



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

BUILDING AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL OF FEDERAL STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

DOI: 10.36108/wjss/ConfP.2024.022

Ambily Etekpe, Epoweide Isaiah Koko, Prince Beteh Barisuka, and Winifred Idubamo Gagariga
Department of Political Science, Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The federal structure of democracy is a widely accepted form of government in several countries, especially, Western Europe and their former colonies to redress ethnic, cultural and religious diversities. Unfortunately, it has solved the structural problems of devolution of legislative powers, fiscal federation and principles of federal character, etc; in Nigeria; and as such, democracy is withering away in the country and continent. This study was, therefore, aimed at re-examining the mode and practices of federalism in Nigeria and its impact on good governance, with emphasis on the 4th Republic Nigeria. It adopted Schumacher's theory on "Small is beautiful (SIB)", and applied a combination of desktop and participant-observation methods of data collection; and found that the present federal structure of democracy in Nigeria has not engendered dividends of democracy in the areas of peace, good governance and sustainable development. It then recommended a modified presidential system an alternative model of federal government that shall take into cognizance the practice of 'SIB' for Nigeria and other African countries.

Keywords: Africa countries, democracy, ethnic nationalities, federal structure, good governance and withering away.

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been argued by scholars (Beckman and Jega, 1994: scholar. Harvard.edu.dziblatt, chal... and www.uyu.eduadmission), that democracy is a western European concept defined by Abraham Lincoln, 16th president of the United State of America (USA), and imposed on African countries during colonialism. Thus, the democratic structures, institutions, and forms are alien to Africans, and as such, it shall be difficult for African countries to practice or get it right. Such persons contend that Africans should, therefore, evolve their own form and type of government beside the western democracy.

Jamo Kenyatta (1953: 190-300) and Etekpe, 2009:30-34) in his book, *Facing mount Kenya*, discussed "how his Gikuyu village government followed the democratic principle prior to the British colonialism, and even had a constitution anchored on eight (8) fundamental rules, similar to the present UN democratic charter, as guidelines of government; The constitution was "sealed with the power of great magician to make it inviolate able....". The form of

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



**Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty
of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024**

democratic government in Gikugu involved the participation of the entire population where the ‘supreme power was vested in the people of Gikugu.

He then dismissed the argument that democracy is alien to African countries. Rather, the western democracy adulterated the indigenous African democracy by “monetizing the process of selection/recruitment of leaders and appointments of top government functionaries where the highest bidder gets all”. This was not the form and concept of African democracy, and as such, Kenyatta advocated ‘how to de-monetize the selection/recruitment process of political leaders-heads of state and government (HOSG), prime ministers (PM), governors, legislators, etc in order to get back to the indigenous element of merit – competence, integrity, accountability, hardworking, trust and stewardship (www.jst.org.stable).

In essence, democracy is a universal concept practicable in Nigeria and other African countries; and was the reason Nigeria adopted federal structure of democracy with three (3) regions in 1954. By this, the three (3) regions wielded more powers than the centre owned and controlled their natural and mineral resources and paid prescribed taxes to the federal government, and had derivation principles, etc. These and similar tenets of Federalism were enshrined into the 1960 and 1963 independence and Republican constitutions. The 1963 constitution, for example, balanced power and services, and as such, the defunct three regions had economic agenda that metamorphosed to service to the people. The constitution was clear that the primary purpose of government was the “provision of security and welfare of the people” but the military intervention in 1966 replaced federalism with unitary system of government where the socio-economic and political powers were concentrated at the federal level. This pattern spilled over to the Fourth Republic in 1999. The resultant effect is an ‘awkward’ federal structure/democracy in the country.

The awkwardness is facilitated by the 2nd scheduled of the 1999 Nigerian constitution that as assigned 68 critical factors of production (CFP) as exclusion legislative list (ELL) and the remaining 34 items as concurrent legislative list (CLL) and ‘O’ (zero) as residual legislative list (RLL). By this, the presidency (federal government) controls 102 CFP, leaving “O” in RLL. Incidentally, the RLL represent services to the people. This is a reversal of federalism Fourth Republic that has given the presidency (federal government) control of 102 CFP and responsible for the lopsided implementation of Federalism in Nigeria (Etekpe, 2023; 3-4).

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

This has resulted in the clamor for economic and political restructuring (EPR) to usher in an alternative model of federal government in the country and continent since the 1999 Nigeria constitution is beyond further alteration (amendment). The weakness of the 1999 constitution has become more obvious with different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria expressing concerns about its operations. Thus, several scholars and experts have challenged it, and proposed a sovereign national conference (SNC) to resolve it, the former presidents Olusegun Obasanjo then convened national political reform conference (NPRC) in 2005, and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (GEJ) further convoked the NC in 2014. The NC was to “strengthen national unity and consolidate democratic governance in Nigeria especially, on national consensus on the structure and guiding principles of state that will guarantee the emergence of a more united, progressive, just, peaceful and prosperous Nigeria” (NC, 2014:22). As these effort have not brought about the desired federalism, the search goes on, and this study is one of such efforts to evolve an alternative model of federalism to forestall the country/continent ‘withering’ in the 21st century.

