Accommodative Strategies in Nigerian Federalism Since Independence

Ozy B. Orluwene, JP

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ACCOMMODATIVE STRATEGIES IN NIGERIAN FEDERALISM
SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Ozioma B. Orluwene and Jones M. Jaja, (Ph.D.)

Abstract

This paper primarily illustrates how the practice of Federalism in Nigeria has made her an epitome and pioneer of federalism in Africa in the use of power sharing mechanisms and practice to promote inter-ethnic inclusiveness or discourage sectional imbalance and bias in decision-making processes. This practice of federalism in Nigeria has also validated the idea that federalism is adopted with a view to ensuring unity of the people and faith in their fatherland so as to further the end of liberty, equality and justice in the country. This observation has led us to conclude that it is these integrative mechanisms that have been holding the convoluting federation together.

Introduction

In the African continent, Nigeria is the richest exhibition hall of political experiments characterized by wide gaps between theory and practice, vision and reality. The frequency with which these experiments are conducted and the deterioration or stagnation which follows rather than improving in the quality of governance, tends to validate the French saying that ‘the more things change, the more they stay the same’. For observers unfamiliar with our political sentiments and impulses, the country is simply enigmatic, as it has persisted as a nation in spite of these experiments marked quite often by costly mistakes.

Viewed against the causes of political upheavals and disintegration elsewhere, and whatever else it shows, the patience and understanding with which Nigerians live through these experiments provide a remarkable example of a people’s determination to build a virile democratic nation-state which enable her to further the end of liberty, equality and justice in the country with a view to ensuring the unity of the people and faith in their fatherland. It is therefore the major objective of this study to highlight those integrative mechanisms that have been holding the convoluting federation together as one of the settled imperatives of our national life.

This paper is divided into five segments. The first is introduction. The second is the theoretical framework of the paper. The third examines the conceptual clarification. The accommodative strategies to national integration are looked at in the fourth segment. While the final sections are suggestions and conclusion

Theoretical Framework

There exists an avalanche of eminent theorists that produced extensive interaction in the field of inter-group relation in plural societies/states. Integration theory had served as an effective way of achieving and preserving both
integration and stability in deeply divided societies. The Nigerian nation-state is a pluralist state and there are many theories of national integration, which would be suitable for studying the Nigerian national-state. Some of the theoretical approaches include the functionalist, the federalist and the cybernetic. The functionalist approach requires the study of Nigeria within the primordial ethnic, cultural, economic, linguistic and religious heterogeneity and the need to drive the citizens into a homogenous unit, which may permit participatory government (Hass, 1964). This may be performed through the process of political socialization.

The federalist model extols the creation of a central government that coordinates the constituent units. While the cybernetic approach emphasises the establishment of contacts and promotion of interactions through which the component units would understand and appreciate themselves better. These approaches are said to contribute to effective national integration, which fosters political unification of the component parts into one whole unit.

To this extent, this study adopts integration theory as propounded by Myron Weiner. According to Weiner (1965), integration may refer to the process of having together culturally and socially discrete groups into a single territorial unit. This definition presupposes that there is in existence an ethnically-pluralist society in which each group is characterized by its own language or other self-conscious cultural qualities. This territorial integration implies that the territory must be in existence under the control of one state and one government like the Nigerian State and that the authority of the central government must be firmly established over all the country’s territories.

The ultimate goal of national integration as a process (irrespective of the preferred strategy) therefore, is the political unification of the constituent units into one whole nation, the type of Plato’s polis (city-state). This is known as the process of state building as opposed to the process of nation building.

