

Political Economy of Restructuring the Nigerian State

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Abstract

The restructuring discussion seems to be the most current topic in Nigeria's political discourse today, and it has been picking up steam since 2014. In the meantime, it appears that Nigeria's current federal system seems to have failed the entire nation. Thus, it is argued in this paper that unwillingness of successive governments to comply with calls for the restructuring of the Nigerian state may be attributed to the advancement and protection of elite economic interests. It went on to say that, this has fueled more pent-up resentment, frustration, impatience, distrust, restlessness as well as some degree of dissatisfaction which is grounded in the escalating class struggle between the populace and the political elites. This study is anchored on regulatory capture theory as its theoretical compass. The study adopted documentary approach for data collection while relying on sequential qualitative analytical techniques. The paper therefore concluded that the growing clamours for restructuring of the Nigerian state are a result of the country becoming a failed state that is unable to carry out the fundamental functions of a sovereign nation-state in this contemporary world system. As a result, this paper recommends using distributive justice, equity and fair play to address Nigeria's issues with injustice, unfairness and inequalities.

Keywords: Political Economy, Restructuring, Class Struggle, Federalism, State Failure

Introduction

Nation-states exist to provide political goods to the citizens living within their geographically designated territory. Rotberg (2004) posits that states succeed or fail across all sectors but according to their performance level. When a state develops an effective means of delivering most of the important political goods, that state may be distinguished from weak ones or collapsed states, and it is said to be a strong state. Rotberg (2004) described political goods as those intangible and hard-to-quantify claims that citizens once made on sovereigns and now make on states. These political goods include human security, infrastructures (health and educational facilities, good roads, and others), inclusive governance, and maintenance of law and order, political participation, among others. Strong states obviously perform well across board fulfilling expectations. In weak states, performance level is poor and the inability to fulfill the

expectations of citizens exceedingly possibly account for weak states. The weaker they become, the more that weakness tends to edge towards failure.

Nigeria is a country located in West Africa and is a home to multi-ethnic and multi-cultural people. She has a rich cultural heritage and abundant natural resources, with great potential for growth and development. However, like many failing states, Nigeria faces several challenges including issues related to state failure. Factors such as security challenges, weak institutions, corruption, economic disparities, inequalities, injustice and social issues contribute to the varying degrees of success and failure experienced across the different states. Security issues like insurgency, terrorism, rural banditry, herdsmen/farmers conflict, kidnapping, ethnic/religious violence, communal conflict, unknown gunmen and others have negatively impacted governance and economic development (Bates, 2008). Corruption or bad leadership is a pervasive issue in Nigeria and has had detrimental effect on state institutions and governance. When bad leadership is prevalent, it undermines the ability of the state to effectively deliver public services, resource allocation, maintain law and order.

The Nigeria state faces challenges connected to weak institutions, poor governance structures, ineffective public administration, lack of accountability, limited infrastructures, high poverty rates, lower economic growth, high unemployment rates, inadequate access to education and healthcare facilities and social inequality. These factors can exacerbate poverty, social unrest and discontent among the population. It is against this backdrop that the increasing clamours for restructuring of the Nigerian state are a result of the country becoming a failed state that is unable to carry out the fundamental functions of a sovereign nation-state in this contemporary world system. The modern-day Nigerian state is confronted with the clamour for restructuring borne out of perceived, imagined or real crises of marginalization, inequality, deprivations, insecurity and the inability of the Nigerian state to provide welfare for her citizenry (Audu, 2021). It is this discontent, dissatisfaction, trust deficit and frustration arising from state failure that triggers the agitation for restructuring.

The present calls for restructuring of the Nigerian state have largely been coming from the oppressed citizens. Mbah (2014) noted that while the oppressed class agitates for a new social order that ensures fairly equitable distribution of resources, the ruling class preoccupies itself

with maintaining their class advantage, and by extension, the structural inequality. Since the ruling class does not willingly surrender power, it has to be compelled to do so through intense struggle and, or violence. Such agitations and struggles result in class conflicts such as the #EndSARS movement, Obidient movement and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) confrontation with government and others. The class struggle accounts for the unwillingness of successive governments to comply with calls for the restructuring of the Nigerian state and possibly attributed to the advancement and protection of elite economic interests. Therefore, this paper examined the political economy of restructuring the Nigeria state and by so doing recommends practicable solutions.

