

RESTRUCTURING NIGERIA: BEYOND POLITICAL RHETORIC AND THE MORAL PANIC

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ABSTRACT

Renewed debates to restructure Nigeria have enjoyed a lot of currency in the political circle and media outfits, both in print and online immediately after the victory of President Muhammadu Buhari in the 2015 General Elections. Since after the Nigerian civil war in the 1970s, Nigerians from different backgrounds called for the rearrangement or restructuring of the composition of the existing federal system. However, as at 2018, there are a lot of political brokers and power-mongers that revived the call to restructure Nigeria based on the incessant violence between alleged herdsmen and farmers in central Nigeria, Southern Kaduna and parts of South-East. Similarly, the cattle rustling menace and kidnapping in Birnin Gwari, Kaduna, Sokoto and Zamfara States, remained the gravest challenge for the entire security circle and leadership in Nigeria has provided a cogent excuse for the agitators. The core demands of the cheerleaders of restructuring are devolution of power from the federal government on security and resource control to State Governments that is to strengthen the states and weaken the central government. The last National Conference before the 2015 General Elections has not yielded any result beyond a waste of resources whose recommendations are yet to be implemented. To restructure a country that was unified more than a century ago, it must go beyond the political rhetoric of politicians who hide under the canopy of restructuring to advance their political ambition so as to gain cheap popularity and score political points. It is evident most of the private media are owned by the political elites, therefore, they set the agenda; create a moral panic and zoomed the call for the restructuring out of proportion in order to garner support from the citizens. In this regard, to restructure a complex and heterogeneous country like Nigeria, it requires an in-depth discussion among the holders of the stake from all ethnic nationalities, religious and interests groups whom the political elites, mass media and social media handlers do not represent. This would enable the country to have a workable system that could address the leadership and infrastructural problems through adherence to democratic traditions and act of patriotism.

KEYWORDS:

Nigeria, Restructuring, Political Rhetoric, Media, Moral Panic

1. INTRODUCTION

In underdeveloped countries which the developed nations euphemistically refers to as developing countries, national issues, debates and arguments are tailored around political contours, interpretations. Similarly, media, globally usually sets the agenda for the public whenever an issue has taken the centre stage of national discourse. In fact, they are brought forward for political motives. Political rhetoric, the creation of moral panic and media hype are some the tacit ploy employed by the politicians either in government or opposition seeking to capture power. Nigeria is not an exception as one of the populous developing countries with a heterogeneous population. The demographic heterogeneity of the population has been at the epicentre of a national issue, resource allocation and appointment. A lot of contestations, agitations and nagging

complaints has followed the 1914 amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates by the British colonialist for administrative convenience and assuage political acrimony among the protectorates if they are federated instead of being independent entities.

From 1960 when Nigeria became an independent country, several calls were made, observations and solution tendered and offered regarding the 1914 amalgamation. The need to revisit the amalgamation has been premised on believing that British marriage of inconvenience and incompatibility is the foundation of underdevelopment in Nigeria. The present federal structure has been alleged by the chief priests of restructuring Nigeria that it has retarded the development and created a system of unequal distribution of societal wealth among regions of Nigeria. In this connection, the objectives of this paper are to examine both sides of the restructuring debates that is those who are pro and anti-restructuring Nigeria. Similarly, weigh the arguments on the sociological scale in order to see which is tenable and applicable in Nigeria. To achieve the objectives, the researchers utilized secondary sources of data related to the phenomena and discussed, on which valid conclusion is drawn based content analysis.

2. RHETORIC

Załęska, (2012) view that rhetoric in/of politics is conceived as a way of speaking which is characteristic for the Aristotelian rhetoric of deliberation. Aristotle theorizes an interrelation between politics and the rhetorical genus *deliberativum*, i.e. a way of speaking that enhances making good choices within the available possibilities. Trying to conform to its expectations, the politician may dissociate from his/her authentic self in order to appear a desired type of person for a role s/he wants to play in politics. Within the argumentative pattern, the politician adopts mainly the perspective of the problem (Załęska, 2012). Mainstream research on rhetoric and/in/of politics addresses main issues that overtly involve power relations, legitimization, competing interests and rights of large social groups, differing criteria and values, as well as the necessity to make consequential decisions. The attempts to regulate the public discourse by imposing censorship on certain issues, by qualifying them as SEP (i.e. Somebody Else's Problem, see Czyżewski, Dunin and Piotrowski 2010), or by suppressing and silencing them prove that they are indeed perceived as strictly political, thus able to influence the current policy (Załęska, 2012).

