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NIGERIA STAKEHOLDER-SHIP AND ETHNIC SURVIVAL: EVIDENCE FROM SOUTHERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria is a national project for all which is supposed to be inclusive commitment for ethnic groups that make up the entity. The amalgamation in 1914 and republican constitutions as revised defined the plural nature of federal state which serves to entrench doctrine of equity and sense of belonging. However, sense of ethnic suspicions and lack of commitment to national unity pervade nook and cranny of the nation. This is evident in the ongoing ethnic strives, ethnic militia and arms in Nigeria. Peoples of the south-south and south-east have persistently raised raucous blistering against configuration of the federal system which plunder their sense of stakeholder in the Nigeria project. Against this backdrop, this study examined perception of stakeholder-ship in Nigeria federalism among indigenous peoples of southern Nigeria. This study adopted qualitative survey design using 120 sample size, determined purposively. Data were collected and analyzed qualitatively using unstructured interviews and thematic analysis. Study population consisted of indigenous residents in south-east and south-south Nigeria. At qualitative measure, indigenous peoples expressed distrust in the current federal government, the perception reinforced by subtle exclusion from mainstream federal projects, infrastructure, resource control and military hierarchy. It was consensus in both south-south and south-east that Buhari presidency depleted sense of stakeholder, a shift in ideological appraisal of Nigeria unity. This significantly whittled down commitment to national unity. The study recommended need to neutralize ethnic tension through reconstruction of federal constitution to address main problem of stakeholder-ship.

Keywords: federalism, Nigeria stakeholder-ship, ethnic survival, resource control, evidence. Southern Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of stakeholder is ideological submission and distinction which sought to identify partnership in ownership of an entity. Stakeholders are interest members who are Bonafide joint owners. The concept is often used in business world to depict investors in utilitarian organization. It is the idea that stakeholders are shareholders in corporate and multinational organization (Ritzer, 2011). It is the quantum of minimum subscription in the stocks and

shares of corporation or company which every individual holds that qualifies as stakeholder (World Bank, 2007a). There is follow up in the social world which translates stakeholder to cover spectrum beyond corporate world. It is translation in content and role of stakeholder that derives application in the social world. This means like investors who commit fortunes to derive dividends, it is similar in propensity of individuals who commit self-service to group, community or society investment in the anticipation for reciprocal gains. Stakeholders are parties to formation of social contract of government. Analytically, social contract involves surrendering one's freedom and self-aggrandizement to absolute order of state. It incorporates individuals who are conscientious and conscious of the implications of surrendering to government. There is superlative outcome of gains to stakeholders in the contract and exchange of reciprocity. In the model of business investment, shareholders put wholesome and trusted commitment in anticipation to derive dividends. Like the case in corporate investment, there is expectancy of stakeholders in the state or government to derive benefits in proportion to contribution. There is no government until subsisting contract of agreement exist. In the same case, no sovereign state or nation is possible without citizens of the state agree to accept supreme power of government. Contract of agreement grants responsibility to the state and citizens thereof.

Nigeria is a sovereign state which existence is credited to amalgamation of different ethnic groups. These are ethnics nations that are unique in culture, different in languages, origin and historical antecedents. The colonial government which imposed amalgamation were aware of these salient differences and the implications of a fusion of dissimilar peoples (Otubanjo, 2018). The central push for the fusion was closely associated with colonial economic interest and exploitation which benefitted British colonialism (Onanuga, 2014). Abundantly, peoples of the north and south were brought together under one umbrella called Nigeria. Since the fusion in 1914, there have been drive to create sense of belonging, one nation and indissoluble entity. The drive towards one Nigeria is the push for stakeholder, investors of social sovereign nation, citizenry and shareholders of the state. Indeed, the constitution of Nigeria imposed worldview and totality of sense of belonging which ethnic groups and citizens hold in high esteem. Chapters of constitution covering colonial version and post independent versions stipulated the inalienable rights and duties of parties in the social contract of Nigeria (The Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2019). The constitution is a supreme document of the state which imposed stringent commitment on both state and citizens. This means the document seal fate of ethnic groups or citizens who are parties to the contract. The state assumes supreme power to govern multi ethnic peoples of Nigeria since they have given up autonomy of ethnic or regional power. Unfortunately, turns of event in space of Nigeria have questioned the very existence of stakeholders, the equity in the benefits and sincerity of the social contract which brought amalgamation. It is unpalatable to witness continuous spate of agitations, inter-ethnic conflicts, religious wars, insurgency and government discrimination. Studies have shown that Nigeria is witnessing rapid ethnic distrust, skewed distribution of federal resources, religious insurgency, marginalization of ethnic nations and civil unrest (Nwabueze, 2018; Nweke, 2019). The problem is significantly noticeable in the government of President Muhammadu Buhari, leading to rapid ethnic militia and socio-political groups which now call for restructuring and disintegration of Nigeria. The tension is creating widespread unrest in the country especially the indignation expressed by the peoples of southern Nigeria.

