

UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

**NIGERIA: THE BURDEN
OF DIVERSITY**

An Inaugural Lecture

By

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ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS

2.45 pm. Guests are seated

3.00pm. Academic Procession begins

The Procession shall enter the CBN Centre of Excellence auditorium, University Park, and the Congregation shall stand as the Procession enters the hall in the following order:

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After the Vice Chancellor has ascended the dais, the Congregation shall remain standing for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem.

The Congregation shall thereafter resume their seats.

THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S OPENING REMARKS.

The Registrar shall rise, cap, invite the Vice Chancellor to make his opening remarks and introduce the Lecturer.

The Lecturer shall remain standing during the Introduction.

THE INAUGURAL LECTURE

The Lecturer shall step on the rostrum, cap and deliver his Inaugural Lecture. After the lecture, he shall step towards the Vice Chancellor, cap and deliver a copy of the Inaugural Lecture to the Vice Chancellor and resume his seat. The Vice Chancellor shall present the document to the Registrar.

CLOSING

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The Vice Chancellor's Closing Remarks.

The Vice Chancellor shall then rise, cap and make his Closing Remarks. The Congregation shall rise for the University of Port Harcourt Anthem and remain standing as the Academic [Honour] Procession retreats in the following order:

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Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Development
Registrar
University Librarian
Lecturer
Provost, College of Health Sciences
Dean, School of Graduate Studies
Deans of Faculties/School
Professors
Academic Officer

DEDICATION

To the memory of Mesua, my dear sister and pathfinder.

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I had to go through a crucible to get this far. It was not an overly sweet experience, but God sent angels in human form to make the pain less excruciating and worthwhile. First, I must thank my family especially, my Maternal Aunt, Mrs. Chinyere Akekue for single-handedly footing the bill for my education to the highest level. Dorathy Togo was incredibly supportive, and so were Atah and Dum, as well as my other siblings. Kornebari, Nornubari, Nice and Covenant were always there for me. I appreciate the fatherly role played by Chief Mark Akekue (of blessed memory). My Cousins, Otua Hart Nakwaasah, Bari-adora Kumbe and Emmanuel Ngbarabara were there to watch my back and to ensure that I did not lack much while I was on this journey. My immediate family has been wonderful. My companion, soulmate, lover, friend, and wife, Williamba, remains solid as the rock of Gibraltar. To my ardent critic, adviser, son and best friend, Zina, I say “*chop Knuckle.*” May I also express my deepest gratitude to the Weldon Amakiri Akpana Georgewill Family of Abonnema for their tremendous love and support. In the beginning, was the State School Kpite and men who used the big cane to whip the spirit of a naughty boy out of me. My gratitude goes to M.P.Y. Tee, S.B. Kpona, Robert Mbani, Cecilia Kumbe, Samuel Npenu, Anthony Dume Asereka Nordee and others who taught us to aim high. The Birabi Memorial Grammar School Bori provided the right multi-cultural setting to stimulate competition and academic growth. My respect to the memory of men and women who lit the light and let it shine; Philip Badom, Ndah Aguma, and Peter Otoona. I also salute the memory of Mr Chacko and his wife, Mr. Rehman, Mr. Thomas and his wife, Mr. Adooh Mrs. Lee, J.B Naabe, Mr. Piagbo and others. May I say a special salute to the Old Boys and Girls of B.M.G.S, Bori, particularly, the Batch of 1976 – 1981.

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PREAMBLE

There were elevated expectations at Nigeria's attainment of political independence on October 1, 1960, that the country could be a leading power in Africa and indeed Africa's major contribution to global leadership (Perham, 1967). This based on the country's enormous material and human resources.

Nigeria's landmass is estimated at 910,770 square kilometres, 34 percent of which can support all-year farming, thus, holding enormous potential for agriculture and food security (World Bank, 2021). Similarly, Nigeria's estimated population is 200,963,600 people, thereby, ranking it as one of the most populous countries in the world (World Bank, 2021). As the World Bank (2021) has also revealed, 65 percent of the estimated 200 million plus population are young people between the ages of 15-35 years. That means that about 130 million Nigerians are youths. This has a significant implications for the global market and indeed the global political economy. One other advantage which Nigeria enjoyed is its ethnic and cultural diversity. According to Daniel (2015), Nigeria has about 250 ethnic groups, speaking between 440 to 445 different languages. However, despite these potentials, Nigeria remains a debacle, raising questions as to why a country with such enormous potential, remains underdeveloped or fails to translate its potential into security development and prosperity for its people. Put differently, why has development eluded Nigeria despite its enormous potential? Indeed, the National Bureau of Statistics (2022) puts the percentage of unemployed youths in Nigeria at 46.5 percent and the population of people living below the poverty line at 83 million or 43 percent of the country's total population.

In an editorial published in the *Punch Newspaper* on July 7, 2005, the National Intelligence Council of the United

States of America published the findings of the Conference of American Experts on Sub-Saharan Africa. The meeting discussed the consequences of globalization for the Region's development by 2015. This was about its geography. Decisions made by past and present governments, the presence of professionals, the strength and safety of civil society groups, promoting democracy and the capabilities of the local police and security forces to deal decisively with potential threats (*Punch Newspaper*, July 7, 2005). While acknowledging that globalisation has the potential to accelerate increasing differences among and within countries, the Committee of American Experts identified several potential drivers of conflict, including violent extremism and predicted that Nigeria might experience the possibility of outright collapse through a military coup d'état. It stated emphatically that "while currently leaders are locked in a bad marriage that all dislike and dare not leave; there are possibilities that it could disrupt the precarious equilibrium in Abuja." Well, a coup never happened in 2015 but danger was not averted. In 2019, amidst reports of increasing incidences of human rights abuse, including extra-judicial killings, the United Nation's Human Rights Commission dispatched its Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Extra-Judicial Killings to Nigeria for a twenty-two-day fact-finding mission (UNHRC, 2019). At the end of her mission, Ms Agnes Callamard described Nigeria as a pressure cooker waiting to explode. She revealed that the country was experiencing nationwide regional and global pressures which included not only the effects of climate change and population explosion, but also extreme poverty, desertification, and the proliferation of arms. According to her, this has reinforced localized and national patterns of violence, many of which were spinning out of control. She added that these conflicts were exacerbated by official impunity which has resulted in the loss of confidence in public authorities. In

turn, promoting the resort to self-help and accounting for increasing concern for state fragility (UNHRC, 2019).

Similarly, the Fund for Peace (2020) has developed a classification on the State Fragility Risk and Vulnerability Index. This was based on the following indices: mounting demographic pressures, ethnic and religious conflicts, massive internal and external displacement of refugees, creating serious humanitarian emergencies with widespread vengeance-seeking groups, chronic and sustained human rights abuse, widespread corruption, high economic inequality, severe economic decline, delegitimation of the state, deterioration of public services, suspension or arbitrary application of the law and the rise in factionalized elites and intervention of external and foreign states. Following the indices listed above, the Fund classified Nigeria as the fifteenth (15th) most fragile state in the World. In a list containing one hundred and seventy-eight (178) countries, Nigeria was ahead of well-known failed states like Libya and Yemen.

The implication of this for national cohesion and nation-building is dire. In a survey on social cohesion, using a cluster of states in Nigeria, the African Polling Institute (2021) revealed the following: when asked how they felt about their country, 49 percent of the respondents indicated that they were disappointed. However, 42 percent expressed pride in Nigeria, 7 percent felt indifferent, and 2 percent were not sure of how they felt. Interestingly, when asked to choose between being a Nigerian and belonging to their ethnic groups, while 33 percent of the respondents choosed their ethnic groups, 65 percent expressed concerns that Nigeria was more divided than it was four years earlier. Mair (2001) has expressed concern that Nigerians now openly question whether their country should remain one indivisible entity or should be broken down into separate or independent entities. He reveals that the situation has deteriorated to the point where a national

consensus and a binding ideology was overtaken by one in which ethnic and religious prejudice now find fertile ground to grow. This is a serious national problem that demands the attention of scholars of all persuasions.

Vice Chancellor Sir, Nwaorgu (2014) has reminded us of Waldo, who, in 1975, admonished that:

Political Scientists should be more concerned with issues of justice, freedom, equality, and with political activity. In a period of stress, turmoil, and gross inequalities, it is irresponsible to carry on as usual in academic detachment. At a minimum, Political Scientists need to be concerned with issues of public policy and political reform (Nwaorgu, 2014, p.19).

Vice Chancellor Sir, I have made this clarion call in my more than twenty-six years of academic research, teaching and community service at this university. I have devoted myself to interrogating the problems of the post-colonial social formations from the perspective of the Marxian Political Economy, particularly as they relate to the issues of the Human Rights of Indigenous People, Comparative Poverty Research, Global Governance and Natural Resource Conflicts. In doing so, I have not only raised questions on the vexing issues of powerlessness and destitution but also the unequal access to political representation and resources because of questionable strategies adopted as mitigating measures.

Vice Chancellor Sir, in this lecture I have interrogated the theory of internal colonialism in exploring the nexus between the state and the marginalisation, exploitation and domination of ethnic minorities and Indigenous people. With this, I hope that the peculiar problems of Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, particularly those in the Niger Delta

would be understood and the intricate dynamics which shape the political and economic choices of the communities be brought to the fore. This is the 5th inaugural lecture from the Department of Political and Administrative Studies.

INTRODUCTION

Before the advent of the nineteenth century, the area now known and called Nigeria was home to hundreds of Indigenous communities. These communities were organized into self-governing entities either known as states, kingdoms, empires, city-states, or chiefdoms that were at varying stages of socio-economic organisation and political development with diverse systems of beliefs (Blitz, 1965). These Indigenous communities were invaded and conquered by the turn of the nineteenth century in what Crowder (1986) has described as "the two phases of imperialism".

The first phase began in the North and initiated by Fulani Moslem pastoralists and religious reformists headed by Sheik Othman Dan-Fodio. The Fulani had migrated from Futa Toro in present-day Guinea and settled in the Hausa State of Gobir where Dan-Fodio was engaged as an Islamic teacher in the palace of the Sarkin Gobir in 1800. By 1804, he was able to exercise so much influence that he was able to turn the people against his hosts. Indeed, he accused the Hausa king of promoting idol worship, excessive taxation of their subjects, and no proper implementation of Islamic governance and rules (Sharia law) (Ekeh, 2004). He was subsequently able to mobilize support and overthrow the king in a Jihad that Ekeh (2004) has described as the most violent and brutal exercise in state-building in West Africa since the end of the Songhai Empire. The new Fulani rulers were able to conquer and subjugate all the Hausa-States and to extend their rule from Western Mali to Eastern Cameroun through the Yoruba Kingdom of Ilorin, the land of the Jukun, Igbira and Nupe, among others, built on Islamic Theocratic State with strict Islamic rules while adopting the Hausa language as the language of commerce (Crowder, 1986; Ekeh, 2004). Their rule did not extend to the forest areas of the South. Oyovbaire (1985) has therefore maintained that the Fulani Caliphate was

not expansive and extensive enough before it was conquered and subjugated by the British.

Phase two, therefore, was initiated by the British from the Southern part of modern-day Nigeria. The British had successfully conquered Lagos in 1861 and annexed it; they progressively extended their rule to the rest of the Yoruba hinterland and through gun-boat diplomacy, conquered and annexed the Benin Empire and the city-states of the Niger Delta before taking over the Igbo heartland. From there, they moved up through the Royal Niger Company and decimated what remained of the rest of the Sokoto Caliphate. By the end of the nineteenth century, the British were able to conquer and coerce the diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural entities in Nigeria into a single political and geographical space. Oyovbaire (1985) have therefore concluded that having taken control of the vast swath of territory and dominated it, the British became the most expansive and dominant part of what is now known as Nigeria by the end of the nineteenth century. Coleman (1986) has thus described Nigeria as a creation of the British. However, Afigbo (1991) has revealed that British suzerainty and Nigeria's diversity was not just about the economic, geographical, religious, and ethnic composition of Nigeria. But rather, the colonial administrative traditions that the British imposed on the territory, and which became entrenched through the process of consolidation and nation-building. He, therefore, argues that it was this development which underscored the conflict and nation-building difficulties which Nigeria experienced.