Public rhetoric is of causal consequence only from the top down, as leaders of states and social movements deploy resonant language in an effort to mobilize support (Edelman 1964; Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1988). Similarly, rhetoric is an essential part of politics, without it, there can be no civic debate or disputes in contemporary politics and democracy in both developed and developing nations. The arguments and justifications politicians employ are formed out of a general set of shared (yet not uncontested) assumptions about what counts as a good argument and what are the kinds of things people will find convincing, vivid and emotive (Atkins and Finlayson, 2012). This explains the significance of rhetoric in every social discourse to persuade the citizens, followers and audience for the purpose of achieving political, ethnic and religious motives.

3. MORAL PANIC

Moral panics refers to punctuated moments of alarm in which, more than sources of risk or harm, specific events and behaviours are perceived as threatening society's normative foundations. Introduced in Cohen's (2002) seminal study of 'Mods and Rockers' in 1960s Britain, the concept has since been extended to multifarious issues, whether street crime, pornography, undocumented migration, paedophilia, drug use, or welfare fraud. Essential to moral panics are 'folk devils': those deemed responsible for the behaviour in question. As targets of enmity and enhanced social

control folk devils are constructed as evil personified, 'visible reminders of what we should not be' and the antithesis of stability, order, and security (Cohen, 2002:2; Hier, 2002). Folk devils are not randomly selected and are typically constructed in moralistic and overbroad terms, with marginalized groups and 'cultural scapegoats' being especially susceptible, even when the vast majority of members are law-abiding (Garland, 2008: 15). Moreover, although characterized as threatening social and moral order, reactions to folk devils are 'out of all proportion to the actual threat' (Hall, et al., 1978: 16). While risk perception and evaluation are often far from objective and beset by 'dispute and collective negotiation' (Garland, 2008:13; Douglas, 2002; Watney, 1987), for Cohen (2002) 'there are many waves of panic where judgment(s) of proportionality' whether in relation to public atavism, available empirical evidence, or comparisons with equivalent or more serious concerns 'can and should be made even when the object of evaluation is vocabulary and rhetorical style alone'. To differentiate moral panics from legitimate societal concern, Goode and Ben-Yehuda (2010) have enumerated five essential attributes: (1) concern (the issue is fearsome and anxiety-inducing); (2) hostility (those deemed responsible are subjected to intolerance and revulsion); (3) consensus (anxiety is widespread); (4) disproportionality (the issue provokes overreaction); and (5) volatility (panic emerges and dissipates with stunning alacrity).

According to Walsh (2016) far from spontaneous, moral panics stem from the interlocking reactions of social control agents, the media, and the public. In conventional accounts, they encompass three developmental pathways: grassroots, interest group, and elite-engineered (Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 2010). In the first moral panics are organic and initiated by perceptions and sentiments broadly diffused among the lay public, and eventually incorporated into media coverage and political discourse. In the second, alarm stems from the deliberate actions of moral entrepreneurs who work to direct attention towards a particular moral 'evil'. The final model represents a coordinated propaganda campaign designed to orchestrate hegemony and divert attention from and avoid solutions to deeper structural problems that threaten elite interests (Walsh, 2016). The level of popularity and attention which the political elites and media houses Nigeria gave to the issue of restructuring could be situated within the work of Walsh (2016) where the campaign to restructure the country become so intense in the peak period of insecurity challenges and electioneering campaign for the next generation elections in 2019.