Against this background, this study intends to examine the structure of stakeholder-ship in the Nigerian federalism among citizens in south-east and south-south Nigeria.

2. Literature review

The stakeholders in social contract of Nigerian state are strategic investors who surrendering their totality also operate principle of reciprocity. The ethnic peoples seek maximum protection of their interest in the collective bond of state. They are therefore rational and strategic in the game exploitation of federalism.

2.1 Good Governance: Definitions and Components in the Context of Social Contract

The working definitions of good governance and the quality of governance more generally, are notable in diversity. There are examples from the major multilateral agencies including the UN; the multilateral development banks; the European Commission, the IMF, and the OECD. These definitions are drawn either from each organization's current policy on *good governance* (the IMF's *Good Governance: IMF's Role,* published in 1997) or its most recent major public statement on the topic (the entry entitled 'Governance' on the UN's website).

With the exceptions of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), all of these organizations use the term good governance widely and discuss its promotion among their main objectives (Gisselquist 2012). Both the EBRD and the IADB highlight a number of issues associated with good governance (democracy, the rule of law, human rights, institutional development), but neither frames its work in these terms. As the definitions presented, there are clear similarities across working definitions, but there are also major differences. Seven core components are collectively highlighted: (i) democracy and representation, (ii) human rights, (iii) the rule of law, (iv) effective and efficient public management, (v) transparency and accountability, (vi) developmentalist objectives, and (vii) a varying range of particular political and economic policies, programmes, and institutions (in this case, elections, a legislature, a free press, secure property rights) (Gisselquist 2012).

United Nations (2012) addresses six of the seven components, but does not explicitly link good governance with development. It also references equity and security as additional components. World Bank (2007a), by contrast, highlights efficient and effective public management, transparency and accountability, and the objective of development, steering clear of more 'political' components. It also includes discussion of technical capacity, leadership, and the delivery of public services. The IMF (1997) does not present a global definition but explicitly frames its discussion in terms of components of governance that are related to its mandate of dealing with macroeconomic stability. These same seven components also figure in other definitions in use by donor agencies. The OECD's 2009 Sourcebook, *Donor Approaches to Governance Assessments,* provides a useful listing of definitions used by aid agencies from 12 OECD member countries and five multilaterals (ADB, EC, IMF, UNDP, and World Bank). Definitions given in OECD (2009) highlight in particular the rule of law, and democracy and representation. ADB discusses financial and regulatory institutions. A handful of additional components are also mentioned by several

donors, including equity, sustainability, legitimacy, social welfare, the 'State's ability to serve the citizens', and public service provision.

There is a clear distinction between the more economic and management focused approaches in use by the multilateral development banks and the greater attention to political issues in the approaches of the UN, the European Commission, and many bilateral donors (Gisselquist 2012). This distinction is clearly rooted in the history of the concept and organizational mandates. As summarized by scholars, the origins of the 'good governance agenda' can be seen clearly in work by multilateral institutions, and especially the World Bank, in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Doornbos 2001; Nanda 2006; Williams 2009; Grindle 2010). One of the first major statements on the issue was the World Bank's 1989 study, *Sub Saharan Africa: From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, which attributed 'the litany of Africa's development problems' in the 1970s and 1980s to a crisis of governance, arguing for the need to look beyond the external factors emphasized in other work to internal or domestic factors (Gisselquist 2012).

The study highlighted a number of pathways through which the quality of governance affected development in the region. These included the use of public resources for badly designed public investment projects, the introduction of price distortions, creation of institutional environments that discouraged productive private-sector activities (through costly regulations), spending on 'overblown' public agencies, and the waste and theft of aid resources by unaccountable public officials (Ibid). These issues have been reflected clearly in subsequent Bank policy on governance, which is inextricably bound up with developmental objectives, and includes both efforts to institute effective, efficient, transparent, and non-corrupt public management, and the adoption of free market policies, programmes, and other institutions seen to promote economic growth, such as secure property rights and a business-friendly regulatory environment.

