WHAT IS IN RESTRUCTURING IN THE ERA OF CHANGE IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

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Abstract-The "Nigerian Project" is a euphemism for how the country could properly be built to ensure that, like a real building project, it shall stand the test of time. Nigeria is a colonial creation, which process brought together motley nationalities and ethnic groups that were at various levels of sophistication in terms of statecraft and the bewildering assets and powers of demographics,especially in an electoral political practice. Obviously, because the colonial process did not bring people of the same level of development together, there has been a great deal of mutual suspicions and misgivings, particularly if the available patrimony can't get to every community equitably. In other words, in any given public policy in Nigeria, there are always protagonists and antagonists, because it is assumed, *ab initio,*that one group or the other stands to gain more. This is a fair assumption;but the resultant quest for equity is likely to create its dynamics: if the dynamics are favourable to the greater majority and they are inclusive enough, the country is likely to create bases for consensus, amity, and cooperation that shall conduce to healthy and sustainable development of the country and her people as well as, possibly, democratic politics. On the other hand, if the dynamics are negative, regardless of the ratios affected and their nature or distribution, the results shall be none other than accusations and counter-accusations as well as anarchy, at the most its extreme. It is precisely this latter outcome that was harvested within the first decade of the country's independence. The country witnessed a civil war, which threatened its territorial integrity and, contrary to expected result, theend of the war also averted that disintegration. Should the country get to the extreme point once again, chances are that it might not survive, if the statement credited to General T. Y. Danjuma (Rtd.) that no country ever survives two civil wars is anything to go by. The issues for this paper, among others, include: what is in this restructuring conceptually? What is going to be the outcome of the restructuring: properly conceptualized and generally accepted as the minimum condition for the sustainability of the nation-state? Will it actually bring out the "Nigerian Project" as a rejuvenated national entity that can at the point of success make the country assume its rightful place in the comity of nations? Or will it eventuate tragically, to bring the "Project" to its long-wished or long-awaited collapse that is in the imagination of the doomsayers a few years ago? In the conjuncture or mantra of change, brought about by the new civil rule that came to office on May 29th, 2015, what are the salient issues about restructuring that some sections of Nigerian society are hankering after, which can and/or cannot be handled within the ambit of the "change" mantra? In other words, how efficacious or otherwise and in what direction could the "change" mantra be put in place to tackle the underlying contradictions in the polity? To be viable, solutions should be found for the challenges that may confront any nation-state, as there is no nation-state that does not have its peculiar headache, after all.

Keywords: restructuring; protagonists; antagonists; change mantra; corruption; federalism; marginalization; and sub-national units

I. INTRODUCTION

The word "restructuring" has acquired widespread usage, with sonorous reverberations, particularly in Nigeria's public space within the last 18 months of the coming to office of the Buhari Administration. In historical terms, it must be emphasized that this is not the first time that words with prefixes such as "Re" have found their ways into national consciousness and reckoning. As a matter of fact, after the bitterly fought civil war between 1967 and 1970 in the country, the Yakubu Gowon Administration coined the three "Re's," namely, "Re-conciliation:" "Re-construction;" and "Re-habilitation;" to depict the determination of the regime then to come up with programmes that would, at least, be used to blunt the rough edges of the traumatic years of the civil war on the war-torn erstwhile Eastern Region. It should be quickly stressed that the three "Re's" were not even evocative [1] then as compared to the current "restructuring" crusade that some of its protagonists would be prepared to even pay the supreme sacrifice in order to realize it. If what should have been the more evocative "Re's" did not bring out the worst in us (considering the fact that during and, particularly, shortly after the war emotions were still high given that lives were lost on both sides and properties were similarly destroyed), then the tenor of the call for restructuring, even when it is not conceptually so crystal clear at this point in time, should make

[1] In terms of the general treatment meted out to opponents that have been defeated in a war, the resolve of government to embark on re-conciliation, re-construction, and re-habilitation should have been resisted. But the feeling then was that the war was a misadventure by the rebels who took up arms against their fatherland; they were misguided and therefore should be forgiven. Between then and now, so much water has passed under the bridge as far as nation-building process is concerned. This is to the extent that some people openly canvass the dismemberment of the country, as its peoples cannot stay together.

everyone worried about motives and likely consequences.[2]

It must also be stated that "restructuring" is also not new in another sense: "resource control" was at a point in time the rallying phraseology aimed at precisely achieving the same objective as the current debate. Probably, the only difference this time around is as follows: while "resource control" largely captured the imagination and practical mobilization of largely the people of the oil producing communities in the Niger Delta, this time around "restructuring" is pitting the elite of the North and those of the South, as may be broadly segmented, to represent the South-East Geopolitical Zone; the South-South Geopolitical Zone; and the South- West Geopolitical Zone, on the firing line. As the issue stands at this point in time, it may be necessary to pose and answer the question in this paper: Whose interest do these elite elements represent?

In the next section, an attempt shall be made at conceptual and historical clarification of the word "restructuring. This section would also be concerned with analyzing the historical and existing instruments of association of the various communities into a nation-state and specifying what intrinsically are the positive factors of the federal set up that might have been compromised that, in turn, have given rise to the clamour for restructuring. This shall be followed by providing the background to the emergence of the Buhari Administration and its significance in the political changes that may have given "birth" to the restructuring agitation.[3] The next section to this shall critically examine the content of the "change" mantra and how it has been implemented so far. A succeeding section shall be devoted to underscoring the likely positive and negative outcomes of restructuring, should the restructuring further gather steam beyond the normal feature of open and honest democratic discourse in the public space of a polity. The final section shall conclude the discussion.

II. RESTRUCTURING NIGERIA: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS AND CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Etymologically speaking, the word "restructuring" is from its verb form "to restructure," which, in turn, could be traced to what could be referred to as the root word: "to structure," from which the prefix "re" was added to become "restructure." It is necessary to stress how the permutation of the word is arrived because there is no dictionary worthy of its name and in our possession that has the word "restructure" among the words it has had to define.[4] This finding compels us to embark on conceptual clarification very meticulously by leaving no stone unturned. On the basis of this clarification, we would like to proceed by defining structure first.

To structure something, one of the dictionaries defines the process as follows: "To form into an organized structure; build. To conceive as a structure whole; ideate."[5] As a noun form, the word "structure"

[2] Some concern should actually be raised considering that the Election Year of 2015 was the year the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or some of its operatives had predicted that Nigeria would disintegrate. Disintegration is not an option for any nation-state in the present global conjuncture as the process would definitely leave the different state structures coming out of the disintegration much weaker and more vulnerable.