Therefore, whether they come up from genuine public concern or are manufactured by state experts and moral entrepreneurs, the media represent 'the prime movers and beneficiaries' of moral panics (Garland, 2008: 12; Altheide, 2009). Since the vast majority of those swept up in the collective alarm do not directly experience the issue in question, media outlets act as informational gatekeepers that 'visualize deviance, concentrate and publicize outrage offer perspectives on social control' and bring folk devils into existence (Cohen, 2002: 89; Altheide and Michalowski, 1999). Accordingly, they play an agenda-setting role in constructing reality and determining what is 'socially thinkable' (Altheide, 2002; Welch, et al., 1998).

Similarly, the most frequently cited definition of a moral panic is the one with which Stanley Cohen's classic book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972) begins: Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Like Cohen, some subsequent authors such as Stuart Hall explicitly regard moral panics as a means of neutralising 'threats to societal values and interests'. Moral panics become a means whereby the state persuades people to accept that it has to deal with threats to the social order through authoritarian

means, and thereby preserve the rule of law. However, other analyses have focused not so much on the role of the state or of elites, but on a wider range of campaigners and interest groups who seek to take control of defining the problem and hence its potential solution. It is within this realm that this paper seeks to situate the calls or agitations for the restructuring of Nigeria. Different interest groups, politicians, private organization have created a charged political atmosphere calling for the rearrangement of the existing federal structure of government in operation in Nigeria.

3.1 POLITICAL RHETORIC AND MORAL PANIC: THE RESTRUCTURING DEBATE

One common school of thought asserts that messaging from the political “elites” has a significant impact on how the general public perceives various issues, simply by virtue of coming from leadership (Schattschneider, 1997). Donald Searing takes that argument a step further, asserting that political elites possess “political authority”, a dynamic in which people hold a sort of reverent respect for political elites, which “predisposes followers to accept guidance from leaders who leave coercive power in the background and concentrate instead on the desires and beliefs that can produce willing compliance (Searing, 1995). Hoffmann argues that President Bush ‘manipulated’ the public into believing the Iraq War was a just cause. In their analysis of Bush rhetoric before Iraq, Gershkoff and Kushner make a similar case about policy framing: the Bush administration successfully framed the war in Iraq as an extension of its response to September 11 and the war on terror. The administration juxtaposed allusions to Iraq with the terms terror, bin Laden, and al Qaeda (Gershkoff and Kushner, 2005). In Nigeria, several national and constitutional conferences were organized, the last conference was the National Conference held in 2014 close to the 2015 General Elections. The motive behind the conference was to appease the political ego of some segments of the citizens who were not satisfied with the political and governmental arrangements in Nigeria. The opposition politicians and the political elites as the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria is fast approaching, want Nigerians to believe that restructuring the country is the only panacea to security challenges, inequality, mass illiteracy, corruption and infrastructural decay that has become the trademark of the country. However, previous conferences have pointed to the contrary, in fact, the recommendations have not been implemented till date and has further make Nigerians be sceptical about the validity of the agitations for restructuring so as to avoid falling in the trap of power-mongers who are using the restructuring issue as bait to capture power in the 2019 elections.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: RHETORICAL IDEA OF COMMUNICATION

The rhetorical idea of communication is based on the assumption that the human nature is knowable and that it may be fruitfully described as organised in types, forms, patterns, models. The knowledge about the human nature within the communicative interactions allows for predictability of action and reaction. The intelligibility and the predictability of certain behavioural schemes increase possibilities of successful rhetorical persuasion. The three main rhetorical proofs (*ethos, logos, pathos*) refer roughly to three elements of communication: the speaker, the message and the audience (Załęska, 2012). This explains the timing of the call for restructuring, the personalities that are at the forefront, leading the call, the content of the messages media outlets are sending to the public and the definition of the restructuring which mostly borrowed from business and banking sector and the target audience. The cheerleaders of the restructuring have given it an idiosyncratic definition to suit their political ambitions because most of the leaders of restructuring were at different times, had the power to restructure the control to better the lots of the citizens but they woefully failed to develop the country instead served their personal aggrandizements.