One of the major explanations of diversity related problems is the theory of pluralism. Pluralism presumes that the society is composed of autonomous and segmented cleavages which consist of diverse or multiple, equal competing groups. It, therefore, maintains that in a plural society, power is not concentrated in the hands of a particular

group, but it is dispersed among many centres. Consequently, the state is not dominated by a particular group but derives its policies from competition, bargaining and consensus building among counter-vailing groups (Nna, 2004). Nnorom (2023) has thus explained that pluralistic societies contain desperate ethnic and cultural elements which may breed competition and conflict. However, he maintains that this diversity is beneficial to society because it creates a sense of balance.

As part of measures to mitigate conflict and ensure political stability in heterogeneous societies, modernization theorists produced the theory of political integration. According to Ake (1967a), political integration has rapidly developed into an interesting and dominant perception in Political Science. Part of the presumption is that the more heterogeneous a political culture is, the more it will produce individuals who are devoted and loyal to the state and the more likely the system will be integrated and stable. However, Lizphart (2009) has cautioned theorists of political integration against the tendency to attach the same or similar phenomenon and to replicate this in different fields of political science, a situation which has made political integration very extensive in political science literature. He admonishes them to broaden their perspective to incorporate how new social entities once formed can be maintain , rather than focus extensively on how social units came together to form new entities. Similarly, Ake (1967b) has questioned the validity of the assumption that a political system can be more integrated once the individual political actors commit to a pool of commonly accepted norms, values, and behaviours.

Writing on the situation in Post-Colonial Africa, Coleman (1955) has maintained that the process of colonial modernization arbitrarily positioned African political and cultural units into large-scale states and in the process of doing so, uncritically subjected Africans to what he calls

“majoritarian institutions” and “unitarian institutions” of centralized states which removed power from the traditional African elites and transferred it to colonial bureaucracies. Under these, he maintains, African traditional elites were coerced into serving the emergent African elites and European settlers. Furthermore, he revealed that these developments created.

- (1) Large-scale political organisation
- (2) Changes in the structure of political institutions, and
- (3) Changes in the character of the governing elites consequently, created three major situations of non-integration by creating:
 - i. Disunities between Indigenous African cultural groups
 - ii. Tensions between several racial communities which constituted the African plural societies.
 - iii. Socio-economic disparity between emergent African elites or Europeans and the vulnerable African masses.

Okoko and Nna (1997) have maintained that the British had aggregated several diverse ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria under the same geographical and political space creating conditions for disunity and conflict. Similarly, Odondiri and Nna (2002) have lamented that in creating artificial boundaries cutting across many cultural, religious, and ethnic groups, the Europeans in Africa, including Nigeria created room for inter-group conflicts. The failure of political integration gave rise to other competing explanations, one of which is the theory of internal colonialism. According to Verdery (1979), it was to solve the analytical problems associated with reactive ethnicity that Hechter (1978) analyzed the historical relations between England and the Celtic Fringe. She argues that Hechter regarded separatist ethnic sentiments

as symptomatic of a failure of political integration in the system and in looking at the causes of the phenomenon around the internal colonialism model which attempts to explain mal integration by examining historically rooted economic and cultural differences between cores and peripheries, internal to a single political unit. She adds that the economic and cultural differences are by themselves generated by how the partial progression of capitalist industrial development differentially incorporates groups into the system of industrial production, thereby ensuring that those in the core groups are endowed in such a way that they continue to have advantages over and above those in the peripheral groups. Indeed, in his *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development*, Hechter (1975) maintains:

The spatially uneven wave of modernization over state territory creates advanced and less advanced groups. Because of these fortuitous advantages, there is a crystallisation of the unequal distribution of resources and power between the two groups. The super-ordinate group or core seeks to stabilise and monopolise its advantages through policies aiming at the institutionalisation of the existing stratification system. It attempted to regulate the allocation of social roles such that those commonly defined as having high privileges are reserved for its members. Conversely, individuals from less advanced groups are denied access to these roles.

Naanen (1995) attempts to import this model into his analysis of underdevelopment in the Niger Delta. He maintains that internal colonialism began in Nigeria through political

penetration, resulting from the skilful pursuit of political power, facilitated by people, who enjoyed numerical superiority, and they used such as an advantage to acquire more political power, which they then used to transfer resources from numerically weaker regions to develop the regions of numerical superiority. He further reveals that in the process of doing this, the advantaged groups created an economically advanced core in the dominant regions and an economically impoverished and weak periphery in the dominant regions. With reference to the oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta, Naanen submits that the process of ethnic domination and peripherisation was accomplished with the aid of oil multinational corporations and state-owned enterprises, with which the dominant groups infiltrated with the help of their numerical superiority. This granted them privileged access to existing opportunity structures that enabled them to form a comprador class that then mediates between the oil multinational companies and the local communities in the Niger Delta. He, therefore, locates the process of internal colonialism in the Niger Delta within what he calls ‘the conjecture of three principal developments,’ namely:

- i. Ethnic-based political domination deprives communities of the benefit of their natural resources.
- ii. The alliance between dominant groups, the oil companies and state enterprises which restrict a class of minorities to the modern and more rewarding sectors of the economy.
- iii. Oil-based environmental degradation undermined the traditional peasant or fishing economy of the oil-producing

areas, without providing any viable alternative.

The major concern here is the emphasis on cultural and ethnic groups which suggests the possibility of collective appropriation and expropriation of resources. This problem is shared by many commentators on the Nigerian diversity matrix. Take, for example, Madunagu (1994) who attempted to locate internal colonialism in Nigeria in the three major ethnic groups and by so doing, gave the concept an ethnic character. He is of the view that the Hausa/Fulani in the Northern part of the country, and the Yoruba in the Western part not only enjoy numerical superiority but also benefit from the existing pattern of uneven development in the country. The composition and structure of the dominating classes as well as the distribution of power and privileges, favour their dominant classes within the major ethnic groups. He, therefore, labels the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo as dominant ruling groups. To him, it was not only that power and privileges were structured in favour of their ruling classes but also that privileges arising therefrom would trickle down to dominated classes within their groups. Something that the dominated groups within marginalized groups do not enjoy from such developments. This places the poor and weak in the major ethnic groups above the poor and weak in the minority ethnic groups.

To be sure, in the process of socio-economic development, there is a tendency for the ruling classes to make allocations in such a way as to favour their ethnic domain. In such a situation, the benefits of socio-economic growth may trickle down to lower-class individuals in their ethnic domain but that does not suggest, in any way, that such lower-class individuals were the objects of such development projects and programmes, neither does it suggest that the ethnic groups are monolithic. Indeed, all societies are fragmented and

factionalized to the extent that groups and individuals at varying levels of socio-economic differentiations are sometimes involved in some form of conflict over the management of resources. For sure, like in all colonial conditions, no dominant faction of the ruling class can function independently. In other words, there is always an opportunity for collaboration from where they derive mutually rewarding benefits in one form of patronage or the other. Consequently, there is a wide gap between “the dominant” and “the dominated” classes concerning access to resources and political power. Thus, whether it is in the Fulani or Hausa as the case may be, or the Yoruba and Igbo societies, there are individuals and groups of people who are united in wealth, power, and opulence as distinct from individuals or groups who are united in their hunger, poverty, misery or destitution and powerlessness.

This distinction is accentuated by the increasingly disturbing trend in which the ruling classes at all levels of Nigerian society have resorted to reproducing themselves through the process of ‘dynastification’ of political power even within a liberal democratic setting. This process ensures that only offsprings or close blood relations of members of the ruling elites are strategically located to enjoy the opportunities for recruitment into the Executive, Judicial and Parliamentary arms of government and to the military and security agencies. This for sure is a privilege that is not extended to other members of their communities and widens the gulf between the ruling classes and the rest of society. For example, how else do we explain the nomination of 24-year-old Engr. Imam Kashim Imam, a fresh graduate as Chairman of the Board of the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) in 2023 except that he (Imam) is the son of Alhaji Kashim Ibrahim-Imam, the Chair of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund

(TETFUND), and a member of the Nigerian ruling elites (Channels TV News, 18/10/2023).

The Chelsen institute (2021) has revealed that the Nigerian ruling class has three basic characteristics: (1) It is a fusion of elites with the military as the dominant faction (2) it consolidates its hold on power through the process of diversification by which political power converted into economic power, contrary to the mainstream Marxist view, which holds that economic power is used to acquire political power. (3) It is enriched through the process of economic extraction in which the usurpation of wealth plays a crucial role.

Indeed, contrary to the postulations of Madunagu (1994) that there is a monolithic Hausa/Fulani ruling class, it is doubtful if such a category truly exists. The jihad of 1804 threw up the Fulani as the only dominant ruling group in most of the areas where the Hausa had held sway and destroyed whatever remained of a Hausa hegemony. The Fulani have since then continued to control major political, traditional, and religious institutions in those parts of Northern Nigeria, but rule in coalition with other ruling groups elsewhere.

Wolpe (1976) has identified the advantages of the internal colonialism model where he says it transcends issues of race or class differentiation. He also adds that it is interdisciplinary and has the potential for critical interdependent, analytical, and explanatory modes of analysis and practice thus adding value to the resolution of issues of scarcity and control when such are dealt with independently.

THE BURDEN OF DIVERSITY

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) as amended, recognizes the regional, religious, and ethnic diversity of the Nigerian State and makes provision for its management through the integration of the diverse elements, as

part of the process of nation-building. Specifically, section 16 of chapter two of the Constitution sets out a framework for harnessing Nigeria's resources in such a way as to promote "national prosperity and a self-reliant economy" with a view to "maximise the welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen as the basis of justice, equality of states and opportunities." Fundamental to the actualisation of this objective, according to the Constitution, is the promotion of a planned and balanced economic development which ensures that the material resources of the nation are harnessed and distributed for the common good. Indeed, section 40(3) of chapter two of the Constitution of Nigeria, provides that:

Notwithstanding the foregoing provision of this section, the entire economic zone of Nigeria shall be vested in the Government of the Federation and shall be managed in such a manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly.

This provision is followed by section 162 which provides for the establishment of a Special Account to be called the Federation Account. The Constitution further provides that all revenues collected by the Government of the Federation shall be paid into the Federation Account, except the proceeds of the personal income tax of members of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, the Nigerian Police, the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of Government which are responsible for foreign affairs. For sure, section 162(2) of the Constitution provides that the President upon advice from the Revenue Mobilisation, Allocation and Fiscal Commission shall make proposals to the National Assembly for the allocation of revenues from the Federation Account. It further provides that upon receipt of such communication from the President, the National Assembly shall determine the modalities for the

allocation of revenue using population size, population density, equality of states, internal revenue generation efforts, landmass, and terrain as the criteria.

It also provides that each of the thirty-six states of the federation shall maintain a Special Account into which it shall pay all the allocations credited to the local government councils in the state. In addition to this, each state of the federation shall allocate 10 percent of its internally generated revenue in favour of the local government councils in such a manner as shall be prescribed by the House of Assembly of the State. It is this provision of the Constitution that brought about the existence of the Joint Allocation Committee (JAC). The Joint Allocation Committee is managed by the government of the state and consists of representatives of the Local Government Service Commission and the Local Government Councils and meets regularly to distribute the fiscal allocation from the Federation Account to the various local government councils in the state. Through this committee, State Governments have been known to appropriate the resources of local government councils arbitrarily. This condition is exacerbated by the propensity of many State governments to displace elected local government councils chairman with appointed care-taker committees made up of their surrogates, thus making the councils voiceless and powerless. This practice defeats the goal of the 1976 Local Government Reform in Nigeria, which was to make the local government the distinctive third tier of government. This could have become Nigeria's major contribution to the theory and practice of federalism. In a lecture I presented at a training programme for local government employees in Bayelsa State on the 30th of October, 2017, I pointed out that the neglect of local government gone wrong has turned them into ungovernable spaces and the breeding ground for insurgency and military, thus the rising level and insecurity in Nigeria.