[3] Among other factors, the standpoint of the Buhari Administration not to visit the outcome of the 2014 Constitutional Conference organized by the preceding Jonathan Administration could also have added "fuel" to the agitation for restructuring. For example, a chieftain of *Afenifere* – a socio-cultural group from the Yoruba nationality, Chief Ayo Adebanjo, in a recent outburst in an interview on a national television asserted unabashedly that there would be no Nigeria except and until the outcome of the said Constitutional Conference was implemented by the Buhari Administration. Admitted that he is entitled to his opinion, why couldn't the participants of the said Conference convince Jonathan to implement the Report as important as it might have been? After all, from the time of submission and the period he left office in May 2015, he had enough time to consider and implement the Report of "such monumental importance."

[4] At least and for the purpose of the writing this essay, we cross-checked in the following dictionaries: *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language: Encyclopedic Edition*, Naples, Flo.: Trident Press International, 2004 Edition; *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary And Thesaurus*, Springfield, Mass.: Merriam=Webster, Incorporated, 2006; and F. M. Kirkpatrick, ed., *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*, Edinburgh: W & R Chambers Ltd., 1983.

[5] *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English*

is also defined as "That which is constructed; a combination of related parts, as a building or machine."[6] Structure has its biological, geological, chemical, social (societal) connotations, according to the same dictionary. The word "restructure" is not independently defined in the dictionary, as already emphasized. As a prefixed word, it would serve our purpose to define the concept as a process, in the case of a nation-state, that requires its citizens to take a closer look at the national edifice or, better still, the state of the nation with regard to how to address structural deformities, if any. Be that as it may, whatever may be the structural deformities of the Nigerian nation-state would have to be put in their proper historical perspectives by looking, first, at the structure used for governance in a multinational society; and, secondly, the constitutional provisions undergirding that structure.

As already mentioned, Nigeria is a multinational society coupled together by the British as part of the colonialist and imperialist rampart in the 19th century, which process history has dubbed as the "Scramble for Africa." The various communities thus coupled together in Nigeria were at various levels of societal development. Some of them were entrenched empires such as the Kanem-Borno; Oyo (even though at that point it had passed its zenith); the Sokoto Jihad; Kwararafa (Jukun) Empire; Benin Empire (that was reputed to have had diplomatic relationships with the Portuguese monarchy); etc.

Most of the other Nigerian pre-colonial societies, on the other hand, were, in historical studies, dubbed as acephalous entities, which were non-centralized and lacking in any serious statecraft appurtenances. Among these, one would like to mention the Igbo segmental society; the Tiv; the Ebira, and the other less centrally organized and smaller communities, where kinship relations largely formed the basis of authority. In demographic terms, also, the communities that came to comprise what is now known as Nigeria varied and are still varied in size. The big ones numbering in tens of millions of citizens – such as the Hausa/Fulani (with not less than 67 million people);[7] the Yoruba (with not less than 40 million);[8] and the Igbo (with not less than 32 million native speakers)[9] – are arguably bigger in size individually than a select number of African independent states such as Mozambique, Ghana, Angola, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Malawi, Zambia, Senegal, Chad, Zimbabwe, South Sudan, Rwanda, Tunisia, Somalia, Guinea, Benin Republic, etc. Each of these countries has less than the population size of the Igbo ethnic group that has the least figure among the three largest ethnic groups in Nigeria.[10] In one sense, the huge population size of each of these three largest ethnic groups might have made feel, somewhat justifiably, that each of them plus several others with large populations could "if the going gets tougher in Nigeria, jump out of the Nigerian boat and go it alone," just as the less endowed African countries, population-wise, are somehow on-going autonomous entities, recognized diplomatically and accorded membership status in the United Nations system and other global institutions. In other words, it is being argued that there may be an element of psychology undergirding the political tone of the discourse on restructuring.

The motley communities in what became known as Nigeria were conquered one after the other and at different points in history by the British colonialists. The process started with the annexation of the Lagos Colony in 1861. This process of occupation of the various communities, since it started from the coastal area to the interior, culminated in the defeat of Sultan Attahiru Ahmadu in 1903, being the head of the historic Sokoto Caliphate. Because of the paucity of administrative personnel as well as the huge deficit in infrastructural facilities generally at the beginning of the colonial enterprise, the British colonial authorities consolidated the various administrative structures (controlled by the Royal Niger Company and other trading companies, especially in the Oil Rivers Protectorate, the independent Lagos Colony administration, etc.) into two broad Protectorates by January 1st, 1900: the Northern Protectorate and the Southern Protectorate. By January 1st, 1914, the two Protectorates were, furthermore, merged through a process proclaimed as the "Amalgamation of Nigeria." Although, the country was amalgamated in 1914, the administrative structure was still largely divergent between the North and the South, despite the setting up of the Nigerian Council. Indeed, serious administrative harmonization began to take shape

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Language: Encyclopedic Edition, *ibid.*, p.1243.

[6] *Ibid*,

[7] https://**en.wikipedia.org**/wiki/Hausa_people. Downloaded on Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 3.30 am.

[8] https://**en.wikipedia.org**/wiki/Yoruba_people. Downloaded on Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 3.35 am.

[9] https://**en.wikipedia.org**/wiki/Igbo_people. Downloaded on Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 3.40 am.

[10] https://**Simple.wikipedia.org**/wiki/List_of_African_countries_by_population. Downloaded on Thursday, November 17, 2016 at 3.50 am.

only with the introduction of the Clifford Constitution in 1922. Other constitutional landmarks that could be said to have impinged on the development of a nation-state included the Richards Constitution of 1946; the MacPherson Constitution of 1951; the Lyttelton Constitution of 1954; the Constitution of 1957; and the 1959 Constitution that culminated into the Independence status of the country on October 1st, 1960.[11]

The significant thing that came out of the various constitutional changes that took place from 1922 to 1960 was the introduction of a federal constitution to the country starting from the Richards Constitution in 1946 and its consummation in 1951 in the MacPherson Constitution. This instrument of governance, which we referred to earlier, is most probably at the heart of the agitation for and against restructuring in recent times. It is scantily referred in the ongoing debate on restructuring to the extent that the debate is carried out along sub-national parameters that in the end obfuscates what should have been the positive spin-offs of restructuring such as democracy, peaceful co-existence of the various nationality groups as well as the economic development of the country on a sustainable pattern.