(1) Statement of the problem

The British colonial government (BCG) introduced a peculiar custom-tailored form of democracy, anchored on federalism for Nigeria when it colonized the country on 1st January, 1900. The new form and structure of government adulterated the indigenous practice of federalism. The new pattern was based on BCG replicating its form democracy/federalism in Nigeria. This would have been understood if BCG had adopted the modalities after prior discussion with the 250 ethnic nationalities instead of forcing them into three (3) major rejoins in line with the three (3) perceived ethnic nationalities of Hausa/Fulani (HF), Yoruba (Y) and Igbo (I) at the time of Arthur Richard’s constitution of 1946. The 1946 constitution automatically made the remaining 247 ethnic nationalities as minorities (Etekpe, 2007a 2-4). The prior discussion would have centred on appropriate size for each of the regions to ensure that no one region like the defunct North should have had half of the country, thereby dominating the other two (2) region; the principles of derivation at inception, instead of setting up of eight (8) commissions at later years, etc.

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

The British government might have thought that as democracy and/or federalism is a universal concept of federalism adopted in British may necessarily be suitable for Nigeria by ignoring the fact that there are specific tenets of federalism derived from Kenneth Wheare's (1950) postulation of the subject that would have guided the BCG in expatiating it. Etekpe (2007a 3), emphasized that "the principles of federalism is rooted on well-defined division of powers amongst the federating government and the other federating units, distribution of resources based on the principles of derivation, financial autonomy, and pursuance of rule of law in the state. The essence is to combine representation and authority, unity and diversity and freedom and obligation to enhance the welfare of the citizens in the federal state (Heffner, 1956:54-56), J.S Mills (cited in Sabine and Thorson, 1973:638-650) also emphasized the need to uphold these basic tenets, especially, equity amongst the federating units of a federal system of democratic government.

Based on the faulty foundation, the manner and process of federalism in Nigeria has been hijacked by the 3rd majority ethnic nationalities. They have applied it to perpetuate inequality, domination, marginalization, and injustice on the minorities, especially the people of the historical Niger delta region (NDR). It is probably for this reason Oyiam, a social critic, wrote in his book, *The Trouble with Nigeria*:

Our federal structure is rooted on injustice hence, instead of component (federating) states controlling and managing their resources, it is controlled and distributed by the federal government. This violate the cardinal tenets of federalism

The 2nd Schedule, Parts I-III on Legislative Powers in the constitution of Nigeria (CON), 1999 (as amended) has compounded the problem of federalism in Nigeria. As earlier highlighted, the schedule assigned a total of 102 CFP to the executive arm of government as the CON is skewed towards the centre thereby strangulating the states and grass roots. As stated in Table 1, this has accounted for the over blotted governance structure in the country; steady increase in ministerial appointments, budgets, and department and agencies, especially, in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria. unfortunately, the structure has not translated into good governance, provision of security and welfare for the people (Section 14(2) (b),

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

CON). In reviewing the reasons of the founding fathers opting for federalism, Dappa-Biriye (1995), one of the founding fathers of Nigeria, stated, “what we demanded is different from what is being practiced in the country”. He went further to state that “federalism is reversed in Nigeria in favour of the three (3) predatory majority ethnic groups of H/F, Y, I”, Alex de Tocheville (1956):45-47) seemed to have Nigerian situation in mind when he wrote

These errors are no doubt discreditable to human reason; they attest the inferiority of our nation, which is incapable of laying firm hold upon what is true and just.... Often reduce to the alternative of two (federal) excesses.

The excesses were the “fears and grievances” of the NDR that the Rivers Chiefs and People Conference (RCPC), led by Dappa-Biriye, presented at the Henry Willink’s commission of enquiry in 1957 (Willink, 1958:5-6). The Commission found that whereas the fears and grievances were (and still) real, felt, “it was not in connection with the central (federal) government”. After 6 years of the report in 1958, it is obvious that the Commission was wrong and the British government has also realized that the problem of the country is the central (federal) government. This prompted the national debate on an alternative form and structure of democratic government to usher in ‘true’ federalism. The foregoing discussion has raised three (3) major questions.

Research Questions

- (2) The research questions were:
 - (a) How would EPR strengthen the practice of federalism in Nigeria;
 - (b) What are the appropriate structures and institutions for EPR; and
 - (c) What would be the ideal alternative model of federalism to bring about democratic governance in Nigeria?