Vice-Chancellor Sir, let us be reminded that among the core objectives set for this university in the Act establishing it are that it shall, amongst other things, “encourage and promote scholarship and conduct research in all fields of learning and human endeavour and to relate its activities to the social, cultural, and economic needs of the people of Nigeria (CAP.U13, 2C &D). Indeed, the Act mandates the University to “contribute to national development; self-reliance and unity through the advancement and propagation of knowledge and to use such knowledge for service to the community and humanity (p.1). In pursuance of these objectives, I have focused a significant portion of my research on the consequences of Nigeria’s diversity on the communities and people of the Niger Delta. I was one of three radical scholars of Niger Delta extraction who began questioning the place of ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in the Nigerian State (Nna, 2014; Okoko, Nna & Ibaba, 2006; Okoko & Nna, 1997). We maintained that the burden of Nigeria’s diversity is borne by the people of the Niger Delta because their oil and gas resources are exploited for the development of the rest of the country. Indeed, the point is made that the major ethnic groups in Nigeria through their ruling elites, siphon the benefits of oil and gas exploitation in such a way that they have made the Niger Delta an internal colony of the Nigerian State. We have therefore consistently argued that the Niger Delta bears the burden for sustaining Nigeria’s diversity. We also observed that the plight of oil producing communities was exacerbated by the existence of networks involving industries regulators, official of oil companies, contractors, chiefs and opinion leaders in the communities. These issues gave rise to the Journal of Oil and Politics which I am now the Editor-in-Chief.



Figure 1: Picture of an Oil-Spilled Site in the Niger Delta
Source: Tribune Newspaper (2022)



Figure 2: An Aerial View of the Federal Capital Territory
Source: A friend's Facebook page



Figure 3: Picture Showing a Bridge in a Typical Niger Delta Settlement

Source: A friend's Facebook page



Figure 4: Picture Showing a Network of Roads in the Federal Capital Territory

Source: A friend's Facebook page

Sagay (2014) reveals that not long before Nigeria attained independence, it was known that petroleum oil would play a key role in Nigeria's political economy. Consequently, the military rulers of Nigeria who had toppled the first democratically elected government became determined to boost their stay in power by seizing control of Nigeria's oil wealth. According to Nna (2021), they did this by re-enacting the infamous Mineral Ordinance of 1945 under the Petroleum Decree No. 59 of 1969, thereby vesting the ownership, control and management of petroleum oil and gas in the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Decree provided that all lands, including land covered by water, under the territorial waters of Nigeria, forming part of the exclusive economic zone are thus a property of the Federal Government. By this, therefore, not only the title but all the royalties, rents and other revenues that were deemed from or related to the exploration, prospecting for or winning or working for petroleum as defined by the Decree were accruable to the Federal Government. As Sagay (2014) has revealed therefore that Decree No. 59 of 1969 deprived the communities of the Niger Delta of access to oil revenue which had been guaranteed under the Independence Constitution of 1960 and the Republican Constitution of 1963. In 1969, General Yakubu Gowon followed through with the promulgation of the Offshore Revenue Decree of 1971, thus completing the usurpation of the rights of the communities in the Niger Delta of their inalienable rights to their natural resources. Nna (2014) further reveals that the deprivation and domination of the communities of the Niger Delta was completed in 1978 when General Olusegun Obasanjo promulgated the Land Use Decree.

The Land Use Decree was, according to Nna (2011c), a reaffirmation of the Colonial Public Land Requisition Ordinance which gave the right to the crown to acquire whatever land it wanted for public use. The Land Use Decree

transferred the ownership of land from the communities to the states, most of who were not indigenes of the Niger Delta. The military regimes or administrations vested with the power to allocate land to anybody they desired without the consent of the communities except for economic trees and buildings. Those laws became enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Acts of Parliament on transition or democratic rule. Indeed, sub-section 2 of chapter two of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) directs the state to actively encourage national integration by proscribing any form of discrimination on grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, ethnicity, or linguistic affiliations. Section 41(1) of chapter four goes further to declare that it is a right for every citizen of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to move freely and settle in any part of Nigeria which he or she desires and to own property, including land anywhere thereof. This Constitutional provision is likely to arouse the suspicion of, and the fears of, Indigenous people and ethnic minorities like those of the Niger Delta. This is because they feel threatened that more affluent and powerful neighbours might use the provisions of this section of the Constitution to deprive them of their land and heritage. The Office of the United Nations Commission for Refugees has revealed that the land acquisition question constitutes a sore point in the relationship between Indigenous people and their more dominant neighbours (United Nations Commission for Refugees, 2002). Similarly, Egwu (1999) has demonstrated that the loss of land for agriculture, water sources and others bothering on territorial spaces to more dominant and affluent ethnic groups and the perception that this might in turn denigrate indigenous customs, traditions and value systems promoted by the perennial conflicts between agrarian communities and settler population in the Plateau State of Nigeria.

Justino and Litchfield (2001) have revealed that discrimination and denigration against Indigenous minority ethnic groups constitute the significant cause of the dimension of poverty and other forms of exclusion, thereby underscoring the resistance of indigenous and ethnic minorities to the state and its institutions. It was these concerns that propelled me to join the agitation for the rights of Indigenous peoples of the Niger Delta. As a very prominent member of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) since 1990 and a key member of the steering committee of the organisation, one of the lessons learnt is that local elites form social movements not for the love of their communities but for their self-preservation. Furthermore, the prevailing perception in the Niger Delta is that social movements provide additional opportunities for personal aggrandisement, thus, forming organisations for the struggle of the people is one sure way to capture resources for self and family.

Vice Chancellor Sir, it is these circumstances and experiences that influenced the concerns, content, context, and direction of a significant number of my publications. These concerns were sufficiently demonstrated in Nna (2001) *The Niger Delta: State Legislation and Disempowerment*, published by Springfield Publishers in Owerri. In this work, I discussed the consequences of oil and land legislation for the disempowerment of communities of the Niger Delta. In Nna (2011b) “Oil and Gas Exploration and the Rights of the Indigenous People of the Niger Delta”, *Journal of Management and Enterprise Development*, 8(2), 138-147, it was sufficiently demonstrated that the exploration, exploitation and production of oil and gas resources in the Niger Delta had negative consequences for their economic, cultural, and political rights. In Nna (2011a) “In Search of a Paradigm Shift for Understanding the Dialectics of Poverty and Conflict in the Niger Delta: Evidence from Ogoni “in *the Journal of*

Contemporary Issues, it was observed that the consequences of the devastation of the Ogoni environment and ecology are dire. Nna (2011d) in “Indigenous People and the Politics of Identity: The Case of the Ogoni People” interrogated the nexus between the exclusion, exploitation and marginalization of the Ogoni people and their search for identity within the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

A. Revenue Allocation in Nigeria

Vice Chancellor Sir, underneath these contradictions in the constitutional provision which vest the ownership, control, and management of natural resources, including petroleum oil and gas resources exclusively in the Nigerian State pose serious problems for the oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta. This contrasts sharply with what obtains in some of the most advanced federations of the world. Take, for example, the Constitution of the Canadian Federation also known as the British North American Act of 1957 which provides that:

All lands, minerals and royalties belonging to the several provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, all the Unions and all the sums due them or payable for such lands and minerals or royalties shall belong to the several provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick of which the sum are situated or arise (Bartlett, 1983, p. 258).

What this means is that, in the case of the Canadian Federation, the proceeds of oil exploration, exploitation and production activities are paid directly to the provinces and communities, which bear these resources. In the case of Nigeria, these are paid directly to the Federal Government, which in turn allocates certain percentages of such proceeds to the thirty-six States, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT),

Abuja and the seven hundred and seventy-four local government councils in Nigeria. Indeed, Section 162(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) provides that on receipt of advice from the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission, the President shall present to the National Assembly proposals for the allocation of revenue for all the three tiers of government (Federal, State and Local). It adds that upon the receipt of the proposal from the President, the National Assembly shall determine the allocation of revenue based on the following criteria: population density, pollution size, equality of states, internal revenue generation, landmass, and terrain. What this means is that whatever amount that is credited to the Federation Account shall be distributed among the federal government, the government of the states and local government councils in each of the thirty-six States of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory on such terms and in such manner as may be determined by the National Assembly. Similarly, it provides that whatever amount that is credited to the states in the Federation Account should be distributed on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly. Furthermore, it also makes it clear that each of the thirty-six States of the federation shall maintain a special account into which shall be paid all allocations, credited to the local government councils and in addition to that amount on their behalf. Each state shall allocate the percentage of all their internal revenue to each local government council in each state on such terms and in such manner as may be prescribed by the House of Assembly of each state of the Federation.

Table 1: Formula for Vertical Allocation of Revenue in Nigeria

Level of Government	Percentage (percent)
Federal Government	52.68
State Government	26.72
Local Government Councils	20.60

Source: Sagay (2014).

In March 2022, the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission proposed an upward review of the vertical allocation of revenue to the three tiers of government in Nigeria. The new proposal made a 3.33 percent reduction in the allocation to the federal government and an increase of 3.0 percent in the allocation to the states, while the local government councils got an increase of 0.4 percent and an increase of 2 percent allocated to the Federal Capital Territory. By this new proposal therefore, the federal government is to receive 45.1 percent of the revenue from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, while the 36 States would receive 29 percent and the 774 local government councils would receive 21.04 percent. This new proposal remains marginal and does not address the critical issues of their developmental mandate occasioned by an over-bloated and powerful central government.

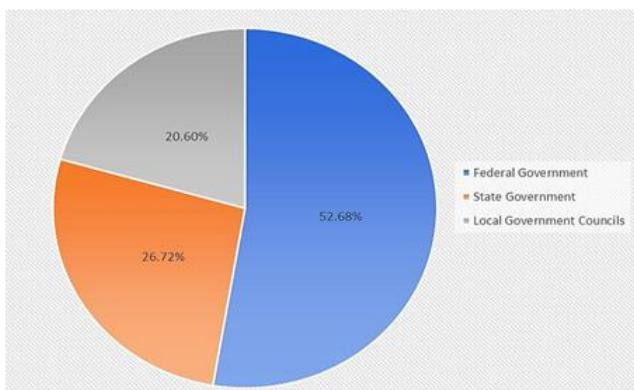


Figure 5: Vertical Allocation of Revenue in Nigeria

Source: Sagay (2014).

Table 2: Revenue Generated (VAT) by States and Allocation to States in Nigeria between January –August 2021.

S/No.	State	VAT Generated (₦ Billion)	VAT Allocation (₦ Billion)	Difference in VAT Allocation and Generation (₦ Billion)
1	Abia	2.290	20.02	17.73
2	Adamawa	3.689	22.26	18.57
3	Akwa Ibom	8.39	37.74	19.35
4	Anambra	5.938	25.00	19.06
5	Bauchi	5.309	25.61	20.30
6	Bayelsa	12.536	17.65	5.123
7	Benue	1.268	24.52	23.25
8	Borno	3.442	25.89	22.45
9	Cross River	2.347	20.47	18.13
10	Delta	13.964	27.85	13.89
11	Ebonyi	7.894	18.76	10.76
12	Edo	8.284	22.58	14.30
13	Ekiti	6.635	19.75	13.12
14	Enugu	5.485	20.72	15.24
15	Gombe	4.028	17.65	13.62
16	Imo	1.941	25.11	23.17
17	Jigawa	3.375	26.36	22.99
18	Kaduna	18.262	32.72	14.46
19	Kano	24.492	47.08	22.59
20	Katsina	3.738	31.53	27.80
21	Kebbi	1.284	22.16	20.87

22	Kogi	3.286	2	22.28	6	18.99
23	Kwara	3.471	8	18.99	7	15.52
24	Lagos	429.203	87	139.5		-
25	Nassarawa	2.495	2	16.87	7	14.37
26	Niger	3.723	2	25.04	9	21.31
27	Ogun	11.823	1	25.14	8	13.31
28	Ondo	4.554	7	22.10	3	17.55
29	Osun	1.995	6	24.76	1	22.77
30	Oyo	64.646	6	45.13		-19.51
31	Plateau	5.208	3	21.43	5	16.22
32	Rivers	90.293	0	46.27		-
33	Sokoto	4.978	9	24.21	1	19.24
34	Taraba	1.756	9	18.46	3	16.71
35	Yobe	9.445	5	20.52		11.08
36	Zamfara	0.598	6	25.71	8	35.11
37	FCT	235.794		NOT ELIGIBLE		

Source: Adapted from the Federal Ministry of Finance (2021)

In their *Revenue Allocation and the Oil Producing States in Nigeria*, Okoko and Nna (1997) frowned at the pattern of revenue allocation in Nigeria. They reveal that it reflected the political structure of Nigeria in which the oil-producing states and communities of ethnic minorities and Indigenous people are disadvantaged in the political decision-making process and reflected a condition of internal colonialism. They maintain that it is this condition that has underscored their continuous marginalisation.