Perhaps and at this juncture, we may need to pause to reflect as follows: did it ever occur to Nigerians that Britain that introduced federalism to the country was and still never a federal society? What practical experience did it therefore have to pass on to Nigerians? People have talked about the "Mistake of 1914;"[12] and the that Nigeria "is a mere geographical expression,"[13] without ever interrogating the perfidy of the 1946 to 1951 constitutional constructs that left one part of the country in both physical and population sizes predominant over the other two segments of the federation. Federalism could have been theoretically accepted as a panacea to any conceivable bottlenecks of governing a multi-cultural Nigeria[14] right from the period of the struggle for independence from the forties throughout the fifties, but Britain could not have been the best teacher for that purpose.

Be that as it may, at independence and up to the demise of the First Republic in 1966, the principle of governance – i.e., fiscal federalism – was regarded as having been somehow adhered to. The prominence given to the principle of derivation meant that the regions could retain up to 50% of the revenue generated within their spheres of influence.[15] The practice of the principle of derivation did enable each region to embark on competitive development projects that led to the generation of more wealth that, in turn, conduced to more revenue accruing to the region. These sublime features of fiscal federalism were indeed the hallmarks of governance in the First Republic. Conversely, it could be argued that it is the departure from adequate remuneration to the efforts of the constituent states in the federal system as well as the accompanying lack of equity in giving what is due to states that generate the enormous revenues, which are also seen being used rather recklessly and corruptly by the Federal Government that combine to fuel the agitation for restructuring.

The issue raised by this reality is fundamentally how can a nation-state adopt the federal system of governance and, at the same time, the constitutional provision thathas given life to that system from 1979 to date is so deficient on arrival? The necessity of adequate knowledge, best practice and functionality alluded to in the paragraph preceding the one immediately above. Meanwhile, in the next sub-section, we shall attempt to address this question by content analysis of how the protagonists and the antagonists have stated their respective positions

[11] Among others and for details of the constitutional advance from 1922 to 1960, see G. O. Olusanya, "Constitutional Development 1861 – 1960," in O. Ikime, ed., *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Ibadan: Published for the Historical Society of Nigeria by Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria) PLC, 1999 Edition, pp.518-544.

[12] Statement credited to Sir Ahmadu Bello, the *Sardauna* of Sokoto, late Premier of Northern Nigeria, following a constitutional crisis in the legislative house in the early fifties in Lagos. See his autobiography, *My Life*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962, p.133.

[13] Awolowo, O., *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, London: London: Faber & Faber, 1947.

[14] Multi-culturalism should, as a matter of fact, not have been the main consideration for the introduction of the federal system; the absorptive capacity as well as the long learning curve required to entrench it should also have been factored into the whole equation.

[15] This practice did not also prevent them to reap from the remaining 50% of the revenue with respect to the other principles – such as population size, land mass, contribution to national development, etc. – that were also in operation then.

before coming back to the critical issue of what direction the Nigerian state should embark upon in order to stem the tide of incessant inflamed exchanges, especially when it comes to manage our common patrimony.

III. HOW HAVE BOTH THE PROTAGONISTS AND THE ANTAGONISTS CONCEPTUALIZED AND/OR APPROACHED RESTRUCTURING

It is usually the case in any politically charged discourse in Nigeria to discover that issues are looked at, first and foremost, from highly partisan, ethnic, and religious perspectives. The debate that has so far taken place on restructuring the Nigerian political and governance landscapes has lived up to this billing. From the content analysis of the debate so far, it is obvious that the debate is largely between the southern protagonists who largely bay for restructuring and the northern antagonists who are apparently largely, on the other hand, opposed to restructuring. For instance, in an interview granted to *Daily Sun*, Professor A. B. C. Nwosu (a one-time Political Adviser to President Obasanjo), starts by defining restructuring as:

> …let us change the structure. What is the structure? There is too much power at the centre. [The] Federal government has too much power, too much responsibility, too much money, much to waste….
>
> I thought change was if it is not good for the country, we [would] do it. Is there anybody who has not seen that [the] federal government has too much power, and too much responsibility? Is there anybody who does not see that the over 60 to 70 per cent spent on recurrent expenditure is wrong? Is there anybody who does not see that the federal government has over 800 parastatals and that it is wrong? Is there anybody see that having over 42 ministries is wrong?[16]

When asked why are people asking for restructuring, he answers by asserting that:

> The structure that we have is anti-development. The structure we have is unjust and unfair. I belong to the school [of thought] that regards restructuring more of a devolution of power than regionalization of Nigeria.[17]

Professor Nwosu appears to have a fellow traveller in Dr. Arthur Nwankwo[18] who defines the restructuring process as:

> …the reinvention of the 1963 constitution [*sic.*]; constitutionalising the six geo-political zones as federating units and devolving considerable powers to the regions. Restructuring simply means divesting the central government of certain powers and limiting its area of influence to such issues as fiscal policies, military defence, foreign policy, immigration and national elections.
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> Restructuring does not mean the merging of states, as some people would prefer. Rather, it is a thoroughgoing process that allows each region to control its resources and pay royalties to the central government. It is a process that is anchored on the principle of "from each according to each according to his needs."[19]

We should put aside Nwankwo's digression into the classic principle of communism, which is not what restructuring is likely to bring about as the material conditions for building a communist society are simply not there yet; just as the fact that it is irrelevant in its entirety, in the context of the discussion.[20] He however avers that: "Restructuring will help us to stem the tide of restiveness in many parts of the country. It will also resolve the questions of citizenship, religion, resource control, and fiscal federalism."[21]

On the side of the antagonists to the argument on restructuring, which, apparently and perhaps unfortunately, has made the print media in particular theplatform to pitchthe Northerners against the Southerners, the perception has been created that restructuring is being aimed at compromising the "historical" and "natural" advantage embedded in the region. Some even see it as an attempt to divide the country in which Northern Region shall be the worse for it. Some of the sampled opinions of the

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16 Professor A. B. C. Nwosu, "Why North is Afraid of Restructuring," Text of the Interview Granted to *Daily Sun*, Thursday, September 15, 2016, pp.32-33.

17 *Ibid.*

18 Dr. A. Nwankwo is a self-styled Chancellor of the Eastern Mandate Union and a Prolific Essayist.

19 *Ibid.*, "No Alternative to Restructuring in Nigeria," Text of an Interview granted to *The Guardian*, Sunday, August 28, 2016, pp.16-17.

20 As a matter of fact and based on the principle of derivation, restructuring, in practice, is supposed to be "from whom that has (no matter the quantum) and to whom as much is returned or given back. It is a compensatory schema *par excellence*.

21 *Ibid.*, p.17.

spokespeople of the region are serially provided as follows:

You see the way most of those people agitating for restructuring is unpatriotic. Most of those who are calling for restructuring in Nigeria today are doing so with some kind of hate in their minds. The thing that is working in their minds is to find a way of denying states from the North [from] getting the kind of shares they are getting from the federation account. Some of the factors that the government is [*sic.*]using to distribute the revenue are God-made. For instance, when they talk of population, the Nigerian people were not created by the Nigerian government.

