

Federalism, Nation Building and Ethnicity in Nigeria

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Abstract

Federalism, as a system of government is one that emphasizes a constitutional division of powers between levels of government in a state, with each exercising authority over areas of its statutory jurisdiction. It is a system that evolved from the idea of containing deep-seated differences within states that are interested in staying together. Hence, federalism emphasizes, unity in diversity. Nigeria, since the Lytelton Constitution of 1954, has remained a federal state. Though Federalism was introduced in Nigeria by the British colonialists, there is no doubt that it was a response to the inherent diversities in the country. Nigeria is a heterogeneous society, with over three hundred and fifty ethnic nationalities. The problem arising from inter-ethnic competition for resources (ethnicity) has remained a major bottleneck for nation building in Nigeria. Many techniques have been invented in the past managing this problem, the chief of which is the Federal Character principle introduced by the 1979 constitution. This solution just like others has not really done much, as the country is as divided as ever. It is therefore the central thesis of this paper that efforts by the Nigerian state towards managing ethnicity in Nigeria are rather exacerbating the problem. The author concludes that until sincere efforts towards real democratization, good governance and frank national dialogue are initiated, ethnicity remain the major impediment to a balanced and workable federalism in Nigeria.

Key Words: Federalism, Ethnicity, Nation Building, Character Principle

Introduction

The introduction of the Richards Constitution of 1946, which divided Nigeria into three regions, set the tone for the country's federal arrangement that the Lytelton Constitution of 1954 formalized. Since then the problem of creating 'Nigeria' from the desperate groups and peoples who inhabit its vast territory has not been easy or even possible. As a heterogeneous society with more than three hundred, and forty ethnic nationalities, Nigeria has faced serious problems with the issue of ethnicity, and had even fought a thirty months civil war whose cost in human and material resources was indeed enormous.

As a heterogeneous society, the introduction of federalism was meant to achieve limited unity in diversity, and at the same time allow the nationalities to develop at their own pace and direction. At the same time, it was expected that the process of nation building would commence in such a manner as to engender true spirit of oneness and patriotism among the people. For sure, nation building which has been defined by Almond and Powell (1966) as a —process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller tribes, villages or petty principalities to the large central political system (p. 36) if well managed, ought to by now, fifty three years after independence – have made Nigerians see themselves as one indivisible entity.

Regrettably, till today Chief Obafemi Awolowo's statement of 1947, that —Nigeria is not a nation, It is a mere geographical expression. There are no Nigerians in the same sense as there are 'English or Welsh' or French. The word Nigeria is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not has remained most poignant. Unfortunately, while there is no doubt among Nigerians that ethnicity is the major problem militating against the country's unity, no real solution has been found. Instead, efforts like creating more states and local governments, the National Youth Service Scheme among others have not even scratched the surface of the problem let alone reduce it. The novel contraption, known as the federal character principle, evolved by the Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) in 1978 is the most contentious.

This paper focuses on the problem of ethnicity and its management in Nigeria, especially the federal character principle. Its intent is to see whether the Nigerian state through its policies have been managing or exacerbating the ethnic problem or Nigeria.

Theoretical Exposition - The Theory of Federalism

The theory of federalism is one that has witnessed divergent opinions and views from scholars. Thus, attempts at conceptualizing federalism almost always end in confusion. Hence, Dare (1979) posits that —the present study of federalism is in a theoretical jungle (p. 26). Ramphal's (1979) argument, that —the practical necessities of a miscellany of national circumstances, not the symmetry of academic reasoning, have given it, its contents and its form (p. xiv), is a serious explanation on the reasons behind the fact —that the study of federalism remains in a state of uncertainty and vagueness (Dare, 1979, p. 26). Though there have been many efforts in the past to define federalism, the ground breaking work by Wheare (1943), titled *Federal Government*, set the tone for contemporary thinking on the subject matter. The federal principle a method of dividing powers so that general and regional governments are each, within a sphere, coordinate and independent (Wheare, 1943, p. 10). Wheare lists what he considers the federal principles as including the following:

- a. The division of powers among levels of government
- b. Written constitution showing this division
- c. Coordinate supremacy of the two levels of government with regards to their respective functions.