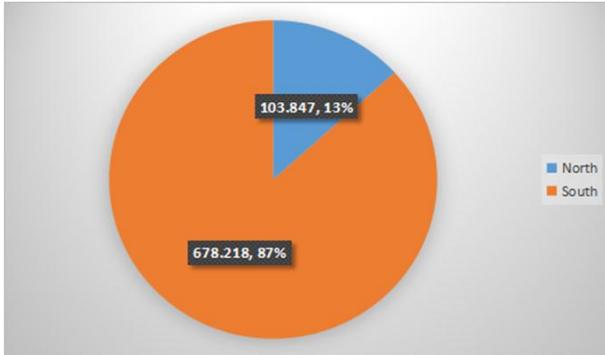


Figure 6: Revenue Generated from VAT by the Northern and Southern Nigeria between January–August 2021.

Source: Federal Ministry of Finance (2021)

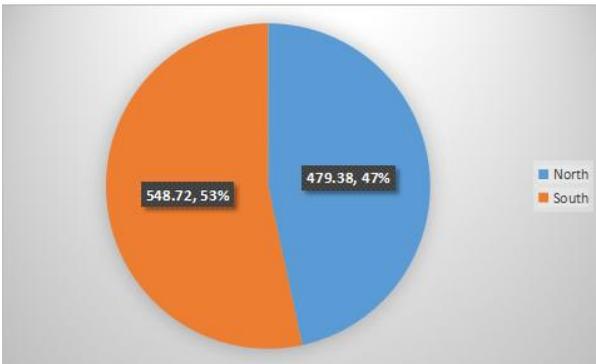


Figure 7: VAT Revenue Shared between the Northern and Southern Nigeria, between January-August 2021

Source: Federal Ministry of Finance (2021)

In respect of figures 6 and 7 above, please note that the Value Added Tax (VAT) is a consumption tax levied on imported items and consumables like alcoholic beverages and spirits, among others. In Nigeria, this is generated mostly in the states in the South where port facilities exist and where the consumption of alcohol is allowed than in the states in the North where the consumption of alcohol is prohibited by the

Sharia legal system and where the generation of the Value Added Tax is minimal. The Value Added Tax in practice is collected by the Federal Inland Revenue Service even though it is a consumption tax which should be left to the States where it is collected. Interestingly, in sharing the tax, the states with minimal generation capacity are favoured over and above those with greater generation capacity because of the application of the principle of equality of states, population size, population density, land mass, special needs, and equality of states over and above the principle of derivation.

Table 3: Federal-State Percentage Share of Petroleum Proceeds 1960 - 2022

Years	Producing State (percent)	Federal Government (percent)	Distributable Pool (percent)
1960 – 1967	50	20	30
1967 – 1969	50	50	-
1969 – 1971	45	50	-
1971 – 1975	45 less offshore proceeds	55	-
1975 – 1979	20 less offshore proceeds	80	-
1979 – 1981	nil	100	-
1982 – 1992	1.5	98.5	-
1992 – 1999	3	97	-
1999 – 2022	13	87(Federation account)	-

Source: Sagay (2014).

In table 3 above, we also see a demonstration of the progressive denial or usurpation of the rights of the minority ethnic groups, particularly the oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta through the gradual abrogation of the principle of derivation during the period of military rule in Nigeria. It is evident that the Northern-controlled military which controlled

the Nigerian States and moulded the Constitution at the time it was drafted, preferred the application of principles that favoured the dominant sections of the country through the centralization and concentration of the proceeds of petroleum oil and gas in the Federal Government, which they controlled or dominated. It took the brave agitation of the Ogoni people and other communities with the support of the international human rights community in the 1990s to achieve a slight upward review of the derivation formula to 13 percent. Even in this case, the intention was not to assist the local communities who suffer from the adverse consequence of oil exploration, exploitation, and development activities, but to assuage the feelings of the local ruling elites in the states and local government areas who are clients to the ruling elites at the centre.

The current revenue allocation formula gives the Federal Government overwhelming control of the proceeds of oil exploration and exploitation activities to the detriment of the state and local governments. The figure above shows the disparity of income between the Federal, State and Local Government Councils. It is tilted in favour of the central government and manifests the power of the Federal Government over the component units of the federation. The implication of this for the economic and social backwardness of the oil-producing Niger Delta has been dire. It underscores the poverty of the region and accounts for what analysts have called the resource curse. The resource curse theory is made very explicit in Banta's (2006) description of the situation in the North of Canada where he states that:

Where oil and gas or mining can generate enormous wealth, yet resource rich-regions too often have poor economic growth, inadequate investment in health, education, and low levels, of child welfares because the

wealth is diverted elsewhere" (Cited in Bedford & Irving, 2009, p.6)

This problem is created by the fact that the Presidential Constitution adopted by Nigeria, on the other hand, did not come along with the democratic principle of political accountability, as well as checks and balances but threw up an imperial presidency. This manifested in a neo-feudal political structure in which the President is at the vortex (apex) of power. The President is constitutionally endowed with absolute powers over the country's resources, which enables him to dispense with various forms of patronage that attract absolute loyalty to the chief executive. For example, in the fourth schedule of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979 and 1999 as amended, of the ninety-eight items listed for jurisdictions between the levels of government, sixty-eight were listed in the Exclusive list for the federal government; thirty-six items were listed in concurrent list for both federal and state government legislation. This makes the Presidency an immensely powerful institution under the Nigerian Constitution and the law. The same applied to the State Governors and the Chairman of Local Government Councils. Indeed, it threw up strong men as political executives, creating what has become a perking order in Nigeria power relations.

Nna and Igwe (2010.) have examined the implications of this development for governance in Nigeria and concluded sadly that it constitutes the core of systemic corruption. Interestingly, Martin (2014) describes Nigeria as a neo-patrimony. Implying that a network of formal state institutions exists side by side with the informal and personal network by which powerful politicians and their clients influence key decisions and policies of government. This system therefore makes it possible for politicians to use their access to formal

state institutions to extract resources from the state and transfer such resources to their informal network of clientele in return for political support. This network of corruption has over the years enabled Nigerian public office holders to siphon from the state, resources which are vital to development. For example, a report by the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) puts the amount of money stolen between 1960 and 1999 at over four hundred billion United States dollars (Nna, 2011b.). The figures represent vast amounts of money that could have transformed the lives of most Nigerians if invested in infrastructure, education, and health.

Nna (2001) has therefore argued that centralizing the ownership, control and management of oil and mineral resources in the central government empowers it to disperse with patronages in the form of oil mining leases and licenses without the involvement and consent of the local communities. Indeed, the international and local oil companies are required by law to pay taxes, rents, and royalties to the federal government, but are not obligated to contribute to the development of their host communities which must bear the adverse consequences of their oil exploration, exploitation, and developmental activities. Leton (1990) has for example decried the degrading effects of oil spillages on lands, streams, and creeks in Ogoni land, as well as the pollution of its atmosphere with hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide. He argues that these have undermined agricultural productivity and resulted in declining crop yields, fish catches and a reduction in living standards, livelihoods, and the health of the people.

Nna and Nyenke (2004) revealed that oil spillages caused environmental pollution and degradation in the Niger Delta and in turn, brought about exclusion. To them, forms of exclusion brought about by the activities of oil companies led to the proliferation of all groups which served as a protection

ring for pipeline vandals and oil thieves in the region. They, therefore, argue that a way out of the problem of the conflict between the oil companies and their host oil-producing communities was the rehabilitation or restoration of the traditional economies of the region, the provision of credit facilities for farmers and fishermen and the provision of a guaranteed market for their products, as well as the employment opportunities for the youths by the oil companies.

Nna and Nyenke (2007) attribute the increasing and chronic poverty among rural women in Rivers State to the failure of governments to provide them with opportunities for access to the means of economic empowerment and thus the political decision-making process. They conclude that governments have failed to improve the economic conditions of rural women sustainably. They are not able to overcome their poverty conditions and therefore are not likely to participate in the political system effectively.

The law indeed provides for some form of compensation payments for crop losses, economic trees, and fish as well as other surface rights such as buildings. However, such compensation payments being limited to surface liabilities are made based on criteria set by the government and without the input of the host communities. According to Okoko and Nna (1998a), the compensation is often time too meagre and to make ends meet, some individuals within the communities are forced to resort to acts of sabotage, including the attacking of pipelines to force spillages. They are assisted in this process by a network of corruption involving officials of government and multinational oil companies, their contractors, opinion leaders and chiefs in oil-producing communities. Indeed, Peel (2009) has observed, that the lack of accountability in the oil and gas industry has given rise to a situation in which the behaviour of oil companies and those associated with them are rarely brought to scrutiny. Okoko and

Nna (1998b) have interrogated the issue of the provision of community assistance projects by multinational oil companies to oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta. They have revealed that these projects are not driven by the needs of the communities, but are promoted by the greed of officials of multinational oil companies, their contractors and collaborators in the oil-producing communities, thus, oiling the wheel of corruption and not contributing to the development needs and aspirations of the oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta. This revelation was corroborated by Nna (2009) in his work on SPDC's piggery project in Kpite Tai. He revealed that the piggery project did not exist as a community assistance project. On the contrary, a local contractor to the SPDC had fronted a small piggery project which was owned by his cousin and in concert with the officials of SPDC used that to siphon huge sums of money from the company. The money was then distributed between the contractor, his cousin who owned the project, some cronies within the community and officials of SPDC.

Okoko and Nna (1998b) have also revealed that because community assistance projects are not community-driven, they are often prone to neglect and vandalism and this failed to meet the development aspirations of the communities. They have therefore proposed the establishment of agro-allied cluster community industries in place of community assistance projects in the Niger Delta. They suggest that their choice of agro-allied industries is not only informed by the existence of abundant agricultural resources in the area, but particularly by the fact that agricultural activities constitute the primary traditional activities of the people. In their view, if such agro-allied industries are established and managed by democratically elected committees of the people, the people will undertake the issue of project monitoring and evaluation themselves. Not only that it will create a sense of

community ownership in the people and stem the ugly situation in which projects are neglected and vandalised. Okoko, Nna and Ibaba (2006) have added that such agro-allied industries will promote the use of Indigenous knowledge in tackling the problems of insecurity, environmental pollution, and degradation, and employment generation. They have therefore advocated the amendment of the relevant laws governing the oil industry through the acquisition of equity shares in which case the land donated by the communities will serve as their equity contribution, while the government and the oil companies contribute technical support. They opined that this would solve the perennial problem of oil company-community conflict as the community-based agro-allied industries will take responsibility for the provision of not only employment of young school leavers and graduates from the communities but also use their dividends to provide for basic social amenities in the community. Indeed, they contend that if properly managed, the cluster community agro-allied industries will transform the oil-producing communities into centres of production, processing, packaging of products and marketing, and this will not only generate income for members of the communities but also, and more importantly, promote accountability and transparency in the management of community business, thereby stemming the graft and corruption often associated with community assistance projects in the oil-producing communities of the Niger Delta. This will justify the provision of the Host Community Fund in the 2021 Petroleum Industry Act and the agitation for an increase of the allocation to the fund to at least thirty percent from the three percent allocated.

Ikporukpo (2009) and of course, Nna and Pabon (2017) have respectively defended the proposal for an amendment of relevant laws governing the oil industry, particularly the subsisting mineral and oil mineral laws to provide for

community ownership and control on the ground that such would promote the process of devolution of powers to lower levels of government and administration and promote inter-governmental relations. Nna and Pabon (2017) in particular argue that such an amendment would enable states, local government councils and communities to gain access to the abundant mineral resources in their locality and promote the establishment of cottage industries by eliminating bureaucratic bottlenecks and promote the effective utilization of Nigeria's abundant oil and solid mineral resources as well as the transfer of wealth to the local communities. This, they argue, will mitigate the problem of unemployment and insecurity in the local communities.