It is God who created the Nigerian people and concentrated some of them in a particular area, which is the North and which always has more than 55 percent of the total population of Nigeria. Now, if you go with the other factor, that is landmass, the North has two third [*sic.*] of the total landmass of Nigeria. You cannot deny a Northerner those advantages given to him by God simply because he gets some revenue based on those creations. [*sic.*]Those talking of restructuring are actually hiding their real intent under the slogan. They are yet to explain what this restructuring means. They are only shouting and fighting restructuring because of the share of the revenue the North is getting.[22]

On his own part, Anthony Sani – a one-time Public Relations Officer of the Arewa Consultative Forum (a socio-cultural group of the people of the North)argues that:

The North is currently opposed to the restructuring of Nigeria precisely because there is nothing to restructure. The North does not believe the problems of Nigeria can rightly be attributed to the form of government the country chooses. What we believe is that the problems of Nigeria are due to the failure of leadership.

Those who hanker for 'true federalism' to enable each constituent unit to develop at its own pace are unwittingly advocating that Nigerians should live as if they are in different countries, where some citizens would live in a comfort zone, while others would live on the fringe. Such a split would be a harbinger for split.

There is nothing universally accepted as true federalism. And that is why there are no two countries with federal systems that are self-same or clones of one another. All federal systems depend on the circumstances of their emergence. For example, 13 American colonies came together and formed the United States and evolved to be what America is today, while in the case of Nigeria, the national government created the federating units. But the common mantra in all federal systems is a national government that is strong enough to keep the country under one roof but not too strong as to tilt the country into unitary system.[23]

What may perhaps be considered a moderating viewpoint from Northern Nigeria is the opinion of Atiku Abubakar – a former Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. He argues thus:

As some of you know, I have for a long time advocated the need to restructure our federation. Our current structure and the practice it has encouraged have been a major impediment to the economic and political development of our country.

When I was invited to chair this occasion, I immediately understood that the title of the book is a metaphor for the legitimate feelings of marginalization by diverse segments of Nigerians that cut across the country. Agitations by many right-thinking Nigerians call for a restructuring and renewal of our federation to make it less centralized, less suffocating and less dictatorial in the affairs of our country's constituent units and logistics.

In short, it has not served Nigeria well, and at the risk of reproach, it has not served my part of the country, the North, well. The call for restructuring is even more relevant today in the light of the governance and economic challenges facing us and the rising tide of agitations, some militant and violent, require a reset in our relationships as a united nation.[24]

The major planks of the arguments are as sampled above. Whose interests do they actually serve? In the next section, we shall try to look at these arguments beyond their face values.

IV. IN WHOSE INTEREST ARE WE TO SITUATE THE CLAMOUR FOR RESTRUCTURING

From the sample of the positions of what one may term as the spokespersons of the various groups and regions it is obvious that there are problems of adequate and accurate comprehension of the concept

[22] Yakasai, T., Excerpt of Interview Conducted by *Sunday Sun* Entitled "North Divide Over Nigeria: Arewa Leaders Sing Discordant Tunes Over Restructuring," September 25, 2016, pp.30, and 31. Alhaji Yakasai was the Presidential Adviser on National Assembly Matters to President Shehu Shagari, 1979-83.

[23] Sani, A., *ibid*.

[24] A, Abubakar, *ibid*.

of restructuring and how the Nigerian people should go about it. Besides, the conversation has been largely at the level of the elite who, in a large measure, are the architects of the lopsided nature of the Nigerian nation-state. Of course, they leave the country in ugly form it has found itself because of the possible immense benefits that accrue therefrom to them, first and foremost, and as much as they are less than honest about their agitative pastimes they try to champion.

In terms of whose interest is best served by elite manipulation, which is what the restructuring campaigns are all about, some scholars argued vociferously that it is the elite that stand as always to gain from what agenda they have drummed up. Before we come up with their arguments, let us see how the proponents have put the matter in its particularistic patterns.

At the end of the day, when posterity is evaluating today's events, what would matter for the Yoruba would not be how each Yoruba leader has survived and achieved political fame. Rather, what would matter is how each generation of Yoruba leaders deployed their endowments to the furtherance of an agenda that **unashamedly** led to the empowering of the Yoruba agenda in Nigeria. That is the sole justification for the existing legacy of Chief Obafemi Awolowo.[25] [Emphasis mine.]

In addition, the reductionist portrayal of the issue of restructuring on the deliberate "persecution" of a particular ethnic or nationality group by another on the basis of the lack of appointments to juicy offices smacks of a lack of appreciation of the complex nature of modern governance system. Thus, argument such as the following misses the whole point; it is a misdirected arsenal to the pristine issue of restructuring as it is merely made to inflame emotions as they evade the fundamental and the most debilitating issues that affect the bulk of the Nigerian populace:

If there is an emergency and there is a National Security Council meeting to declare war in the country, there is no single south-easterner in the security architecture of Nigeria. If Mr. President is today meeting with the Vice President, Senate President, Speaker of [the] House of Representatives, Service Chiefs, the DG [Director General], DSS [Department of State Security] and the IGP [Inspector General of Police], the South-east will not be represented. When the President is making appointments and the eastern region [*sic*.] is being totally neglected, he is telling them 'you are not part of Nigeria.'

In the 2016 budget, the North-west got over 40 per cent of the allocation for capital projects. The North-central, North-east, and the South-west also got large chunks. The South-south got a little; but the South-east got the least. That is man's inhumanity to man. The administration is only sending a message to the south-east that it is out to enslave them forever.[26] [Emphasis in the original.]

In addition, the issue of the roads of the South-East that is mentioned in the foregoing paragraph is disgraceful that a national asset has been left to rut away for long by the highly corrupt, inefficient and ineffective regimes, particularly that of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. Besides, is it only when you have the representatives of the bigger ethnic groups in the country that "justice and fair play" would be considered to have been done? What about the non-representation of the smaller ethnic groups in such appointments? Who speak for them? There should a pan-Nigerian platform to pursue vigorously and sincerely the issue of restructuring.

In an attempt to provide such pan-Nigerian platform for restructuring, Ihonvbere has argued thus:

What has become power sharing in the context of Nigerian federalism would normally be a good political agenda designed, religious and cultural groups an almost equal opportunity to manage the affairs of the nation. But in the Nigerian context, we need to be very cautious if we are to understand the driving forces behind the strident calls for power sharing that has become a national obsession. The truth is that Nigerian politicians have been calling for new patterns of power sharing not because they are genuinely interested in gaining a share of power in the interest of their respective nationality, religious, or interest groups, but because they see such arrangements as an easy route to grab power and deploy it for private accumulation.[27]

[25] Olaopa, T., "The Yoruba's Precarious Future in Nigeria," in *THISDAY*, Friday, 18 November, 2016, p.32.