National integration is one among the five types of integration identified by Weiner. The others are: territorial, value, elite-mass and integrative behaviour (Weiner, 1965). According to Weiner, national integration refers specifically to the problem of creating a sense of territorial nationality, which overshadows or eliminates-subordinate parochial loyalties. This integration involves amalgamation of disparate social, economic, religious, ethnic, and geographic elements into a single nation-state, a homogenous entity, the like of Plato’s Polis, the city-state. This kind of integration implies both the capacity of government to control the territory under its jurisdiction as well as to stimulate a set of popular willingness by the people to place national interest above local or parochial concern towards the nation generally. Also, where national integration thrives, the individuals realize their rights and privileges, identify fully with the state and owe allegiance to it because they see themselves as standing in direct relation with it (Plato, 1969).
Conceptual Clarification

Concept of Federalism, its Evolution and Operation in Nigeria

The concept of federalism has attracted the attention of scholars, political activists, politicians and public affairs commentators over the years. The earliest and most profound theoretical exposition is probably the 85 essays that appeared in 1788 under the now famous title “The Federalist”. These essays were actually written in defence and support of the 1787 Constitution of the United States of America.

Federalism is a term described as a structural device for managing the affairs of a plural society. A considerably large number of scholars have written extensively on the concept of federalism. It has almost become a convention to begin its conceptualization with the work of Kenneth C. Wheare generally regarded as the originator of the modern concept of federalism (Okoko, 1998:16).

Wheare (1963:1), conceptualized federalism with the American union as the basis of his thesis. He sees federalism as the formal division of powers between levels of government. According to him:

- federal government is an association of states so organized that power are divided between a general government which in certain matters independent of the governments of the associated states, and on the other hand, state governments, which in certain matters are in their turn, independent of the general government.

Wheare (1963:10), further states that people will adopt the federal system if they desire a single coercive force in some aspects and independent of the units in other aspects. He added that, “by the federal principle, I mean the method of dividing powers so that general and regional governments are each within a sphere, co-ordinate and independent”.

This statement of the federal principle is qualified by Wheare’s pointing out that it is a principle of organization and practice whose ultimate test is how the federal system operates. Wheare further listed conditions under which such a polity can exist and be sustained. These include among others, the formal and legal divisions of powers and responsibilities among levels of government as manifested in a written constitution, the establishment of an independent judicial system particularly the Supreme Court.

Although, Wheare has been criticized by other commentators for being legalistic, formal, rigid, euro-centric and idealistic, his formulation continued to serve as the springboard for subsequent analyses.

Appadorai (1975:495), in his postulation expressed the dire need for clear division in certain issues under mutual agreement. He explains that:

- a federal state is one in which there is a central authority that represents the whole and acts on behalf of the common interest, and in which there are also provincial or state authorities with powers of legislation and administration within the sphere allotted to them by the constitution.
According to him, federalism is a political contrivance intended to reconcile national unity with the maintenance of state rights. He also recognized the formal division of governmental powers by the constitution and the supremacy of constitution as distinctive features of federalism.

Awa (1976:1), sees federalism:
as the coming together of different (sometimes also distinct) political units under a single political umbrella, a central authority (government) that faithfully represents the whole and acts on behalf of the whole in such areas as external affairs, which are in a sort of social contract agreed to be to the mutual interest of the different constituent units.

Nwabueze (1983:1), throws more light on the concept by stating that: federalism is an arrangement whereby powers of government within a country are shared between a national (nation-wide) government and a number of regionalized (i.e., territorially localized) governments in such a way that each exists as a government separately and independently from the others, operating directly on persons and property within its territorial area with a will of its own and its own apparatus for the conduct of its affairs and with an authority in some matters exclusive of all others.

Thus, federalism implies and involves:

a) The existence of more than one level of government (central government), as powers and functions are vertically shared among the federal, regional, or state, as well as the local governments within each having its own constitution, flag, coat of arms, anthem, etc.

b) The powers and functions of each level of government are derived not from the central government but directly from the constitution and are separate vertically between the tiers of government.

c) These powers are usually explicitly embedded in the legislative lists – exclusive (for the federal government), concurrent (for federal and states/regions), and residual (for regions/states or local governments).

d) The existence of written and rigid constitutions.

e) Separation of powers among the various organs of government.

f) Balanced sizes of federating components.

g) Adequate funds to enable each component unit and the federal government operate.

h) Dispersed authority since the different tiers of government have their respective functions.

i) Resources in regions or states are controlled by the states and an agreed quantum paid into the central pool.

j) The various levels of government operate as coordinates and equals, instead of subordinates or super-ordinates (Wheare, 1963; Ransom, 1943).
Federalism in actuality is all about treaty making. Therefore, it could be contended that without the legal framework, it would be difficult for sociological factors to work effectively.