To further buttress his belief in the water-tight nature of his definition, Wheare later states that:

I have put forward uncompromisingly a criteria of federal government- the delimited and coordinate division of government functions-and I have implied that to the extent to which any system of government does not conform to this criterion, it has no claim to call itself federal (ibid. p. 34).

Wheare's conceptualization, which is seen as juristic, has been criticized for being too legalistic and inflexible by Birch (1968). Beyond this, it has also been criticized for being a description of American federalism which in any case Wheare believed is the archetype of federal government. On this critical defect of Wheare, Obi (2004) has argued that:

He (Wheare) seemed to have forgotten that even the America federalism was a reflection of the socio-political conditions and history of America and has equally witnessed some changes since the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 where the constitution was adopted. In any case, the American patriots that converged in Philadelphia stated that they —gathered for the

purpose of rendering the articles of confederation adequate to the exigencies of government and the preservation of the union¹ (p 2-3).

Obi (ibid.) further argues that:

it is therefore apparent from the above, that since the American federalism was fashioned bearing in mind the exigencies of government, it cannot be the ideal as K.C Wheare felt, since every society ought to fashion its own system to make it —adequate to the exigencies of government¹. These exigencies we know, must take into consideration, the peculiarities, history and eccentricities of the local conditions of the country fashioning out the constitution.

In his evaluation of Wheare's formulation, especially as it concerns seeing the American federal system as an ideal, Jinadu (1979) has argued that to the extent to which he sets up the United States as a paradigm of federal government, Wheare's model is static. This is because federalism in the United States has undergone different phases and stages; so much so that some features delineated by Wheare may not be of contemporary significance. He concludes that:

Wheare falls prey to a kind of historicism whereby what he interprets as socio-political facts about the United States federal experiment, are elevated to the status of defining characteristics, which they are not of federal government (p. 17).

Other scholars who also conceptualized federalism in reaction to the noticeable pitfalls of Wheare include Livingstone (1968), Birch (1955), Friedrich (1964), Elazar (1977), Riker (1964) and Davis (1967). Each of these writers has contributed towards a proper understanding of the concept, and as Dare (1979) argues:

Each approach is a narrow perspective of the broad theme, and none by itself explains the totality of the federal concept or its dynamics, for example, Wheare provides the legal framework of what constitutes a federal constitution. Livingstone looked beyond the surface to the social diversities that the constitutional division of powers is supposed to mirror. Riker addressed himself to the actual bargain and the integrative roles of political parties, Etzioni considered the process of unification and interaction among the elites, Truman examined groups and political parties and Friedrich looked intensely at the actual operation of the societal centripetal and centrifugal forces and how these affect the constitutional alignments. In short all these approaches together provide a comprehensive view of federalism and complement each other. Both constitutional and extra-constitutional factors go into the making and working of any federal system (p. 34).

In summation, these differences notwithstanding, there is no doubt that irrespective of where one stands federalism remains, in the words of Ramphal (1979):

a pragmatic method of organising government so that sovereignty and political power are combined within a simple nation of several territorial units but are also distributed between national and unit governments that each within its own sphere is substantially independent of the others (p. xv).

Main Discussion

Nation Building

The concept of nation building is quite popular among scholars, politicians/statesmen. Though it still does not enjoy a universally accepted definition, its exact meaning is not much in doubt.

Friedrich (1966) sees it as "a matter of building group cohesion and group loyalty for purposes of international relations and domestic planning, whatever might be the building stones of the past" (p. 32). It is further defined as a process whereby people transfer their commitment and loyalty from smaller tribes, villages or petty principalities to the larger central political system (Almond & Powell, 1966, p. 36). Obasi (2001) states that from the conception of nation building, it is apparent "that the central element in nation-building is the desire and effort to achieve unity among the multi ethnic groups that make up a state, put differently national integration constitutes the core of nation-building" (p. 239).

For most countries, the major bottleneck that hinders the process of nation building is ethnicity. Integrating the heterogeneous ethnic groups in a state is not often a very easy exercise, and often these groups see themselves as competitors not partners, and this is the root of the problem. Nnoli (1978) believes ethnicity arises from the desire of individuals to organize themselves in ways to enhance their competitive efficiency in a situation where they perceive each other as competing for resources and positions. It is therefore because of the prime position of ethnicity in nation building that often reduces the process of nation building to that of managing ethnicity. But then one may ask, is ethnicity purely negative and can it be fully eradicated so as to make the process of nation-building take a firm root?