4.1 RESTRUCTURING NIGERIA

Restructuring simply means to organize a system or company in a new and different way (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2017). The current federal system in Nigeria has come under intense scrutiny, seeking for its reorganization from politicians and sociocultural group leaders. The media both print and online are inundated with demands and agitations to restructure the arrangement which predate the 1960 independence from Britain. However, some were of the view that there is the need to reconsider the Nigerian federal system. Okojie (2013) stated that the idea here is not to identify the numerous problems that confront Nigeria. Rather, it is to identify some basic issues in the Nigerian federal system that have circumvented its efficiency in the management of group fragmentation and specifically the root causes of inter-group conflicts in the country. Similarly, some of the demands are for the distribution of powers, Okojie (2013) opined that Horowitz (2007) himself notes that where there are sub-ethnic cleavages in homogenous sub-states, devolution of a “generous” share of powers will likely reduce conflict at the centre. Nze and King (2005) similarly find that a cardinal principle of federal arrangements is that powers should be so weighted as to maintain a fair balance between the national and regional governments. They, however, conclude that Nigeria has over time breached this principle, and, as such, it is run as a unitary state masqueraded as federal. By section 4(2) of the Nigerian Constitution, the national government has exclusive powers over any of the items contained in the Exclusive legislative list and a concurrent jurisdiction with sub-states over items in the Concurrent List where its laws prevail in cases of inconsistencies (Nze and King, 2005). Concentration of powers in the national government as a means to foster national integration has been noted as one of the major causes of militant ethnic nationalism, conflict and political disorder in sub-Saharan Africa (Selassie, 2003), in Nigeria, it minimizes the depth of group loyalty and affinity in the country (Okojie, 2013).

However, apart from the calls emanated from the apparent failure of the Nigerian governments to properly operate a true federalism, most of the agitations have political, religious and ethnic undertones which are not directed towards national development and cohesion. It is on the premise, the demands for the restructuring has been placed on the political microscope and raised critical questions by the Governor of Kaduna State Mal. Nasir Ahmed El-Rufa’i. El-Rufa’i (2017) enquired that how much of the debate is propelled by a desire for national progress and how much is mere politics, opportunism and search for sectional entitlement? Is the debate mostly driven by our fractious politics and competing interests, or are there real grievances whose resolution will create a critical juncture and opportunity for national rebirth.

The critical questions raised by El-Rufa’i are not unfounded and out of place based on the people that are championing the restructuring agenda. The leading proponents of restructuring are politicians who are out of power and left out in the power scheming in the present administration. Second, a group of politicians who are nurturing presidential ambition in 2019, therefore, want to use the restructuring as a bait to get support from other geopolitical zones who are marginalized in the federal structure and dissatisfied with the appointments in the present administration of Muhammad Buhari, particular Southeastern Nigeria.

However, in central Nigeria, the call to restructure Nigeria is ignited by the incessant clashes between farmers who are predominantly Christians in Benue, Plateau and Southern Kaduna but in Nasarawa State farmers are predominantly Muslim and herdsmen who are mostly Muslim. This occupational conflict between farmers and herders has been sensationally coloured by some media both print and online as an attempt Fulani to eliminate ethnic groups who are overwhelmingly Christians from their ancestral land. To deepen our democracy, we need to address the damage being done to our politics by hate speech and the growing industry of fake news and conspiracy theories attributing murderous intentions to ethnic and religious groups.

Finally, the issue of reinventing a new political class committed to issue-based politics is the pathway to democratic consolidation (Ibrahim, 2018).

Based on this ethnic and religious interpretation and colouration of the farmer-herdsmen conflict, some of the chief priests of the restructuring calls for the creation of Police due to the inability of the Nigeria Police Force and other security agencies to prevent, arrest and stop the lingering killings in the farming communities in the region.