From the above, three things are clear. First is that, constitutional specification is the starting point of any federal arrangement. Secondly, social, political and cultural factors determine and affect the nature of any federal system. Thirdly, federalism is a concept for promoting unity in diversity and has to be worked upon by the country to reflect economic, social, cultural and historical reality.

The Evolution and Operation of Federalism in Nigeria

The people and territories that make up what is today called Nigeria lived in chiefdoms, kingdoms, emirates/sultanates, empires or republics before British colonial invasion. Nigeria’s colonial experience began from the 1851 invasion of Lagos and its eventual annexation in 1861 as a British colony. Further colonial activities through the Royal Niger Company led to the creation of the Oil Rivers Protectorate which was re-named Niger Coast Protectorate in 1896 and the eventual establishment of the southern and Northern Protectorates. In 1906, Lagos Colony and Southern protectorates were merged. While in 1914, the Southern and Northern protectorates were amalgamated to create Nigeria (Tamuno, 1989).

The Clifford Constitution (1922), began with a unitary system of government, while the Richards Constitution (1946) recognizing the diverse nature of Nigerians aimed at creating a political system within which the diverse elements in the country may progress amicably and smoothly into unity without sacrificing the principles and ideas in their divergent ways of life. Thus, regionalism was introduced into Nigeria by this constitution. The Macpherson Constitution (1951), stamped the regional arrangement on Nigeria granting greater autonomy to the regions, thus introducing quasi-federalism into the country. It was the Lyttelton Constitution (1954), which brought the federal principle more progressively into the country as it introduced three legislative lists – exclusive, concurrent and residual. The country gained independence in 1960 on a federal platform. The independence Constitution had three legislative lists: the exclusive list with about 45 items including defence, currency, immigration, external relations, etc; concurrent list containing about 25 items including higher education, industrial development, tourism, census, etc., and residual powers containing items such as primary and secondary education, health, public works, marketing boards, and others (Akpan, 1983).

Nigeria obtained independence with three regions: Northern, Western and Eastern regions. But contrary to all known principles of federalism, the North was deliberately made larger than the East and West combined. A fourth region – the Mid-west – was created in 1962. The regions were politically powerful, and economically very viable and buoyant. They made foreign policy statements, took external loans and had foreign offices. Each region had its own constitution,
coat of arms, flag, anthem, etc; and was “sovereign” in its area of legislative jurisdiction. The federal government was thus very cautious in its domestic and foreign policies and actions especially over Israel and the Middle East. Each region had enough resources to meet its obligations and responsibilities to its people (Crowder, 1978).

The 1963 Republic Constitution retained the federal principle, and the three legislative jurisdictions. This constitution endured until 15th January, 1966 when the Nigerian military took over government of the country. The country witnessed tumults and crisis, which impinged upon the then existing structural arrangement. It could be safely said that there was no serious threat to the federal system in that our fiscal federalism took full cognizance of the need for diversification. The vision that the region should develop their economic potentials accounted for the diversified national economic base of those years: groundnut in the Northern, palm produce in the Eastern and Cocoa in the Western Regions. The phenomenal infrastructural development in those regions in the relatively short period of their existence, lends credence to the importance of diversification. Besides, sub-system autonomy had the salutary effect of imposing responsible economic management on the regions based on the provision of the 1963 Republican Constitution (chapter IX), 50 percent of the proceeds of any royalty or mining rents was paid to the Regions from where the mineral including oil were extracted (Anam-Ndu, 1993).

