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## **Is the Unity of Nigeria Negotiable or Not?**

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### **Abstract**

*One popular saying among the elites in Nigeria is that 'unity of Nigeria is not negotiable'. However, going by the daily experiences or occurrences and views of ordinary Nigerians, the statement seems aloof of the realities in Nigeria in all the decades of her creation. Indeed, there seems to be more factors pointing to the need for re-negotiation than a blanket non-negotiability-the sing song of the elites. The concern of this paper is to explore the factors that have made Nigerians unwilling to live together. In this regard therefore, the paper shall unravel reasons advanced by the elites for the non-negotiability of Nigeria in spite of her challenges and unwillingness to live together; find out why some Nigerians belief and call for self-determination or a complete re-negotiation of Nigeria and finally document the daily experiences of Nigerians in the last sixty years to supply empirical evidences for the need for a re-negotiation of a nation on the brink.*

### **Introduction**

The Nigeria's National Motto is Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress. The Nigeria's motto encapsulates the beliefs or ideals of Nigeria as a nation. On the contrary, the realities and history of Nigeria since independence has been opposite of her motto. It has been a history and a mixed bag of the bad, the good and the ugly considering her trajectory of development. Nigeria, no doubt, is a great country that has enjoyed warm friendship across the globe among comity of nations in the early 1970s and 1980s.

Things however began to take a down-turn for Nigeria from late 1980s through the 1990s when Nigeria's resources began to be plundered by her political leadership and she began to pile up debts occasioned by senseless borrowing (by both Military and Civilian Governments) and outright stealing of the common patrimony of the citizens. The height of the plundering and corruption was captured by T. Momoh the Federal Minister of Information and

Culture, published his “2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to My Countryman: Corruption in High Places”, little did he realise that the measure he awarded to the erstwhile politicians would be awarded, in due course, to the upper echelons of his own government; worse still, while they are yet in office (Eboh, 1990).

It is in the midst of this continuous dwindling of resources that Nigerians began to protest the unbearable situation they found themselves. Aside the most recent and popular decentralized mass protests against Nigerian Police brutality in October 2020 (Adetola, 2022), one major protest in the history of Nigeria was the protest against the Structural Adjustment Programme in 1989. The Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was not benefitting everyone. Groups were affected differently, the rural farmers rose from the ashes, the middle class and the civil servants dropped down the ladder. The people’s wages grew much slower, and their living standards worsened. SAP seems to be working, but it was incredibly slow. The per capita income was rising 2% per year. This meant that it would take at least thirty years for the economy to reach its 1980 level. Naira depreciated up to 80% against the U.S. dollar. The inflation level barely improved (Eboh, 1990). Consequent upon the effects of SAP on Nigerians, the popular SAP riot of May 1989 broke and the “Mother of all protests ‘Aluta’ ensued”.

The adoption of SAP in spite of resistance from Nigerians laid the foundation of the economic down-turn for Nigeria before the premeditated annulment of the June 12 General Elections popularly won by Late MKO Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) by the Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida Administration. The annulment, like SAP, also laid the foundation of disruption in the political future of Nigeria. The Annulment was not as bad as the management of the outcomes where politicians messed up the unity of purpose, brought to the fore by the masses, when they voted unanimously against ethnic or religious divide that often plunge Nigeria in the path of backwardness.

From that time forward, the unity of Nigeria has continued to nose-dive irretrievably by the years that follow. The foundational difference in the Nigerian State was once again brought to bear on Nigeria visibly by the events that followed. Rather than unity, division became the order of the day. The phrase, ‘unity of Nigeria is not negotiable’ became the new cliché in the national life of the nation as a way of response to the tension that broke from the annulment.

Whereas the political elite desire an indivisible nation, their conduct pointed in another direction, which was more of division on all fronts. Then another phrase of ‘re-negotiation of Nigeria’s unity’ by the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria emerged. There and then the two schools of thought divided along ‘Negotiation’ and ‘Non-Negotiation’ of the unity of Nigeria was born, pursued and entrenched in the political space of Nigeria. This paper examines the two schools of thought starting with those calling for Negotiation of the unity of Nigeria.