In answer to the first question, Nnoli (1994) believes that ethnicity really has many positive effects. In outlining them he argues that first, the political demands of many ethnic movements concern liberty and justice. They express fears about the oppression of their members by other groups and about the nepotistic distribution of public service jobs and socio amenities, and the imposition of the culture of the dominant ethnic groups on the others. In this way, ethnicity contributes to democratic practice by its emphasis on equality and justice in socio-political relations. Second, it leads to the appreciation of one's own social roots in a community and cultural group which is essential not only for the stability of the individual and ethnic group but that of the country as a whole. Third it provides a local mobilization base for the anti-colonial movement for national freedom. Fourth, ethnic identity has been instrumental in the promotion of community development in the rural areas. Fifth, the mobilization of the various ethnic groups behind the various factions of a nation's ruling class contributes to the decentralization of power in the country, which is healthy for democratic freedoms.

Still on the positive side of ethnicity, Wallenstein (as cited in Obasi, 2001) identifies four principal ways in which ethnicity serves to aid national integration. First, ethnic groups tend to assume some of the functions of the extended family and hence diminish the importance of kinship roles. Loyalties to ethnic groups interfere less with national integration than loyalties to the extended family. This is because it extends further the boundaries of the extended family system. Although ethnic ties are still particularistic and diffuse, it is however less so and less strong than the case of kinship groups (extended family system).

Secondly, ethnicity aids national integration in the sense that ethnic groups serve as a mechanism of re-socialization; thirdly, ethnic groups help keep the class structures fluid and so prevent the emergence of castes. This is because by encouraging social mobility, it minimizes any tendency towards caste-formation. Finally, ethnic groups serve as an outlet for political tensions. It helps, for instance, to divert expectations from the state to other social groups. By performing this important scapegoat function, it may permit individuals to challenge persons rather than the authority of the office these persons occupy. Thus by rejecting the men, they implicitly accept the system.

On the second issue of whether or not ethnicity can be completely eradicated, Osaghae (1994) insists that ethnic cleavages do not die, quoting Diamond (1988), he says that the cleavages cannot be extinguished through repression or assimilation; however, they can be managed so that they do not threaten civil peace and people of different groups are able to exist tranquilly.

Managing Ethnicity as Nation Building

Ethnicity is regarded as the biggest problem facing nation building in most African countries today. Many mechanisms have been used in these countries to manage ethnicity. Unfortunately, countries that have tried to manage ethnicity through trying to eliminate it have found out that they end up exacerbating ethnic conflicts and even making it more insidious, subterranean and dangerous (Obi & Abonyi, 2004). It is therefore better to accept Sithole's (1995) submissions that if ethnicity is legitimated, it can be diffused, controlled and managed better than approaching it as if it were an illegitimate social phenomenon.

The salience and resilience of ethnic groups in Africa

lie in the fact, that some of us, perhaps most of us are prone to giving loyalty to the community, the ethnic or national group. We tend to define ourselves in terms of these identities and it is in our oneness with them that we become intelligible to ourselves, enjoy freedom, pursue interests and actualize our potentialities (Ake, 1996, p. 24).

Arguing in the same vein Nnoli (1994), asserts that in Africa,

Individuals do not have any claims, which may over-ride those of the collectivity. Harmony and co-operation rather than divergence of interest, competition and conflict characterize social life. People are more inclined to think of their obligation to other members of the group than their rights. In addition, feelings of kinship pervade social relations. However, hospitality towards peaceful foreigners is strongly valued. Even in the urban areas a feeling of belongingness to a community is an important part of individual existence (p. 18).

Lijphart (1991, p. 486-487) suggests a multi-party system as a means of managing ethnicity. He identifies some intervening variables that can be used in managing ethnicity they as:

Broad coalition cabinets instead of one party bare-majority cabinets

- a) A balanced power relationship between the cabinet and the legislature instead of cabinet predominance
- b) A bicameral legislature, particularly one in which the two chambers have roughly equal powers and are differently constituted, instead of uni-cameralism
- c) A federal and decentralized structure instead of a unitary and centralized government
- d) A rigid constitution that can only be amended by extraordinary majorities, instead of a flexible written or unwritten constitution
- e) Judicial review of the constitutionality of legislation
- f) A multi-dimensional party system in which parties differ on more issue dimensions in addition to socio- economic issues, as for instance along cultural, urban-rural or foreign policy dimensions
- g) Elections by proportional representation instead of by plurality.