In the First Republic (1960–1965) period, federalism was maintained within the context of a democratic independent nation-state as well as structure and relation of power provided training for Nigerian nationalist who controlled the regional governments. Nevertheless, some ominous seeds, which were to signal disintegration, were sown during that period. We refer to the 1963 census figures and the TIV riots of 1964 before then the crisis in the Western Region in 1962, which led to the declaration of state of emergency, which amounted to virtual take-over of that region by the federal government with all its attendant consequences for regional autonomy, democratic governance, national unity and cohesion (Nwolise, 2005).

By May, 1999, the military had ruled Nigeria for over 29 out of the nearly 39 years of the country’s history as a sovereign state since independence from Britain in October, 1960. Civilian rulers on the other hand, had governed the country for a total of nine years and six months during the short-lived first Republic (1960-1965) and second Republic (1979-1983) respectively. A prolonged programme of transition to the Third Republic, which would have ended military rule in 1993, was sabotaged and aborted by the very military administration that had elaborately initiated and crafted the project.

Different military administrations took varying measures that had so much devastating impact on the country’s federal system that they still haunt the nation today, threatening at times, to snuff life out of the system. These measures as summarized by Nwolise (2005), include the following: (a) loss of the power and autonomy of component units, (b) abolition of the federal system, (c)
balkanization of Nigeria into 36 states, (d) fiscal debilitation of the component units of the federal system, and (e) suppression of culture of enlightened challenges from component units.

In essence, the political hegemony of centralizing military elites and the instability of civilian rule, which promoted the country's sectional fragmentation, polarization, socio-economic stagnation, account for many of the contemporary tension and contradictions of Nigerian federalism. The gunshots of that early harmattan morning of January 15, 1966, not only eliminated some of the founding fathers of federalism in Nigeria, but also killed the essence of federalism itself (Anam-Ndu, 1999).

The federal form which survived that military onslaught and on the basis of which the country precariously persisted as an entity, has never since regained its true essence. Two interrelated developments accounted for that demise. First, the coup and the eventual threat to the unity of the country following secession and the Civil War were traumatic events that called for centralized authority capable of pulling things back into one fold. Second, there was and still has always been the professional practice of unified command with which soldiers are familiar. Ever since successive military regimes – eight of them in thirty-three years (1966 – 1999) have perfected the menace of centralization. To date, the concentration at the centre of a formidable array of legislative and other responsibilities remains one of the disruptive heritage of military rule in Nigeria. One would have thought that the series of constitutional reviews undertaken after the Civil War would have restored the true essence of federalism but rather, the orgy of centralization was in each case, perfected and constitutionalized (Anam-Ndu, 1998).

The first constitution-making after the civil war was in 1979. That Constitution was made largely under the pressure of hunting fear and, consequently, with an intellectual background that the federating units should be made as weak as they could possibly be. The centralization of power designed and perfected in a single constitution for federal and the 19 states governments at that time, aimed at forging national unity but it was short of the vision that such unity was best promoted through conscious provision for diversity. Here decades after the civil war, it has become clear that the secession pretence of one region had left a permanent fear even among soldier statesmen of harmless worms mistaken for deadly serpents.

For whatever purpose it was meant to serve, another constitution making exercise was undertaken in 1989. Nigerians involved in that exercise worsened matters as they were largely “new-breed”, inexperienced and unemployed recruited to alienate and displace the experienced politicians of the First and Second Republics, most of whom were banned from political participation. Although the 1989 Constitution eventually came to nothing, the unfortunate outcome of both exercises was the placement of over 67 items under the legislative jurisdiction of the Federal Government while leaving jurisdiction on only 12 items with states in the concurrent list (Anam-Ndu, 1998).
In spite of its reformist posture, the 1995 constitution succumbed to these paranoiac postures particularly on issues involving devolution of power. The setting up of a Committee on devolution of power after the dissolution of the National Constitutional Conference gave hope, but it was forlorn as the committee, desperately working to actualize General Abacha’s self-succession bid, desecrated all the sensitive provisions in the Draft Constitution, which addressed some of the suppressed issues of federalism in Nigeria.