[26] O. Agbedo quoting Evangelist Elliot Ugochukwu-Uko, in his piece entitled "Real Reasons Igbos Cry of Marginalisation Under Buhari," *Sunday Sun*, September 25, 2016, p.35.

[27] Ihonvbere, J., "The Nigerian State as Obstacle to Federalism: Towards a New Constitutional Compact for Democratic Politics," in A. T. Gana and S. G. Egwu, eds., *Federalism in Africa: The Imperative of Democratic Governance*, Vol. Two, Trenton, N. J.: Africa World Press, Inc., A Publication of The African Centre for

As much as those clamouring may not be too inclined to allow the likely accruable dividends of "restructuring" to even trickle down to the "disadvantaged communities and give all nationality, religious and cultural groups an almost equal opportunity to manage the affairs of the nation…," according to Ihonvbere, it is,however, the instrumentalist way they deploy the struggle for restructuring via the appeals to sub-national emotions and sentiments, i.e., "ethnicizing restructuring," which should not be factored into the analysis of how the country is to be restructured that is a major cause for concern.

This is because it reduces the whole argument to either personalities: who they are; their superhuman credentials; how what they have achieved paled into insignificance because they have been denied and/or have not been fully acknowledged for the roles they had, are still playing, or are likely to play, of course, for the benefit of selves, first, and, secondly, for such sub-national communities. Thisexplains the appeals to such historical figures in the discourse as may be seen above (see footnote 25 again).

For this paper, one of the main issues in the struggle to "restructure governance" in Nigeria emanates from the fact the Nigerian people, rather than ethnic spokespersons or heroes, are yet to pose the fundamental question about the transparency of, for instance, the proceeds of the little that is being doled out by the overbearing federal centre. This is why even if there is an improvement or a reverting to the fiscal federal system of the First Republic (1960-1966) or something that is akin to it, there is no guarantee that the huge amount would not end the way the small disbursements under contemporary or the current regimes in the private pocket of the so-called leaders. In other words, there is a need to take a critical look at the issue of corruption, which has actually become the new definition of fiscal federalism at all levels of government in Nigeria.

Furthermore, there is the aspect of insincerity that Adibe has hammeredmuch about in his critical analysis of the discourse on restructuring that we think should also be considered in our attempt to unravel how the restructuring of the polity could be embarked upon more properly:

I have always believed that the problem with Nigeria project is politics, not economics or underdevelopment or poverty. We are on the cliff because though every part of the country feels marginalized we have zero-sum attitude to solving the country's problem. Once an effort is made to solve the problem of one area, others go into their institutional memories to retrieve cases of injustices [*sic*.] and marginalization[,] which must be concurrently addressed. In the end the country moves in circles, with problems mutating, rather than being effectively solved. All this calls for a forum where Nigerians can talk, air out their grievances, even if for catharsis. If the word 'restructuring' engenders distrust, we will need to construct new vocabularies that will enable us to engage one another. Certainly[,] if we continue to do what we have always done, then we will continue to get what we have always got, which is hanging on a cliff.[28]

It is probably in order to avoid hanging on a cliff that the Buhari Administration sought for election under the platform of All People's Congress (APC) party with the mantra of "change" in the 2015 Presidential Elections. The regime has been in power for more than 19 months (from May 2015 to December 2016). Has his regime been up to the challenge of the change mantra? In what respect or direction has the change been pursued? Equally important is the issue of the civic responsibility of the people to demand responsibility from their so-called leaders. The requisite role of the invocation of the spirit of the rule of law is what is being demanded from the citizenry at this juncture. Historically speaking, it is not unusual that leaders are always the ones to set the agenda for governance; but it is also the birth right of the followership to insist that due process must be adhered to, for the overall benefit of the greater majority of the people. It is this missing link that gives fillip to impunity that has become the basic characteristic of either the instrument of governance or the constitutional basis of that instrument.In the next section, an attempt shall be made to analyze the background to the adoption of the change mantra by the Buhari Administration aswell as to see what has been the effect so far.

V. THECONTENTS OF THE CHANGE MANTRA

The Buhari Administration came to power on the promise of a changed mode and focus of governance, particularly in key areas of arresting insecurity; battling corruption; and also reducing unemployment. Indeed, under the administration of Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, all what one should expect as the minimum level of decency and responsibility in governance was compromised. Governance was deficient, ineffective and ingrained with impunity as well as corrupt practices. In these key areas that would occupy the attention of the administration of Buhari, the Jonathan

Democratic Governance, Abuja, pp.196-197.

[28] Adibe, J., "Nigeria @ 56? Is This House Really Falling?" *Daily Trust*, Thursday, October 6, 2016, p.48.

Administration showed nothing other than incapacity and total failure. The essence of the "change mantra," as far as this paper is concerned, is the extent to which the inanities of governance could be consigned to the dustbin of history. The measures taken in these key areas so far have included the revelations that have been made public with regard to the lootings that took place serially during the Jonathan administration. We shall go through this first and then come back to see what the new administration might have done in the realms of tackling insecurity as well as combating the issue of unemployment. These issues of focus for the new administration may be the major reasons why the Jonathan Administration lost the election in 2015, The other salient factor for his loss of power includes what Professor Emeritus Akin Mabogunje referred as his ill-preparedness for leadership before fate thrust him into power as the president of the country.[29]

Recovering Some of the Looted Public Funds Under the Jonathan Administration

It may not be out of place to call the Jonathan Administration a "lootocacy," i.e., the government of the looters, by the looters and for the looters.[30] In the history of this highly benighted country, corruption has never been so blatant and with reckless abandon as has been revealed by the crusade mounted by the Buhari Administration. Within one year of coming unto the saddle, the government has been able to recover the amount of monies reported below:

=N=78,325,354,631.82;
$185,119,584.61;
3,508.355.46 (pound sterling); and
11,250 (euros).

Other recoveries made under what has been described "interim forfeitures," which are a combination of cash and assets of varying significance, are as follows:

=N=126,563,481,095.43;
$9,090,243,920,.15;
2,484,447,55 (pound; sterling); and
11,826.11 (euros)

Sources: Ministry of Information and Culture, Abuja; and www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/204676-nigeria-publishes-details-of-recovered-assets-withholds-names-of-looters.html

Note: Non-cash recoveries include: farmlands; plots of land; uncompleted buildings; completed buildings; vehicles; and maritime vessels.