Nna (2011a) is particularly optimistic about the potential of the agricultural sector to contribute positively to the development of the Niger Delta despite abysmal neglect by successive governments. He, therefore, advocated for the restoration of pro-agricultural development policies such as the 'School to Land Programmes' and the allocation of subsidies and subventions by the government in line with the American Farm Bills. This is a system whereby the United States of America grants subsidies to farmers. Again, Nna (2014) has called for the agricultural mapping of the Niger Delta to indicate areas of production of major agricultural products and the promotion of specialisation, competition, and co-operation among the major centres of agricultural production.

Vice-Chancellor Sir, I was also a member of the Rivers State Manpower Committee between 2010 and 2012. Among the recommendations which the committee sent to the Government of Rivers State were that there should be collaboration between the Rivers State Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, the Rivers State Scholarship Board, and the Ministry of Education. This synergy according to the committee, would ensure among other things that the

curricular of educational establishments in the state, especially the higher educational institutions are in line with the state's manpower needs. Consequently, the committee recommended that the manpower training should be based on the natural economy of the State and its auxiliary services. These include maritime or the blue economy including fisheries, food crop production, fruit production, Engineering, and life sciences, among other things. Thus, the scholarship awards should be concentrated in these areas. Again, Nna (2007) has identified the development of the tourism industry as one major area in which the economy of the Niger Delta can be boosted. Hence, he suggested the use of the public-private partnership model given the huge capital investments required.

B. Creation of States and Local Government Councils

The creation of State and local government councils has often been conceived as a process of political restructuring in Nigeria. Ramphal (1979) has pointed out that restructuring has always been an integral part of federalism because all federation makes structures and institutional modifications or adjustments in response to the yearnings and aspirations of the people. Okoko, Nna, and Ibaba (2006) have revealed that Nigeria has approached the issue of political restructuring through the creation of states, local government councils and boundary adjustments. They however contend that these measures were self-serving and did not sufficiently address the challenges of inclusion of the people of the Niger Delta. For, Nna and Nwiyor (2012), political elites in Nigeria have most often manipulated the process of State and local government creation, and boundary adjustments to actualise their narrow political, economic, and social interests. Following Awolowo (in Ogunmodede, 1986) and Saro-Wiwa (1994), Nna and Nwiyor (2012) have called for the establishment of a federal system in Nigeria which is based on equal representation of ethnic groups.

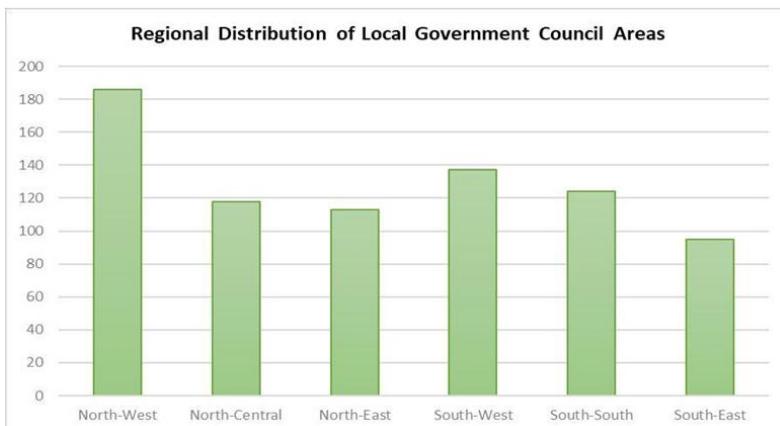


Figure 8: Zonal Distribution of Local Government Councils in Nigeria

Source: Compiled by the author

Figure 4 above illustrates the advantages enjoyed by some sections of the country with the current emphasis on land mass, population size, needs and equality of states as criteria for revenue allocation. These criteria have informed the numbers of local government councils created in each state and determined the amount of funds allocated to councils in each state. Just as the allocation of oil revenue is shared based on plurality, so also is the creation of states and local government council areas. From three regions and a few native authority areas in 1960, Nigeria now has thirty-six (36) States and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja and seven hundred and seventy-four (774) Local Government Council Areas, all created by the military between 1967 and 1996; using population size, population density, land mass and terrain as criteria. In addition to these, some bizarre indices were applied. For instance, some states and local government council areas were created as rewards to members of the Supreme Military Council or the wives and lovers of top military officers. One example is the allocation of the capital of Delta State to Asaba,

the hometown of the Wife of General Ibrahim Babangida when that state was created in 1993. The others were the location of the capital of Jigawa and Nassarawa States at Dutse and Lafia respectively, all the strongholds of a particular ethnic group, even though Hadeija and Keffi were more viable state capitals.

C. Distribution of Electoral Constituencies

Vice-Chancellor Sir, let us be reminded that in spite of all pretensions to the contrary, Nigeria is a capitalist society and appeals more to the liberal form of democracy. In such a society, the major means of production and finance are concentrated in the hands of a few individuals who use such to gain access to the political system and manipulate it to serve their interests. It is therefore a system of domination and exploitation. As the political correlate of capitalism, liberal democracy rests on the control of the material and ideological production and indeed the defense of the system which promotes “even-greater concentration of political power in the hands of the rich and a corresponding erosion of civic, political and democratic rights” (Miliband & Panitch, 1987, p.3) of the mass of the people. A major premise on which the demand for liberal democracy is built is the presumption that it expands access for participation in the political decision-making process for the masses of the people. For Nigeria, the reality of the situation is that this is not true. The Nigerian situation thus demonstrates that the creation of electoral constituencies and wards provides the opportunity for members of the ruling class to accumulate wealth. For a country in which the minimum wage of workers is thirty thousand Naira only, political office holders continue to take home humongous wages and allowances, thus, making them some of the highest paid in the world. Oxfam (2021) has provided a comparative figure of the annual wages of lawmakers in Nigeria and their counterparts in other parts of Africa, Europe, and America. The reality presented in Table 4 led Oxfam (2021) to conclude, and rightly

so, that the world’s highest-paid lawmakers rule over some of the world’s poorest people.

Table 4: Selected Countries and the Salary and Allowances of Federal Lawmakers

Country	Salary and Allowance of Federal Lawmakers (\$)
Nigeria	\$118,000.00
United States of America	\$105,000.00
South Africa	\$104,000.00
France	\$85,000.00
Kenya	\$74,000.00
Saudi Arabia	\$64,000.00

Source: Oxfam (2021)

There is inequitable and unequal representation in Nigeria’s representative democracy. This is evidenced in the distribution of federal constituencies in Nigeria. Indeed, this was perpetuated in the period of military administration, during which political representation at the highest level was skewed in favour of the major ethnic groups. A direct consequence of this skewed representation was that members were able to influence major decisions such as the creation of states and local government councils and the establishment of electoral constituencies in their favour, leading to an intensification of the inequality question among ethnic minority groups. Indeed, Nna and Igwe (2010) attempted to interrogate the relationship between democracy and poverty alleviation in Rivers State between 1999 to 2007. They reveal that democracy has no direct bearing on poverty alleviation and, therefore, does not benefit the poor. In a paper presented at the Anti-Imperialism Conference organized by Social Action in Owerri on the 16th of November 2019, interrogated the nexus between democratic governance, poverty, and political accountability. I also revealed that because elected officials are more concerned about themselves than the needs of the people, poverty is deepened and since poverty strips the people of the ability to hold elected leaders to account, elected officials of government

have increasingly become less responsive and responsible. I therefore maintained that in Nigeria, the democratic system cannot be sustained in an environment of chronic mass poverty because it cannot provide for socio-economic development.

Table 5: State and Zonal Distribution of Federal Constituencies

State	Population	No. of Senatorial Districts	Federal Constituencies	State	Population	No. of Senatorial Districts	Federal Constituencies
Abia	2,845,376	3	8	Kano	9,401,288	3	24
Adama wa	3,178,950	3	8	Katsina	5,801,584	3	15
Akwa-Ibom	3,178,950	3	10	Kebbi	3,256,541	3	8
Anambra	4,177,828	3	11	Kogi	3,314,043	3	9
Bauchi	4,653,066	3	12	Kwara	2,365,353	3	6
Bayelsa	1,704,515	3	5	Lagos	9,113,605	3	24
Benue	4,253,641	3	11	Nassara wa	1,869,377	3	5
Borno	4,171,110	3	10	Niger	3,954,772	3	10
Cross	2,882,984	3	8	Ogun	3,751,104	3	9
Delta	4,112,448	3	10	Ondo	3,751,104	3	9
Ebonyi	2,176,947	3	6	Osun	3,416,959	3	9
Edo	3,233,366	3	9	Oyo	5,580,894	3	14
Ekiti	2,398,356	3	6	Plateau	3,206,531	3	8
Enugu	3,267,837	3	8	Rivers	5,198,716	3	13
Gombe	2,365,040	3	6	Sokoto	3,702,676	3	11
Imo	3,927,563	3	10	Taraba	2,294,800	3	6
Jigawa	4,361,002	3	11	Yobe	2,321,339	3	6
Kaduna	6,113,503	3	16	Zamfara	3,278,873	3	7

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2019).

Please note the distribution below:

North-East 48 (13.4 percent), North-West 81 (22.6 percent), North-Central 43 (12 percent), South-West 69 (19.2 percent), South-East

44 (12.2 percent), South-South 55 (15.3 percent). Total - North (172 or 48 percent). Total South (168 or 46.9 percent).

*Please note the figures for Kano (24), Katsina (15) and Lagos (24).

The adoption of the plurality principle in the enumeration of federal constituencies did not help the cause of minority groups in Nigeria because it is tilted in favour of areas with large population sizes. Indeed, inadequate representation has direct consequences for decision-making and participation in electoral politics. For example, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) makes political party the single most important instrument for political participation and leadership recruitment in Nigeria. Section 122 points out emphatically that no association can canvass for votes for any candidate or present a candidate for election unless it is a political party. In Nigeria, political parties depend on votes from areas of high population figures to win and retain power, consequently, the major ethnic groups which have high populations are considered as electoral assets. Indeed, as Allen and Nna (2017) have pointed out, political parties do not depend on their manifesto to win elections, but rather on their capacity to procure votes by appealing to and manipulating primordial connections.

Vice-Chancellor Sir, the preceding discussions may point to only one direction, suggesting that there is a deliberate policy, and indeed process of transferring the benefits of oil and gas exploration and exploitation from the communities to the domain of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. This position offers a justification for the conventional theories of internal colonialism and masks the elevated level of pillage, plunder, and exploitation of the resources of Nigeria by their ruling class under the guise of ethnicity, religion, and regionalism. This is, indeed, a deception of the class character of the Nigerian State. For sure, most Nigerians are poor, compared to

the very few wealthy members of the ruling class. This is irrespective of ethnicity, religion, or regionalism.

Vice-Chancellor, Sir, let us look at the historical trajectory of the evolution of the ruling class in Nigeria. The British juxtaposed the process of economic exploitation with the search for an appropriate constitutional framework to promote greater participation of Nigerians in government and thus the search for appropriate leadership. Consequently, as political independence approached, the Colonial Government set in motion the mechanisms of ensuring the emergence of a loyal petit-bourgeois Western-educated middle class in the colonies that would take over the government and safeguard the enormous and strategic interests of the British. According to Chinweizu (1978), the main objective of the British was to ensure that the infrastructure in the colonies was reinforced and expanded, and that appropriate legislation and agreements had to be protected to reinforce colonial institutions with new and powerful ones. This of course required courting and nurturing a new crop of an African middle class that would serve the economic correlate of the bureaucracy and politicians whose interests would not coincide with those of the British in implementing the policies in which they would depend for their prosperity. Interestingly, those who were groomed and empowered by the British for political leadership were people who had no shared vision for national development and no commitment to the social and material upliftment of the masses of the Nigerian people. They were committed to seeking an opportunity for access to opportunities and means of their economic and political survival through their connection to external parties. They constitute the Nigerian ruling class, the membership of which was drawn from but not limited to old produce buyers who festered on their association with British commercial capital and represented the nascent petit-bourgeois politicians, serving and retired military

officers, traditional rulers and intellectuals whose survival and relevance depended on their links to the state and foreign capital. The main motivation for this indigenous ruling class was the capture of state power and using the decision of the government to promote the private accumulation of wealth.