Rather than start from where the 1995 Draft Constitution ended, General Abubakar’s administration not only reverted to 1979 Constitution, but concentrated more powers at the centre than before. Thus, the so-called 1999 constitution has 68 items on the Exclusive List and 30 minor ones on the Concurrent list. Decisively, the 1999 Constitution is a blueprint of unitarism in a country that is supposed to be a federal union of states. It is, therefore, at best meant to consolidate power in a hegemonic coalition of major ethnic groups and thereby impose the hegemony of one ethnic group on the rest of the country under the cloak of multipartism. It has not reflected the lessons from Nigeria’s political crises since independence, nor insured the future against a repeat of such crises (Anam-Ndu, 2003).

Amidst intense pressure of centrifugal forces markedly pointing in the direction of state autonomy, the Obasanjo administration called for memoranda from the public to review the constitution. Given the enormity of the problem and the regional impulse of the National Assembly on issues relating to power sharing, it is doubtful whether the National Assembly can effect the restoration of the missing links in the development of federalism in Nigeria.

The Concept of National Integration

National integration being the process of bringing together culturally and socially discrete groups into a single territorial unit is replete with different definitions of the term. It refers to the degree of cohesiveness of a nation; the extent to which it’s various elements interconnects to form a consolidated unit.

Duverger (1976:177), defines it as “the process of unifying a society which tends to make it a harmonious city, based upon an order its members regard as equitably harmonious”. To Jacob and Tenue (1964:9), it is “a relationship of community among people within the same political entity ... a state of mind or disposition to be cohesive, to act together, to be committed to mutual programmes”. In the same vein, some scholars have defined it as a process.

Morrison and Beloff. (1972:385), says it is:

a process by which members of a social system develop linkages so that the boundaries of the system persist over time and the boundaries of sub-systems become less consequential in affecting behaviour. In this process, members of the social system develop an escalating sequence of contact, cooperation, consensus and community.
Integration can also be defined by "the extent that the minimal units (individual political actors) develop in the course of political interaction a pool of norms" (Ake, 1967:3). Coleman and Rosberg (1964:9), see it as the progressive reduction of cultural and regional tensions and discontinuities in the process of creating a homogenous political community. To Binder (1964:630), integration involves the creation of a very high degree of comprehensiveness. On the other hand, Etzioni (1965:4), argues that, a community is cohesive when "(a) it has effective control over the use of the means of violence; (b) it has a centre of decision making capable of effecting the allocation of resources and rewards; and (c) it is a dominant focus of political identification for a large majority of politically aware citizens". Indeed, Weiner (1976:180–182), distinguishes five different senses in which the term can be used, thus: territorial, national, elite-mass, value and behaviour.

These conceptualizations of integration give no clear indication of what the end product would look like and how one would recognize an integrated polity. The following posers by Neuman (1976:1), are indicative: How much cohesion and which commonly accepted norms denote an integrated political or social unit? How would an observer identify integration, or is it dependent on some other manifestations (such as conflict) to demonstrate a lack of integration? What institutional form will an integrated unit take? – will it be democratic or authoritarian? Would it be a centralized organizational entity with full sovereignty, or would it be a loose federal unit? Or are institutional forms irrelevant to integration?

Deutsch. (1966:2), offer a better definition of integration as "the attainment, within a territory of a "sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a long time, dependable expectations of peaceful community". Put differently, a security community is a group of people who are integrated. According to Deutsch, et al (1966), a "sense of community" is a belief on the part of individuals in a group that they have come to agreement on at least one point, that common social problems must and can be resolved through processes of peaceful change. This means the resolution of social problems without resort to large-scale physical force. The obvious disparities among definitions of integration illustrate the state of conceptual confusion in the field. Although, as noted by scholars, the term "national cohesion" many be defined in an endless number of ways without violating the standards for scientific investigation, but failure to agree on the common concept of what integration or cohesion connotes makes useful comparison and theory building difficult. It is not the question of rightness or otherwise of a definition, but rather a matter of agreeing on a set defined concepts and submitting them to rigorous testing. In spite of a general inability of integration theorists to define dependent variables, most writers concerned with nation building in developing countries continue to use the term as if it were a generally understood concept. But despite this, the term remains vague in
meaning; what the field has are various definitions that are incomplete or inapplicable and are at variance with one another.