(3) Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the study was to re-examine the mode and practice of federalism in Nigeria and its impact on good governance, with emphasis on the Fourth Republic, 1999-2023. The specific objectives were to:

- (a) Demonstrate how EPR would strengthen the practice of federalism in Nigeria;
- (b) Identify the appropriate structures and institution for EPR and

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

- (c) Ascertain the ideal alternative model of federalism to bring about democratic governance in Nigeria

(4) Assumptions

The study was guided by the following assumptions, that;

- (a) The 1999 CON, is incapable of engendering federalism in Nigeria, beyond further alterations (amendment), and has to be replaced by a fresh constitution;
- (b) It is the politicians and not the CON 1999 that was responsible for the inability of federalism to flourish in Nigerian, and as long as the same politicians shall operate the fresh constitution the restructuring shall not be viable solution;
- (c) The growth in public bureaucracy, warranted by the presidential system of government, along with the associated costs are necessary as they absorb large numbers of Nigerians that would have been unemployed; and
- (d) The concept or practice of 'SIB' is good but not fashionable because it shall result in retrenchment of workers in the affected MDAs that would further increase social and economic maladies in Nigeria.

(5) Expectations

The findings and results of the study shall;

- (a) Drastically cut-down on federal, state and local governments wastes and expenditures to manageable size;
- (b) Strengthen federalism for socio-economic and political viability and stability of the country;
- (c) Bring to rest the fears, grievance and agitations of the minority ethnic nationalities in Nigeria;
- (d) Guide the Federal Ministry of Budget and National Planning, along with its counterparts in state and local government levels, and development partners on effective planning; and
- (e) Reposition Nigeria in pursuing its Afrocentric foreign policy.

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

(6) Scope

The study focused on re-assessment of the mode and practice of federalism at post-independence Nigeria, with emphasis on the CON 1999 and the Forth Republic between 1999 and 2023. It further focused on structures and institutions for restructuring to bring about 'true' federalism in Nigeria. The period has been serialized to 1999 – 2007, 2007 – 2010, 2010 – 2015, and 2015 - 2023 to coincide with the tenure of rulership in Nigeria, namely, Olusegun Obasanjo, Yar'adua/Jonathan, Jonathan, and Buhari, respectively.

2. THEORETICAL ISSUES AND METHODS OF STUDY

(1) Literature review

(a) **The Concept of Democracy in Africa:** the concept and practice of democracy as a form of government flourished in Africa before colonialization, and according to Jomo Kenyatta, pioneer president of Kenya, is wrong for the colonial masters to pride themselves of having introduced democracy in Africa. In his book, *Facing mount Kenya*, Jomo Kenyatta (1953:189-215), for example, discussed how the "Gikuyu (Kikuyu) village government followed the democratic principles prior to the coming of British colonialists". As earlier stated, he deblocked the British propaganda that they taught Kenyans and other African states the tenets of democracy; and narrated "how in order to administer democracy, the Gikuyu Kingdom introduced a written constitution. The constitution made 8 rules that acted as the guiding principles in the government".

What the British government introduced in Nigeria and other African countries an adulterated and a competing-modalities for governance that hinged on monetization where the people are yet to internalize (Lugard, 1923). The model started with the parliamentary, modified diarchy to presidential system (PS) within the context of federalism. The PS has expanded the scope and dimension of federal, state and local bureaucracies too far that about 70 percent of the annual budgets have been committed to recurrent expenditures, leaving merely 30 percent to execute capital policies, programmes, and projects (PPPs) for provision of security and welfare of the citizens. This new British form and structure are at variance with the indigenous concept and practice, and not that it (British government) introduced democracy/federalism to Nigerian/Africans.

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

This British version can no longer be fashionable amidst dwindling resources, especially, crude and oil. This has led to the clamours for EPR based on the concept of ‘SIB; “This,” according to Etekpe, et al (2022:13-30), who have been campaigning for restructuring since 2005, “shall be actualized through EPR of Nigeria, and not further altering (amending CON. 1999)” Etekpe, et al (2022). have been on the campaign for EPR since 2014.

(b) Trends in Nigeria

(i) Principles of federalism in Nigeria: Dappa – Biriye (1995), contended that as one of the founding fathers of Nigeria, they opted for the federal structure of government in 1954 because the concept is associated with well-defined principles for separation of powers and revenue allocation based on derivation. This was later enshrined in the Independence and Republican constitutions in 1960 and 1963. By exercising the principles of derivation, the defunct regions that produced the resources got 50 percent out of it, and still benefited from the remaining balance that was shared. This continued until the Nigerian civil war in 1968 when, now, General Dr. Yakubu Gowon (then head of state and government (HOSG) government altered the revenue sharing formula and increased the federal government its share by additional 35 percent to persecute the war.

Unfortunately, even after the war, the formula continued and his successors, General Mohammed/Obasanjo further increased the allocation in favour of federal government, and eventually abolished the principles of derivation – a cardinal tenet of federalism. At this point, revenue from cocoa (Y) cotton and groundnut (HF) and pam oil/kernel (I) produced from the three (3) regions have dwindled and oil/gas have become economic livewire of Nigerian economy again, at this point neither Obafemi Awolowo nor his contemporaries demanded for the principles of derivation (federalism). This informed Dappa – Biriye to regard the new development as “another paradox of minority politics rooted in awkward implementation of federalism “(Etekpe, 2007a:9).