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (2003) summarizes: to the World Bank, good governance consists of a public service that is efficient, a judicial system that is reliable, and an administration that is accountable to the public. The World Bank elaborates on four elements of good governance (World Bank 1989, 1992): Public sector management emphasizing the need for effective financial and human resource management through improved budgeting, accounting and reporting, and rooting out inefficiency particularly in public enterprises; Accountability in public services, including effective accounting, auditing and decentralization, and generally making public officials responsible for their actions and responsive to consumers; A predictable legal framework with rules known in advance; a reliable and independent judiciary and law enforcement mechanisms; and Availability of information and transparency in order to enhance policy analysis, promote public debate and reduce the risk of corruption. This approach to good governance has roots in two strains of the literature: (i) work in the 1970s-1990s that challenged the role of the state in development, spurred on particularly by the experience of market transition in the former Soviet Union and (ii) the new institutionalism in economics and in particular Douglass North's *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, published in 1990 (Grindle 2010).

The Bank's institutional mandate also played an important role: because the Bank is prohibited under its Articles of Agreement from engaging in political affairs, focus on 'governance' by the Bank could only be justified insofar as governance directly affected economic development, only insofar as governance was relevant to the Bank's mandate (Oestreich 2004; Harrison 2005; Moloney 2009). Nor has the Bank been free to engage fully in political analysis or consideration of human rights in its activities, both of which could be seen as 'political' activities favouring one form of government or one domestic faction over another (Shihata 1988; World Bank 1998; Palacio 2006). Thus, 'governance' for the Bank, while addressing various issues dealing with public policy, representation, and public administration, has taken on a curiously apolitical character. Since the early 1990s, however, use of the concept by other organizations has expanded to include a variety of other 'good things', including political liberalization and human rights (Grindle 2010). Unbound by the same constraints placed on the Bank, the UN, in particular, has used the terms 'good' and 'democratic' governance interchangeably. Core principles of representative democracy, such as participation, equality, and inclusivity are intimately bound up with the UN's approach.

The United Nations Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (2012), for instance, notes that: good governance has eight major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society. UN projects specify and work to support key democratic political institutions as part of these efforts. The UN's *Human Development Report 2002*: *Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World* summarizes these institutions as follows:

i. A system of representation, with well-functioning political parties and interest associations.
ii. An electoral system that guarantees free and fair elections as well as universal suffrage.
iii. A system of checks and balances based on the separation of powers, with independent judicial and legislative branches.
iv. A vibrant civil society, able to monitor government and private business and provide alternative forms of political participation.
v. A free, independent media
vi. Effective civilian control over the military and other security forces.

The UN also explicitly underscores the relevance of democratic principles in the design and management of its own governance projects and programmes: the Global Programme on Democratic Governance Assessments, supported by UNDP's Oslo Governance Centre, for instance, highlights its focus on 'nationally owned', rather than external, governance assessment, and provides financial and technical support to sixteen projects (Gisselquist 2012). Such assessments are seen as an accountability mechanism for local stakeholders, and also intended to be 'participatory', 'transparent', and 'legitimate' by including a broad and representative range of national actors, providing these actors with full information on the

process, and making the results of assessments open to the public (UNDP 2009). While the definition of 'good governance' in use by some multilateral agencies has expanded, the link with development has remained central. The political components of governance are not just seen as 'good things' in their own right, but also because they promote development broadly defined. One of the clearest statements on this was made in the 2002 Human Development Report: It has become common in recent years to hear policy-makers and development experts describe good governance as the 'missing link' to successful growth and economic reform in developing countries. But attention has focused almost exclusively on economic processes and administrative efficiency. The central message of this Report is that effective governance is central to human development, and lasting solutions need to go beyond such narrow issues and be firmly grounded in democratic politics in the broadest sense. In other words, not democracy as practiced by any particular country or group of countries—but rather a set of principles and core values that allow poor people to gain power through participation while protecting them from arbitrary, unaccountable actions in their lives by governments, multinational corporations and other forces (Malloch-Brown 2002).