***Negotiating the Unity of Nigeria: The National Question***

In addressing the national question concerning the unity of Nigeria, Onigbinde (2020) had noted that ‘the tragedy which the absence of spiritual bond amongst men and women within the geographic limit called Nigeria has wrought, is not only physically disruptive, but psychologically damaging to those who had to hold onto the shorter end of the stick in the name of national unity’. In other words, the unity of Nigeria is already divided along those holding on the longer and shorter ends of the stick that ‘bond’ Nigeria together as a nation. Is Nigeria really a nation?

To some, Nigeria is even not a nation as it has failed to become one in the last 107 years of the amalgamation of both the Northerner and Southern protectorates with the hope of forming a nation. The independence gained after many years of struggle on October, 1960, would not and has not helped either to form Nigeria into a nation state because in a nation-state ‘the constitution should reflect the citizens consensus on such issues as modality for sharing power and management of resources, especially the nature-endowed ones. To others like Tamuno (1991) however, the inability of Nigeria to transform into a nation-state is beyond the current constitution, as the remote and root cause was actually in the amalgamation and its unresolved questions. Part of which was that ‘the 1914 amalgamation itself left unanswered one important question: whether Nigeria’s political future would lie in unity or other convenient arrangement’.

Tamuno (1991) noted further that ‘the Colonial Office, between 1911 and 1914, deliberately left that matter to be resolved, one way or another, through the logic of the future events in Nigeria’. The ‘logic of future events’ sixty years after independence could not and have not resolved the unresolved questions of national unity of Nigeria. Succinctly put, Onigbinde (2020) attempted to narrow down the national question into three issues collapsed into two namely: ‘the North-South dichotomy and the problem of power sharing. These are tangential to the place of minority and wealth sharing in a situation where political power is eternally denied the goose that lays the golden egg’. The second being ‘religion and its emergence as factor in political leverage and economic patronage’.

Other challenges have been added to the national questions in the last six decades of Nigeria existence, which include the democratic transitional challenge under civil rule (with specific reference to the annulment of June 12 Presidential Election); quest for self-determination; and more recently, the security challenge.

***Negotiating Unity of Nigeria: The June 12 Annulments Question***

The June 12, 1993 Presidential election was a turnaround in the political space of Nigeria, where the perceived domination of the machinery of government by a section of the nation, that is, the core North was ended with massive votes from the masses that brought in a southerner. The subsequent annulment of the

election by a Northern and self-styled Military President confirmed the position of politicians from the South that the North was pursuing an ambition to perpetuate itself in power at the expense of other sections of Nigeria.

The cancellation of an election results believed to have been won on a Muslim-Muslim ticket by a Southerner, and in an election initiated and implemented by a Federal Government led by a Northerner further exacerbated the National Question. It became pertinent, for instance, to wonder if there could be a peaceful coexistence among the Nigerian people, and if injustice has not become the hallmark of the Nigerian system. (*Lalude, 2005: 501*)

The immediate attempt at addressing the injustice by a call for de-annulment of the June 12 Presidential Election considered necessary for the unity of Nigeria was rubbished by some Northerners who were bent on keeping power perpetually in the North. Osoba, a former Governor of Ogun State had noted that:

As we were struggling for the de-annulment, the announcement of the June 12 election results, and the swearing-in of Abiola as the duly elected President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Sa'idu Barda, the Governor of Katsina State, released a bombshell, saying "blood will flow on an unprecedented scale" if the annulment was reversed. Barda was backed by the 9 Northern governors of the NRC who met on September 30, 1993 at the NICON NOGA HILTON to frustrate the June 12 aspirations. In a communiqué at the end of their meeting, the Northern governors, rather than act in consensus to get the military out, resorted to making unhelpful demands. (*Osoba, 203-204*)

'Unfortunately, the handling of this issue and others equally fundamental such as resource control and zoning of public offices by a civilian government since May 1999 has further intensified the quest for a Conference to resolve, once and for all, the national question (*Lalude, 2005: 501*). The 1995 Constitutional Conference organised by the late Military Head of State, Sanni Abacha to manage the negative fallout of the June 12 annulment proposed a rotational presidency clause in the draft constitution, was described by the Conference Chairman as 'the recipe for the maintenance of peace, harmony, ethnic concord, political stability and good government'.