The trend in federalism has further drifted with the enactment of CON 1999 in the Forth Republic where even though the term, federal is still retained in the constitution, the country

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

has become unitary. In this form, the presidency has become unduly powerful, controlling 102 CFP under ELL and CLL. This is a clear evidence that the constitution has ignored the tenets of federalism and has not allayed the fears and grievances of the 247 ethnic minority groups in the country (Dudley, 1076).

(ii) **Effective Leadership:** The role of dynamic leadership in redressing the nose-diving trend of federalism cannot be over emphasized. This informed Achebe (1998:1) to write that 'the trouble with Nigeria is simple and squarely as a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with Nigerian land or climate'. The Nigerian political leaders (HOSG0, PMs, NASS, etc) have not been able to bring back federalism, instead in the midst of the leadership crisis, there was a growing public bureaucracy between 1999 and 2023 to the point where ministerial appointments have increased from 25 in 1999 to 48 in 2023, and departments and agencies (DAs) from 541 in 1999 to 1,043 in 2023 making federalism unduly expensive (Table 1).

The Table I also showed the growth in fed bureaucracies in Nigeria, 1999-2023

S/NO	Variables	Periods				
		Obasanjo 1999-2007	Yar'adua 2007-2010	Jonathan 2010- 2015	Buhari 2015- 2023	Tinubu 2023----
1	Ministerial appointments	25	39	33	44	48
2	Budget (cost of governance)	₦677b	₦1.25t	₦2.93t	₦9.78t	₦21.83t
3	Department/ Agencies (Parastatals/ Corporations	541	573	760	943	1,043
4	Senators	109	109	109	109	109
5	Representatives	360	360	360	360	360

Sources: Authors compilation, 2023

This is where modification of the PS with prescription to reduce to cost of governance becomes imperative (Table. 2). The Table 2 has identified some structures, institutions, powers, etc to be restructured in line with the global trend of 'SIB'

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



**Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty
of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024**

Table 2: Selected form, structure and institutions for restructuring in Nigeria

S/no	Structure institute	Outcome
1	Model (Form) of government	(a) Modified presidential system (unicameral legislature) (b) Rotation of powers (c) Prescriptions to reduce cost of governance
2	Resources control and management	(1) Ownership and management of resources by states and communities and they should pay appropriate tax of not more 13% the federal government
3	Devolution of power	(a) Reduce the 68 items, as well as, 34 items on the exclusive (ELL) and concement (CLL) legislative list and increase the residual (ELL) lists as follows: a. ELL from 68 to 5 b. CLL from 34 to 85 c. RLL from 0 to 12 (The Specific items are in Table 4 (Etekpe, et al 2022:27-28) (b) Sharing of funds accruing to the federation account shall be shared: (a) Federal Government from 52.68% to 42.5% (b) State Government from 26.72% to 57.5% (c) Local Governments no longer tier (Federating unit (a) Local Governments should be stripped off their status as 3 rd tier of public administration (government) (b) Sharing formula (horizontal) allocation indicated above (3). (c) The Federating units should be state and federal governments.
5	Federating units	(a) Local Government areas (LGAs) should be stripped off their status as 3 rd tier of public administration (b) States to create, fund and manage LGAs
6	Fiscal federalism	(a) There shall be the Office of Accountant – General (Director – General) of the Federation as distinct and separate from the Office of Accountant – General of the federation. The function of both offices shall be clearly spelt in the constitution. (b) ‘True’ fiscal federalism (c) Natural resources of onshore/offshore be controlled by owners where it is located (d) Include proceeds from gas as part of distributable revenue for allocation
7	Land tenure	(a) The Land the use Act be removed from the constitution. (b) The Federal constitution should recognize the right of ownership of land and natural resources relating to communities and individuals (c) The land owners should determine the price, value, etc
8	Local Government Area (LGA)	(a) Local Government administration shall cease and be funded by state government being a tier of the state government. (b) State government(s) shall create LGAs and determine its structure, etc (c) Federal government should cease all matters concerning LGA to the state government(s)

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

9	Secular status of Nigeria	(a) The federal constitution shall not recognize any religion as a state religion (b) The federal constitution shall separate religion from the state and state from religion
10	Types of restructuring	(a) Economic and political restructuring (EPR) (b) EPR should trickle down to state and local government levels.
11	Federal character principles	(a) State and local government character principles be also created
12	Rotation of public office	(a) Principal officers at federal, state and local government levels are to rotate among senatorial districts, federal and state constituencies
13	Derivative principles	(a) Federating unit retain royalties, revenue and profit from assets within their territory
14	Legislature	(a) Parliamentarians at federal and state levels be on part times basis (b) Unicameral legislature
15	Security matters	(a) Decentralization of security agencies (b) Establish state police
16	Judiciary	(a) States to establish state judiciary council (b) States to establish courts of appeal and state supreme courts.
17	Offshore/onshore	(a) Follow UN law of the Seas (UNLOS), 1982

Sources: Etekpe, A et al (2022:16-27)

The trend in drifting federalism has equally affected general elections in Nigeria