Accommodative Strategies for National Integration

Despite the problems facing Nigerian federalism, the country is regarded as a pioneer and an exemplar in Africa in the use of power-sharing mechanisms and practices to promote inter-ethnic inclusiveness, or discourage sectional imbalance and bias, in decision-making processes (Suberu, 1996:71–72). It is these integrative mechanisms that have been holding the convoluting federation together. Commencing from the post-civil wartime, policy makers came up with the idea of promoting interaction and cooperation among the Nigerian elite. The assumption of the policy is that if the elite is forced to interact with the environment outside their natural milieu that they are likely to have better understanding of the Nigerian state. This is the reason behind the establishment of the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) by Decree No. 24 of 22 May 1973. The scheme enlists all young graduates for a mandatory one-year national service. However, the implementation of the scheme is frustrating both in terms of entrenched ethnic favouritism and brazen misappropriation of funds. For instance, young graduates cannot secure jobs where they serve because they are not indigenes, followed by other discriminatory practices. Even, when employed, it is on contract basis.

Another accommodative strategy adopted in Nigeria is the “federal character” principle. It is defined as “fair and effective representation of the various components of the federation in the country’s position of power, status and influence” (Government’s View and Comments on the Findings and Recommendations of the Political Bureau, 1987:86-87). As laudable as this integrative mechanism is, the wide gap between intent and practice is making it counter-productive. The policy has been criticized for invading the integrity and standards of public bureaucracy and such other governmental bodies that normally require safeguards from party politics. Another problem is that the policy has been a mask for ethnic cleansing (Dewan, 1995). It also suffers from a faulty philosophical premise (Ayoade, 1982:21; 1988:13). In essence, the policy is engendering federal instability rather than integration.

In an extensive nationwide survey carried out by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2001:101), the impact of the “federal character” policy on citizenship was explored. It is believed that it has created three types of Nigerian citizens; namely, indigenes, non-indigenes, and those citizens who are unable to prove that they belong to a community indigenous to any state in Nigeria as well as women married to men from states other than their own (IDEA 2001). Such a multiple system of citizenship inevitably engenders discrimination in jobs, land purchase, housing, admission to educational institutions, marriage, business transactions and the distribution of social welfare services. Most of the respondents to the survey agree that the situation should change to one in which citizenship is based solely on residence.
The constitutional provision as contained in 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria has equally acted as a assuage in the exacerbated impediment in Nigerian cohesion through the political representation and accommodation of sub-national constituencies at the federal level which has been advanced by a wide variety of means including, the equal representation of all the states of the federation in the powerful Senate (the upper chamber of the bicameral federal legislature); the appointment of at least one federal minister (member of the federal executive council) and Ambassador or High Commission for foreign missions from each state of the federation; the conscious, although by no means completely successful attempts by the Obasanjo administration to fulfill the constitutional mandate of “federal character” in the distribution of public positions and resources; and the adoption of a more or less informal ethno-regional power-sharing arrangement by the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) (Suberu, 2005).

Under the power-sharing arrangement, the six most important political positions in the federation were shared among the six geopolitical zones as follows: President of the Federal Republic (Yoruba southwest), Vice-president (Hausa-Fulani/minority northeast), President of the Senate (Igbo southeast), Deputy Senate president (ethnic minority Middle-Belt or North-Central), Speaker of the House of Representatives (Hausa-Fulani north-west), and Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives (ethnic minority south-south or Niger Delta). The expectation is that at the end of the maximum two terms of the incumbent Yoruba president in 2007, the presidential slot and the other key political positions will rotate among other geopolitical regions. A major attraction of this power-sharing arrangement is its flexibility and informality as a political party convention, which helps to prevent the kind of ethno-sectarian polarization and gridlock that has tarnished more rigid or constitutionally entrenched power-sharing arrangements in countries like Lebanon and the former Yugoslavia (Suberu, 2005).

