Forms/Modes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disintegration/Break-up • Decentralization • Devolution • Competitive Federalism • Fiscal Federalism • Resource Control • Regionalism 	Robust
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue (conference/confab) • Constitutionalism • Non-Constitutional Renewal (Constitutional Infidelity) • Legal Action (Law/Decree Repeal) • Violence • Voluntary Break-up 	Narrow
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralist Tendencies/Inept Government (Federal) • Ethnic Nationalism/convulsions • Religious ferments • Historical antecedents • Harsh Economic Realities 	Weak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals • Political agencies • Government • Pan socio-political-cultural groups 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time Frame 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate • Short Term • Incrementalism 	Vague
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived stakeholders' Outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winners-Regionalists • Losers-Centralists 	Vague

What is the extent of restructuring anticipated? A few who consider the 'total' or comprehensive 're-ordering' of Nigeria call for reform in all sectors and at all levels. The NCR 2014 is the best representative of this group which seeks to 'build a fresh national consensus for the amicable resolution of issues that still cause friction'. NCR 2014 contains resolutions and policy measures on 20 sectors, from Agriculture and Water Resources to Transportation. No doubt, attention has been focused on restructuring as a political concern than economic imperative. Only recent discussions have moved to the economic dimension as a right paradigm shift, with focus on regional integration as measure of wealth creation and shared prosperity on competitive mode than the parasitic framework promoted by political concern.

Two sharp and opposite ends are presented in the debate on the form of expression of restructuring. Those who call for the break-up of Nigeria, though considered a 'reckless' option (Adegoroye, 2017), consider that all forms of cooperation and compromise have broken down - premised mainly on the issue of the resource/revenue allocation than production. 'Dislocated revenue allocation have accelerated the wide clamours for separation, separatists tendencies, threat to remove Nigerian flag' (Walter and James, 2016:307). The alternative to the politically induced disintegrative form is the economic pathway which seeks inclusive participation on competitive, healthy rivalry way, using regional integration. 'Regional integration does not offered the spirit of the constitution and the spirit of federalism' (Teniola, 2016). Fiscal federalism, resources control and devolution have easy accommodation within the expression of regionalism as entity within the nation.

Historically, Nigeria has a poor record of reforming the political system through constitutionalism (which includes constitutional conferences) given the usual legitimacy contests and the ‘relative marginality and ineffectiveness of the amendments’ that are usually allowed (Suberu, 2014). The new initiative promoted is the adoption of what is called ‘non-constitutional renewal’ which permits constitutional infidelity. The generally acceptable use of the six geo-political zones in the country as the basis of political actions, even though not in the 1999 constitution, is the commonly cited example of ‘constitutional infidelity’ (Suberu, 2014). The political zones can also be converted to economic zones. It is a creative strategy. Notwithstanding, dialogue is recommended above violence for all strategies, to allow citizens to decide freely and with understanding. ‘It is in freedom that creative energy unfolds without impediment of any kind’ (Ogundowole, 2014).

Centralization as a state policy, which introduced skewed institutions in favor of the Federal Government and ‘destroyed robust and competitive post-independence federal structures’ (Punch Editorial, 2017:16) has been identified as the strongest driver of the current debate. Centralization is linked to revenue allocation. It was the beginning of export of crude oil that introduced centralization as a state policy under the military, raising the resource-curse mantra in Nigeria. This explains why restructuring resonates loudly in South-South Nigeria, resource control and ethnic militancy. ‘Sadly, the military had to abrogate the regional constitution as well as the federal constitution. Everything became centralized at a time when crude oil export started. Consequently, no regard was given to the state or communities that produced oil and which bore the brunt’ (Otumara, 2014; Ikoh and Ukpong, 2013). Consequently, restructuring seeks to end and reverse the negative outcome through the (re) creation of new local growth and innovative points away from the inept center.

The debate on the idea of restructuring oscillates between political necessity and economic imperative and is about the nostalgia with the past and the determination to break forth into a brave future with new constellation of policies and values that damn authoritarianism and parasitism. The pendulum swings in favor of paradigm shift towards economic concern as the country is in dire need of development, prosperity, peace and progress.

