The Nigerian Federation and Separatists’ Agitations: A Reconsideration of Contending Issues on Biafra

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Abstract

Federalism often arises from the desire of the peoples to form a union without necessarily losing their identities. In Nigeria, an attempt to cultivate a common national identity met with serious obstacles from separatist agitations in Nigerian history. In the light of this, the paper examines the causes of separatist agitations in Nigeria from its formative years as a British Colony and Protectorate and proffers solutions for stemming the drift toward disintegration. It observes that the history of the Federation of Nigeria is one laced with separatist agitations. The paper notes that separatist agitations, have been traced to a plethora of factors which include ethnicity, cultural diversity, vast size, revenue allocation, political instability, and ambiguities in the constitution, among others. The paper argues that these factors remain object of intense politics and generally paved way for separatist agitations in Nigeria. In recent times, separatist movements in the South East geopolitical zone have stepped-up struggles for the actualization of the sovereign state of Biafra through protests and other forms of social mobilization. The protests have triggered tension and heightened insecurity, with the security agencies applying excessive force to quell the protests in some cases. The extant literature is awash with narratives regarding the recent upsurge and persistent centrifugal demands by pro-Biafra separatists, five decades after the Nigerian civil war. Although these analyses are germane to the subject matter, they essentially suffer from disjointed empiricism, and as such unable to adequately illuminate the understanding of the renewed Biafra separatist agitations. The paper concludes that Nigeria’s unity is problematic and that the approach the government has been adopting in handling the problem is actually not working.

Keywords: Separatist agitations, federalism, South East geopolitical zone, Biafra, nation-building, marginalization
Introduction

Agbu (2004) observed that a federal system of government emanates from the yearning of the populace to form a unification without necessarily losing their specification and identification. Federalism should, therefore, seem to supply an elegant structure of government, most especially in different circumstances of ethnic pluralism which is found in developing nations. Federalism is acknowledging by many as necessary for managing the country’s ethnic variation as echoed in the adage “unity in variation. Federalism in proposition is of the opinion that the construction of a system where agreement is reached in between contemporary demand of the unification and the regional diversity inside and surface and come out of the society, through the foundation of a single political system within which central and provincial governments are allocated coordinated authority in a manner defining both the legal or political limits of equality or subordinate purpose (Agbu, 2004). The subsequent modification of Nigeria into a federal state came to existence in 1954 as a result of the 1953 Lyttleton constitution conference (Ikeji, 2011). No doubt, federalism as a political system in Nigeria is a product of colonialism (Osifeso, 2011; Arowolo, 2011). Majekodunmi (2015) observed that the same line of explanation when she declares that the foundation of the nation’s federalism lie does not in the pluralities of economic and geographic regions or of ethnic nationalities, but in the plurality of colonial administrative traditions imposed by the colonial administrative.

Federalism provides a substructure for solving the political problem of administration and the economic problem of resource distribution. In practice, sometimes, the optimization of administrative costs is an economic issue, where also the distribution of resources involves some political issues in determining the constitutional criteria for such allocation in such a way that will ensure equality and/or equity (Ikeji, 2011). The origin of the Nigerian federation has elicited two contrasting perspectives. Some scholars argue that the presence of certain socio-economic conditions induced the federation while others posit that the British colonial government purposely imposed federalism on Nigeria in order to maintain a neo-colonial control of the country after its departure (Babalola, 2019). Nigeria’s federal experience began in 1954 under the tutelage of the British colonial authority and the fundamental aim of the Federation was to hold together the diverse groups that have been lumped together in the British-inspired contraption called Nigeria. The formation of the Nigerian Federation has elicited divergent views from scholars. The key debate in this investigation is that to reject the social and economic conditions that assign the foundation for the federation is to render unimportant the merits of the forces that resulted in the transformation of the previously unitary state into a federation. The practice of federalism in Nigeria cannot be fully understood without understanding the character of the society (Agbu, 2004).