The report further spelled out a three parts argument for the ways in which democratic governance promotes human development: First, enjoying political freedom and participating in the decisions that shape one's life are fundamental human rights: they are part of human development in their own right. Second, democracy helps protect people from economic and political catastrophes such as famines and descents into chaos. Nobel Prizewinner Amartya Sen has shown how elections and a free press give politicians in democracies much stronger incentives to avert famines. Democracies also contribute to political stability, providing open space for political opposition and handovers of power. Third, democratic governance can trigger a virtuous cycle of development as political freedom empowers people to press for policies that expand social and economic opportunities, and as open debates help communities shape their priorities (UNDP 2002). Like the UN, the European Commission and many of its member countries also bind together focus on democracy, governance, and human rights, highlighting both the inherent importance of these topics and their relationship to development. The 2011 'Agenda for Change' on EU development policy, for instance, notes that 'good governance, in its political, economic, social and environmental terms, is vital for inclusive and sustainable development (Gisselquist 2012). EU support to governments should feature more prominently in all partnerships, notably through incentives for results-oriented reform and a focus on partners' commitments to human rights, democracy and the rule of law and to meeting their peoples' demands and needs' (European Commission 2010). The European Commission 'believes that democracy and human rights are universal values that should be vigorously promoted across the world' and intends to promote them in all of its external policies.

Similarly, programming by the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is guided by five objectives: enhancing respect for human rights in countries where they are most at risk; strengthening the role of civil society; supporting actions in areas covered by EU Guidelines; supporting relevant international and regional frameworks; and enhancing democratic electoral processes, particularly through election observation. Emphasis on the political components of governance has been especially strong in governance

work on Africa, where it was explicitly incorporated into the mandates of several major organizations founded in the 2000s (World Bank 1989; Abrahamsen 2000; The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) 2012). For instance, unlike its predecessor, the Organization of African Unity, the African Union explicitly recognizes 'respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law and good governance' among its founding principles (African Union, 2011). The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), launched by the AU in 2001, identifies 'peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management' as 'conditions for sustainable development' (NEPAD, 2007). In 2003, NEPAD inaugurated the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), an initiative to develop voluntary self assessments of governance by AU member states, with the objective of ensuring that countries comply with the *Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance* (NEPAD 2007). The interlinked issues of aid, democracy, and governance also remain sharply controversial on the continent. In January 2007, the AU adopted the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance,* which builds on the constitutive act of the AU in order to promote adherence by all states to 'the universal values and principles of democracy and respect for human rights', including the rule of law, free and fair elections, judicial independence, political pluralism, gender equality, citizen participation, freedom of the press, and public accountability (African Union (AU), 2007; Saungwem, 2007; Kane 2008; Matlosa 2008). The Charter is to enter into force after ratification by fifteen countries. As of mid-2011, however, it was ratified by only ten countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Mauritania, Rwanda, South Africa, Sierra Leone, and Zambia (AU, 2011).

The diverse definition of good governance, the central objective provides that democratic principle must be enshrined in the equity and equality that promote sense of collective orientation. Good governance is a preservation of social contract in the sense that reciprocal responsibility is fulfilled to the citizens and government. Nigeria is a multiethnic society and it is the expectation that the interest of every ethnic group is preserved to promote sense of belongingness. However, the current pattern of governance appears to undermine the principle of good governance in the midst of myriad of disenchantment, relentless call for restructuring, lack of trust among ethnic groups and suspicion of dominance between the north and south, especially the case of south-east and south-south. This invariably has constrained the existing social contract and gradual fulfillment of John Locke recommendation for end civil government which inevitably metamorphose new government, perhaps the strong negotiation for rebirth of good governance. Unfortunately, the ideal of good governance in the context is the question of justificatory equity and fairness in the federal system. The Nigeria federalism is a beehive of suspicions and distrust.

2.2 Nigeria and the Practice of Federalism

Table 1 Heads of Nigerian Security Agencies and their Regions in Mohammadu Buhari Presidency

Name	Agency	State	Region
Leo Irabor	**Defence**		
Faruk Yahaya	**Army**	**Sokoto**	**North**
Ibiaka Oladayo Amao	**Nigeria Airforce**	**Osun**	**South**