(iii) Elections

One of the barometers of federalism is free and fair elections. In reviewing elections as election Observer, Monitoring National Assembly returning officers in the 4th Republic, Etekpe (2023:16-17) wrote:

Nigeria has, indeed organized 23 elections, out of which 11 are at post – independence (excluding June 12, 1993). We found that the integrity of voters-education, voters enlightenment and conduct of general elections have systematically declined since 1964, with that of 2007 as the worst in the country’s history. The independent national electoral commission (INEC) legal department stated that there were 1,249 petitions brought before the electoral tribunals. The petitions resulted in annulment of 14 governorship election, including that of Bayelsa State. In landmark cases like Rivers, Edo, Ondo and Ekiti States, new governors were sworn in

He went further to emphasize that the elections improved between 2011 and 2019 due to improved media campaigns and there was high expectation for 2023 national and state elections, especially transmission of results from BVAS to ERE to forestall malpractices. Unfortunately, it did not go as proclaimed and public confidence and trust in INEC were severely damaged during the presidential poll. The consequence was an unprecedented

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

number of election petitions (Table 3). The Table 3 presented 1,044 petitions covering national and state elections, geo-political distribution and grounds for the petition

Table 3: 2023 elections petitions in Nigeria

S/N	Forms	Total	National and state election					
1	Petitions	1,044	President	Senator	Reps	Governorship		SHA
			5	180	470	62	327	
Geo-political zones distribution								
2	Forms	Total	SS	SW	SE	NE	NC	NW
	Petitions	1,044	301	166	187	106	149	135
Ground of petition								
3	Forms	Total	Non-compliance	Without majority of lawful vote cast			Elected but not qualified to contest	
	Petition	1,044	544	328			172	

Sources: Etekepe, A (2023:17). Key: SHA – State House of Assembly, SS –South-South, SW – South West, SE – South East, NE – North East, NC – North central and NW – North West.

It should be emphasis that the huge numbers of petitions is an indication that Nigerians are losing faith in the electoral process, and leaving their fate to the judiciary to select/recruit their political leaders. This is a dangerous trend as It is already creating voter's apathy in Nigeria.

c. Neo-Colonization

Nnamdi Azikiwe (1968 – 1921) situated the declining trend in the practice of federation and its negative consequence on democracy and general elections on '*renaissance*'. In African Renaissance, Azikiwe stated that there is a "secret battle between the old generation and the youth in African" This, according to him, is due to the fact that the old generation felt the youths were uncontrollable and irresponsible in their scramble for powers. The youth, on the other hand, regarded the old generation as an impediment to new wave of freedom and SD. As Azikiwe puts it "the renaissance African is a state of society where the mind is brought into harmony with matter".

Julius Nyenere (1968) took a different perspective from him and situated the mind set on "family socialism anchored and agriculture as an integral part of politics" family socialism is based on the "communalism of traditional African society where the means of production and distribution are under the control of the people". This is contrary to the Western system of capitalism and individualism that has stimulated primitive accumulation of wealth. It is also different from Eastern bloc concept of socialism where government controls production and

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

distribution of resources. His emphasis is that “Agriculture is politics and should have formed a solid foundation for post-colonial African states to have overcome the dangers of Neo-colonialism.

Kwame Nkumah (1965) looked beyond the controversy over the old and youthful generations or making agriculture the crux of politics as the reason for declining federalism in post-colonial African states. Instead, he pointed at neo-colonialism as the problem of the continent. He described “Neo-colonialism as the final but most dangerous phase of imperialism. Being dangerous, it constitutes the present African problem (manifested in the awkward and practice of democracy). He felt that the colonial master knew that African shall mess up democratic governance and expect that each state should renew and modify it in line with the indigenous culture.

Etekpe (2009:93) identified the most prominent instruments of neo-colonialism as foreign aids, control over foreign exchange, trade, etc and stated that, foreign capital is used for exploitative, instead of development of African states.

(2) Theoretical framework

The study adopted EF Schumacher’s theory of “small is beautiful (SIB) (practicalities.org 2021/06/30 and www.unm.edu.print:BST) Schumacher (1911 – 1977), a German – British statistician and economists developed the concept of intermediate technology and small is beautiful (SIB) (1973) . the theory focused on “small simple and sustainable development (SD) as people matters” He argued that the contemporary economic and political system should benefit all rather than a selected few”.

He believed that the problem of industrial production that has resulted in the environment crisis, is due to misplaced values driving by pursuit of primitive accumulation of wealth, and emphasized that “bigness, in form of larger industries and cities, including democracies would be wasteful” The theory re-emphasized the importance of SD and the dangers of unchecked political and economic growth and concluded that “our economic foundation should be based on small human scale, local needs and resources and appropriate technology.

The theory is appropriate for the study as Nigerian democracy has grown from parliamentary system in the 1st Republic where the cabinet members were drawn from the legislature and parastatals to presidential system in the 4th Republic (Table 1). As Table 1 showed the cost of governance equally has equally risen from a federal budget of assent 677 bills (Obasanjo,

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

1999) N1.25t trillion, (Yar'Adua, 2007) N2.93t trillion, (Jonathan, 2015) N9.908t trillion, (Buhari, 2015) to N21.83t trillion (Tinubu, 2023). In addition, the departments and agencies grew from 541 in 1999 to 1,043 in 2023. This steady growth can no longer sustain, and there is a growing clamour to cut down national (and states) expenditures to conform with the theory of SIB.