A further accommodative feature of Nigeria federalism involves the use of the revenue allocation system to redistribute centrally collected oil revenues to all the states of the federation. This distribution policy has helped to prevent large disparities in the access of the various Nigerian groups to financial resources, promote a sense of national loyalty in resource-poor sections, and consolidate the authority of the central government. But the “boomerang effects” of this distributive system are evident in the feelings of economic dispossession in the oil-endowed regions, the economic dependency and complacency of the sub-national units, the development of a debilitating and divisive “national cakesharing psychosis,” the enervation of any incentives to genuine economic development and diversification, the over-centralization of the federation, and the potentially explosive tendency, underscored by the massive PDP victories in the April-May, 2003 elections, towards hegemonic domination of the entire federation by the ruling factions at the center (Suberu, 2005).
It is, however, crucial to note that, minorities’ agitation for self-determination is being tackled. The restless oil-rich Niger Delta region is being gradually placated with higher revenue allocation through the constitutional provision for the re-allocation of not less than 13 percent of federally collected oil revenues on a regional derivation basis. This may redress the problem of ecological degradation and developmental neglect in the region but only if public functionaries in the zone eschew corruption. Beyond higher revenue allocation, a development corporation, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), was established to address the needs of the region.

The transfer of the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja was intended to be an integrative policy. But both the politics and administration of the new Federal Capital Territory have not been palatable. The chairman and some members of the committee that recommended the new capital have since lamented that its integrative essence has been abandoned. The whole essence of the concept of a new Federal Capital Territory as a symbol of unity and nationhood has been completely put into abeyance. The federation is now confronted with brazen demonstration of the “death” of the original concept of Federal Capital Territory for Nigeria as a symbol of unity by the current reference even by government mass media to the Federal Capital Territory as the 20th state of Northern Nigeria. In a nutshell, Abuja, it appears, is organized as northern “revenge project” against southern Yoruba domination of Lagos.

A final feature of the accommodative strategy adopted in Nigeria is the informal dispute resolution – the use of mechanisms outside the constitutionally stipulated procedures, which has been a recurrent feature of conflict management in Nigeria. Such alternative dispute resolution techniques for conflict resolution have featured committee of elder statesmen and women or what is known as Patriots in Nigeria. A graphic example is the intervention of former two Heads of State (General Yakubu Gowon and Alhaji Shehu Shagari) in the impeachment impasses between the Obasanjo administration and the legislature. Both at the state and local government areas level, the engagement of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), as well as the good offices of traditional and religious elite as conflict mediators have contributed enormously in a number of cases to the cessation of hostilities (Bassey, 2005).

Suggestions and Conclusion

Based on the above, the study recommends that, there should be the re-structuring of the Nigerian society, economically and politically in the direction of letting the states control their resources. This will reduce the huge sums of money dumped at the centre and consequently reduce the cutthroat and near warfare struggle to control the centre. On the other hand, it will help to unleash the latent productive capacity of every state, which will invariably stimulate healthy economic competitions among states and geo-political zones, leading to substantial economic growth and development through active participation of state in wealth creation.
Accommodative Strategies in Nigerian Federalism Since Independence

Going by the various conceptualization of federalism by different scholars as analyzed and re-echoed in this work, the glaring fact that federalism is a governmental arrangement that is compatible with multi-ethnic, multi-national, culturally heterogeneous societies like Nigeria is indicated. It is therefore evident that the key to national integration based on federal practice in Nigeria lies squarely in the adoption of the measures recommended in this study.

References