Nnoli (1994), however, disagrees with Lijphart (ibid.), arguing that in some countries where these variables have been applied serious difficulties have been created for the political system. Citing Nigeria as an example, he argues that the various consociational policies designed to undermine ethnicity have led to the politicization of the state bureaucracy and the retention of ethnicity into its activities. This has resulted in the loss of professionalism in its function, low priority given to merit and excellence and consequently the loss of innovative capacity by the institutions.

Second, national loyalty is compromised by the distribution of national wealth along ethnic lines. Third, the standard of equity used in dealing with matters associated with inter ethnic relations is that of the lowest, the least, the poorest or the worst. The objective seems to be to level down rather than up. Fourth, these consociational policies promote a desire on the part of the beneficiaries to remain under-developed in order to continue to be declared disadvantaged areas because of the benefits accruing from that status in the distribution of amenities. Fourth, these policies have encouraged the development of a category of people, "ethnic watchers", who constantly assess the benefit accruing to the various ethnic groups. Their activities promote dissatisfaction, disaffection and bitterness among groups. And sixth, the policies make it difficult to exact accountability from public officers who are quick to charge their accusers of ethnic prejudice.

Federal Character

As stated earlier the federal character principle is one of the means evolved by Nigeria to manage the ethnic problem. The term owes its origin to the 1979 Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC). It was later embodied in section 14(3) of the 1979 Constitution. This section stated the premise of the principle as;

The composition of the federal government or any of its agencies and the conduct of their affairs shall be carried out in such manner as to recognize the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and to command national loyalty. Accordingly, the predominance in that government or its agencies of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups shall be avoided.

The principle was further extended to the states and local government councils through section 14(4) of the same constitution that says that:

The composition of the government of a state, a local government council, or any of the agencies of such government or council, and the conduct of the affairs of the government or council or such agencies shall be carried out in such a manner as to recognize the diversity of the peoples within its area of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and loyalty among all the peoples of the federation.

The above, which is contained under the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, has been a very contentious issue in the government and politics of Nigeria. In all fairness to the authors of the principle, they were trying to find solution to the intractable problem of ethnicity in Nigeria, and to bring about the desired peace and harmony, thereby making for national integration.

The question now is on how far the federal character has gone in tackling the problem for which it was designed. To start with, one cannot fight, eradicate or manage ethnicity by giving it prominence. By giving salience to ethnic groups and making them prominent in our political life, one would be strengthening ethnic affiliations and by extension inflaming ethnic tensions. If political appointments and public offices are shared out on the basis of ethnic groups, it invariably means that a struggle for public offices instead of being a struggle by individuals is made a struggle among ethnic groups. It is quite clear that the federal character principle has exacerbated the main problem it was made to solve. According to Ayoade (2000), the principle "is the Achilles heel of Nigerian politics. It is the most recent epiphany in the Nigerian troubled federal trilogy" (p. 168).

Abubakar (2000) sees the principle in Nigeria as being symptomatic of the desire by the political class in the second republic to ensure access to and siphoning of national wealth through patron-client linkages. He equally believes it creates a prebendal system which Joseph (1991) says could be seen as not only as one in which the offices of state are allocated and then exploited as benefits by the officeholders, but also as one where such a practice is legitimated by a set of political norms according to which the appropriation of such offices is not just an act of individual greed or ambition but concurrently the satisfaction of the short-term objectives of a subset of the general population,

In his own argument on the principle, Uroh (2000) stresses that preferential treatment to a group like the affirmative action in America is geared towards redressing certain state policies in the past, which were biased against certain groups. It is simply to correct some of the disequilibria created by the past policies. He therefore asks the question: what past wrongs is the practice of federal character expected to right? Though he accepts the fact that there is a great disparity educationally between the North and South but then it was a colonial policy backed by the Emirs in the North. The question then is: to what extent can the South be held responsible for the educational backwardness of the North? There appears to be none.