The foregoing is a glimpse of the exorbitant cost of running the PS that should be cut down drastically. Already, the federal government is considering implementation of the White Paper of Stephen Orosanye's *Committee report on cost of governance*. The report recommends reduction of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) from 943 to about 180. With the global economic meltdown developing countries are tilting towards "cut back management" (esj.ng.org.upward 2018/06 and www.iedunote.com). The State of California, in the United State of America (USA) adopted it (cut back management) in 1982, known as *Proposition 13* as the law "no longer allows for an unlimited property tax (main sources of income) to fund public PPPs (www.jatoris.org.stable.)

(3) Method of the study

The basic method of data collection was desktop – federal government white papers, gazettes, archival materials, along with technical reports and specialized journals. It was complemented by participants' observation as the lead author has been in the campaign for EPR since 2005. He has held several key positions in the private and public sectors in Nigeria and America and brought such insight and hindsight to bear in the study.

(4) Gap in literature

Whereas the federal government has made several efforts to redress the defective federalism in Nigeria by setting up technical teams (i.e Orosanye Committee, 2012) NC (2014) and NPRC (2005), and alteration (amendment) CON 1999, they have not changed the system. This is because, they have not addressed the cardinal areas of devolution of legislative power in the 2nd schedule, including the structural defects. The study has addressed these areas (gap) by identifying the form, structures, institution etc (Table 2) for restructuring to enthrone true federalism in Nigeria.

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

3. DISCUSSION OF FINDING AND RESULTS

The study found the followings:

(1) **Reversal of democracy in African**: African states experienced democratic reversal in three (3) forms. The first form is coup d' etat where it had had seven (7) coups in the past eight (8) years (2015-2023), in Garbon, Niger, Bukina faso, Sudan, Guinea, Chad and Mali. The reversal was most prominent in former French colonies in West Africa, where on 26 July 2023, Niger republic joined. The rationale for the reversal was the over bearing effects of neo-colonialism (Hanson, 2020) (Table 4). The Table 4 highlighted the countries, their former colonial masters, and rationale.

Table 4. Anti-democratic political trend in post-colonial African states 2015-2023

S/No	Name of country (a)	Year of coup (b)	Former colonial masters, ©	Challenge (Rationale), (d)
1.	Bunkina Afaso	2014, 2016 & 2022	France	Complex inter play on policy of assimilation leading to: (1) Exploitation of mineral resources, unequal economic relations, political interference. (2) Supplie's of mineral and industrial resources
2.	Mali	2020 & 2021		
3.	Guinea	2020		
4.	Niger republic	2023		

Sources: Authors Compilation, 2023

The consequences of these coups, especially that of Niger republic have reverberated far beyond national borders, prompting concerns in neighbouring countries like Nigeria and Ghana (Taruvunga, 2023: 148-150). The concern is that coups in most African states are usually celebrated because of the unsatisfactory performance of the democratic leaders (i.e HOSG, prime ministers, governors, members of state and national assemblies). The celebration seems genuine for failure of the leaders to engender key dividends of democracy – economic prosperity, free and fair elections, good governance, peace and security.

Using Niger republic, as an example, the issues of anti-democracy centered on neo-colonialism, anchored on foreign interference, power imbalance, economic exploitation and cooperation (Table 4 (d) to sustain the colonial master. The Niger – France relation is determined by France which controls Niger's uranium industry to bolster the France nuclear power and weaponry programme. The control extends to dictating the rulership (HOSG, etc) of the country. This has faced several challenges, leading to anti-democratic movement.

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

The immediate challenge was the military alliance where the National Committee for salvation of the People (CNSP) accused France of applying her military defense pact to install unpopular government (i.e Bazoun) to protect her, not Nigerien, interest. The French interference eroded domestic trust in the democratic process and institutions, thereby exacerbating political crisis.

This is where Nkrumah's call for post-colonial African states to break away from cooperation on multiple fronts – economic cooperation to security partnership from their colonial masters becomes imperative. In this complex political cub web, the way forward lies in dialogue and redefinition of the dynamics of power, cooperation and sovereignty as viable solution (Soumaila, 2023: 314 – 320)

The second category for anti-democratic reversal is from the seating HOSG who often manipulate or stage-manage the charge of their constitutions to abolish term-limits to remain in office. Yoweri Museveni (Uganda). Paul Biya (Comeroun), Joseph Kabila (DRC), etc fall into this category. These manipulations are mone sophisticated version of the old-fashioned military coup d'etat. Inomically, these undermocratic practice, have not been crticsized, sanctioned or punished by Economic community of West African states (ECOWAS), African Union (AU) and United Nations (UN). They are merely about coups.