As stated earlier, this is a historic development in the annals of looting in the country in which so many people were involved in corrupt practices, some officials and others who were not, but were recruited for yeomen's jobs. It is also the first time some of the people exposed for taking part in the looting would not only admit being involved, but unabashedly refute what had been attributed to them as their returns to government coffers. An anonymous government official has also explained the recovery process does: "include monies withheld by past government officials, monies kept in private accounts, monies directed to private pockets and monies in possession of government officials not disclosed after leaving government."[31]

Measures Taken to Tackle Insurgencies of the Boko Haram and Niger Delta Avengers Genres

A short background would indicate that various non-state actors have dragged the Nigerian nation-state into combating a series of anti-state activities over a variety of reasons. In the Niger-Delta, where the nefarious activities reared their ugly head before the Boko Haram phenomenon took its turn, the anti-state activities involved economic sabotage through the destruction of pipelines meant to transport crude oil to the coast for transportation to the international markets. The destruction of the pipelines also had impact on the domestic distribution of some of the refined petroleum products. The economic sabotage that the militants embarked upon was meant to force government to give more resources or more attention to the region from where the bulk of the nation's financial resources were and still are being obtained.

[29] Mabogunje, A., "Jonathan Was Poorly Prepared for Presidency," Text of the Interview the Professor granted to *ThisDay, The Sunday Newspaper*, May 10, 2015, pp.84-86.

[30] The looting was so pervasive that the Patience, the President's wife, who was never known to have had a serious public service career and/or hss been engaged as an international businesswoman, has been embroiled in controversies with officials of Economic and Financial Corruption Commission (EFCC) over who owns some bank accounts and huge sums of money she cannot possibly account for or explain their sources. For a sample of newspaper reportages, see *The Nation*, Sunday, September 11, 2016, p.59; and *The Nation*,Saturday, November 19, 2016, pp.6-7.

[31] Qz.com/700036/Nigeria-says-its-recovered-9-1-billion-in-looted-funds-but-wont-name-the-culprits/

When the Yar'Adua Administration came into in May 2007, it initiated what was referred to as an "Amnesty Policy." The Policy was meant to dissuade the militants from totally collapsing the Nigerian economy and, at the same, providing them with some skills that would put such participants as well as others through training to the extent that they could more be useful to themselves and to the country. Some people viewed the policy as ill advised.[32] The state went ahead and symbolically the militants "laid down" their arms and the other weapons of destruction. The issue is from where did they come back to arm themselves in such sophisticated fashion that it is now requiring full-scale military assault to engage them in fighting? Could it be due to the blatant support that the Jonathan Administration granted them through the appointments of their kingpins into lucrative contracts involving huge sums of money, because they were his kit and kin? Whatever may be the case, militancy and/or armed terrorism in the Niger Delta is one leg of the security challenges that the Buhari Administration came to office to tackle. Progress is being made, but at snail's speed. The militants are still sabotaging oil production and distribution; but the Niger Delta leaders are trying to seek settlement by dialoguing with the Nigerian state;[33] and, at the same time, asking their kith and kin to lay down their arms.

The other leg in combating insurgency is the phenomenon of Boko Haram, which started in Borno State, and spread due to negligence of the Jonathan Administration to the whole of the northeast region that includes states such as Adamawa, Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe. The leadership of Boko Haram even boasted at the height of the success of their military campaigns that they would extend the areas of their operation to other parts of the country and even declare an Islamic state over the entire country.

The height of the campaigns of this notorious group was in April 2014 when they attacked a secondary school in the town of Chibok and kidnapped over 270 students, all of them females. The incompetency of the Jonathan Administration was demonstrated when he dismissed the episode as a non-event. Even after local and global public opinion forced his regime to acknowledge the seriousness of the disaster, his lackluster, cavalier and nonchalant attitude never allowed him to wake up from slumber. The worst of all of his stupidity was discovered only after the Buhari Administration came to power when it was discovered that monies running into billions of dollars, appropriated for the procurement of military equipment to engage the Boko Haram insurgents, were being shared recklessly among state officials and those who were recruited to carry out sundry activities on behalf of the government, such as taking money from the Office of the National Security Adviser for "prayers;" for campaigns to secure a second term for Jonathan; or, simply, for embezzlement, etc., etc. The practice was so nauseating that a former President of the country, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, was recently forced to emotionally remonstrate as follows:

> It is sickening! When the military is corrupt, it affects its fighting ability in many ways. Poor, used and inappropriate equipment and materials are purchased by the military for the military at the expense of the lives of fighting troops at the warfront. In some cases, nothing at all was purchased.
>
> How callous, for a General, an Air Marshal, a Naval Admiral to be so cruel and unpatriotic as to buy such inappropriate weapons, equipment, ammunition and materials for men facing the rigour and ruthlessness of an enemy force like the Boko Haram!
>
> It is more damnable for nothing to be bought and yet the money disappears into their private personal pockets. I can only say to these officers that I am not proud of them. Whether

[32] I was one of those particularly incensed that a state could allow itself to be compromised in this manner as that policy could trigger off similar anti-state activities from different parts of the country, since it was and still is the feeling that the Nigerian state is so irresponsible that things do not work because of pervasive corruption and an inefficient civil service. To a certain extent, the emergence of Boko Haram later to the scene is an affirmation of this stance. Beside, in spite of the "amnesty," the militants stepped up their campaigns, seeing that it was a way of blackmailing the state to capitulate more. The campaigns by the group in the Niger-Delta Region are such that it could be argued that they are one of the factors that led the country to slide into recession, in addition to corruption and the collapse of the international price of crude oil.

[33] At a recent parley with the President, Niger-Delta leaders came with a shopping list of demands, which included oil blocks that would facilitate peaceful resolution of the armed militancy in the region.

> they are alive or not, their family members should also be ashamed of them.[34]

Without doubt, the commitment of the regime of Buhari to battle Boko Haram to a standstill as well as to recover the monies misdirected through corruption has led to remarkable improvement in security challenges, especially in the Northeast, in particular, and in the country, in general.