Regrettably, after the death of Abacha, the next Military Head of State, General Abubakar Salami deleted the rotational clause in the imminent 1999 Constitution through the Constitution Debate Coordinating Committee (CDCC) he established on the ground that 'the clause was a product of

frustrated Nigerians’. And that ‘though the clause was a reaction to the obvious lopsidedness in the Federal structure, the protagonists of the rotational presidency were prepared to abandon the idea if the new Constitution could guarantee a return to true Federalism’ (Lalude, 2005). The question is who were the protagonists of the idea of rotational presidency? Why did they opt to abandon the idea? Is the idea not really helpful to the challenge of lopsided nature of the Nigerian political structure that is perpetually slanted in favour of the North and against other ethnic nationalities in Nigeria? Are the many unanswered questions about the Nigerian State call for a negotiation or re-negotiation of the unity of the nation?

***Quest for Self-Determination and the Negotiability of Nigeria***

The issue of self-determination is not new to Nigeria. It has been a recurring decimal in the history of Nigeria since 1950 when Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello-Rep Emirs of Northern Nigeria first made the preference to opt out of the intending nation of Nigeria in 1950 during a discussion around the infamous 1914 amalgamation. To the Northerners, the amalgamation was an unpopular policy. Below in table 1, is a catalogue of such demands from 1950 to 2021 as recorded by Adetola (2021), who considered the self-determination moves as ‘signposts of systemic challenge that was carried on and over from the pre-independence, independence and post independent Nigeria.

The fact that these quests had been on and sustained leave questions on the negotiability or non-negotiability discourse about the nation called Nigeria. Another fact that all the major components parts have at one time or another asked to be free from Nigeria is significant enough to be considered among the several factors precipitating the call for secession. The inability to find a solution to the national question and other attendant threatening challenges to the stability of Nigeria has also shown that the cord that binds the components together is not only weak, it might become so weakened over the years such that the issue of negotiability or none of it might just be actualised sooner than later.

**Table 1: Threats and Attempts at Secession from Nigeria (1950-2021)**

S/N	Name, Region and Year	Nature of Secession	Instrument of Secession	Reason(s) for Secession
1.	Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello-Rep Emirs of Northern Nigeria Northern Nigeria, 1950	Preference	Discourse around the infamous 1914 amalgamation	Unpopular amalgamation policy
2.	Chief Obafemi Awolowo Western Nigeria, 1953	Solicitation	Cable to the Secretary of State	Lagos status policy
3.	Malam Bala Garba Northern Nigeria, 1964	Threat	Public Expression	Being land-locked region
4.	Isaac Sha’ahu Tiv Middle-belt, 1965	Threat	Address at Northern House of Assembly	Dissatisfaction and unfair treatment from the North

S/N	Name, Region and Year	Nature of Secession	Instrument of Secession	Reason(s) for Secession
5.	Isaac Adaka Boro Niger Delta, 1966	Attempt	Niger Delta volunteer force	Fight against corruption
6.	Lt. Col. Odumegbu Ojukwu Eastern Nigeria, 1967	Attempt/ Operational	War 1967-70 Declaration of Biafra Republic on May, 1967	Fear, distress, frustration and anger.
7.	Nnamdi Kanu Eastern Nigeria, 2015	Threat	IPOB/ESN	Marginalisation
8.	Professor Banji Akintoye/Chief Sunday Adeyemo (Igboho) Southern Nigeria, 2019	International Appeal to UNO	Legal Instrument and documentation	Oppression, wanton killings and general insecurity

Source: Adetola, 2021

The table 1 above on threats and attempts at secession from Nigeria from 1950-2021 contains major ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. The various attempts and threats also span a period of seventy-one years (71 years), which is over and above the sixty (61) years of Nigeria Independence as at 1st October 2021.

Commenting on the return to self-determination by major ethnic groups in Nigeria in the recent times, Douglas Anele in his column in the Sunday Vanguard Newspaper of 1st August, 2021 observed frankly that “the present situation where Fulani caliphate colonialists whose region contributes less than fifteen percent to Nigeria’s national income dominate everybody by controlling critical levers of national security and governance architecture at the federal level is unjust and unsustainable”. He went on to emphasise that since the dawn of civilization human beings cannot endure oppression for too long... consequently, an increasing number of southerners are seriously questioning the basis of Nigeria’s unity. For him, the country, might have outlived its usefulness notwithstanding the dubious self-serving claim by One Nigeria apologists that we are stronger together.