Awwal Zubairu Gambo	**Navy**	**Kano**	**North**
Usman Alkali Baba	**Nigeria Police**	**Yobe**	**North**
Yusuf Magaji Bich	**Director of State Service (DSS)**	**Kano**	**North**
Ahmed Rufai Abubakar	**National Intelligence Agency**	**Katsina**	**North**
John Mrabure	**Nigeria Correctional Service**	**Delta**	**South**
Muhammed Babandede	**Nigeria Immigration**	**Jigawa**	**North**
Hameed Ibrahim Ali	**Nigeria Customs Service**	**Bauchi**	**North**
Ahmed Abubakar Audi	**Civil Defence**	**Nassarawa**	**North**
Boboye O. Olayemi	**Federal Road Safety Commission**	**Kwara**	**Noth**
Liman Alhaji I.	**Federal Fire Service**	**Niger**	**North**
Abdulrasheed Bawa	**Economic and Financial Crime Commission**	**Kebbi**	**North**
Bolaji Owasanoye	**ICPC**	**Ondo**	**South**
Buba Marwa	**NDLEA**	**Adamawa**	**North**

Source: *International Centre for Investigative Reporting [ICIR] (2021)*

The structure of appointments listed above is dominated by peoples from the north. There is no representation from south-east. Appointment of Justices of Court of Appeal approved by the President, Muhammadu Buhari is dominated by 61% jurists from north and 39% from south. Also, south-east is excluded (ICIR, 2021).

2.3 Appointment in NNPC

The ICIR (2021) listed in its report, out of 40 senior management positions within NNPC ranging from chief operating officers and managing directors its subsidiaries to general managers' roles, 24 are occupied by Nigerians from the north and 16 occupied by Nigerians from the south. The total representation comprises two from north-west, two from north-eats, one from north-central, one from south-south and one from south-west. The list is as follows.

1. Chief Operating Officer in charge of refineries (Mustapha Yinusa from north-central)
2. Chief Operating Officer in charge of accounts and finance (Usman Isa Asifa from north-west)
3. Chief Operating Officer in charge of gas and power (Yusuf Usman from north-east)
4. Chief Operating Officer in charge of ventures and investments (Adeyemi Adetunji from south-west)
5. Chief Operating Officer in charge of upstream (Tombomieye Adokiye from south-south)
6. Chief Operating Officer in charge of services (Adulkabir Ahmed from north-west)
7. Corporate Legal Adviser (Hadiza Coomassie from north-west)

The position of Chief Operating Officer in charge of downstream occupied by Ndupe Lawrence, an Igbo ethnic, is vacant having retired from service. It is yet to be filled. The north

occupied mainstream positions in the national oil corporation. Yet, oil exploration is found in the south.

3. Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory asserts that human beings behave rationally, either in the narrow sense of rational self-interest, or in the broader sense that decisions are rationally based on preferences. This empirical theory makes no direct ethical claims, but they may have relevance to ethics. Social contract theorists have maintained that rational individuals can assent to a social arrangement that promotes general welfare in some sense. Social choice theorists have argued in a mathematical model that if we rationally derive social policy from individual preferences, we will adhere to certain ethical norms, perhaps a utilitarian or Rawlsian maximin principle. However, these arguments are based on strong assumptions, particularly with respect to interpersonal incomparability of utilities (Hooker, 2013). According to Hooker, rational bargaining procedures, such as Nash bargaining or Raiffa-Kalai Smorodinsky bargaining, have been shown to lead to outcomes that likewise have ethical content. The former has seen practical application in industry, and the latter results in a minimax relative concession principle similar to that derived by some social contract theorists (Binmore, Rubinstein & Wolinsky, 1986; Gaertner, 2009)

Rational choice theories attempt to explain human behavior as resulting from rational choices, particularly in an economic context. They have been a major part of the Western intellectual landscape since the market system replaced a medieval economy. This historical shift is seen as giving rise to Homo economicus economic man who is driven by self-interested economic calculation rather than a value system of loyalty and honor (Christiano, 2004). Rational choice theories provide the central explanatory principle of much neoclassical economic theory and have generated a vast academic literature. Rational choice theories are empirical theories of human behaviour and, as such, make no ethical claims. However, they are often seen as having implications for ethics. In particular, they address the question, "why be moral?" If it can be shown that rational behaviour results in ethical behaviour, then the question has an answer: I should act morally because it is rational (Hooker, 2013).