Political Economy, Restructuring, Class Struggle, Federalism, State Failure: A Conceptual Discourse

Political economy is a field of study that combines elements of both politics and economics to examine the interactions between politics and economic systems. It focuses on understanding how political institutions, policies and processes shape economic outcomes and vice versa. Political economy analyzes the distribution of power and resources within society, as well as the ways in which economic activities and decisions are influenced by political factors. Therefore, political economy can be seen as a social science discipline that studies the dynamic interaction and parallel existence between the state and economy as well as wealth and power (Ezeibe, 2016). According to this discourse, all political elites in the country, regardless of the geopolitical regions, share the same economic interests and those interests must be safeguarded. As a result, it appears that political economy of restructuring the Nigerian state is a class conflict between the rulers and the ruled.

To dissect the concept of restructuring, academic debates continue to proliferate on the meaning and analytical utility of the concept of restructuring. The concept of restructuring has been used to describe the menace of problems confronting Nigerian state. These problems includes insecurity, insurgency, bad governance, corruption, smuggling of light weapons, porous borders, rural banditry, herdsmen/farmers conflicts, inter-communal conflicts, unemployment, inflation, economic depression, weak institutions and among others. Therefore, restructuring means restoration, reformation and addressing structuring deformities in the system. Several interpretations have been used to explain restructuring especially from the political elites.

Othman, Osman & Mohammed (2019) noted that the political leaders tactically avoid the use of the word “restructuring” while making presentations. For instance, El-Rufai affirmed that some elites Nigerians prefer to use other words such as true federalism, devolution of power, resource control, regionalism, self-determination, and others, instead of the word “restructuring (Othman, Osman & Mohammed, 2019).

Undoubtedly, several Nigerians think that their country has gradually and systematically moved from one of tremendous promise to one of great challenges, with all states and geopolitical zones plagued with social problems (Ikenna, 2018). Arising from this, people feel aggrieved, marginalized, pent-up resentment, frustrated, impatience, distrust, restlessness as well as some degree of dissatisfaction which is grounded in the escalating class struggle between the populace and the political elites. Thus, one could argue that the holistic clamour to restructuring the Nigerian state is mainly to accommodate all different interests that make up the country. Restructuring is the process of making significant changes to the existing structure of a system. It is undertaken to improve efficiency and satisfaction that can guarantee maximum gain.

Class Struggle is a concept that originated from Marxist theory, which argues that society is divided into different social classes based on their relationship to the means of production. Gauba (2007) posits that class struggle or class conflict can be likened to tension or antagonism in society. This tension most times comes as a result for the clamour for change. Class struggle is said to exist because different groups of people who have antagonizing interests. One of the most obvious implications of modern state is gradual but steady polarization of the society into two main classes; one miserably poor and the other massively rich. According to Akpuru-Aja (1997), the miserably poor people shall rise in unity out of their common hatred of social inequalities and social injustice. Hence, class struggle is a political struggle. Threatened by the indignation and revolutionary pressures of the exploited poor class, the ruling class will not be indifferent to defending their political economy interests. The ruling class usually fights to maintain the status quo of dominion and exploitation (Akpuru-Aja, 1997).

It seems though inequality will always exist in human society both outside and inside. The existence of inequality and social injustice in society is invariably accompanied with class conflict. The exploiting and exploited dominant classes continued to be incompatible and class struggle is a virulent expression of that antagonism. Thus, it could be argued that the deployment

and use of the state instrument of violence by the Nigerian state in the management of #EndSARS non-violent protest shows the extent of class conflict in the country. The Non-violent #EndSARS movement demanded for an end to SARS, police brutality, poor governance, political and economic restructuring. Unfortunately, the Nigerian government through her character of repressive nature clamped down on the peaceful #EndSARS non-violent protesters on 20th October, 2020. Similarly, Baba and Aeysinghe (2017, p.43) have raised concern on the sincerity and feasibility of the restructuring for the fact that: “The elites whose supports are required to make restructuring possible are strongly united because the unity of the country seems to be fetching them serious fortunes through corruption and injustice at the expense of the ordinary citizens”.

The Marxist theory posits that there is an inherent conflict of interest between the governed and governor. It is the conflict between the two classes forms the basis of class struggle. It is a class conflict to capture the soul of the state.