According to Nnoli (1978), a careful examination of the nationalist political parties before independence clearly showed their penchant to capture state power and chase their narrow class interests of gathering wealth and privileges, even at the expense of most workers and peasants. As he puts it, while not being oblivious to the elevated level of poverty and destitution among the people and injustice thrown up by this situation, the Nigerian power elites quickly moved into the Whiteman's salary scale and the Government Reserved Areas (GRA) to break the racial monopoly of those privileges. In a way therefore, the utmost legacy of a Nigerian power elite remains the use of opportunities provided by their access to and control of the instrumentality of state power to promote amassing of wealth and personal self-aggrandisement. It is because of their inclination for state capture that they were neither productive nor innovative.

Indeed, Lambadidi (1998) has revealed that as early as 1929, Hooker expressed this same view, when he made it abundantly clear that the major trend in the development of the Nigerian power elite was the desire and determination to ensure that its members were sufficiently bourgeoisified. To this extent, they became obsessed with concerns for acquiring wealth and power on the realisation that within the context of general poverty in the country and scarcity of capital, the connection with the government and the parties in power was indispensable. Ake (1988) has therefore observed that the intra-class struggle for power became more intense as independence drew nearer and the power elites realised that the

power at the disposal of the state, which they sought to inherit, was enormous and impressive.

Oxfam (2017) is very instructive on the consequences of the excessive quest for the primitive accumulation of wealth by members of the Nigerian ruling class. It has published a Report on the poverty incidence in Nigeria across the six geo-political zones. The Report reveals the following:

Table 6: Percentage of People Living in Poverty (by Geo-Political Zones) in Nigeria

Geo-Political Zone	Percentage of People Living in Poverty
North-Central	60.7 percent
North-East	69.1 percent
North-West	71.4 percent
South-East	59.5 percent
South-South	55 percent
South-West	49.8 percent

Source: Oxfam (2017)

The Report of Oxfam (2017) concludes that the wealth of Nigeria is consumed by a small number of individuals, while the vast majority in the thirty-six states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja struggle daily for survival. There is indeed, a direct relationship between the wealth of ruling class and the poverty of the mass of the people. As Engels (1877 p. 15) puts it:

Accumulation of wealth at one pole is therefore, at same time, accumulation of agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the other pole.

Vice-Chancellor Sir, the implication of the statement above therefore, is that the ruling class is the burden of diversity which transmits poverty, misery and underdevelopment to the people. Chronic poverty and destitution are deep and

widespread in Nigeria and cut across all geo-political zones, ethnicities, religions, and regions. Similarly, in 2022, the National Bureau of Statistics published its report of multi-dimensional poverty in Nigeria. The report revealed that Nigeria had a Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) of 0.257 which showed that Nigerians suffer from multiple forms of poverty. With 133 million people living in multi-dimensional poverty, 86 million people representing 65 percent are identified in the North, while 47 million people representing 35 percent are identified in the South. The table below reveals that poverty is widespread and cuts across all geo-political zones.

Table 7: Multi-Dimensional Poverty by Geo-Political Zones.

Area	MPI	Incidence (H, percent)	Intensity (A, percent)	Population Share (Million)	Number of Poor People (Million)
National	0.257	62.9	40.9	100	132.92
North	0.272	66.3	41.0	14.4	20.19
Central					
Northeast	0.324	76.5	42.4	12.7	20.47
Northwest	0.324	75.8	42.7	28.4	45.49
Southeast	0.183	49.0	37.3	10.5	10.85
South South	0.250	62.6	39.8	14.8	19.66
Southwest	0.151	40.0	37.7	19.2	16.27

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2022, p.15)

From the above table, we can argue that the geo-political zones with greater population size and density also have the highest number of states and local government areas and, therefore, a greater number of representatives in the National Assembly. However, these geo-political zones also contain the highest number of incidence of poverty and the greatest number of the multi-dimensionally poor. This is not limited to numerically strong states or regions. The problem also affects those which produce oil, and which benefit from the 13 percent oil; Derivation Fund.

I have consistently questioned the utilization of oil-related revenue in the oil-producing states of the Niger Delta, regarding the 13 percent Derivation Fund (Nna, 2020, 2011a, 2018, 2019). I have therefore maintained that the mismanagement of the oil-derived revenue by the ruling class in the Niger Delta as the cause of the perennial poverty, conflict, and underdevelopment in the Region. Why, for example, shall Bayelsa State with its relatively low population figure, abundant oil, gas and agricultural resources and humongous financial allocation be among the poorest states in Nigeria?

The 13 percent Derivation Fund is a creation of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999. It followed a series of violent-agitations by social movements within the Niger Delta and was intended to provide some incentives for the development of oil-producing communities. Adesanmi (2023) has revealed that between its implementation in May 1999 and the end of 2022, the Oil-Producing States in Nigeria collectively received 9.58 trillion Naira from the Derivation Fund. According to Adebowale (2021), between 2018 and 2020, these states received 1.5 trillion Naira from 13 percent allocation and according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), in 2022 alone they got almost a trillion Naira from the 13 percent allocation.

When added to their monthly allocation from the Federal Account Allocation Committee, the Oil-Producing States in Nigeria indeed received a humongous amount of money from the Federal Accounts Allocation Committee every month. However, despite the huge amount allocated to them, the Oil-Producing States are among the top indebted states in Nigeria. Again, extracts from the National Bureau of Statistics for 2022 are instructive on this:

Table 8: Niger Delta States, 13 Percent Allocation and Domestic Indebtedness

S/No.	States	13 Percent Allocation (in Billion ₦)	Domestic Indebtedness (in Billion ₦)
1	Delta	296.63	272.61
2	Akwa-Ibom	222.52	219.62
3	Bayelsa	188.82	151.11
4	Rivers	169.79	225.51
5	Edo	37.49	110.99
6	Ondo	25.99	78.82
7	Imo	18.61	207.52
8	Abia	6.95	104.52

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2022)

Perhaps, because of the apparent mismanagement of the 13 percent Derivation Fund to Oil-Producing States, Adebowale (2021) has concluded that “intervention activities and physical development do not reflect the derivation fund received” by these states. Adesanmi (2023), they performed miserably on development indices, such as “access to good education, stable school enrolment, access to health-care delivery, life expectancy, good roads, portable water, quality of human life, effective management of ecological problems, employment opportunities, and access to capital, among others. Why then have the plethora of social movements and elite organisations remained relatively mute or failed to raise the question of financial accountability? The answer is that they are most likely direct or indirect beneficiaries of the corruption in oil-producing communities.

Table 9: Multidimensional Poverty in Selected States in Nigeria

State	Allocation Received (in Trillion)	Percentage of People in Multidimensional Poverty
Akwa Ibom	₦ 1.870	71
Bayelsa	₦ 1.240	88.5
Delta	₦1.999	47.6
Kano	₦ 1.332	66.3
Lagos	₦ 1.792	29.4
Rivers	₦ 1.755	62.3

Source: Adapted from NBS and FACC, 2023

What are the types of policy decisions made by the Nigerian ruling class? In whose interest are they made? And how do they impinge on national cohesion and nation-building? Some examples suffice.

The Nigerian ruling class are not only obsessed with the primitive accumulation of wealth but are also predatory and so, acquire their wealth through the capture of the state and its institutions. This situation was exacerbated by the rising dominance of the petroleum industry and the collaboration between the state and the international oil companies which gave the ruling class access to petrodollars either through state coffers or the opportunities provided through oil company contracts, thus, the propensity to corruption as a group. Nna (2014) has interrogated the nexus between the state and the international oil companies in Nigeria and concluded that the state serves the interests of foreign oil companies. The Nigerian ruling class has therefore demonstrated a lack of discipline, competence, creativity, innovation, and an unobstructed vision of national development. This has resulted in the reoccurring crisis of development in Nigeria. By the 1970s, signs had begun to show that all was not well with Nigeria, despite its enormous oil and gas resources. However, lacking in innovation, creativity and unobstructed vision, the Federal Military Government resorted to foreign loans with high interest. The development described above further dragged down the economy. It got to a height in 1981 when the Federal Military Government approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and some multilateral development agencies for economic stabilisation support. By 1986, the Federal Government adopted the Structural Adjustment Programme as its home-grown alternative to the economic stabilisation support. However, this was based on the conditionalities characteristic of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)

programme. They include a cocktail of belt-tightening measures based on the Washington Consensus. Such as wage freeze, diversification of the economy, and reforms of the foreign exchange regime, withdrawal of subsidies, withdrawal of subsidies on social services such as education, health, transportation, an embargo on employment in the public sector and the devaluation of the currency. These measures led to mass unemployment, rising inflation, infrastructural decay, mass poverty and destitution, and further undermined livelihood and induced crime, criminality, and insecurity. For the educational sector, it translated into underfunding of infrastructural development, and research, a dearth of teaching and learning aids, and increased brain drain, recruitment of poor-quality faculty, loss of morale and decline in productivity.

Table 10: Unemployment Rates by Geo-Political Zones in Nigeria, 2020

Geopolitical Zone	Percentage (percent)
North-Central	27 percent
North-East	29.9 percent
North-West	26.3 percent
South-East	29.1 percent
South-South	37 percent
South-West	18 percent

Source: National Bureau of Statistics (2020)

Vice-Chancellor, Sir, since 1999 the Federal Government has consistently allocated less than 10 percent of the national budget to education. Oromosele (2022) has extracted percentage figures of budget allocation to the educational subsector based on the report of the Invictus Group between 2015 and 2022 to show that allocations had consistently declined over the years. It rose to 10.79 percent in 2015 but declined to 6.7 percent in 2016, 7.38 percent in 2017, 7.04

percent in 2018, 7.05 percent in 2019, 6.7 percent in 2020, 6.68 percent in 2021 and 5.39 percent in 2022. The 5.39 percent in 2022 amounted to ₦923.79 billion out of a total budget of ₦17.13 trillion. According to Kolawole (2021), this was as a period that Ghana allocated 18.5 percent of its national budget to education and 12.8 percent to health. This makes Nigeria the only Country which subscribes to UNESCO’s Education for All with a commitment to spend between 15 percent and 20 percent of the national budget on education, but which has consistently failed to do that (Premium Times, Friday 17 June 2022). In a report in *the Tribune Newspaper of March 2022*, Nwokedi revealed that Nigerians spent an average of \$28.65 billion on foreign education between 2012 and 2022 and between \$1.2 to \$1.6 billion (about ₦609 billion at an exchange ₦415 to a dollar) on medical tourism (Sunrise Daily, Channels Television, 6/8/2022).

Table 11: Federal Government’s Budgetary Allocation to Public Education, 2016-2021

Year	Total Budget (in Trillion)	The budget for Education (in Billions)	Percentage (percent)
2016	₦ 6.06	₦ 369.6	6.7
2017	₦ 7.29	₦ 550	7.38
2018	₦ 9.2	₦ 605	7.04
2019	₦ 8.92	₦ 620	7.05
2020	₦ 10.33	₦ 671.07	6.7
2021	₦ 13.6	₦ 742.5	5.6

Source: Wahab (2022)

In contrast, to Nigeria, Wahab (2022) reveals that Ghana's allocation to public education from its national budget was 23.51 percent in 2015, 22.09 percent in 2016, 20.12 percent in 2017, and 11.6 percent in 2018. He also reveals that in 2022, the Federal government allocated 355 billion Naira to its 44 universities from the total of 875.93 billion Naira allocated to the public education sector. Out of this figure, 326 billion

Naira was for recurrent expenditure, made up of 320.7 billion Naira (personnel cost), 61 billion Naira (overhead cost) and 29.5 billion Naira (capital projects). For the recurrent expenditure, the top five beneficiaries were the following: University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 24.2 billion Naira, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 22.6 billion Naira University of Calabar, 19.8 billion Naira, University of Benin, 17.7 billion Naira, University of Ibadan, 11.1 billion Naira. The top 5 beneficiaries of the allocation to capital projects were the National Open University of Nigeria, 2.6 billion Naira, Federal University Lokoja, 1.7 billion Naira, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1.6 billion Naira, University of Lagos, 963 million Naira and University of Nigeria, Nsukka, 900 million Naira.