Agbu (2004) is of the opinion that the urgency to set up a stable structure of federal democracy has influenced the history of constitutional conversation since Nigeria gained independence. The nation Nigeria itself is said to be a
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federal state. According to Section 2(1) of the 1999 Constitution, the nation Nigeria is one unalterable and infusible sovereign state to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Subsection 2 of the same section is of the opinion that Nigeria shall be a Federation comprises of states and a Federal Capital Territory. One thing is clear in a federal system of government; the three tiers of government should be compelled to allot political power as absolutely written out in the constitution. Regrettably and sadly, the contemporary foundation and proposition on which Nigeria’s constitution is to work and wield over the years specifically since the rise and advent of democracy has not in any way designated a true federalism on judiciously sensible ground.

Literature review
The literature review entails the review of some works that have been done by other scholars in area of inquiry. It also involves the presenting of summaries, indication of sources and critical assessment of the relevant works by indicating their strengths and weaknesses (Soyombo, 1996). The literature review indicates where this research work fits in the context of the general body of scientific knowledge (Babbie, 2005). The literature review also lays the groundwork for the main study and shows why the main study may have value in the realm of the research enterprise (Babbie, 2005).

Conceptual clarification
Federalism
The literature on federalism often commences on the somewhat apologetic note by stating that federalism lacks a standard definition. Hence, for instance, it has been said that federalism “may mean many things to all men” (Duchacek, 1970). Federalism is a political ideology that signifies a division of governmental powers between the national government and the constituent units which may well be states of provinces and or regions, as pointed out by Ayode (1988). Federalism to Junaidu (2007) is an ambiguous term which has no clear or universally acceptable meaning apart from its philosophical terminology, including its diversified approaches.

The word Federalism was derived from the Latin word “foedus” which translate to mean covenant. It is a political concept in which a group of members are bound together by covenant with a governing representative head. The term is also used to describe a system of the government in which sovereignty is constitutionally divided between a central governing authority and constitutional political units. As a concept of governance, federalism is unique and easily distinguishable from its “cousin” confederacy and its clear opposite, unitarism.

Kenneth (2003) provides a convincing conceptualization of federalism; the federal principle, is the method of separation of powers so that general and regional governments are each within a sphere, harmonize and independent. This explanation is classic in the sense that it tries to stress formal institutional
requirement such as constitutional delimitation of powers, bi-cameral legislature, independent electoral system for both levels of government, multi-party but preferably a two party system, a supreme court, etc. it is essentially because these variables are presented in such a way as to constitute the defining characteristics of federalism, which is not even accepted scholarly, that elements of weakness of these types are found in such definitions.

Federalism is a system in which sovereignty is constitutionally split inbetween a central governing authority and constituent political units (such as states or provinces), it is a system based upon democratic rules and institutions in which the power to govern is shared between national and provincial/state governments formed what is often called a federation (Yahaya, 2019). Federalism is a system in which the power to govern is shared between national state governments, creating what is often called a federation (Akindele & Olaopa, 2002). Federalism refers to the mixed or compound mode of government, combining a general government (the central or 'federal' government) with sub regional governments in a single political system (Olu-Adeyemi, 2017).

Contending issues in Nigerian Federalism
The contending issues include the following:

Revenue Allocation: Ekpo & Englama (2008) observed that resource allocation and management as well as fiscal federalism/decentralization have remained contentious issues in a federal state such as Nigeria. This is because the essence of government at all levels is to bring about rapid economic development through adequate provisions of social and economic infrastructures for the citizenry.

Ethnicity: Nigeria, one of the most ethnically diverse countries of the world (Okotoni & Adegbami, 2021). The 1914 amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates and the Lagos Colony by the British imperialist, brought together over 300 different ethnic groups with many languages and over 1,000 dialects in Nigeria (Okotoni, 2006). Nigeria has from independence and onwards been a country ridden by ethnic conflict. This may not come as a surprise as Nigeria is a deeply divided society. Over the years, this geographic based federal system evolved towards a federal system largely based on ethnic groups in order to mitigate ethnic conflict (Ejobowah, 2010). Ethnicity in the nation Nigeria doubles as a tool for primitive accumulation with political liberalization and democratic openings allowing for varying forms of expression of dissent and the intensification of ethnic competition (Umoh & Adeyi, 2019). Everyone would have thought that federalism would be the bedrock of democratic consolidation for Nigeria and bewildering diversities.
But unlike India, which is also a federal state which has been rightly described as a land of “million mutinies” (Roy, 2002: 2), Nigeria is a deeply divided and plural society (Ojo, 2009). The polity as it is known to have many ethnic nationalities, which scholars have variously put at different figures. Nigeria is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world with well over 250 ethno-linguistic groups, some of which are bigger than many independent states in contemporary Africa (Tsuwa & Asongo, 2013).