Federalism is a principle of government that defines the relationship between the central government and the regional (state) or local levels (Kayode, 2015, p.34). Federalism deals with how power and authority is allocated between the national and local government units, such that each unit operates within the delimited sphere of power and authority allocated to it by the constitution. Federalism is a system of government in which power is divided between a central authority and various regional/state governments. It is based on the principle of shared sovereignty where both levels of government have their own distinct powers and responsibilities as well as degree of autonomy.

According to the classical scholar and the “father of federalism, Wheare (1963), “federalism is the method of dividing powers so that federal and regional government is each, within a sphere, coordinates and independent”. Federalism is a constitutional arrangement which divides law making powers and functions of the state between two levels of government which are coordinate in status not subordinate. By this definition however, Wheare emphasizes the need for each level of government to have adequate resources to perform its functions without appealing to the other level of government. Also, the constitution can guarantee that each unit of government is coordinate and independent. The true position is that the tiers of government in

Nigeria are not co-ordinate and independent. The tiers of government in Nigeria are not financially independent.

The Federal government though has dominated a very strong position over the State and Local governments and the state on the other hand has marginalized Local government funds (Ejeh and Orokpo, 2014). Power sharing in a federal structure of Nigeria is highly centralized. Review of relevant literatures shows that scholars have expressed their displeasure about the experience of federalism in Nigeria. Olu-Adeyemi (2017) noted that Nigeria's practice of federalism is always in an awkward manner and this has resulted to inevitable frictions and clashes while at the same time, destroying nation building. According to Ojo (1989), in Majekodunmi (2015, p.113) observed that "this unequal sharing of power has transformed Nigeria from a political community to an administered state". Babalola & Okafor (2019, p.3) argued that:

Nigeria is an oil-rich federation yet governments at all levels perform poorly. State governments continually experience fiscal gap and deficiency in service delivery. Not only have that, the vast majority of the citizens lived under the twin burden of poverty and unemployment. The inability of the Nigerian state to address these challenges, despite the huge oil revenue, contributes to the continuous debates over the value of the country's fiscal system. Obviously, the failure of oil resources to generate economic prosperity in the states is rooted in the flawed fiscal system that encourages the sharing of the oil wealth rather than economic production at the state level.

It could be argued that Nigeria is gradually becoming a failed state for poor performances across the nation. According to Debt Management Office (DMO), Nigeria's total debt as at December, 2022 was ₦46.25tn despite the abundant resources (Temitayo & Olatunji, 2023). This is why the World Bank warned that Africa's largest economy was using 96% of its revenue to service debts.

State failure refers to the situation where a governing state is unable to perform basic functions and maintain control over its territory, leading to a breakdown of governance, law, order and public services. State failure involves the collapse or severe erosion of state institutions and the inability of the government to provide security, enforce laws, deliver essential services and protect the rights and well-being of its citizens. Scholars like Goldstone (2008) and Rotberg (2002) defined state failure as the condition of losing both effectiveness and legitimacy by any given state. Onuoha & Okafor (2021) agreed with Goldstone and Rotberg definition. Elaborating on this, Onuoha & Okafor (2021) argued that effectiveness in providing security and provision of

the basic needs of the population, and legitimacy in securing the goodwill, trust, and backing of the citizens, are the criteria that guarantee the stability of a state.

Herbst (1996) noted that state failure is the collapse of a state's security architecture, evident in the loss of capacity to maintain order or monopolize the use of force within its known territorial jurisdiction (cited in Onuoha & Okafor, 2021, p.143). Once a state loses the capacity to maintain law and order as well as perform basic functions of providing public good like security, such state could be regarded as failed state (Moritz, 2013). Socio-political and economic dysfunctionality, often resulting in the outbreak of crisis in most African States, has been singled out as one among the numerous factors responsible for state failure in Africa (Engel, 2014). Indeed, state failure can occur due to various factors like political instability, economic collapse, social unrest, armed conflict, corruption, weak institutions, poor governance and others. The consequences of state failure are profound and can have far-reaching impacts on the affected country, including extremism and spread of violence, loss of territorial control, the emergence of non-state groups, widespread corruption, lack of public trust in institutions, deteriorating infrastructure, high levels of poverty and unemployment and a breakdown of social cohesion.