#### ***Security of Lives and Property and the Negotiability of Nigeria***

Prior to the emergence of Nigeria as an Independent country, each ethnic nationalities that later form Nigeria already had a ‘system of unwritten, but properly understood, customary laws’ that served the purpose of maintaining public order, public safety and public security. However, the emergence of Nigeria, though unwillingly, led to the surrender of the existing security laws that helped in maintaining public order, safety and security. (*Adetola forthcoming*)

Consequently, the security architecture of Nigeria had continued to expand in both content and context to accommodate the security needs of Nigeria since

independence to the present times. In spite of the expansion however, the security challenge seems to be growing faster than the pace of response to curtail it. This is more noticeable in the last one decade or more with the advent of the Boko Haram Insurgency that began in July 2009 by a violent rebel of militant Islamists and Jihadists against the Nigerian State. Ever since then, the group has become an enormous security threat to the survival of Nigeria and it has instigated and renewed the call for the negotiation of Nigeria by a majority of stakeholders within and outside Nigeria.

Corroborating the prostrate state of security situation in Nigeria, Festus Adedayo (2021) wrote in the Cable News online that:

Like Nigeria, since 2015, rising insecurity had gripped Burkina Faso's Sahel region as it faces increasing and frequent, yet lethal attacks. Though an extension of the seemingly interminable Malian conflict, local dynamics fuel the Burkina insecurity. Spearheaded by the Ansarul Islam group, founded by Malam Ibrahim Dicko, a preacher from its Soum province, the crisis has religious, social and security dimensions. Dicko's jihadist armed group, like Nigeria's Boko Haram, is said to be affiliated with Al-Qaida, as well as the Islamic State organization. Targeting civilians and soldiers, Ansarul has thus far killed 2,000 persons, with 1.4 million displaced. On November 14, the Inata Northern Province came under an attack said to be Burkina's deadliest ever. Jihadists mercilessly shelled Burkina security forces of gendarmerie detachment, which led to the deaths of about 57 people, 53 of them gendarmes. Till date, military offensives against Burkina insurgency have not been able to stem its tide.

He noted further in specific terms that:

Earlier, in the first six weeks of 2021, according to Nigeria Security Tracker (NST) a project of the Council on Foreign Relations' Africa programme, 1,525 persons got wasted all over the country by the insecurity in Nigeria. Same week, as the world mourns with Nigeria, Buhari was on a binge to the United Arab Emirates, with ten of his ministers and undisclosed cache of aides. It will seem as if shedding blood of innocent has become such a thriving but ghoulish national industry under Buhari. It is so bad that if you are homophobic, Nigeria may not be the right place for you to live now. Under Buhari, Nigeria has assumed a couple of unflattering nomenclatures. Nigeria is either a failed, failing or fallen state.

In the same vein, Farouk Perogi (2021) also wrote in his column on 11th Saturday of the Nigerian Tribune on the dire state of security in Nigeria he observed that:

Northern Nigeria, particularly Muslim northern Nigeria, has become by far the most dangerous place to live in Nigeria - and one of the most dangerous places to live in the entire world. Terrorist bandits have almost literally taken over the region. Terrorists habitually waylay and burn passengers alive, kidnap Islamiyya and conventional school pupils, murder imams and worshipers in mosques, slaughter innocents in their sleep and incinerate their homes, vandalize and burn harvested crops and farms, and constitute a source of permanent terror. The carnage and terror are unabating. They are spreading out to previously sedate parts of the region. Niger State, which used to be insulated from communal upheavals, is now becoming the new epicenter of terrorist banditry. This is clearly the most precarious moment in northern Nigeria's history. But amid the growing precarity of life in the region, a federal government dominated by northern Muslims at best only pays lip service to security. Yet there are only muffled, barely audible voices of outrage from everyday northerners. Sure, there are now a few timid, emergency northern social critics who rail against the Buhari regime's outrageous incompetence and cruel unconcern, but there are no mass protests in the streets and no consistently violent maledictions against Buhari in mosques - like there would have been if the president were a Christian (pg 32).