IV. Regional Integration

It is wrong to assume that the debate on restructuring is framed as political necessity versus economic imperative. It has been that there had been, until very recently, preponderance of voices about political concerns in the course of nation building as against economic considerations for national development. Regional integration brings both economic and political consideration into a nexus. The focus of the debate and the literature on regional integration is however feeble and scanty. But available evidence indicate that regional integration receives ample attention as a focused issue in the debate. Regional integration is framed in political economy perspective. This section presents briefly, what regional integration is considered to be and its strengths in addressing the concerns of restructuring Nigeria.

Regional integration is considered as an appropriate, innovation response to the inhibitions of the central Federal Government. At both its First and Second South-South Nigeria Economic Summits held in Calabar, April 23-25, 2009 and Asaba, April 26-28, 2012 with the themes ‘Positioning the South-South Nigeria for Global Competitiveness’ and ‘Integrating South-South Nigeria for Sustainable Development’ respectively, the six Governments and people of the South-South Nigeria presented regional integration as “inspiration for the creation of a new economic bloc that promotes the accelerated developments and prosperity of the Region as well as serving as a ‘thriving center of national growth’. This is considered a logical response to the lethargy of the center (Ukpong, 2009; 2013A). The South-South Nigeria’s perspective is that regional integration is ‘internally motivated and driven by the principle of comparative advantage in the quest for wealth production or prosperity creation’ (Ukpong, 2013B:6). Elsewhere, regional integration is presented as divisive and a response to the failure of the central government. However, South-South Nigeria demonstrated it as a positive and healthy framework not just for the zone but the entire country. The success of the model in the zone is expected to stimulate competitiveness and replication in other zones and also create many development centers in the nation.

Regional integration is perceived alongside the inevitability of restructuring Nigeria (Teniola, 2016). Regionalism, regional autonomy and regional integration have been used synonymously in the literature to call attention to the same issue of empowering a group of states by enlarging the space, resources and legitimate authority to do more and better for the citizens. It is seen as a new paradigm, focusing on regional development with autonomy within the federal system (Oluniyi, 2014).

Using an earlier work (Ukpong, 2013B:5-9), the necessity, opportunities and dynamics of regional integration are summarized here. Best analyzed from the perspective of political economy, the factors that promote integration fall under what is generally called development challenges and include issues like:

- Small economic spaces with low income
- Widespread poverty
- Weak production structures exemplified in poor and inadequate infrastructure
- Small and inadequate human and physical capital stock
- Weak institutions
- Inappropriate policies and laggard reforms.

Integration can overcome these challenges by

- Reaping the benefits of economics of scale
- Providing the nexus for stronger competition and more investment
- Engendering cooperation which increases bargaining power and visibility
- Inducing institutional building and strengthening
- Compelling coordination of economic and social policies
- Advancing good governance
- Combining or harnessing forces and resources and presenting a unified approach

Regional integration, even at sub-national level as this, comes with the positive strength of multipolarity-more actors and capabilities in healthy competition. Integration, gearing towards 'fuller union' has been advocated, especially in the South West Zone. The strongest incentive or boost for regional integration presented so far, ironically is the historical antecedent, a backward looking to the past, the 'golden era' of the 1960s where regionalism had reigned (Gbadegesin, 2011). 'Intelligent' analysis needs to say whether mere nostalgia provides good ground for the demonstration of such huge self confidence in regionalism as expressed in the literature.

V. The Paths to Consolidation

The federal government, other governments and stakeholders which hitherto had lived in self-denial about restructuring Nigeria have now come to terms with the reality of the idea. According to Emir Lamido Sanusi, 'we cannot continue to live in denial of the need for restructuring' (Abioye, 2017). Stripped of any subtleties, the Federal Government has been 'ordered' to restructure Nigeria, given the perceived 'human and development-oriented' benefits to all Nigerians (Adewole and James, 2016). According to Gbadegesin (2011), even while waiting for formal and 'essential restructuring at the center', certain gains impressed upon by the restructuring Nigeria debate have been recorded. As these are matter of further and full studies and analyses, they are merely highlighted here to include:

- Some regions, based on the present six geo-political structure of Nigeria, have pushed significantly towards regional integration, starting with the South-South Nigeria that has set up the BRACED (Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Delta states) Commission and for the South Western Nigeria, the DAWN (Development Agenda for Western Nigeria) Commission, as vehicles to facilitate regional integration (Atoyebi, 2016; Ukpong, 2009 and 2013A). In fact the former Western Region is at the fore front in the push for regional autonomy (Punch, 2014).
- The South East Zone has also joined the trend of regional integration. It brings an innovation of further expanding the space for competitive cooperation. It joined the South-South Nigeria by creating the South-South and South East Governors' Forum with the primary objective of accelerating regional and economic integration to enhance development of the area. The impetus for this is 'the deliberate neglect by the Federal Government in the provisions of basic development infrastructure and appointments' (Chinowo, 2017; The Guardian, 2014).
- As anticipated, since the initiative of setting up BRACED Commission in 2009, other similar bodies have been set up in other zones of the country, notably in the South. They include, the DAWN Commission and the South East Nigeria Economic Commission (SENEC). Although they are yet to be fully established and operational, they remain the visible instrument of commitment towards regional integration within the national economy.
- There is indication that the vanguard states of regional integration are silently and internally re-ordering their states' institutions and systems to become competitive and geared towards global penetration. The National Competitiveness Council of Nigeria Report, the first ever Sub-National Index, launched on November 2, 2017 ranked Lagos first closely followed by Delta, Rivers, Niger, Enugu, Edo, Jigawa and Abia states. The Index presents a 'significant platform for research and discussion' as well highlights Nigeria's continued challenges in its competitiveness drive (Chimma and Elusoji, 2017).

- Nigeria is disposed to restructuring following the non-violence strategy. The national indignation towards the advocates of the disintegration of Nigeria is historically unprecedented. Whether the target of condemnation is an individual, like the former Vice Chancellor and spokesman of the Northern Elders' Forum, Prof. Ango Abdulahi, or a collectivity like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), the intensity of disapproval is the same (Adegrooye, 2017 and Aluko, Ajaja and Alagbe, 2017).

As the National Conference 2014 Report reminds us, characteristically, all reports on government processes embody proposal of 'policy guidelines' for implementation (NCR, 2014:17). It is pertinent to suggest a few key policy issues that have emerged from the study:

- **Rethinking tools and disposition of national policy making-** Centralization as a state policy underpins the current debate on restructuring Nigeria. It is obvious that both the tools and informing premise of Nigerian public policy are outdated, not nationalistic and destroyed by the federal character syndrome. Nigeria is in urgent need of synergy of public policies.
- **Avoid the creation of confusing fragmentation of authority-** The Federal Government is said to choke up the space, with little attention or sensitivity to the needs of the citizens at the local level. This comes with parallel layers of other authorities of the state and local government, for instance, over the same issue. Greater devolution, including the establishment of community police, for instance, is being urgently sought.
- **Engender cooperation by agreement, not by bullying-** The current agitations by the various pan socio-political-cultural organizations may in fact be a reaction to the various forms of imposition in the country. At the same time, the various brilliant and creative actions for economic improvement at the sub-national level indicate the desire for space to compete positively for wealth creation. Policies that promote solutions are now needed.
- **Create a community of Experts to galvanize action –** It is a national imperative to constitute a body of non-partisan experts to deepen the understanding of the process, suggest the galvanizing ideology and propose the innovative ways forward. There is a dearth of such informed and respected guide in the country.

VI. Conclusion

Globally, there is a crisis of contemporary democracy. The debate on restructuring Nigeria is a local expression of this. The challenge is not simply political, it is as well an economic concern. There is a rejection of a central imposition and a demand for creative, competitive growth centers at the local level. This is what the debate on restructuring Nigeria is about. However, the process of attaining this is not quite clear at the moment so the community of social scientists should rise to its responsibility of providing conceptual clarity and galvanizing the citizens through a working ideology built on multipolarity to engender development and prosperity.

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