It could be argued that the growing clamours for restructuring of the Nigerian state are a result of the country becoming a failed state that is unable to carry out the fundamental functions of a sovereign nation-state in this contemporary world system. The failure Nigeria government to provide security in the country as given rise to formation of unknown gunmen and informal security networks in Southern region while in the North, banditry, insurgency and herdsman/farmers conflicts are all in the rise leaving all geopolitical zones as unsafe haven.

Theoretical Compass and Application

This study is anchored on regulatory capture theory of politics propounded by George Stigler (1971). Other scholars that contributed as proponents of this theory are Richard Posner, Joel Hellman, Daniel Kaufmann and Johan de Hertog. Regulatory capture means the capture of regulators by the regulated (Ezeibe, 2016). This often happen whenever special interests seize regulatory agencies to advance their own ends. According to Onuoha (2008), capture means the act of seizing by force or getting possession of something by a superior power or stratagem. This implies that those who intend to capture the state must be as strong as the state or stronger.

The theory sees regulation as the undertaken to prevent economic crisis. It suggests regulatory agencies are established for the purpose of correcting market failures, thereafter the agencies are subject to capture by the firms they regulate. Capture is said to occur when established agencies, bureaucrats or politicians who are supposed to be acting in public interest, end up acting systematically to favour a particular vested interests. The theory assumes that the public interest is the beginning of regulations. Thus, regulation is always connected with redistribution. Politicians aim at maintaining political power in their efforts to design regulations for the industries but they also seek money, votes and resources from the groups that are favoured by the regulations. Consequently, the industries capture the state and make her agencies to act in the interest of the industry rather than the public.

The theory also posited that regulations are manipulated to fit the requirements of those affected by them. Therefore, regulations serve the interests of the industries concerned. Ezeibe (2016) notes, that this capture is achieve through constant romance, gift/bribe giving and taking between the government agencies and the industries. Proponents of this theory further argued that decisions do not just emerge. In every decision, certain vested interests must be protected. Onuoha (2008) remarks, that every policy represents the interest of a dominant group. Stigler (1997) argued that an industry can benefit from regulation if it can capture the regulatory agency involved. Hence, regulation appears to be a process by which interest (dominating) groups seek to promote their private interest rather than the public interest. Similarly, Hellman & Kaufmann (2000) in Ezeibe (2016, p.165) affirmed that anyone who seizes the state seizes the day, business, property, rent and interest. Obviously, capture brings substantial gains to the captor.

The justification for the use of the regulatory capture theory in this paper hinges on the fact that the promotion and protection of elites economic interests may be to blame for the successive governments refusal to accede to proposals for the restructuring of the Nigerian state. Nigerian leaders are elected for purpose of serving the interests of the masses or electorates. However, the same leaders have paid deaf ears to the crying of Nigerians for restructuring. This explains why the leaders cannot implement the reports of different national conferences especially the 2014 national conference reports. This endless struggle to capture the soul of the Nigerian economy has made it if not impossible to restructure. Every policy tends to represents the interest of a dominant group. The true position is that 2014 national conference reports seemingly do not

represent the interest of the ruling elites. This is why Marx categorically classified the state as instrument in the hands of the powerful ruling class. Thus, when established organizations, bureaucracies or politicians who are anticipated to serve in the public good end up behaving systematically in favour of a certain entrenched interest, it is said regulatory capture has occurred.

Interrogating the Justification for Restructuring the Nigeria State

The issue of restructuring the Nigerian state is a very heated debate in the political, academics, and economic discourse. However, the subject of restructuring appears ambiguous as many people have ascribe different meaning to it especially according to their understanding and what they perceived that require improvement and changes in the country. To the common man on the street, it means ending poverty and frustration. To a graduate, restructuring is providing job opportunities to the youths. To social-cultural groups, it means fiscal federalism and resource control. To a businessman, it means improving and stabilizing the economy. To some school of thought, restructuring Nigeria will guarantee happiness for everybody through justice, equity, fair play and equal opportunities. The truth is that Nigerians stand to gain if the system can undergo restructuring.