VI. UNEMPLOYMENT

As a problem, unemployment, particularly youth typology, has been a major social issue in contemporary Nigeria. To underscore the dimension or extent of the problem, on Saturday, March 15, 2014, the Jonathan Administration wanted to partially address the problem and arranged to interview prospective employees into the immigration service. All over the country, 6.5 million applicants were invited to the various venues for 4,000 such vacancies. Being characteristic of the regime's knack for disorganization and imbecile planning, the venues chosen were open stadia, their main bowls, where no seats and desks were provided for writing; or private areas made available for more confidential interactions between the candidates and the officials conducting the interviews. The outcome was bound to be tragedy waiting to happen because of inherent crowd control challenges. This was exactly what happened as a result of overcrowding, stampede, exhaustion; but officials blamed the whole episode on "the impatience of the applicants," rather than the crass nature of the organization. Where, on earth, would any reasonable organization mass that number of people in arenas that could not ensure the barest minimum of comfort to both the organizers and the candidates? The death toll from across the country that day stood at 16, with several injured.[35] No disciplinary action was ever taken against the officials, especially the Minister of Interior, who should have been asked to resign (as he did not volunteer to do so) and be later prosecuted for the resultant tragedy.

The pervasiveness of the unemployment problem was one major issue that the Buhari Administration came to address. Figures indicate that unemployment rate, as of the second quarter of 2016, for example, stood at 13.3%, up from 12.1% in the three months to March 2016. Youth unemployment figures indicate that these increased from 21.5% to 24%; while the number of unemployed persons rose by 12.2% to 10.644 millions, in the same period of reporting.[36]

It is in the bid to address this social problem that in the 2016 Budget that government earmarked the creation of 500,000 jobs for unemployed graduates.

> It is a remunerated volunteering programme of two-year period that engages graduates in their…communities, where they will assist in improving the shortfalls in the education, health and agricultural sectors. They will own tablets that contain essential information concerning their precise engagements and other such crucial information. They are also to be provided teaching, instructional and consultative solutions in four major focus areas[;] namely[,] basic education, agriculture extension services, public health and community education (civic and adult education). They would also be trained in skills that could enable them to exit after two years to reasonably feasible opportunities. They are to be paid a monthly stipend of =N=30,000.00.[37]

While some groups, particularly the labour unions, have welcome this initiative because it is expected to go a long to reduce the rough edges of the unemployment problems in the country, quite a number of others feel it is rather a cosmetic tool that may not likely address the challenge the government sets out to address in the first instance. Perhaps, one may leave the critique of this government measure at this point and come back to look at the "change mantra" holistically in

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[34] Obasanjo, O., Keynote Address at the First Akintola Williams Annual Lecture. Downloaded from file://localhost/Users/Onyiohinoyi/Downloads/Obasanjo%20to%20Buhari_%20Stop%20the%20Excuses,%20Nigeria%20Needs%20Result-oriented%20Policies%20THISDAYLIVE.html on Saturday, November 26, 2016 at 9.30 pm.

[35] Among others see the following websites: https://**en.wikipedia.org**/wiki/2014_Nig_Immigration_Recruitment_Tragedy; and **www,premiumtimes.com**/news/156824-nigeria-immigration-pockets-n250-million-job-seekers-interior-minister-blames-applicants-deaths-recruitment-centres.html. Both were downloaded on Friday, November 24, 2016, at 00.15 am.

[36] www.tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/unemployment-rate. Downloaded on Friday, November 25, 2016, at 1.00 am. See also T. Ogunbiyi, "On Federal Government's 500,000 Jobs Initiative," in *The Nation*, Friday, November 25, 2016, .20.

[37] Ogunbiyi, *ibid*.

terms of how the contents of the mantra could or should be addressing the issue of restructuring that has engaged a good number of stakeholders in the "Nigerian Project."

VII. CHANGE MANTRA: AN APPRAISAL

Whether or not the Buhari Administration developed an articulate programme of change beyond what he said during the campaigns for election, it was the general belief that, given the poverty of governance by the Jonathan Administration, he was all the same going to be defeated. His defeat, in other words, was crystal clear, no matter whom the candidate and their platform for electoral contest were. It was therefore electorally expedient for the All People's Congress (APC) – the platform under which Buhari contested – to adopt the "change mantra" as it was bound to resonate with the electorate; and it actually did.

From what happened since the President was sworn in on May 29th, 2015 up to the end of September of the same year when he submitted his ministerial nominees' list to the Senate for confirmation, there was a deafening silence. There was virtually nothing going on except routine administration.[38] Even when the cabinet was constituted, there was nothing remarkable about either the quality of the ministerial list nor was there any programme framework that emanated from the cabinet. Up till this moment, it is difficult for any analyst to pinpoint a document that seeks to spell out the organic "change mantra." What is discernible is the fact that a number of government agencies have carried out executive instructions to the effect that some of the monies reportedly recovered have been documented (although the names of the culprits have been kept top secret, as if Nigerians were not entitled to be accurately and completely informed); the battle for the liberation of the entire Northeast from the hitherto menacing stranglehold of the Boko Haram has recorded remarkable progress; and the recent release of the programme of employing graduates on time-specific jobs.

To say the least, these "programmes," if they can be so-called, especially the ones on employment and anti-corruption crusade, do not indicate any synergy with one another and, most importantly, to what extent could they be harmonized with the latest challenge to the regime – the issue of recession that has come to worsen the socio-economic and the socio-political environment as well as the conditions of most Nigerians. Aside from all this, why should the regime be just launching the programme of addressing the unemployment problems, when the 2016 budget life span is tapering off in just one month's time? People have also criticized the paltry sum of =N=30,000.00 (thirty thousand naira) that is going to be paid to 500,00 selected graduates on the scheme, which number is far insignificant to dent the bulge of the 24% that comprises the youth segment of the unemployed in the country.[39]

When critics from the Southeast tried to rattle the Buhari Administration over key political appointments, their grouse was on the fact that one of the meanings of change should be the inclusiveness of everyone, particularly as a major ethnic group in government appointments. This can be gleaned from their discourse:

> Legally speaking, the President has violated the constitution by making appointments in favour of one section of the country against the others. Specifically, Section 171(5) of the 1999Constitution as amended provides for the manner in which the President should make his appointments. The section provides that the President in the exercise of his powers to make appointments [that] shall have regard to the Federal Character of Nigeria[,] to provide national security.
>
> Furthermore, Section 14 of the same constitution makes provision for the exercise of the principles of social justice and equality by the President in the administration of his government.
>
> Now[,] a situation where [a] certain section of the country comes close to 90 per cent of all key appointments in the country while other sections, particularly the south-east, has [*sic*.] none clearly shows a violation of the constitution by the President.
>
> Under the current administration, instead of talking about the nationalisation in appointments, what we are talking about is the northernisation of human and physical infrastructure of the country. Before his election, he represented a political party, but after his election and swearing in, he has

[38] It is amazing that at this point in time – 18 months since coming to power – the sluggish style of the regime has not been replaced with a pace that should be considered the *desideratum* of the times and situations the country has found itself. Buhari, in other words, slow and smacks of being bereft of both intellectual and physical vigours.