Adetola (forthcoming) noted that "with more than a dozen security services under the watch, control and management of the Federal Government of Nigeria with all the monopoly of violence, the security of both lives and properties of Nigerians have suffered a great deal from attacks on a weekly or monthly basis without a sufficient corresponding attempt to bring the attacks to a stop". From his own research findings, he catalogued the security threat that young boys and girls in-and out-of school have suffered in form of abductions in the table two below:

**Table 2: Students' Abduction Profile in Nigeria**

S/N	Name of School	State	Number Abducted	Date
1.	Govt. Secondary School for Girls Chibok	Borno State	276	14-15 April, 2014
2.	Govt. Girls Science and Technical College. Dapchi	Yobe State	110	Feb. 19, 2018
3.	Federal Govt. College Bunuyadi	Yobe State	59*	25th Feb., 2014
4.	Govt. Science Secondary School, Kankara	Katsina State	Over 300	11th December, 2020
5.	Govt. Secondary School Kagara	Niger State	42, 27 boys, 3 teachers 12 family Members	Feb 17th 2021
6.	Government Girls Junior Secondary School. Jengede	Zamfara State	317	March 3rd 2021
7.	UBE Primary School Rama Birnin Gwari Local Govt.	Kaduna State	NA Yet	15th March, 2021
8.	Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation. Mando	Kaduna State	39. 23 female and 16 males	12th March, 2021
9.	Olabisi Onabanjo University	Ogun State	2	14th March
10.	Greenfield University	Kaduna State	Several abducted (50+)	20th April, 2021
11.	Federal University of Agriculture, Markudi	Benue State	Several abducted	25th April, 2021
12.	Islamiyya School, Tegina, Rafi LG	Niger State	Over 200	30th April, 2021
13.	Nuhu Bamali Polytechnic, Kaduna	Kaduna State	2 Lecturers and 8 Students	11th June, 2021
14.	Federal Government College Birnin-Yari	Kebbi State	30 students 3 teachers	17th June, 2021

**Source:** Adetola (forth coming). \*The students were all killed in the attack in their school hostel

The abduction profile of Nigerian students catalogued above in table 2 is a reminder on how the Nigerian State is treating the youths, their future and the state of hopelessness their parents are subjected to almost on daily basis. The case of Leah Sharibu who has been in captivity for not renouncing her faith since 2014, is a special one among many others who have been forgotten in the hands of the kidnapers.

In his article titled *Hopeful Parents; Helpless Children* published in the *Sunday Vanguard Newspapers* on 25th July, 2021, Adetola was of the view

that “it is not all cases of kidnap that enjoy a mention in the newspapers, and not all those mentioned receive the necessary attention of Government for any intervention if any at all”. To him, “what Nigerians do not really understand in all of these is the level of docility of the different levels of Government about the plight of these very young Nigerians whose only offence is, going to school, only to be kidnapped under the power of gun and bullets. Were it to be a one off case, it would have been understandable but it has become business of the day. This banditry, as a business, thrives on the hopelessness, helplessness, trauma and sometimes blood of the innocents Nigerians that submitted their powers of self-protection to the government through the ballots only for the government to turn her back on them when they needed her most”.

The hopelessness and helplessness Nigerians are subjected to are not limited to the civilian populations alone; the security personnel suffer similar fate as many are killed almost effortlessly by the bandits and terrorists. Morgen (SBM) Intelligence, as captured by Cable Newspapers 16th December, 2021, reported that:

In what appears to be a festival of bloodletting, at least 964 officers of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and the Nigerian military were killed in combatant attacks within one year. The report released by the research and intelligence firm on Thursday examined combatant attacks in the period of Q4 2020 and Q3 2021. In recent years, insecurity has worsened in many parts of the country. There were been cases of kidnapping, banditry, terrorism, armed robbery, farmers-herders clashes and other violent crimes. In the report, 642 personnel of the Nigerian military and 322 police officers were killed in the period under review. Operatives of other security agencies were also killed in attacks — 11 personnel of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and five personnel of the Nigeria Customs Service were affected. Other security agencies include the Department of State Services (2), the Nigeria Immigration Service (2) and Federal Road Safety Corps (1). (*Cable Newspapers 16th December, 2021*)

Consequent upon the above reasons adduced for negotiability of Nigeria from ‘the national question’, ‘the June 12 question’ to self-determination and security of lives and property, we are of the view that the opinion of Aiyede, (2021) as canvassed in his Inaugural lecture titled: *If gold rusts, what will Iron do? That Politicians, Academics and Institution Building be adopted in resolving the need for or not of, negotiation about the Nigeria’s existence as it were.* Aiyede wrote that:

States, faced with specific challenges, have often experimented with new rules or institutions, sometimes borrowed and

adapted from other climes to resolve political challenges. In the face of crises, for instance, major or violent conflicts, countries have changed systems or forms of government to prevent or resolve them, as we see in the adoption of a federal constitution with a semi-presidential system in Kenya following the 2007/2008 post-election conflict. Indeed, countries sometimes modify or change from one form or system of government to another when they are convinced that the one in use has become problematic or unsuitable. (Aiyede, 2021: 8)

***Reasons advanced for the non-negotiability of Nigeria***

Quite honestly, aside the rhetoric of ‘Nigeria is better as one indivisible entity’ often advanced by the politically exposed elites and their associates, one is yet to see or appreciate any sound reason(s) logical enough for serious consideration on the discourse on the negotiability or non-negotiability of Nigeria. While the media is inundated with lots of reasons for the negotiability of Nigeria on a daily basis with empirical evidences, it is rather difficult to point one evidenced based reason(s) for non-negotiability of Nigeria in the same media.

One of such mouthing of the non-negotiability of Nigeria was published by Premium times where it reported the Nigeria’s Vice President to have said that “Nigerians must at every opportunity insist that every great multi-ethnic and multi-religious nations has, through thick and thin, fought to realize the great dividends of diversity and pluralism” (Premium Times, Jan, 2021). One wonders what other fight is expected of Nigerians by the Vice President about how Nigeria wants to live or not within Nigeria other than the several expressions in form of agitations on and offline.

Perhaps, if there be any fight, it should be a fight against MAP, which as conceived by (Adetola, 2019), is the most powerful ‘political party’ in Nigeria. To him, MAP means:

The Military Autocratic Party (MAP), whose membership is predominantly the ‘serving’ and retired Generals. There are some co-opted civilian members among the wealthy Nigerians that serve as interface between the Military and the Civil Society. In specific terms, all past military heads of state in Nigeria are members and some of those in military governments of yesteryears, particularly from the Northern or Middle-Belt extraction. Besides the wealthy Nigerians, who are holding the economy of Nigeria on behalf of MAP, there is the Northern Caliphate that consists of members who hold the spiritual authority to always legitimise all illegalities of MAP before the civil society thereby establishing its hegemony and sustainability to maintain the present structure of Nigeria,

which is a tool for their survival. MAP is permanent in government in Nigeria and it has not left for once. If anyone says that the unity of Nigeria is not negotiable – check very well, they are members of this Military Autocratic Party (MAP), who are directly benefitting from the skewed structure of Nigeria as it is currently constituted. (Adetola, 2019: 79-80)

The apostles of Non-negotiability of Nigeria are located within the members of MAP and they go to any length to keep Nigeria as it is because of their selfish interests over and above the common interest of the majority of Nigerians.

***Proposal and argument for Nigerian countries as the scandinavian or the Nordic Countries***

Arising from the 1914 amalgamation that left unanswered one important question: whether Nigeria's political future would lie in unity or other convenient arrangement; the over seventy (70) years of separatists agitations from almost all major ethnic nationalities since 1950s up till 2021 and the very weak position of the advocates of indivisibility of Nigeria, it is convenient to propose a Nigerian countries, out of the present Nigeria, in the like and manner of the Scandinavian countries.

Scandinavian countries belong to the same historical and geographical region of the world. The countries were of three different Kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden before eighteenth century. According to some historians, the name Scandinavia was adopted and introduced in the eighteenth century, at a time when the ideas about a common heritage began to appear as literary and linguistic Scandivanism (Østergård, 1997). The three Kingdoms have similar features of a common ethno-cultural heritage and North Germanic language that combine to give definable characteristics as Scandinavians (Østergård, 1997).