**Religion:** Ayoade (1987: 184) observed that religious bias has also been proved to be another form of poor distribution in Nigerian federalism, national cohesion and democratic consolidation. The predominantly Moslem north is not comfortable with the predominantly Christian south especially when it comes to sharing strategic positions/sector of the economy most especially in the bureaucracy.

**Autonomy of States/Intergovernmental Immunity:** The 1999 Constitution institutes a system which denies the states of their autonomy relative to the federal government. This is manifest in many ways. It is manifest in fiscal allocation and intergovernmental revenue relationship by which states are not only denied direct autonomous access to significant tax and revenue sources within each of them but are compelled to submit to the trusteeship of the federal government for financial survival through periodic receipt of revenue allocation from the federation account. This arrangement defies the logic of fiscal federalism which postulates that to survive as an autonomous part of the federal bargain, subnational government must be left to mobilize its fiscal needs, only to be supported in case of shortfalls by the national government through intergovernmental revenue transfers usually to maintain equalization with other well-endowed subnational part of the country in specific targeted programme determined by the national government (Anderson, 2007).

**Insecurity/Risk of Disintegration:** According to Rotberg (2010), “Nation-states fail when they are consumed by internal violence and cease delivering positive political goods to their inhabitants. Their governments lose credibility and the continuing nature of the particular nation-state itself becomes questionable and illegitimate in the hearts and minds of citizens”. This poignant statement appears to speak directly to the stark reality of the Nigerian federation at the moment. There is no doubt that the country is at the cusp of its existence given the centrifugal forces which are pulling at its seams with the serious situation of insecurity of lives and property across the country, and the inability of both tiers of government to meet the aspirations of Nigerian for good governance. This paper sought to investigate The Nigeria Federal and Separatist ‘Agitations: Re consideration of contending issues on Biafra.
Separatist movement in Nigeria

Niger Delta militant:
In the Niger Delta, apart from the demand for Niger Delta Republic, shades of separatism are embedded in the demands for “resource control” by regional activists. In essence, there is a fairly generalized feeling of alienation and dissatisfaction among the various constituents of the Nigerian federation, a situation that has also deepened mistrust and incentivized separatist agitations. However, because there has never been a referendum in any of the areas agitating for separation, it is difficult to know whether the leaders of the various separatist groups actually reflect the wishes of the people of those areas or whether the agitations are mere masks for pursuing other agendas. The current separatist conflict in the Niger Delta first arose in the early 1990s over tensions between foreign oil corporations and a number of the Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups who feel they are being exploited, particularly the Ogoni and the Ijaw. Ethnic and political unrest continued throughout the 1990s despite the return to democracy and the election of the Obasanjo government in 1999. Struggle for oil wealth has fueled violence between ethnic groups, causing the militarization of nearly the entire region by ethnic militia groups, Nigerian military and police forces, notably the Nigerian Mobile Police. The violence has contributed to Nigeria's ongoing energy supply crisis by discouraging foreign investment in new power generation plants in the region.

From 2004 on, violence also hit the oil industry with piracy and kidnappings. In 2009, a presidential amnesty program accompanied with support and training of ex-militants proved to be a success. Thus until 2011, victims of crimes were fearful of seeking justice for crimes committed against them because of a failure to prosecute those responsible for human rights abuses.

Indigenous People of Biafra:
Nnamdi Kanu is the founder of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), which aims to establish an independent state of Biafra in southeastern Nigeria. IPOB, outlawed by the federal government in 2017, draws on memories of an independent Biafra defeated in the 1967–70 Nigerian Civil War, which killed up to two million people. Most supporters of Biafra are ethnically Igbo. In late 2020, IPOB formed an armed wing, the Eastern Security Network (ESN), ostensibly to protect the predominantly Christian Igbo from Fulani Muslim herders who the group claims—without much evidence—are supported by President Muhammadu Buhari’s government in a bid to Islamize the country.