Scholars like Audu (2021) identified state failure as a result of poor governance is the major trigger for the agitation for restructuring. Hence, states are considered failed when they are consumed by internal violence and ceased to deliver positive political goods to their inhabitants. However, Audu (2021) did not see how the practice of federalism in Nigeria seems to be a nightmare owing to the asymmetric nature of relationship between ethnic, religious and regional groups as well as the components units in relations to power sharing and resource allocation. Abdullahi & Odumu (2021) on their part argued that equitable power sharing assures of harmony, integration and eventually development which is only possible through restructuring of the Nigerian state. According to them restructuring is paramount and as such appears inevitable. They further notes, that the constitution assigned excessive power to the federal government in segments like fiscal relations, economic planning, monopoly control over state and can declare state of emergency in any part of the country. Abdullahi & Odumu (2021) did not pay attention

to explain how the agitations for restructuring have increasingly become a strategy in elite politics for power and its associated material opportunities.

Babalola & Onapajo (2019) offered a near excellent argument; ethno-regional politics could induce the restructuring debate and as such sees the contradictions in the demands of regional elites and their groupings. They went further to argue that the issue of restructuring seems to be elite-driven. This tends to lead to continuous agitations for change. Thus, they concluded that the call for restructuring might not be the solution to the persistent problem bedeviling the country. Yauri (2018) posits that the struggle for the control of economic resources between several ethnicities, groups or social classes are factors that can trigger agitations for restructuring and the counter-agitations against it. Notwithstanding, Yauri (2018) failed to establish a connection between poor governance and restructuring. Orunbon (2022) identified regionalism as the answer to Nigeria's wake-up call for restructuring. Orunbon (2022) however, did not explain how general elections ought to partly be a referendum on restructuring.

Soludo (2018) emphasizes that restructuring is not just a political agitation: it is the foundational plan for Nigeria's future prosperity without oil. Restructuring is not only progressive politics but excellent economics. Soludo (2018) went further to advocate that general elections in Nigeria should always serve as a referendum on restructuring. Hence, political parties and candidates must be clear about the specifics of the restructuring they propose if they want to be taken seriously. Soludo (2018) failed to establish the link between ethnic domination of the system by one ethnic group over others for several years can induce the agitation for restructuring of the Nigerian state. Further scholars review like Ojo (2005) attributed the repeated calls for restructuring of the political system to the Southern allegation that Northerners seem to be in dominant control of the political power while on the other hand the Northerners have established their dread of Southerner's economic domination.

From the foregoing, one could argue that for several decades the Nigerian federal system has come under severe threat of disintegration. This appears to have established different militant and resistant groups nationwide and currently have resulted to ethno-religious clashes, violent conflicts, kidnappings, terrorism and insurgency as possible instruments of achieving their goals. Thus, the bone of contention between several people in Nigeria is the issue of restructuring the

system. Will restructuring solve the problem and maintain the co-operate existence of the country as a united indivisible action or will it lead to total disintegration of the country? (Abeeb & Rukema, 2021).

Restructuring the system can promote good governance by decentralizing power and decision-making. It will allow for a more efficient and responsive government structure, bringing decision-making closer to the people. This can result in increased accountability, transparency and effectiveness in governance as well as improved public service delivery. Thus, Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country with diverse and identities. Restructuring can address the grievances and perceptions of marginalization held by various ethnic and regional groups. By giving more autonomy and control over resources can foster sense of inclusivity, reduce ethnic tensions and promote peaceful coexistence among different groups.

Notwithstanding, the central argument of the reformists is that restructuring will enhance national development. Hence, it will eliminate state dependent on the central government and provide opportunities for states development and competitiveness. Corroborating this view, Deinibiteim (2020) notes that restructuring will expunge the sharing of “national cake” mentality established in the country. Therefore, it will encourage the baking of cakes (productions) at the states and local governments rather than making them consumers. One argument for restructuring is that it can stimulate economic growth and development. By allowing states or regions to have more control over their resources, including oil and natural gas reserves, they can develop their economies based on their unique strengths and priorities. This can lead to increased investment, job creation and overall economic prosperity.

Also, Najakku (2016) rightly observed that restructuring of the Nigerian state will foster national unity, coherence and development. The true position is that the endless competition engendering ethnic tensions is the scramble for national cake. So, when there is no national cake to share, ethnic politics will be largely managed. Restructuring will shift emphasis from state consuming nature to state productiveness. For this reason, states will pursue aggressive economic policies and programs that will encourage the productivity, competitiveness and development of all sectors of the Nigerian economy. The issue of restructuring can address the issue of resource control and revenue allocation. Currently, the central government controls a significant portion of

resources and revenue, which some scholars argued could lead to a concentration of power and economic imbalances.