Poor funding of the educational sector will lead to poor infrastructural development of education institutions and the reduction of teaching and learning aids. It then means that less attention will be paid to research, teaching, and community development. If research outcomes are poor, our health sector will be weakened, industry will be less productive, the poverty incidence will be on the rise and the incidence of criminality will boredom. In a report published in Business Day on 5th October 2023, Chisom revealed that in the 2023 edition of the *Global Organised Crime Index*, Nigeria ranked 6th in the world with a crime index of 7.28 points out of 10. This makes the Nigerian State the second highest in Africa behind the Democratic Republic of Congo, with a crime index of 7.35 ranked 5th globally and No.1 in Africa. Nigeria was therefore ranked above South Africa, 7th (7.18), Kenya, 16th (7.02), Libya, 18th (6.93), Central African Republic, 23rd (6.75), Uganda, 29th (6.55), Sudan, 34th (6.37), South-Sudan, 36th (6.32), and Cameroun, 37th (6.27). Among the indices used were financial crimes, cyber-dependent crimes, illicit trade in goods, extortion, and protection racketeering. It was in

response to these that the Academic Staff Union of Universities in Nigeria embarked on industrial action for a cumulative period of five years between 1999 and 2022. Adeniyi (2022) has broken down this cumulative period of industrial action as follows:

Table 12: Number of Periods of ASUU Strikes between 1999 and 2022

Year	Number of Days
1999	150
2001	90
2002	14
2003	180
2005	14
2007	90
2008	7
2009	120
2010	150
2011	59
2013	180
2014	-
2015	-
2016	-
2017	30
2018	90
2019	270
2022	200

Source: Adeniyi (2022)

The more prolonged the period of industrial action, the more the likelihood that educational infrastructure will decay and learning outcomes will deteriorate, the more the loss of morale and the more the likelihood that education will be less attractive, the more the level of poverty and criminality will rise, and the more Nigeria will become underdeveloped and thus, the more the crisis of development. These concerns formed the basis of a lecture I presented at the Annual Dinner

of Rivers State branch of the University of Port Harcourt Alumni Association on the 22nd of December 2022. Here, I called on Nigerian Universities to be more innovative, partnering with the private sector and the Alumni community. This way, universities can overcome the problem of poor funding and become strategic partners contributing to national development and prosperity.

Vice-Chancellor, Sir, please you may also recall that since the pre-colonial period, the Nigerian ruling class promoted policies which induced poverty and further pushed their subjects to the level of destitution. In the North, for instance, the ruling class promoted an education system, which permitted parents to give out their children to Quranic teachers in distant lands without any form of state or parental care provisioning. This compels Quranic scholars to provide for the daily needs of their pupils by any means available to them, including sending them out on the streets to beg for food as Almajiri. Over time, the system has been abused, resulting in many out-of-school children in many parts of Nigeria. This system has been of immense benefit to the Nigerian political establishment in the past because it has provided them with the willing tools for election rigging and political violence. Indeed, the Almajiri social system has sustained a decaying economic, political, and social order, which the ruling elites have continued to sustain in the name of religion, tradition, and culture. However, it has now threatened their very existence because it has created a situation of lawlessness.

Under the Presidency of Goodluck Jonathan, efforts were made to resolve the Almajiri problem by identifying and integrating the Almajiri children into the formal education system through the establishment of special schools in key state capitals in the North. However, the efforts were frustrated as the dominant section of the ruling elites in the North refused

to cooperate with the federal government because they were not consulted sufficiently on the project. The result was that the contractors either abandoned the projects or failed to complete them and where such were completed; they were never use. Today, the Almajiri menace has continued to constitute a social nuisance and a security threat all over Nigeria.

In the past, a programme was established for the education of children of nomads. The programme was in fact, adopted as part of the National Education Policy. Despite the huge budgetary allocations to that programme, its implementation was also frustrated, and the money budgeted for it ended in the existing network of bureaucratic corruption. The consequences of the failure of these programmes have been dire for the security and socio-economic development of Nigeria. According to the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2018), there are an estimated 13.5 million out-of-school children in Nigeria. Some of these children now provide the resource base for the recruitment of terrorists, bandits, armed robbers and other criminal groups by criminals who have turned banditry, kidnapping and other forms of organised crime into lucrative business ventures in Nigeria. When this is added to the large army of unemployed youths, school leavers and graduates, and with the availability of small arms and light weapons all over the country through the Sahel and other porous borders, The fate of Nigeria can be likened to a country on the edge.

Today in Nigeria, even the most powerful have become insecure. Nna and Pabon (2017) have revealed the dialectical relationship between poverty and conflict in their analysis of situations in the Niger Delta. For sure, economic crises have a direct bearing on insecurity. Indeed, the fear of losing valuable resources gives rise to a situation in which ruling elites now scramble for

whatever is within their reach, and in the process, tend to reinforce the existing patterns of resource conflict. The prolonged periods of insurgency, banditry and kidnapping demonstrates how lucrative these ventures have become for conflict entrepreneurs, many of which are disadvantaged members of the ruling class. The sophisticated nature of the arms used and the compact nature of their organisation only show that those directly involved are sponsored by the big men who see the business as an another source of the primitive accumulation of wealth. This has resulted in the proliferation of sub-national armed groups. This has resulted in a growing irredentism that has been further complicated by the pools of supply of small arms and light weapons by conflict entrepreneurs. The conflict in Warri in the early 2000 and the conflicts in parts of Kaduna, Plateau and Benue are manifestations of the tragic consequences of the problem of underdevelopment.

Summary

This lecture interrogated the crises of Nation-building in post-colonial Nigeria. It demonstrated that the structure of state-federalism, which should have been for heterogeneous societies if based on equity rather than political exigencies, produced a fundamental problem for ethnic-cultural diversity and national unity. Amongst others, it created an internal colonial system which has produced and reinforced existing conditions of domination, exploitation and marginalisation of vulnerable groups such as Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. However, rather than focus attention on the ethnic dimensions of the theory of internal colonialism, the lecture shifts attention to the post-colonial ruling class in Nigeria. It argues that the ruling class has turned the ethnic minorities, indigenous people, the poor and vulnerable groups in Nigeria

into internal colonies and thus constituted itself into a burden of diversity.

Recommendations

Pro-demerger groups in Nigeria have called for the dismembering of the Nigerian State. Historically, such developments have in a considerable number of cases, not been conflict-free and the outcome for Nigeria will be conflict-prone. For a country with its size of population, which will be catastrophic for the West African sub-region and will not be supported by the international community. As Shaw (2003) has revealed, it is better to pursue self-determination within the context of an existing state system through adopting a more inclusive political order. Doing this through processes of political restructuring like the creation of states and local government councils has only reinforced existing patterns of inequality and inequity and thus, has remained unhelpful. Similarly, the rotation of political offices has only succeeded in recycling power among the ruling class and deepened the marginalisation of vulnerable groups such as the urban and rural poor, Indigenous peoples, and ethnic minorities.

I therefore recommend the following, as forms of restructuring for the management of diversity in Nigeria.

1. For the Federal Government

To Address the Issue of Lack of Inclusivity and National Cohesion Building, the Federal Government Should Promulgate a Bill for the Rights of Indigenous People and Ethnic Minorities Rights Commission

The Federal Executive Council should forward an Executive Bill to the National Assembly for the Promulgation of a law for the establishment of a charter of Rights for Indigenous people and a Commission on the Rights of Ethnic Minorities in

Nigeria. State governments should similarly propose bills to State Houses of Assembly for similar processes.

When passed into law, this will promote and protect the cultural heritage of Indigenous people and ethnic minorities such as their languages, artefacts, customs, and traditions. The Commission, when established shall promote inter-ethnic dialogue, create a sense of belonging among Indigenous people and ethnic minorities and thus minimise mutual suspicion, mistrust, and fear, thereby promoting ethnic and cultural diversity in Nigeria.

To Address the Problem of Inequitable Representation, the Federal Government Should Reform the System of Political Representation

The system of representation based on plurality has deepened the marginalisation of vulnerable groups and shifted advantages to certain groups with higher land mass and greater population sizes. I propose a system of representation based on the equal representation of interest groups such as religion and ethnic groups. As the case of India despite its land mass, religious and cultural diversity and population size has sufficiently demonstrated, this makes for transparency and political stability.

To Address the Issue of Federal Government Control of Natural Resources, Dominance and Marginalisation, there is the Need to Reconstruct the Federal System

Studies have revealed the economic and financial unviability of most of the existing States and local councils in Nigeria, and thus, their inability to foster national development. However, expectations have been raised about the enormous potential of Regional Development Commissions as catalysts for regional economic transformation and thus national development. These commissions can complement the development efforts

by conducting regional development surveys and promulgation of regional development plans. These would culminate into shared budgets for the construction of joint development programmes such as regional power plants, airports, seaports, highways and joint universities and polytechnics focused on regional natural resource endowments, including agricultural endowments and regional development needs. Examples exist in the BRACED Commission for the South-South Region and the ODUAL group with the proposed Western Nigeria Development Commission for the South-West Region. Replication of these efforts throughout the six geo-political zones will propel Nigeria once more into an era of regional development, competition, economic cooperation and national growth and transformation. This way, the geo-political zones will become regions of shared prosperity and the issue of the preponderance of central government control or domination will be taken care of. This becomes very imperative with the ongoing efforts to decentralise responsibilities by the Federal Government, including the devolution of powers to generate and transmit electricity to the states as well as the replacement of rail development on the concurrent list.

To Address the Issue of Food Insecurity and Poverty, the Federal Government Should Refocus Attention on Economic Diversification through Agriculture and Solid Minerals

With an estimated thirty-four million hectares of arable land, agriculture holds enormous potential for Nigeria's economic transformation. Not only does it hold the key for food security, but it is also necessary for micro, small and medium industries and indeed backward integration and foreign exchange. For agriculture to play this crucial role in the Nigerian economy, potential investors must know what is produced and where. An agricultural map will promote the development of agro-allied

industries and transform rural areas in Nigeria into key centres of development while also enhancing inter-regional competition and cooperation. This development will promote the expansion of the agricultural value chain and make Nigeria more competitive in the African Free Trade Economic Zone. The government should also amend the relevant laws to take solid minerals from the exclusive legislative list to guarantee access by states and local governments.

To Address the Issue of National Transformation, the Federal Government Should Transform the Educational System

No matter how the government tries to restructure Nigeria for nation-building and national development, such efforts will not yield the desired results unless there exists an efficient and effective workshop as well as a progressive leadership cadre. This can only be produced through the transformation of the educational system in Nigeria. This becomes imperative going by Nigeria's demographic structure. Indeed, 65 percent of Nigeria's estimated population of over two hundred million people consists of more people between the ages of 15 and 35 years. This youthful population will become worthless and an army of bandits and insurgents unless they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to turn them into agents of national transformation. It is only a progressive education system that focuses on the training of thinkers namely the Homo-Politicus and Homo-Economicus, as well as entrepreneurs that can actualise these goals. Good policies and good programmes are necessary for a viable and vibrant educational system. This involves the restoration of skills development through the activation of vocational training, professional development and knowledge-driven policies and programmes in the educational sector.

Transforming the education system will entail removing it from the grips of the state and a corrupt bureaucracy and giving progressive foundations, regional development corporations and international non-governmental organisations the opportunity for co-funding and content development at the Basic, Senior Secondary, Vocational, Monotechnic, Polytechnic and University educational levels with emphasis not only on literacy and accuracy but also on creativity and innovation, with the government providing the foundational funds.

Before it was overwhelmed by multilateralism and neo-liberalism in the mid-1980s, Nigeria had such a system of education with the Port Harcourt school in the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Port Harcourt holding sway in the development of critical minds through its political education programmes.