Rational choice theory, also called rational action theory or choice theory is based on the assumption that individuals choose a course of action that is most in line with their personal preferences. Rational choice theory is used to model human decision making, especially in the context of microeconomics, where it helps economists better understand the behaviour of a society in terms of individual actions as explained through rationality, in which choices are consistent because they are made according to personal preference. Rational choice theory increasingly is applied to other areas as well, including evolutionary theory, political science, and warfare. In rational choice theory, agents are described by their unchanging sets of preferences over all conceivable global outcomes. Agents are said to be rational if their preferences are complete that is, if they reflect a relationship of superiority, inferiority, or indifference among all pairs of choices and are logically ordered that is, they do not exhibit any cyclic inconsistencies. In addition, for choices in which the probabilities of outcomes are either risky or uncertain, rational agents exhibit consistencies among their choices (Hooker, 2013).

The consistency relations among preferences over outcomes are stated in mathematical axioms; a rational agent is one whose choices reflect internal consistency demanded by the axioms of rational choice. Rational choice theory holds that all considerations pertinent to choice (that may include attitudes toward risk, resentment, sympathy, envy, loyalty, love, and a sense of fairness) can be incorporated into agents' preference rankings over all possible end states. Social scientists have only indirect access to agents' desires through their revealed choices. Therefore, researchers infer back from observed behaviour to reconstruct the preference hierarchy that is thought to regulate a rational agent's decisions (Christiano, 2004; Hooker, 2013). Rational choice theory is a fundamental element of game theory, which provides a mathematical framework for analyzing individuals' mutually interdependent interactions (Amadae, 2019). In this case, individuals are defined by their preferences over outcomes and the set of possible actions available to each. As its name suggests, game theory represents a formal study of social institutions with set rules that relate agents' actions to outcomes. Game theory assumes that agents are like-minded rational opponents who are aware of each other's preferences and strategies. A strategy is the exhaustive game plan each will implement, or the complete set of instructions another could implement on an agent's behalf, that best fits individual preferences in view of the specific structural contingencies of the game. Such contingencies include the number of game plays, the sequential structure of the game and the possibility of forming coalitions with other players, and other players' preferences over outcomes. For social scientists using game theory to model, explain, and predict collective outcomes, games are classified into three groups: purely cooperative games in which players prefer and jointly benefit from the same outcomes; purely competitive games in which one person's gain is another's loss; and mixed games, including the prisoner's dilemma, that involve varied motives of cooperation and competition (Amadae, 2019).

Game theory is a mathematical exercise insofar as theorists strive to solve for the collective result of various game forms, considering their structure and agents' preferences. Equilibrium solutions are of the most interest because they indicate, following the Nash equilibrium concept, that, given the actions of all other agents, each agent is satisfied with his or her chosen strategy of play. Equilibrium solutions have the property of stability in that they are spontaneously generated as a function of agents' preferences. Solving games is complicated by the fact that a single game may have more than one equilibrium solution, leaving it far from clear what the collective outcome will be. Moreover, some games have no equilibrium solutions whatsoever (Gaertner, 2009).

A perplexing feature of game theory relates to the assumption of reflexivity on the part of agents: agents must choose strategies in response to their beliefs of what strategies others will choose. This idea of reflexivity leads some researchers to associate methodological individualism with game theory (Ritzer, 2011; Amadae, 2019). This is the assumption that the individual is the pivotal unit of analysis for understanding collective outcomes in politics and economics. However, as the use of game theory for understanding interactions in populations studied in evolutionary biology makes clear, the assumption of reflexivity and a view of the individual that could sustain a liberal understanding of politics and economics are not essential. Still, having made this observation, it remains the case that many who adopt rational choice and game theory in social science find it consistent with

individualistic approaches that view the individual as the sole determinant of personal preferences, goals, and values. Among the outstanding successes of rational choice theory in the late 20th century was its extensive refashioning of understanding of how and why markets and democracy function to respect individual choices (Amadae, 2019).

The context of rational choice theory provides the base that social contract is an outflow of rational choices, equilibrium, bargaining and game which rational individuals derives maximum satisfaction through complex negotiation and competition. The theorists of rational choice were aware that collective agreement or consent of people who enter into social contract is a linear procedure of negotiation through individual interaction, group interaction and community relations which provides the base to surrender to moral ethics of government. As such, the rational individuals hold freedom to renegotiate the contract in game context which provides ground for cooperative game, competitive game and mixed game as long such renegotiation benefits all. In the case of Nigeria, it is a rational decision by groups to come together as federating units. However, such rational decision may also be subject to renegotiation by the rational individuals which claims imbalance in the game play.