4.2 RESTRUCTURING: BEYOND MORAL PANIC AND POLITICAL RHETORIC

It could be deduced from both sides of the discourse that the calls for restructuring were initiated by highly placed politicians who either owned or sponsor the media houses, employed social media geeks who make the issue the trendiest on the social media. In this regard, two class of people were formed, those who were cajoled by the way the issue has taken the centre stage in the media and those who viewed the restructuring as one of the campaign tools to woo the support of the Southeast and North Central in 2019 because they are geopolitical zones where there incessant clashes between the herdsmen and farmers and the President Buhari is has been accused by Christians in the areas has been sympathetic to Fulani who are mostly Muslims. It has become apparent and clear that a significant proportion of Nigerians does not understand the meaning of and reasons for restructuring. This is because it has become a tradition in Nigeria since independence, similar calls and agitation were made, especially in a penultimate year to the general election under a democratic government. Usman (2017) encapsulated that there is no doubt that the restructure advocates are few and localised to some sections of the country. However, many of them are respected and influential in the society. Some of them have held public offices. Others are still serving. Some never held public office. There are also notorious armchair critics and non-conformists among them. Some of the advocates are also fairly well off in the society. They cannot, therefore, be accused of acting on selfish grounds or for material gains. But it is quite apparent that they are out to promote, in the main, sectional interests and agenda that could erode the pillars of our national unity. Some of them promote their views with all the force at their disposal. Others threaten to unleash unimaginable calamity on the nation if their largely narrow and untenable wishes are not granted within a given time, ignoring the undeniable fact that nation-building is a continuous project.

In the same connection, Dahiru (2017) stressed that because some minds have been conditioned now to assume that restructuring is the greatest thing that can ever happen to the country, once you sidestep postulating this reasoning as a panacea to our numerous politico-economic and social challenges your debater simply hisses and says you are living in the past. The major proponents of the restructuring argument today are among the opposition party and some southerners who are pushing the idea with recklessly frenetic insistence. The whole idea of restructuring is centred on political and economic ends by those who are not in the corridors of power now. Issues ceding the control of natural resources notably crude oil and mineral resources to variously states where they are produced. Others are additionally stating for the Southeast and decentralisation of the police where each will have its own police. However, there other people who want Nigeria to adopt the system of government used before the 1966 military coup. Chief Ayo Opadokun from Southwest and Chief Arabs Sara-Igbe from South-South are at the forefront popularizing the return to 1963 constitution. All the current agitations, be it resource control, MASSOB, IPOB, OPC, Arewa youths, name it, are all a call for us to return to what we were before 1966. It was in 1966, after the first coup, that the soldiers abrogated the 1963 Constitution and replaced it with a military styled central government (The Nation, 2017). However, it was the same sort of agitations that forced the previous regimes to abandon the regional style of government, years after the coup, Nigeria adopted the federal system of government which is still in operation till 2018. Usman (2017) observed that memories are short. Some people seem to

forget that it was similar agitations like the current clamour to restructure that brought about the Balkanisation of Nigeria into states, ostensibly to redress the perceived imbalance that might jeopardise the existence of Nigeria as a country. Emerging from a hard-earned independence, the nationalists could not contemplate such a suicidal act and therefore sacrificed their individual ambitions to sustain the unity of the country.

Furthermore, Usman (2017) submitted that perhaps, it is in the realisation of the impracticality of returning to the 1963 structure and worried by the malfunction of the current state structure, that some of the advocates floated the idea of adoption of the current geopolitical zones as the federating units. This idea was canvassed and rejected in the course of the constitutional discussions prior to the promulgation of the 1999 Constitution. Another proposal is for a supra body of the Federation of some states within the federation. That is to group the states into several federal regional governments and empower the federated states to have representations overseas, just like it was when the regions had consular-generals. The workability of this proposal is suspect and should be rejected. It may be recalled that Nigerians were jubilant and hailed the creation of their states. It is, therefore, inconceivable that the states as presently constituted would willingly give up their hard-earned freedom and again subordinate themselves to the former regional capitals. The ensuing struggle for a would-be capital of the proposed sub-federating units is another issue that must be anticipated. Can Nigeria afford more rounds of squabbles and expenses to the site and build new capitals for the proposed sub-federating units?