The third category is the judiciary system where disputants over election matter's resorts to counts, beginning with elections tribunals to appeal courts and supreme courts especially in Nigeria. Experiences have shown that the court system have in several cases replaced the 'people's choice' with unpopular candidates under the auspices of technicalities'. This has diminished the efficacy of elections with its negative consequences on apathy of electorates (Table 3).

(2) Economic and political restructuring (EPR)

In Nigeria, the campaign for EPR took a national form in 2014. Etekpe, A, a major campaigner, have espoused in details the form, structures and institutions for restructuring to bring about 'true' federalism in the study: "*Generating Fresh Vision on Federalism in Nigeria*" (Etekpe, et al, 2022). The said study outlines the:

- a) Major areas of similarities and differences between NC 2014 and All progressive Congress (APC) report on restructuring in Nigeria;

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

- b) Specific areas for devolution or modification of ELL, CLL and RLL;
- c) Specific structure and institutions for restructuring – model of government, federating units, devolution of powers, fiscal federalism etc;
- d) Extension of restructuring to state and local governments;
- e) 4 – point actionable legislative agenda for national assembly, and specific time frame; and
- f) Basic instruments (i.e, 2014 resolutions of NC, 2017 report of APC committee on restructuring) (Table 2)

The study also stated that the EPR process is already driven by the Nigeria Indigenous Nationalities for survival (NINAS) – a socio-cultural platform for the major ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. They are Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) (South South), Ohaneze (Igbo), Afenifere (Yoruba), United Middle Belt Forum (UMBF) (Middle belt), and it has reached out to Arewa consultative forum (Hausa/Fulani). The rationale for this approach is that the different pan socio-cultural organizations wield enormous powers on their parliamentarians in the national assemblies and when once they agree, they would oblige their parliamentarians to support EPR. Being a democratic process, it has involved dialogue, bargaining and compromise to achieve it.

(3) The Model and Structure of Federal Government

The country has practiced a parliamentary and presidential systems and whereas there seemed to be over whelming majority of Nigerians clamoring for continuation of the PS, the bone of contention is on the exorbitant cost of running it (Table 1). This has made several scholars to tilt towards parliamentary, while others suggesting an indigenous form of government without identifying the form. The study found that the problem is not so much on the model but how politicians have exploited the loopholes of the 1999 constitution and manipulated to remain in politics an occupation instead of vocation. Since the country has practiced PS for over 25 years and gained considerable experience, it should continue with it but be modified to cut down costs. Such measures include part time bases instead of full time, unicameral as against the ongoing bicameral in line with the concept of SIB. The study, therefore, found the “modified presidential system (MPS)” of government as ideal for Nigeria. This is because, MPS has the tendency of retaining the principle of separation of powers that is essential for promotion of good governance, accountability and peace.

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

This form is different from that of NC 2014 which also recommended MPS. The NC considered the 2 systems of government, identified and examined their attributes merits and demerits, and settled for MPS. It then listed core elements (attributes) – the good aspects of each to form its MPS. This method of selection is similar to Nnamdi Azikiwe's concept of eclecticism. Azikiwe (1980) used it to mean “a social economic and political theory based on selecting the best ideas, methods, ideologies and doctrines out of existing theories to emancipate humanity”. This, like NC's MPS, was not practically tenable as blending of opposing practice into a completely new one makes more of a theoretical than practical political thoughts.

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

(1) Summary and conclusion:

The study re-examined the mode and practice of federalism in Nigeria, with emphasis on the Fourth Republic. It discussed how federalism has drifted from its tenets because it had a faulty foundation from Arthur Richard's constitution of regionalism in 1946. The drift has taken different phases until it was jettisoned by the military intervention in politics in 1966; and compounded by the CON 1999.

The legislative powers in the 2nd schedule of the said constitution assigned all the 102 CFP to the centre in form of exclusive and concurrent legislative lists (ELL) and (CLL). This is an aberration to federalism and has suffocated the federating units; and has prompted a national debate that became intensives since 2014 on an ideal form, structure and institutions, etc of democracy in Nigeria. While some scholars, experts and practitioners are arguing to return to parliamentary systems, others are on retaining the presidential system, the study found that the presidential system is still ideal but has to be restructured (modified) to reduce cost and enthrone 'true' federalism. Whereas there seems to be consensus for restructuring, the form and process are still blurred, and the study has proposed the agenda for EPR- that is, all encompassing.

This is because the CON 1999 is beyond further alteration (amendment) but be replaced by a fresh constitution that shall emerge from restructuring. Already, NINAS, a socio-cultural platform of all the major ethnic nationalities, is driving the process through dialogue,

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

bargaining and compromise. Incidentally, this was the process adopted by the founding fathers of Nigeria to agree on the Independence and Republican constitutions of 1960 and 1963. The study identified the form of government – MPS, structures and institutions in Table 2.

The study also found three key issues;

- (1) Reversal of democracy in Africa;
- (2) Need for EPR in Nigeria; and
- (3) An alternative democratic model, known as MPS, to engender ‘true’ federalism in Nigeria.