[39] See, among others, www.tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/unemployment-rate, *op. cit.*; and Ogunbiyi, *op. cit.*

> become the president of the entire country. So, his manner of appointments clearly shows that he does not respect the constitution of the country.
>
> If you talk about [the] execution of federal projects, federal roads in the South-east are death all death traps; and I see the development as a deliberate policy of government to keep the zone perpetually under their hegemony. It's like the civil war is not over yet.[40]

Still on the issue of marginalization, Ugochukwu-Uko has equally argued that:

> Marginalisation of the South-east is contributing to the growing agitation for Biafra[;] but it is not the genesis of the issue. The genesis of the struggle is that the political structure of Nigeria is suffocating. The unitary structure created by the military is not to carry Nigeria much farther. It is not working; it cannot work. The country is capsizing. The only solution is to restructure the country along the lines of six regions without delay.[41]

From the foregoing, a number of issues have cropped up regarding how the expected change by the Buhari Administration might have been derailed. Without necessarily holding brief for the President, the constitutional issue of not spreading federal appointments equitably must have been responded to by the President by ensuring that the composition of his cabinet strictly followed the constitutional stipulation of each constituent state having at least a ministerial slot. What is more, it is hyperbolic to assert that 90% of the key appointments have been taken by a section of the country without providing details and the meaning of "key appointments." Are ministerial appointments not key?

The crux of the matter is that there was the expectation that the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, which the South-east aspired to was not given to the region, but went to the North-east Geo-Political Zone.[42] Even if it was given to the South-east on a platter of gold, how much impact could this have made to the average South-Easterner? How many good roads, which are now referred to as death traps, could the occupant of the office have brought to the entire South-east, to replace such deplorable road networks? Did the roads become what they are now simply because the office was to zoned to the South-east? How long ago did these roads become so bad? Since Buhari came to office or prior? When a South-Easterner was the Army Chief of Staff, how much did steal and how much did he bequeath to the South-Easterners?

These questions are equally addressed to the Northerners who assume, rather foolishly, that the advantage that may be conferred on the region by Providence on account of population would have to be exploited should not be tampered with? Rather, shouldn't the advantage the North may have be more responsibly applied to ensure that abuse of office, which characterized the administrations of the duo of Generals Babangida and Abacha, does not rear its ugly head anytime a Northerner is entrusted with leadership role now and in the future? Indeed, this is the essence of President Muhammadu Buhari. Apart from the conjunctional factor that the Jonathan could have been defeated by any candidate from a serious political party, the coming of Buhari to office at this point in time and his adoption as a political slogan or mantra of change. The Northern Geo-Political Zones should see his reputational attributes and integrity as good omens of immense importance of how good leadership should emerge therefrom. It is a historical lesson of gargantuan importance that societies can only be turned around for the better by men/women of vision and good character. This is what the change mantra should encapsulate and this is what the Buhari Administration should be helped to achieve.No doubt, as amortal, he has his weaknesses; Northerners and

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[40] F. Agbedo, in O. Agbedo, "Real Reasons Igbos Cry of Marginalisation Under Buhari, *op. cit.*

[41] Ugochukwu-Uko, *op. cit.*

[42] The South-east must have aimed too high. This is in the sense that the immediate past Jonathan Administration appointed someone from the South-east to that post covering the period 2011-2015. So, they wanted a second term, because the office is endowed ceaselessly to them? Besides, among the Ministers appointed by the Buhari Administration, those representing the South-east were given ministries that, in any political clime, could be regarded as strategic. These included Education; Foreign Affairs; Industry, Trade, and Investment; and Labour. Although the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources may not have come from the South-east Geo-political Zone, but from the South-South, he is of the same ethnic stock as the other ones occupying the ministerial slots afore-mentioned in the preceding sentence. So, what is the meaning of marginalization?

Nigerians alike should help him to overcome them for the good of this country. In short, the mantra of change should be vigorously pursued so that, at the end of the day, a new leadership valuessystem that encompasses virtue and good character can emerge to complement and institutionalize legal and constitutional provisions and enactments. As Snooping Around with Tatalo Alamu has put in his column:

The current reflex hostility in some sections of the country to any talk about restructuring is a sign of misplaced and misguided political aggression. Perhaps this is due to the fact that many proponents of restructuring have not been able to put their case across with patriotic altruism and without a hint of vengeful grandstanding.

The argument for restructuring is not about hatred for a particular section of the country[,] but about love for the whole country. No section of the country can claim exemption from the tragedy that has befallen us. In a hostile environment in which ethnocide is not far away, it is only natural for people to look out for their own and to use their God-given resources and advantages to tame or negotiate the looming Leviathan while keeping others in medieval peonage. But as we have seen, this can never and will never work in a multiethnic nation with diverse cultural and political sensibility.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The issue of restructuring of Nigeria should not only be a legal cum constitutional matter; it must go beyond it as important as legality and constitutionalism may be. To start with, Nigeria is not working because there are administrative practices that have become an albatross to efficiency and the development of the country. No matter how much restructuring is done in constitutional and structural terms, if the basic ingredients and values of development administration – such as honesty of purpose, dedication to duty, absence of corrupt practices, discipline, decisiveness in taking and implementing acceptable options, etc. – are still absent and/or are not cultivated, it is saying the obvious that one could have the best structural arrangement in a federal setting, but it is the same thing or same result that one would harvest. Better results are more likely to be achieved if theafore-mentioned positive values have been imbibed and have become ingrained in the psyche and practice of government officials. To reiterate, if what some analysts may call "true federalism" (which actually does not exist anywhere; we can have a functional federalism instead) can be structured out, corruption canstill kill it, just as it is generally accepted thatit is killing the quasi- or unified-federal system that is being practiced in the country at the moment.

Theafore-mentioned recommended positive values can work wonders even in unitary system of government, and also in heterogeneous societies, just as in homogeneous ones, if only they can become the articles of faith of the government employees. The major problem one has observed in the style of the Buhari Administration is its sluggishness. Issues of governance are allowed to incubate for too long without any time limit. Nigeria, as an underdeveloped country, does not have the luxury of time. What is more, the world is undergoing rapid changes as a result of ever increasing and rapid changes in information and communications technology. Therefore, the regime should learn to move with time or even faster than it, as time is never prepared to wait for anyone. The paper is for a sound and functional federal system, which is, at the same time, accompanied by values of positive administrative practices.

[1] Alamu, T., "Reverse Nationalism and Its Discontents," *The Nation*, Sunday, October 2, 2016, p.3.

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