2. For the Management of the University of Port Harcourt The Management of the University Should Expand the Mandate of the Claude Ake School of Government to Include Policy and Leadership Training.

One important flagship in the development of critical thinking which still exists in the University of Port Harcourt is the Claude Ake School of Government. It is indeed the only remaining vestige of the Port Harcourt School in the Faculty of Social Sciences. If appropriately funded, a refocused Claude Ake School of Government can be one of the University of Port Harcourt's major contributions to Nigeria's national development. It can develop world-class policy and leadership development models and strategies patterned after the Kennedy School of Government. Beyond that, it can serve as Nigeria's major hub in leadership skills and orientation and thus, become a training ground for a critical mass of an evolving new set of progressive leaders for Nigeria and Africa

in general. The Claude Ake School of Government can indeed be a destination of choice in policy and leadership training in Africa and become a major consultancy hub for governments, corporations, and international development agencies. This will for sure, once more draw the University of Port Harcourt into global reckoning.

The Management of the University Should Transform the Centre for Niger Delta Studies into the Centre for Indigenous Studies

One major constraint of Nigeria's development policy and programmes is that they are not built on Indigenous knowledge. Indeed, development strategies which are built on received ideas cannot engender self-reliant and auto-centric development. A Centre for Indigenous Studies will build an interdisciplinary collaboration between the Faculties of Social Sciences, Humanities, Health Sciences, Plant Science and Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Religion and Cultural Studies, Linguistics and Communication, as well as Hospitality and Tourism by floating joint post-graduate courses in relevant disciplines such as indigenous political systems, archaeology, indigenous medicines, cuisines etc. Once again, the University of Port Harcourt will benefit from the generous grant regimes of First Nation Organisations in the Americas and the United Nations systems committed to the promotion of Indigenous knowledge and becoming a hub of intellectual tourism. An example of such is the Centre for Indigenous Studies at the University of Otago, New Zealand.

Contributions to Knowledge

Vice-Chancellor, Sir, my major contribution to knowledge is the application of the theory of Internal Colonialism to the crisis of development brought about by the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in the Niger Delta. My

interest in the underdevelopment of the Niger Delta began in 1996 when Professor Kimse Okoko (our mentor) engaged Ibaba S. Ibaba, myself and three other young M.Sc graduates as a team of research assistants during his sabbatical leave with the Eastern Division of the Shell Petroleum Development Company. Our research activities involved the survey of the socio-economic impact of oil exploration and exploitation on communities in the Niger Delta. From this experience, produced the following publications: (1). Okoko, K.A.B. & Nna (1996) 'Revenue Allocation and the Oil Producing States in Nigeria'. (Alapiki, H.E (Ed.). In it, we revealed the nature of the politics of inequitable distribution of oil-derived revenue which placed communities in the Niger Delta in a disadvantaged position. (2). Okoko, K.A.B. & Nna (1997) 'Ethnic Minorities and the National Question: The Case of the Southern Minorities' (The Journal of Nigerian Affairs, 2(1). In it, we explored the contributions of ethnic minority groups in Nigeria, particularly those of the south to nation-building, vis-a-vis the relative powerlessness in the national power game. (3). Okoko, K.A.B. & Nna (1998) 'Community Assistance Projects and the Oil Producing Communities', (The Nigerian Journal of Oil and Politics, 1(2). In this, we exposed the dubious nature of community assistance projects provided by the Shell Petroleum Development Company for communities in its areas of operation and the existence of a network of corrupt practices associated with such projects which limit the gains for communities. (4). Okoko, K.A.B. & Nna, N.J. (1998) 'Federalism and Resource Allocation' (The Nigerian Journal of Oil and Politics, 2(1). In this, we went beyond the issue of inequitable distribution of revenue to analyse and discuss how the Niger Delta states suffer from discrimination in issues of appointments, infrastructure, allocation of projects and other facets of development in the Nigerian federation. (4). Okoko, K.A.B. & Nna 'Emerging Trends and Community Perception

in the Nigerian Oil Industry’ (The Nigerian Journal of Oil and Politics, 2(1). Here, we identified the various factors which triggered community discontent and underscored oil companies -oil communities’ conflict in the Niger Delta. (5). Nna (2001) ‘The Niger Delta: State Legislation and Disempowerment’ (Springfield, Owerri). In this, I identified and analysed the various oil and land-related laws in Nigeria, to show how these are used by the Nigerian State as strangleholds over the communities in the Niger Delta. (6). Okoko, K.A.B., Nna & Ibaba, I.S. (2006) ‘The Politics of Oil and the Development of Underdevelopment in the Niger Delta’ (University of Port Harcourt Press). In this, we discussed the intricate nature of oil politics and the powerful forces at play and how these have combined to impinge on the development of the Niger Delta. (7). Nna (2011) ‘Oil and Gas Exploitation and the Rights of Indigenous people in the Niger Delta’ (International Journal of the Social Sciences, 1(2). This discussed the consequences of oil and gas exploitation which has undermined not only the traditional farming and fishing activities of the people and indeed, the local economies but also the cultural activities and the value systems of the people. (8). Nna (2014) ‘Economic Globalization and the Niger Delta’ (University of Port Harcourt Press). Here, we x-rayed and discussed the consequences of the import of foreign capital, manifesting in the intrusion of Transnational Corporations, trade, and development finance for the crisis of development in the Niger Delta.

In 2017, I gave a lecture on “Insurgency and Violent Extremism: Causes and Effects” to the Town Planners Registration Council of Nigeria at its Mandatory Continuing Professional Education Programme held at Kaduna between the 5th and 6th of April. Among the triggers of insurgency and violent extremism we identified were widespread political violence and governance failure brought about by a cocktail of

factors, including systemic corruption argued that these have consequences for national cohesion and political stability because they were directly related to groups espousing violent ideologies with the potential to reverse development gains. On 20th December 2018, I presented a lecture at a security seminar, organised by the Association of Retired Military and Para-Military Officers from Ogoni, entitled, “Security Challenges and Socio-Economic Development of Ogoniland”. In this, I located the crisis of development in Ogoniland in the lack of commitment of government at various levels and transnational corporations to promote sustainable development in the area. I argued therefore, that there is a nexus between underdevelopment, unemployment and poverty which constitute the root cause of insecurity in Ogoniland and other parts of the Niger Delta.

In these and many others, I have sufficiently demonstrated that the ruling class in Nigeria has exploited the benefits of hydrocarbon resources in the Niger Delta without substantial and sustainable benefits to the people. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I have questioned the application of the conventional theory of internal colonialism to the Nigerian diversity matrix. Beyond the issues of cultural or ethnic division of labour, this lecture has reinforced the fact that Nigeria is a class society. Fundamentally, it has, with the help of data sufficiently demonstrated that the burden of diversity lies with the poor, vulnerable and oppressed people of Nigeria, not ethnic or cultural groups.

Areas of Current and Future Research.

For decades now, I have romanticised issues of global governance, particularly those relating to multilateralism and the consequences for post-colonial societies. I am also dealing with issues of comparative poverty, the crisis of nation-building, the Politics of the rights of indigenous people and

human rights, particularly economic and cultural rights. I intend to go beyond these to look at the consequences of climate change on the poverty of indigenous people as well as the upsurge of violent extremism in the post-colonial south.

Let me end this lecture with the words of G. Lewis Dickinson:

Justice is a power and if it cannot create, it will at least destroy. So, the question of the future is not shall there be a revolution, but shall it be beneficial or destructive, (Laski 1971, p.11)

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CITATION ON



PROFESSOR NEKABARI JOHNSON NNA
B.Sc. M.Sc. Ph. D (UPH)

Nekabari Johnson Nna was born on October 1, 1963 in Kpite Town in the Tai Local Government Area of River State, Nigeria. He was the first male child of the family Mr. Reuben Ntete nna of the lineage of Neenee-Akpue and the Gbene-Akarabe Dynasty. He enrolled into the St. Gabriel's Anglican Church Primary School, now State School Kpite immediately after the Nigerian Civil War. While in primary school, he shone brilliantly like a star. He won the first prize in the essay competition, organized by the Defunct Ogoni Divisional Schools Board for primary schools and ended his primary education with the Distinction in the First School Leaving Certificate Examination in 1976. From that moment, his Maternal Aunt (Mrs. Chinyere Akekue, a schoolteacher) took over the responsibility for his education and well-being.

In September 1976, he was admitted into the Birabi Memorial Grammar School, Bori through the National Common Entrance Examination. In his second year in the school, he won both the Rivers State Government Post-Primary School Scholarship Award and the Shell Petroleum Development Company Scholarship Awards for Secondary Schools on merit. In B.M.G.S, he served as school Timekeeper and House Prefect of Dimeari House. He was also active in Literacy and Debating Society, the Drama Club, and the Agricultural Science Club. In September 1982, he was admitted into the B.Sc. Programme in Political and Administrative Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt. There, he was highly active in the politics of the Students' Union at various levels. He served as treasurer of, the National Association of Political Students, Member Students Representative Council, Member Students Disciplinary Committee under the Dean of Student Affairs, Public relations officer and later Secretary-General of the Youths Solidarity on Southern Africa and Nigeria, the leading anti-Apartheid Students Movement of the time and Public Relations Officer of the Students Union Care-taker Committee. He was one of those who brought the ANC, cultural troupe, AMANDLA for a world-class performance at the University in 1986. He graduated with a Second Class Honours (Upper Division) in 1986 and proceeded to the Compulsory National Youth Service Corps Scheme in Niger State. On national service, he was a member of the Football Team and did his primary assignment at the Public Complaints Commission Kashim Ibrahim Road, Minna where he served as an Investigation Officer between 1986 and 1987. Then 1988-1993, he did his M.Sc at the University of Port Harcourt.

In 1990, he accepted an appointment with the Public Complaints Commission Port Harcourt as an Investigation Officer and was there until March 1997 when he gained

admission into the Ph.D. Programme in Development Studies and was in the same year, offered employment as an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies. He graduated with a Ph.D. in Development Studies in 2000. He rose through the rank to the position of Professor of Political Economy/Development Studies in 2013. Vice-Chancellor Sir, Professor Nna has been highly active in the services of the University, his community and at various times, the Rivers State Government. For example, he has been Student/Staff Adviser in his Department, Community Service Programme Coordinator, Ad-hoc Secretary to the Department Board, Coordinator of Departmental Graduate Seminar Services, Faculty Representative to the School of Graduate Studies, Head Warder, Head of Department, Member, Board of Governors, University Demonstration Primary School, Member, Board of Governors, Institute of Agricultural Research and Bio-Acer, Coordinator of Public Administration Unit of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies. In July 2022, he was appointed Acting Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and subsequently, elected Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences in July 2023. Professor Nna is a member of the International Political Science Association and, the African Association of Political Science and he is an active member of the Nigerian Political Science Association

He strongly believes that a man should not build mansions in the midst of slum settlements because it would be safe for him during periods of flooding as the house will be taken over by the poor and homeless. He should strive, rather to ensure that as many people as possible, have access to decent housing. In his effort to contribute to the development of his native community, Prof. Nna at various times served as a Member of the Community Development Advisory Body and the Community Industries Coordinating Committee under the Rivers State Ministry of Local Government and Community

Development. He also served as a member of the Rivers State Manpower Development Committee with the Rivers State Ministry of Budget and Planning. He was at various times, a member of the Ogoni Leaders of Thought, Member of the Ogoni Contact Group and Member of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, where he served as a Member of the State Committee and Publicity Secretary during the darkest period of Ogoni history between 1995 and 1997.

He is still a strong advocate of Minority/Indigenous Peoples' Rights. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I present to you, a consummate researcher and academic, who the legendary Claude Ake once described as "a young bright scholar' who should be kept in the University System, a critical thinker, Activist and astute administrator, a Community Mobiliser and Community Builder, a scion of the Gbenemene Yaa/Gbene Akaani Ruling Dynasty of Kpite, an Advocate of Minority/Indigenous Peoples' Rights, a good family man, the husband of Williamba and Father of Zina, Professor NekaBari Johnson Ntete-Nna.

Prof. Owunari Abraham Georgewill
Vice Chancellor