Recently the use of Scandinavia has however become expanded to include Finland, Iceland and the Faroe Island. The expansion also came with a distinction between the three different Kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden that are of common ethno-cultural heritage and Finland, Iceland, and the Faroe Islands who are only officially recognised as members of the Scandinavian countries. The six countries are known as Nordic Countries. In fact, while the term Scandinavia is most commonly used for Denmark, Norway and Sweden, Nordic Countries is used to refer to Denmark, Norway and Sweden and all others like Finland, and Iceland, including:

- Faroe Islands (an autonomous region of Denmark since 1948)
- Greenland (a self-governing Danish territory since 1979)
- Åland (an autonomous province of Finland since 1920)
- Jan Mayen (an integrated geographical body of Norway)
- Svalbard (under Norwegian sovereignty since 1920)

The Nordic Council shares a large part of their history. While the individual countries have existed in different forms and unions for many centuries (Nordic Council, 2014), the current divisions in countries was finalised only in the first decades of the twentieth century. This common history is partly expressed in language: Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish and to a lesser extent Icelandic are closely related. After World War II, the Nordic countries started intensive form of cooperation. They form a passport union since 1958, have a common labour market and guarantee free movement of citizens. These practices are regulated by the Nordic Council for interparliamentary cooperation (Nordic Council, 2014).

The inability of Nigeria to form an indivisible nation calls for divisible countries similar to the Scandinavian or Nordic Countries as identified above. The idea of a divisible country suggested here is supported by the empirical evidence and relevance of culture areas as an instrument of independence and organizations of nations along natural philosophy of life that allows for mutual respect among cooperating nations in a common world. The idea of philosophy of life is mooted here because of its pivotal role in moving nations towards development path with cooperation and fewer encumbrances as currently witnessed in the Nigerian State.

Aside the Scandinavian or Nordic nations of the world that lend credence to the issue of philosophy of life as an ingredient to state formation, peace and progress, some leading nations of the world like the China, Japan, Korea and Russia are nations established on natural and culturally relevant philosophy of life upon which the entire nation prospers with minimal misunderstanding that are resolvable, without leading to full blown war within its people.

**Table 3: Culture areas, philosophy of life and circle of development**

S/N	Culture Area	Countries	Philosophy	Meaning	Components
1.	Scandinavian Countries	Denmark Norway  Sweden	-Hygge -Friluftshiv  -Lagom	-Appreciation -Life in fresh Air  -Balance	- Positivity - Simple life in nature  - Moderation and Stability
2.	Nigerian Countries	Yoruba  Igbo  Fulani	-Omoluwabi  -Chi  -Dominance	-Good Character  -Notion of duality, connection between man and spirit  -Dominance	- Hardwork; Honesty, Dedication  - Nothing stands alone, Community consciousness/ determination to succeed  - A life dominated by needs of herds

S/N	Culture Area	Countries	Philosophy	Meaning	Components
3.	South African	Zulu	-Ubuntu	-Humanity	- Mutual dependence on one another
4.	Chinese Countries	China	-Ren	-Co-humanity or Humaneness	- Goodness - Benevolence - Love
5.	Japanese Countries	Japan	-Ikigai	-Your reason for being	- Passion - Vocation - Profession and - Mission
6.	The Trucial States	United Arab Emirates	-Justice for all	-Leaders' Selflessness -Safety for all	- Peace for all - Progress for all

Source: Authors, 2021

The culture areas, philosophy of life and circle of development in Table 3 above is conceptualised against the backdrop of call for restructuring of Nigeria by notable Nigerians apart from those calling for its complete disintegration or separation of the components to go its different ways as distinct nations. We came to this position going by the need to strike a balance between the two extremes and the availability of empirical evidence of other parts of the world like the Scandinavian countries where such is operational and successful.

We are of the view that restructuring may need to be preceded by a philosophy of life as a determinant of how nations can be arranged or re-arranged to achieve development. This philosophy as highlighted above across regions of the world is the foundation of any nation, its structure and function, which ultimately determines the achievability of peace, progress and development.

The Trucial States used to refer to a group of Sheikdoms in South Eastern Arabia that allied themselves to the British Empire through various treaties from 1890s till 1971, when United Arab Emirate was formed based on common philosophy of justice for all through a consensus to have a union initiated by both Sheikh Rahid bin Saeed of Dubai and Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan of Abu Dhabi. The common philosophy of life anchored on justice, shared by the six Sheikdoms led to the formation of United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is one of the most peaceful and successful single nation of the century (Rashid Al Maktoum, 2019).