Let us recast the question and say, has the South benefitted in the past as a result of a state policy, which kept the North in the background education wise? If there is none, then on what basis are we applying a discriminatory principle in admitting Nigerian citizens into public institutions of higher learning? He therefore sees the principle as weighing so low on the scale of social justice because not only are those discriminated against not holding any enviable position, despite what is considered to be their attainment educationally, the preferred group: cannot be described as victims of past discriminatory governmental or social policies; they have not been exploited by any group. Here there is no guilty group, which is morally bound to make reparation for past misdeeds. It cannot be fair to punish some other person for your own inadequacies or mistakes.

Protagonists of the federal character principle believe that by using it to reduce imbalance in the socio-economic gap among the various ethnic groups, they would have reduced if not eliminate ethnicity in Nigeria. They are mistaken. Nnoli (1978) has

shown quite clearly that a reduction in the gap definitely increases ethnic struggles among them, because by being almost equal, the competition gets more intense. He argues that:

Contrary to the common expectation created by the propaganda of the ethnic ideologues and intellectuals of those ethnic groups now in the system of ethnic stratification, the reduction of inter ethnic socio-economic imbalance does not necessarily lead to increased inter-ethnic harmony but may instead, heighten inter-ethnic tension. In fact, any solution to the ethnic problem that seeks mechanically to balance the socio-economic attainments of the various ethnic groups while leaving intact the peripheral capitalist nature of the society, the rationalization of the privileged classes, and the internecine struggle among the various factions of these classes for the division of the national cake would exacerbate inter-ethnic tension (p. 218).

He posits further that:

The viewpoint that a reduction in the socio-economic imbalance between ethnic groups would reduce tension is thus mistaken. It arises essentially from a static conception of the ethnic groups as innate primary units of actions, thereby neglecting the historical changes in the boundaries of the ethnic groups and de-emphasizing the role of class and individual factors in inter-ethnic processes (p. 224).

In order to show that an increase in hostility may be a result of the narrowing of the inter-ethnic imbalance, and its function as a mask over class privileges his study showed that during the period 1946-1964, the pattern of inter-ethnic animosity in Nigeria had shifted from the Igbo and Hausa to relations between Igbo and Yoruba.

This was precisely the period when the socio-economic imbalance between the two

ethnic groups had considerably narrowed. The common reasoning in his argument is that intense competition or rivalries can only take place between or among groups that perceive themselves as near-equals or of similar capacities. People don't compete with those that clearly far ahead of them, as it might look like a waste of time, just like the analogy of a bicycle chasing a fast moving car.

The federal character principle grossly contradicts provisions of the constitution regarding residency rights, and completely undermines the development of a national citizenry, a basic requirement for national cohesion (Yusuf, 1977). Incidentally, it is the same 1979 Constitution that embodied federal character that equally provided in section 15(2) that "Accordingly, national integration shall be actively encouraged, whilst discrimination on the grounds of place of origin, sex, religion, status, ethnic or linguistic

association or ties shall be prohibited". Why it was not obvious to them that the federal character principle which encourages discrimination on the grounds of place of origin infringes on the constitution beats one's imagination. Perhaps Nnoli (1978) has an answer why the ruling elite adopted the principle, when he wrote that:

Rather than contribute to national cohesion, these provisions are more likely to lead the country further away from that goal. Their objective, purpose is to exclude Nigerian members of the privileged classes of other states from enjoying the perquisites of public office in a state. They are merely part of a number of devices and tactics deployed in the intraclass struggles of the various regional factions of the privileged classes. Their only relationship to unity is their pretension to establish some order in the struggle of these factions for the division of the national cake (p. 218).

The practice of federal character has only heightened mutual suspicion and acrimonies among Nigerians, and has made them see themselves foremost as members of their primordial groups, before anything else. Thus at every available opportunity they demand for their own separate states. The reasoning here is simply that, one's state is where he or she really belongs (Uroh, in Amuwo et al 2000). In order to avoid the divisiveness, mediocrity, ethnic tensions, discrimination, societal retardation, corruption and other negative outcomes of federal character, we are going to conclude this study by proffering solutions on how best to handle the ethnic problem and achieve the much desired nation building.

Conclusion

Thus far, this paper has tried to look at the problem of ethnicity in Nigeria and how unsuitable the federal character principle has been in solving it thereby making the process of nation-building a mirage. Having seen how the attempted solution to the problem has led to its exacerbation, there is need to be cautious not to fall into this same pit.