MASSOB:
The Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) is a secessionist movement in Nigeria, associated with Igbo nationalism, which supports the recreation of an independent state of Biafra. It
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was founded in 1999 and is led by an Indian-trained lawyer Ralph Uwazuruike, with headquarters in Okwe, in the Okigwe district of Imo State.

MASSOB’s leaders say it is a peaceful group and advertise a 25-stage plan to achieve its goal peacefully. There are two arms to the government, the Biafra Government in Exile and Biafra Shadow Government.

The Nigerian government accuses MASSOB of violence; MASSOB’s leader, Ralph Uwazuruike, was arrested in 2005 and detained on treason charges; he was released in 2007. MASSOB also championed the release of oil militant Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, who faced similar charges at the time. In 2009, MASSOB launched "the Biafran International Passport" in response to persistent demand by Biafrans in the diaspora.

Amotekun:

Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) codenamed Operation Amotekun (Leopard or Cheetah), is a security outfit based in all the six states of the South Western, Nigeria, responsible for curbing insecurity in the region. It was founded on 9 January 2020 in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria as the first regional security outfit initiated by a geopolitical zone in Nigeria.

Amotekun is a Yoruba word that means "One that looks like a leopard," leopard being translated to "ekun." Because of this, Amotekun properly means cheetah, but as in this case, it is often mistransliterated to leopard. Operation Amotekun (Leopard) was established on 9 January 2020 by the six state governors of all the South Western states of Nigeria, namely; Lagos State, Oyo State, Ogun State, Ondo State, Osun State and Ekiti State. The establishment of the security outfit was subject to the decision by all the six state governors at the regional security summit held in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria on June 2019 through Development Agenda for Western Nigeria Commission (DAWN). In support of the outfit, all the six state governors contributed 20 vehicles each, except Oyo that contributed 33 vehicles, in order to assist the operatives in carrying out their duties, making a total of 133 vehicles for the startup, they also procured 100 units of motorcycles each, making a total of 600 motorcycles. The members of the outfit were drawn from local hunters, the Oodua People’s Congress (OPC), Agbekoya, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and vigilante group.

Odua People’s Congress:

The Oodua People’s Congress was formed by a group of Yoruba elites and artisans which included Dr. Fredrick Fasehun (its first national leader), Aare Gani Adams (the 15th Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yoruba land), Ibrahim Atanda, Idowu Abobanawo, Mrs. Adebowale (Maman Ijebu), Olumide Adeniji, Tony Uguru of Ijaw, Opeyemi Bamidele, Hon. Kayode Oladele, Baba Oluwide Omojola, Baba Oja, Bola Aidi, Olubunmi Olusona, and Wole Adebayo among others.
They decided to form an organization to actualize the annulled mandate of Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, a Yoruba who most people believed to be on his way to winning the presidential election of 12 June 1993, which was subsequently annulled by the military government before vote tallying was complete.

Although the founding president of the OPC was Frederick Fasehun, in 1999 a faction led by Gani Adams broke off from the main organization, but continued usage of the main party's name. Until his death in 2018, Fasehun was widely held by the Yoruba to be the leader of the OPC. He bestowed Ganiu Adams with the title of the National Coordinator in order to bring the factions under one body, while he remained its president and founding father. In December 1999, the newly formed Arewa People's Congress said it would begin full self-defense training for northern residents in reaction to attacks on Hausas by the OPC. After Fasehun's death, Oodua People's Congress the factions continued and the Fasehun faction elected a new leader, Prince Oshibote. This was in line with Fasehun's wishes before he died.

**Egbesu Boys:**
Egbesu is the god or deity of justice of the Ijaw people of the Niger Delta region. Egbesu is also perceived as the spiritual foundational force for combating evil. The Egbesu force can only be used in defence or to correct an injustice, and only by people who are in harmony with the universe. The symbol of the divine force is the leopard, panther, and lion. Egbesu has both a philosophical and spiritual dimension, the latter of which has been more prominent during recent times due to conflicts in regions where the Ijaw reside.