(2) Recommendation

Based on the discussion and results, the study recommended that:

- a. EPR is necessary to enthrone ‘true’ federalism. Accordingly, the Nigerian electorate, along with national and state assemblies should support NINAS to facilitate the process of civil society driving consensus documentation on EPR to forestall Nigeria ‘withering away’ in 21st century;
- b. Nigeria, especially the state and National assemblies should adopt MPS i.e scaling down the structures, institutions, etc (Table 2) of government for cost effectiveness, instead of resorting to parliamentary system or any other system that would take considerable time to learn and master; and
- c. Nigeria, and other African countries should avoid the three (3) forms of democracy in the continent by the regional bodies-ECOWAS and African Union (AU) by punishing, sanctioning HOSG that manipulate constitution to remain in power to serve as deterrence.

References

- Achebe, C (1998). *The trouble with Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension publishing company Ltd
- Azikiwe, N.B (1968). *Renaissance Africa*. London: Frank case co. Ltd
- Azikiwe, N.B (1980). *Ecology for Nigeria: capitalism, socialism and welfarism*. Lagoa: African books co. Ltd

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



**Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty
of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024**

- Beckman & Jega (1994). Scholar.harvard.ed.dziblate chal.and.www.nyu.edu.admission
- Constitution of Nigeria (promulgation) Decree 1999 (as amended)
- Dappa – Biriye, H.J.R (1995). *Minority politics in pre-and-post independence Nigeria*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press
- Duddley, B.J (1976). “Implications of the 19-state system”. *In Business Times*, 2:9
- Etekpe, A (2007a). “Politics of resource allocation and control in Nigeria”. *Monograph series, NO.001* Department of Political Science, Niger Delta University (NDU), Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa state, Nigeria.
- Etekpe, A (2007b). *Minority politics in Nigeria: the case of the South-South and middle belt regions*. Lagos: Kemula Publications.
- Etekpe, A (2009). *African political thought and its relevance in contemporary world order*. Port Harcourt: Harey publication company.
- Etekpe, A (2017). *Political philosophy and theory of state*. Port Harcourt: Zelon Integrated Services Ltd.
- Etekpe, A, Koko, I, E, Eyikorogha (2022). “Generating fresh vision on federalism for Nigeria: The position of south-south Nigeria on economic and political restructuring”. *African Journal of Political Science and International relations* (AJPSIR). www.academiejournal.org/AJRSIR
- Etekpe, A (2023a). “The role of civil servants in advancement of democratic process in Nigeria: The 2023 governorship election in Bayelsa state”. Public lecture delivered at 2nd Edition of Annual lecture/Award night of Trade union congress of Nigeria (TUCN), Bayelsa state, Nigeria.
- Etekpe, A (2023b). “National security-development restructuring (SDR) Nexus in Nigeria: What would have been Professor Claude Ake’s position?” Keynote address at 3rd Cluade Ake’s memorial lecture series, organized by *south-south Nigeria Political Association (SS-NPSA)* at Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo state, Nigeria, 13th March
- Hanson, M (2020). Paternalism in bilateral aid assistance: The case of France and its former colonies in the Sahel region of Africa. *In Hollands and Macron’s Mandates*
- Heffner, R.D (1956). *Democracy in America*. New York: American Library
- Kenyatta, J.J.P (1953). *Facing Mount Kenya*. London: Werton Socker Warburg Ltd

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*



Proceedings of the 2nd (Hybrid) International Conference, Faculty of Social Sciences, Niger Delta University, Held on March 13, 2024

- Lugard, F (1923). *The dual mandate in Nigeria: Tropical Africa*. London: William Blackwood and sons.
- National conference (NC) (2014). *Final conference report*. Abuja: presidency
- Nkrumah, K. F (1965). *Neo-colonialism: The Last stage of imperialism*. London: Panaf Books Ltd
- Nyerere, J.K (1968). *Freedom and socialism*. Oxford: Oxford University press
- Sabine, G.H & Thorson, T.L (1973). *A history of political theory*: 4TH ed, New Delhi: Oxford and IBH publishing co, Ltd
- Siollun, M (2003). *The inside story of Nigeria's first military coup*. Lagos: Alagoa Publishing
- Soumaila, I (2023). "Uranium and macro-economy in Nigeria: An empirical investigation". *The journal of Developing Areas*. 57 (2).
- Taruvinga, G.R (2023). "The resurgence of military coups in Africa. The case of West Africa and the Sahel" *In contemporary issues on governance, conflict and security in Africa*. Charm: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- Wheare, K. C (1950). *The Nigerian legislative council*. London: Faber
- Willink, Henry, et al (1958). *Report of the commission appointed to enquire into the fears of minorities and the means of allaying them*. London: Her Majesty stationary office.
- Practicalaction.or. 2021/06/30. www.edunote.com www.jstor.or.stable upload 2018/06 www.unm.edu.print:BST

Theme: *African Solutions to Emerging Challenges: Building Viable Democratic, Economic, Information and Sustainable Systems in the 21st Century*