4. Methodology

This study was undertaken in the anticipation to search new knowledge and identify what perceptions ethnic peoples of the south held about corporate existence of Nigeria. Having established evidence that civil unrest is rife and threatening unity of Nigeria, especially the continuous agitation of southern peoples, the researcher engaged in empirical study of the problem. This study adopted cross sectional survey using qualitative design. Qualitative applied sample survey using close observation and face to face conversation.. The study was conducted in some purposively selected states in the south-east (Abia, Anambra and Imo) and south-south (Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa). The two geopolitical zones are hotspots where ethnic peoples strive for survival in President Buhari federal government arrangement. Study population consisted of indigenous residents and organised socio political groups such as OHANEZE NDIGBO, MASSOB, IPOB, and PANDEF. The groups are movements in the south collectively agitating renegotiation and restructuring of Nigeria. Sample size was 120 participants.. Sample size was determined purposively using consent of participants, availability and commitment to participate in the study. Purposive and accidental sampling were applied. Criteria of inclusion were defined for purposive procedure, while availability and commitment to participate was defined for accidental. Data were collected using qualitative method. At qualitative method, text of conversation was extracted from discussant to generate qualitative data. Data were analysed qualitatively. The method applied thematic analysis. Themes for discussion consisted of stakeholder and sense of belongingness, national inclusiveness, federal appointments in mainstream sector, constitution restructuring and resource control. Instruments of data collection consisted of unstructured interview. Consent of participants was sought before interaction and identities were kept anonymous.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Stakeholder in the Nigeria State

The essence of association in any political group and existence is the feeling that one is truly an integral part of the whole. Constitutionally, the provisions of the 1999 law document which

ushered the current dispensation of democracy recognize all ethnic groups whether major or minority. Chapter three of the constitution stipulates the inalienable right and obligations of citizens of the entity, Nigeria. This same chapter of the constitution also provides that there shall be no exclusion of any part of the entity to contest or hold political position whether president, senate president or speaker of the legislative chamber. The constitution did not either foresee supremacy of one ethnic over another or provide that government shall elevate particular ethnic in the federal appointments at the expense of other ethnics. This survey outlined items that cover description of stakeholder in the Nigeria state.

5.2 Stakeholder and geopolitics

Respondents in the survey were asked to describe whether or not they considered their geopolitical zones as stakeholder of the Nigeria entity. Three quarter disagreed that Nigeria as presently configured offered sense of stakeholder due to conspicuous discrimination and lopsidedness that bedeviled governance. Although less than half in the survey held that the geopolitical zones were part of the stakeholder, an overwhelming majority strongly convinced that government in the last two decades has not offered inclusiveness for geopolitical zones. Description of stakeholder for some respondents is the extent ethnic population contributed to federation account. Even at this description, majority of the respondents were hopeless that contribution to federation account did not translate to inclusive governance by virtue of appointments in strategic federal industries and bureaucracies. Against this backdrop, respondents disagreed that some geopolitical zones like the case of southern Nigeria is among the mainstream stakeholders. A summary of interviews conducted is described:

The Igbo constitute at least one fifth of the country. The ethnic is one of the major stakeholders by virtue of the population... But it is unfortunate with problem of equity in Nigeria. As a stakeholder, we are not being treated fairly like other stakeholders. The Igbos have contributed largely to Nigeria in all areas and this is verifiable. But we are not being treated well like others. Igbos have been schemed out in the mainstream leadership and management of Nigeria…. Igbos have been committed to project Nigeria…. But others see this commitment as attempt to dominate. This erroneous belief which is not so to label our commitment to Nigeria state (IDIs/Judge/High Court/south-east/2020).

Interestingly, the above texts were repetitive for overwhelming majority that participated in the survey.

5.3 Appointments and recruitment in Federal Bureaucracy

Evidently, participants faulted appointments or recruitment in core federal civil service. This demonstrates for respondents, deliberate governance tactics to plunder the value of other ethnics however much the population capacity or contribution to federation account for survival of the entity, Nigeria. A crosscheck of survey in south-east and south-south showed that participants disagreed that the geopolitical zones are part of the stakeholder in the present Nigeria; This position was reinforced by pattern of inclusiveness for the geopolitical zones; especially evidence in military hierarchy, police hierarchy and core federal civil service. Against the backdrop above, a participant held:

The federal government deprived my zone in the sharing of amenities, patronage and appointments. My zone is not in the picture of what is happening in Nigeria. There is no equity in sharing formula of revenue. This is part of our agitation. Let's go our ways…. We are not integrated (IDIs/House of Rep/south south/2020).