Our solutions take cognizance of the fact that balancing inequality should not be aimed at retardation but at the uplifting of society, because by retarding somebody today, in order to lift somebody else is not only unjust but senseless because that means the victim of that action will still tomorrow demand his own affirmative action to lift him from the pit where society has dumped him in order to lift another person or better still:

We do not have to make a poor man rich by making a rich man poor. The aim should be to make a poor man as rich as the wealthy in our midst. Our peculiar politics of envy that seeks deliberately to retard the progress of those who are making sacrifices to obtain their level of development in order that the less developed can catch up will impede rather than accelerate the process of national integration and cohesion (Uroh, in Amuwo et al 2000).

As has been shown, since the federal character principle has not been effective in managing the ethnic problem in Nigeria, some other more effective solutions ought to be tried. Policies aimed at raising nationalities or groups at the lowest rung of the ladder should not be such that would bring somebody down. With this mind, this paper therefore puts forward some solutions.

Recommendations

The first has to do with the issue of restructuring the federation. The present over-centralized federalism practiced in Nigeria today where the centre has so much power and resources fuels the Hobbesian struggle to capture the centre. Since people fighting to control the centre do not fight as individuals but groups, ethnic groupings come in handy. In a restructured federation, more powers and resources should reside in the constituents units who would have the freedom to develop at their own pace. If the units/states/regions became the new loci of power, the norm-less struggle to capture the centre will gradually reduce and ethnicity would equally reduce with it. The restructuring, should be deep enough to alter the asymmetrical political structure that has over the years impoverished the people, thus allowing a few elites to feed fact on our commonwealth, while these group of rentiers and looters have foisted a sense of false consciousness on the people through manipulating ethnic, sectarian and religious sentiments. We are therefore advocating for a comprehensive restructuring.

The second has to do with a nationally thought out affirmative action that would be fashioned to help disadvantaged groups to move faster. The point here is that whatever is agreed upon should be such that helps these disadvantaged groups without necessarily retarding or holding down more progressive groups. For instance government can site more schools in educationally disadvantaged states, and motivate the indigenes of such areas to go to school with more incentives. This is better than the present quota system inherent in the federal character principle. Sound governments

expand opportunities for their people; they do not restrict them (Obi & Nwankwo, 2013, p. 16).

The third solution lies in changing the electoral system. Presently, there is plurality voting system which is a simple and easy one. However, it has major defects, which incidentally manifest more in heterogeneous societies, thereby fuelling ethnicity (Oddih & Obi, 2006, p. 41). These defects according to Joireman (2003) are: first, it punishes parties with small consistencies, as they will rarely get a person elected into office. Second, it is possible for a party in a parliament with a plurality-voting rule to receive the majority of the votes and a minority of the seats. This is particularly problematic in societies like Nigeria with many minority groups. On the other hand, proportional representation systems are fundamentally different. Thus the idea behind it is to have an assembly that adequately reflects the diversity of the population at election time. This makes the assembly to reflect ethnic, ideological and religious diversities. When this happens, most of the disparate groups in a multi-ethnic society are represented in parliament, thus reducing feelings of marginalization and frustrations, which inflame ethnic passion and conflicts.

Fourthly, since federalism is a system evolved to hold diverse groups in a union, it is necessary that the system should be operated in a way attractive to the component units, as rightly argued by Tradeau (as cited in Ramphal, 1979), that:.

The advantages to the minority group of staying integrated in the whole must on balance be greater than the gain to be reaped from separatism ----- A national image must be created that will have such an appeal as to make an image of separatist group unattractive-- --in short the whole of the citizenry must be made to feel that it is only within the framework of the federal state that their language, culture, institutions, sacred tradition and standard of living can be protected from external attack and internal strife (p. xxii).

It is no doubt that today many minority groups in Nigeria do not feel that the advantages of staying in Nigeria outweigh the disadvantages. This is the crux of the ethnic problem in Nigeria. Thus while one can boldly argue that federalism remains the best if not the only option for Nigeria, there is need to make the system workable for Nigeria and Nigerians so that we can all proudly say that —though tribe and tongue may defer, in brotherhood we stand.¶

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