Rashid Al Maktoum wrote further on the unity of purpose of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that:

from 1969 to 1971, we were in a race against time to finalise an Arab agreement of great significance; an agreement that is still in force to this day and whose ultimate outcome was the foundation of the United Arab Emirates; the only viable Arab country conceived by genuine union, rather than arbitrary lines

drawn on a map. The UAE is the only country that was built by Arab leaders through agreement rather than force; the only country that has shown how successful the outcome can be when Arabs (humans) agree and work together to build a common future for their people. (*Rashid Al Maktoum, 2019: 149*)

It is therefore our submission that a country birthed by force or through “arbitrary lines drawn on a map” like Nigeria or a country with combination of (contradictory) philosophies of life within it for purposes of administration may only lead to the erection of a dysfunctional structures that ultimately would not bring about peace, progress and development. For example, a philosophy of life built around ‘dominance’ by one ethnic group as currently found in Nigeria may not fit into the cooperative needs and requirements for development.

On the subject of ‘dominance’ Levinson (1996) wrote about the Fulani that “adopting Islam made the Fulani feel a cultural and religious superiority to surrounding peoples, and that adoption became a major ethnic boundary marker between them and other African ethnic groups in the Sahel and West Africa”.

The philosophy of dominance that became boundary between them and others in Africa including Nigeria has complementary attributes of arrogance, superiority and conceit. Psychology of dominance also has the higher-than-average levels of aggressive, disagreeable, manipulative attributes. On the contrary, the psychology of the submissive is such that finds peace in taking instructions from the domineering people. The submissive has attribute of service-oriented mindset as common place among the Hausa and that paved way for the domination of Hausa people by the Fulani. Unfortunately, the Southern Nigerians (particularly, the Yoruba extraction) do not have such attribute of submissiveness hence the higher-than-average level of resistance against any form of dominance.

It is the same feeling of superiority and dominance tendency of the Fulani that has made the Nigerian State incapable of arriving at a nation state after several years after amalgamation. The Fulani feeling of superiority worked well in Hausa land and they were able to dominate and subdue the Hausa people. The same Fulani feelings of superiority and dominance were met with counter feeling of resistance rooted in other philosophies of life different from that of domination. It has therefore been extremely difficult to overrun Southern Nigeria over years, going by the nature and dynamics of resistance at such dominations and feeling of superiority.

Going forward therefore and considering the long history of socio-political association and relationship of all ethnic groups in Nigeria, we are of the view that if ‘separatists’ and ‘*re-structuralists*’ are not allowed to have their way, we suggest a third option of the Nigerian Countries as mentioned above. This should form the bases of negotiation for peace to reign in both Nigeria and the

proposed Nigerian Countries. A neglect of this path may be a precursor to a forceful disintegration of the most populous black nation in the world. The implication of this may be of negative phenomena impact on many other nations of the world.

### **Concluding remarks**

We are of the view that Nigeria as presently composed is not functional as a result of the fractured structure of the country. The structure needs to be re-structured for efficient and effective service delivery for all Nigerians irrespective of some factors like religion and ethnicity that are currently being used to divide that country. In re-structuring Nigeria therefore, the ethnic nationalities in their original state before amalgamation and natural social setting should be given preeminence as done in the Scandinavian or Nordic Countries. This could be made possible if and when opportunity to negotiate the continued existence of Nigeria as against the idea of non-negotiability by a section of the Nigeria elites.

We are also of the opinion that the present Nigerian State can be left to become a coordinating unit in some specific areas among the proposed Nigerian countries based on the common colonial history as there are common factors that may yet be useful going forward among the independent Nigerian countries. Such a coordinating unit may be in charge of the dynamics of further inclusion or exclusion of other willing and consenting entities within and outside but very close to the history of Nigeria before, during and after Independence.

In specific terms, parts of Yoruba land that are carved and united with Benin Republic like the Egun people may be willing to re-unite with the Yoruba country in the Nigerian countries. Also, parts of Cross Rivers State unite to Cameroon may want to re-unite with their people in the Calabari country in the Nigerian Countries. This exercise and adjustment will continue to accommodate the yearning and aspiration of the people within the ambit of acceptable laws and logics without violence.

Under this arrangement, Abuja becomes the Headquarters of the Independent Nigerian Countries that would be jointly administered, secured and funded by all members of the new Nigerian Countries. Ambassadors and Country Representatives from all over the world including the new Independent Nigerian Countries would continue to relate with and do business in Abuja as if nothing has changed.

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