Restructuring enable state governments to control and retain a greater share of the revenue generated from the state, which can contribute to a more equitable distribution of wealth and development. Also, this can improve public service delivery and governance. When power is decentralized, local governments can be better equipped to understand and address the unique needs of their communities. This can result in more efficient and effective delivery of essential services such as education, healthcare, infrastructures and security.

Closely related to the above is the view that devolution of power will decrease the contestation for power at the federal government occasioned by the wealth, resources, revenue and power currently controlled at the centre (Uzochukwu, 2018). Similarly, Ngoka *et al.* (2020) argued that the present centralized system of Nigeria within which the police force operates may not be justifiable when it comes to curbing the menace of insecurity in the country. Ngoka *et al.* (2020) also supported the calls for restructuring of the Nigeria federal system by introducing state policing as the only seemingly possible panacea to guarantee the human security in Nigeria. In similar studies, Deinibiteim (2020) stated that restructuring will enhance decentralization of security operations, particularly the police force and prisons service(s).

Indeed, restructuring would enhance institutional reform and transformation across every sphere of government activities, provide opportunities for sub-units governments, generate productive activities at the federating units, create wealth nationally and foster national unity, integration, cohesion and ultimately national development (Deinibiteim, 2020). Restructuring can address the concern of different groups and promote a fairer distribution of resources, thereby reducing feelings of marginalization and the associated political unrest. Without doubt, to secure Nigeria, end banditry, violent conflict, guarantee political stability and insurgency; and unite our dear nation, to manage our dear diversities such that no one is left behind; restructuring is no option but a mandate.

Political Economy of Restructuring and the Survivability of the Nigerian State

The elite interests in the present structure, which are manifestly reluctant to restructuring, believing it will not benefit them as much as they have enjoyed in the current situation today,

therefore, they tend to maintain the status quo. Obviously, many elites across several states are enjoying wealth they do not work for because of the corruption the present structure bred. Hence, this attitudinal nature accounts for their opposition and unwillingness to yield to calls by citizens of Nigeria to restructure the country. Similarly, a former governor of Akwa Ibom State, Obong Victor Attah disclosed that, no governor today will lift a finger or put himself out to diversify or restructure the country when every month he can come to Abuja to collect his share of the booty or national cake” (Ujah and Agbakwuru, 2017).

This also relate with Baba and Aeysinghe (2017, p.43) argument that the elites whose support are necessary to enable restructuring are strongly united resisting it because the present system appears to be bringing them significant wealth through corruption and injustice at the expense of the common citizens. The fear of discomfort among some ethnic nationalities, accounts for the opposition to restructuring. According to Nuhu (2016), the fear is drawn from the fact that since the oil boom era of the 1970s to date, states enjoy revenue they do not generate and have become comfortable with the idea of sharing revenue every month without working, thus any change of the status quo would be very discomfoting and will meet opposition.

This has fueled more pent-up resentment, frustration, impatience, distrust, restlessness as well as some degree of dissatisfaction which is grounded in the escalating class struggle between the populace and the political elites. Therefore, state failure and poor governance structure accounts for continue agitation by Nigerians for restructuring. This explains why in October, 2020, the restive youths of Nigeria marched to the streets to protest against police brutality and bad governance. While the struggle goes on, the repressive state used force to clamp down on the non-violent protesters. Moreover, this has led to the endless struggle for the political economy of the Nigerian state among the citizens and elites. It appears to be a game of winner takes all as the welfare of the citizens are increasingly worsen day by.

This explains why political elites clamouring for restructuring especially prior to general elections use the nomenclature to gain political relevance in the country. This does not necessary mean that they care or show purposive leadership instead the concept of restructuring as it is today appears to be a strategy in elite politics for power and its associated material opportunities (Babalola & Onapajo, 2019). For instance, the inability of the political elites to implement the

reports of different national conferences especially the 2014 national conference reports accounts for the political gimmick ahead of the 2015 general elections. This endless struggle to capture the soul of the Nigerian economy has made it seemingly impossible to restructure the system. Every policy tends to represent the interest of a dominant group. The true position is that 2014 national conference reports seemingly do not represent the interest of the ruling elites. This explains why the report was jettisoned, abandoned and neglected by politicians despite the enormous resources wasted to organize the conference. The truth is that we are in a nation where the patriotic call to serve our father's land seems to be defeated. Politician cannot serve this land with love and strength. Service to father's land is attached to material wealth. The labour of our hero's past are gradually becoming in vein.