Belief in Egbesu dictates the Ijaw philosophical principles of war and the Egbesu force is believed to be able to provide spiritual attributes to Ijaw fighters. The philosophical aspect incorporates elements of a just war. Egbesu conduct for just wars dictates that the only justified cause of war is self-defence. Therefore, the Egbesu force can only be used to correct an injustice and only by people who are considered in harmony with the universe. Egbesu war ethics also incorporates a reward element, where victors are granted rewards for winning just wars.

**Oduduwa Republic:**
The Yoruba separatist led by Sunday Igboho, for instance, echoes of separatism come in different forms from a direct call for Oduduwa Republic to those championing a Sovereign National Conference to decide if the federating units of the country still want to continue to live together, and, if so, under what arrangements.

**Arewa Republic:**
In the north, there are intermittent demands for Arewa Republic by separatist in the northern part of Nigeria, while some talk of the “north” as if it is “a country within a country.”
Boko Haram:
Nigeria’s complex web of complicated security challenges, which has seen its North-West corner ravaged by trans-border bandits, farming communities in its North-Central part pillaged by killer herdsmen and its North-East axis overrun by Boko Haram insurgents, has reduced Africa’s most populous country to the continent’s largest human slaughter slab. More than 10 years after the Boko Haram insurgency started, the Nigerian state has not been able to contain this deadly terror group; instead, its security forces have been drawn into a prolonged war that has clearly become intractable. It is conservatively estimated that the Boko Haram insurgency has claimed over 47,000 lives and displaced over two million others in the North East alone in the last 10 years. More than a decade after the start of the Boko Haram insurgency, a lot of questions about its motive, aims, strategic objectives, recruitment, mode of operation and funding remains unanswered.

Theoretical orientation
A theory is a body of logically interdependent and generalized concepts of empirical reference (Parsons, 1964). They also refer to abstractions, speculations, ideas and conceptual constructions, which are tentative and attempt to make a causal explanation or descriptive illustration of a particular phenomenon. The use of theory enables a social scientist to handle better the nature of relationship between cause and effect. It also enables one to have an idea of what to expect as it equips one with the weapon to deal explicitly and intricately with the subject matter under investigation (Olurode, 1996). This study will look at The Marxist revolutionary theory in other to give life to this study.

The Marxist revolutionary theory
The Marxist revolutionary theory of the right of nations to self-determination was adopted in this study. The theory emerged from the strands of thought on the national question by radical scholars such as Marx 1846 [1964], Engels (1853); Luxemburg (1908, 1970, 1971); Pannekoek (1912); Renner (1917); Bauer (1924); Rosdolsky (1964), Stalin (1953); Paust (1980); Suzuki (1976); Markovits (2005), among others.

The theory assumes that there is dialectical relationship between the resolution of the national question and the right of national self-determination: only the freedom to secede makes possible free and voluntary union, association, co-operation and, in the long term, fusion between nations. Similarly, national liberation struggle of oppressed nations is seen as a democratic movement. Despite, the economic, cultural or “psychological” dimension of the problem, the question of self-determination “belongs wholly and exclusively to the sphere of political democracy” i.e. to the realm of the right of political secession and the establishment of an independent nation-state (Lenin, nd, p. 145).
The Marxist revolutionary theory of the right of nations to self-determination posits that “peoples may be dominated and governed only by their own consent. Self-determination is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action, which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril” (Temperley, 1920: 266). Thus, “all peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of the right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (Article 1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of the General Assembly, Dec. 16, 1966). The basic propositions of the Marxist revolutionary theory of the right of nations to self-determination are centered on some fundamental theses, which among others include:

1. Nation as a uniform and homogenous entity does not exist; each class in the nation has conflicting interests and “rights”;

2. State discrimination creates collective grievances and facilitates the formation of antagonistic groups and greater potential for collective action and even violence as individuals face similar circumstances and suffer from similar patterns of discrimination.

State-making in Africa is replete with contradictions. These contradictions are embedded in both vertical and horizontal relations among groups constituting the post-colonial state, and between them and the state itself. According to Ake (1996), vertical relations involve the imposition of domination over independent social formations by bringing them together into one polity dominated by a centralizing power. This involves the imposition of a chain of command, extraction of political allegiance, exaction of social surplus, making and enforcement of laws, transformation of the subordinated social formations into a coherent economy and polity, and elimination of the resistance of the subject formations to the hegemonic-centralizing power.