The fear that citizens from southern zone are deprived in Buhari presidency is a major discordant breeding disincentive. The notion of exclusion is dominant in the survey. In another feeling from a participant in the survey, he said: "There is nothing to show that equity exist in Nigeria. Everything is skewed to favour the north" (IDIs/IPOB/south east/2020). There is widespread thinking like the above which trended in the survey.

5.4 Constitution components

Further check in the survey showed that participants disagreed components of 1999 constitution promote sense of stakeholder for ethnic groups. This idea was reinforced on the ground that the geopolitical zone is major stakeholder in national oil and gas, yet it was deprived. consequently, participants faulted stakeholder composition in national oil and gas. Comments in the survey discretely described discriminatory treatment meted to the south and east as stakeholders in the Nigeria project. Indeed, majority of the interviewees succumbed to the ideology of renegotiation that justified true status of stakeholder for geopolitical zones by virtue of economic contribution to survival of Nigeria and perhaps by virtue of population components, redistribution of infrastructure and governance. A comment by participant is important to quote:

There is no social justice in Nigeria. The only social justice in Nigeria is that we have state governments and local governments…Even the local governments in the north are much higher in number. States in the north are much higher…. Members of National Assembly from the north exceed the south…. There is no social justice that is fair to the south (IDIs/House of Rep/south south/2020).

Another participant said:
…. Inequity in infrastructure and appointment all over…. There is no federal industry in the south-east. Appointments in mainstream federal industries are largely in favour of the north. The people that produced the revenue for Nigeria are neglected and marginalized (IDIs/Judge/High Court/south east/2020)

The above comments were major reflections of participants in the survey.

5.5 Resource Control

Largely, respondents in the survey disagreed that mineral resources in Nigeria have been utilized to benefit equally for geopolitical zones. The thought here is that, mineral resources like oil exploration found and tapped in the south has not translated to proportionate benefits for the peoples of the south and east that supplied the resources. Participants disagreed that stakeholder status of the zones has translated to rapid growth. In this case, stakeholder problem; inequity and inequality; structure of the federation were marked as major reason centred round the echoes for restructuring. Justifying the call for restructuring in the survey,

participants rated as poor the trickle down benefits to the zones in the last 20 years. Consequently, survey rated benefits as poor; gains from mineral resources were deprived to benefit the zone in proportionate to contribution; and stakeholder status for the zones did not translate to growth. In the words of a commentator:

There is no social justice without equity. Social justice is when there is equity,… equity in appointment to federal parastatals (industries), equity in distribution of federal industries, equity in distribution of federal infrastructure… We cannot talk of equity without these items mentioned…. This is the major agitation. Where is justice without fairness in infrastructure…. (IDIs/Judge/High Court/South South/2020)

Abundantly, there is consistent contestation that distribution of infrastructure and economic gains in the present configuration of Nigeria excluded major contributors of the gains. There is consistent question major question of stakeholder problem, inequality and inequity, structure of federalism and structure of political appointments which largely deprived some zones and benefit others. There is agitation of proportionate contribution to federalism and proportionate trickledown effect of contribution; redistribution of wealth of nation which truly justifies stakeholder status for the zones. The survey and interview indiscriminately showed that there is abundant agitation in the mind of stakeholders that exist as components of Nigeria, especially the peoples of the east and south.

6. Conclusion

The question of stakeholder is reinforced among indigenous peoples of southern Nigeria. This appears as a force of assimilation and accommodation in the federal state. The study revealed that indigenous residents were averse to current configuration of federal structure in political appointments and distribution of federal projects which significantly disadvantaged the zone. There is overwhelming intention to force breakaway from Nigeria state and return to autonomous ethnic government which predated post independent Nigeria. The idea of stakeholder in the Nigeria project was perceived as a ruse and unrealistic in the current system. Federalism of Nigeria to southern people exists to fashion disadvantage, exploit ethnic peoples and suppress mineral resources of the south-east and south-south. Unfortunately, this is universal perception among participants in the study.

Against this backdrop, the study recommends the need for urgent restructuring of the federal government which effectively redirect nationhood and ethnic assimilation. More than three quarter of the participants called for breakaway due to surreptitious and subtle ethnic card which played out against south-east and south-south. The current ethnic tension can be neutralized through reconstruction of federal constitution to address main problem of stakeholder-ship.

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