Primarily, leaders are chosen to serve the electorates but the same leaders have refused to yield to the crying of Nigerian for restructuring. This provoked Marx to firmly call the state an instrument in the hands of the powerful ruling class for protecting and advancing their material interests. The elite's strategies have made the state to serve their interest. The ruling class cannot stop accumulating resources. The state is an instrument to make laws in the interest of the ruling class and to maintain the status quo; elites are tactically planting their children into political positions. This is what Ukaogo (2023) called sexually transmitted political dynasties in the politics of Nigeria. The Nigeria state has successfully build strong men rather than strong institutions since independence. Our laws have over-empowered the leaders making them to live above the law.

According to Mbah (2014), the recent demand in the forms workers protests for improved economic wellbeing in the country is a manifestation of class struggle. Other manifestations of class struggle include #EndSARS non-violent protest in 2020 and the obedient movement in the 2023 general elections. Mbah (2014) went further to argue that various nationwide protests and demonstrations occasioned by economic and political hardship represent revolutionary pressures on the Nigerian state. Therefore, the possible result of the current class struggle between the ruler and the ruled will determine the survivability of this country called Nigeria and its future.

The issue of survivability of the Nigerian state is a crucial concern because Nigeria is a diverse country with significant ethnic, religious and regional differences. These differences often

degenerate tension and conflicts over power, resources and representation. Therefore, tackling these issues through restructuring is seen as a means to promote stability, inclusivity and the long term survival of the Nigerian state. Therefore, to ensure the survivability of the Nigerian state amidst restructuring, it is crucial to foster inclusive dialogue and deal with the underlying grievances, agitations and tensions that have fueled calls for restructuring. It is also important to have robust institutions and mechanisms for managing conflicts, promoting equitable resource allocation and ensuring that the benefits of restructuring are felt across different regions and social groups.

Conclusion

Nigeria's contemporary democracy faces elite attempts to hijack the state for individual interests. Nigeria has steadily and systematically degenerated from being a country of great promise to a country of great problems. The paper therefore, concludes that the growing clamours for restructuring of the Nigerian state are a result of the country becoming a failed state that is unable to carry out the fundamental functions of a sovereign nation-state in this contemporary world system. It is against the foregoing that this paper notes that contrary to some perceptions, it is not the system but the process of governance that has led Nigeria into trouble since independence. It is not the system but the operators of the system that are the problem of the Nigerian state. Thus, successful restructuring will require inclusive governance, fair resource allocation, constitutional reforms, political stability and economic diversification. If managed effectively, restructuring has the potential to address underlying grievances, promote national unity and enhance the survivability of the Nigerian state.

Arising from the above, this paper recommends the following:

- Using distributive justice, equity, good governance and fair play to address Nigeria's issues with injustice, unfairness and inequalities. The concept of distributive justice is a concept that focused on fair distribution of resources, opportunities and benefits within a society. It seeks to deal with inequalities and ensure that individuals receive their due based on principles of fairness and equity. Applying the principles of distributive justice can contribute to resolving problem of injustice in Nigeria. Distributive justice involves redistributing resources such as land, capital and income to ensure a more equitable distribution.

- Transparent governance: Distributive justice is closely link to the concept of good governance. To address injustice, it is essential to establish transparent and accountable systems of governance that ensure equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. This includes tackling corruption, promoting transparency in public institutions and involving citizens in decision-making processes.
- Strengthening institutions: Invest in strengthening the capacity and independence of key institutions involved in governance, including the judiciary, electoral bodies, anti-corruption agencies and administrative bodies. Strong institutions are crucial for ensuring the effective implementation and enforcement of any restructuring plans.
- Inclusive dialogue and national conversation: Facilitate a broad-based and inclusive dialogue among stakeholders including representatives from different regions ethnic groups, civil society organizations and political parties. This national conversation should provide a platform for constructive discussions, airing of grievances and consensus-building on the way forward.
- Implementation of the 2014 National Conference Report: The 2014 national conference report addresses several issues confronting the Nigeria federation. Issues of state creation, state policing, resource control, revenue sharing formula, Local Government Autonomy, Judiciary Independence, reducing regional imbalances, promoting economic diversification, devolution of power to state and local governments, conflict prevention and management and among others.

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