**Trends in separatist agitations**
The attempt for Biafra secession from Nigeria in 1967 was not the first of its kind in Nigeria. The secession attempt itself was the culmination of the various contradictions within the Nigerian state. Various constitutions had been negotiated and adopted prior to 1966, but none addressed the fundamental social differences, political tensions, economic competition and ethnic imbalances that the Nigerian state had struggled with since amalgamation. Before the secession attempt by the Eastern Region that led to the war, the Hausa/Fulani, domination the then Northern region, and the Yoruba, who dominated the then Western region, had all contemplated and sometimes threatened secession. Thus, Tamuno (1970) had traced the agitations for secession in the country to 1914. He noted that from Ahmadu Bello’s account, the north would have preferred a separate political future, instead of
being yoked with the south in what the Sardauna termed “the mistake of 1914”. Then, the north, displeased with the amalgamation, threatened to secede from the union. Further separatist agitations in several parts of Nigeria occurred in the 1950s. According to Tamuno (1970), new constitutional arrangements and party political rivalries during that period accounted for this.

During a constitutional conference in Ibadan in 1950, the Emir of Zaria had threatened that unless the north was allotted 50 percent of the seats in the central legislature, it would ask for separation from the rest of Nigeria. The colonial authorities granted this request. Further political developments around 1953 led to a chain of events which again put northern leaders in a mood for secession.

What cause the recent surge of agitation for Biafra independence?
The recent cause was the 19 October arrest of Nnamdi Kanu by the Department of State Services (DSS), the leader of a separatist movement, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and director of Radio Biafra, an unauthorized station urging unrest and dispute to accomplish self-governance for Biafra in Nigeria’s south east. Allegations against him include the following sedition, ethnic incitement and treasonable felony. Some of these displeasure and crime carry large fines, from long jail terms to the death sentence. The revolutionary are primarily challenging his freedom, but also calling for the reclamation of Biafra as an independent nation.

Conclusion
Contemporary issues in Nigeria’s political economy show that perhaps the most important issue of fiscal federalism is the revenue allocation formula, the sharing of national revenue among the various tiers of government (vertical revenue sharing) as well as the distribution of revenue among state governments (that is, horizontal revenue allocation). In Nigeria, decisions as to what proportion of centrally-generated revenue that would be retained by the federal government, the proportion that will be shared among the state governments and the proportion that will go to the local government has always been a problem, due to the fact that there is no consensus of opinion as to what could be seen as an ideal formula.

Federalism was adopted in Nigeria largely to ameliorate the negative effects of diversity but the system has not been able to resolve the inbuilt contradictions within the Nigerian society as envisaged by the architects of the system who saw federalism as a solution to the country’s multiplicities. The problems inherent in lumping together myriad of different peoples and regions continue to provoke debate and controversy which are often directed at Nigeria’s federal system.
Recommendations
1. Tinkering with the constitution to accommodate referendum could help remedy the Biafra agitations.
2. There should be tolerance of uncomfortable views, one of the argument for free speech is that through robust competition of ideas in the political market place, the truth will be discovered.
3. There should be power sharing; it will be helpful to institutionalize or codify the existing conventional system of power sharing and rotating the presidency between the two blocs as an interim measure –until the country democracy matures and trust between the two blocs and among Nigerians has improved.
4. The strident call for a national question is perhaps the strongest evidence yet that all is not well with Nigerian federalism.
5. There is need to remodel the Nigerian constitution in line with the principle of federalism, not as tailored by the military.
6. For a federation to be able to resist failure, the leaders and the followers must feel federal.
7. Prioritising nation-building processes; ultimately, the greatest weapon against separatist agitation is for each constituent party to feel treated fairly and be convinced that the gains of being part of Nigerian federation far outweigh the benefit of existing as an independent country.
8. Referendum is another time-tested instrument for blunting separatist tendencies in the mature democracies. It is also a way of testing whether the leaders of the separatist movements really reflect the wishes of those they claim they represent and want to “liberate.” Following from this, perhaps Nigeria should consider a constitutional provision allowing for a referendum among nationalities that want to secede from the union, say, once every 30 years.

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