According to the Memorandum on True Federalism (2017), the first rule towards restructuring Nigeria is to allow the peoples, ethnic nationalities and communities come together and create their own autonomous state governments as they please. It is only after the various ethnic nationalities have created their own autonomous state governments that they can then come together to create the federal government. There is nowhere in the world where the federal government creates the state governments, rather it is the pre-existing autonomous state governments that come together to create the federal government (country) and decide what and what political and economic powers should be given to the federal government. However, this view differs in meaning and content of the restructuring advanced by its leading proponents like Chief Ezeife former Vice President Alhaji Atiku Abubakar whose middle name has now become restructuring due to his nagging agitation for restructuring because is one of the top northern politician that is vigorously championing the issue of restructuring in order to garner south support s

According to the chief priests of restructuring Atiku (2017) and Ezeife (2017) conceived that restructuring means effecting changes to our current federal structure to bring it closer to what our founding leaders erected in order to address the very issues and challenges that led them to opt for a less centralized system. It means devolution of more powers to the federating units with the accompanying resources, and it would involve greater control by the federating units of the resources in their areas. It would mean, by implication, the reduction of the powers and roles of the federal government so that it focuses only on those matters best handled by the centre such as defence, immigration, customs and excise, foreign policy, aviation as well as setting and enforcing national standards on such matters as education, health and safety. However, one of the political leader of Igbo ethnic extraction perceived restructuring from a different perspective. According to Ezeife (2017) restructuring simply means going back to the agreed Nigeria that is the, going back to the structure or political arrangements of Nigeria as agreed by the founding fathers –our heroes past! That agreed Nigeria was a federal structure, with regions as federating units. Initially, there were three regions: Eastern, Western and Northern regions. The mid-western region was created later making four: three in the south, one in the North. East region had its own constitution and operated fairly autonomous. The federal government handled issues universally agreed to be federal responsibilities, issues like external relations, currency, weights and

measures etc. there was fiscal federalism as the resources for running the Federal Government came, basically from the federating units. Each region controlled its resources and grew at its own pace.

Amadi, Echem, Nwoko, and Daniel (2017) asserted that restructuring the federation” is a term which has gained wide currency in the nation’s political discourse, having been popularized through its indiscriminate and lugubrious use by the most vocal sections of the Nigerian elite. Like all popular concepts, it has hardly ever been clearly defined and its nebulousness has been congenial to the slippery nature of its proponents. “Restructuring” has come to represent, in reality, an omnibus word for all forms of adjustments, alterations and cosmetic manipulations aimed at changing the formula on the basis of which economic resources and political power are shared or distributed among the Nigerian elite. Each section traditionally defends the area of its comparative advantage at any given time standing by the status quo when it serves its purposes and asking for “restructuring” when it does not (Sanusi, 2015).

4.3 DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

This clearly shows that most of the demands and agitations for restructuring are premised on sheer vested interests and selfish desires to either ascend power or control the scare resources going the antecedents of the leaders, most of them were either retired civil servants or politicians that are not at the helm affairs, who had all the opportunities to do what they are preaching when in power but refused to do the needful.

It could be deduced from the above data sourced from secondary literature, it is not the failure of the existing federalism that plunged Nigeria into the present myriads of economic and security unrests. However, it is the inability of the operators of the system to effectively apply or operate according to the dictate of the tenets of federalism as enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at different republics. This correlates with the view of the leaders of Ohaneze Ndigbo Chief Ralph Obioha. Obioha (2017) submitted that Nigeria at the moment is a constitutional federation with 36 component parts and a federal territory. So we have restructured on a federal system, but the question is: Is the federal system working well? He believes it is the operators that are making it not to work. He added I do not subscribe to restructuring for the sake of restructuring. Based on the above discourse, what is happening in Nigeria is, the culprits are blaming the victim which is the system for their offence which is a failure to develop the country.

Furthermore, devolution of powers and the idea for the creation of state Police means to add another burden on States that are struggling to pay workers’ salaries. For long, most of the states especially in North Central where there has been the recurring incidence of farmer-herdsmen clashes, the State Governments’ function has been reduced to the payment of salaries hence tagged as salary paying institutions instead of a tier of government. Therefore, it is hilarious for a state that is unable to cater for its recurrent expenditure and execute capital projects to have a state police. Even though various state governments assist the Nigerian Police Force with patrol vehicles and other nitty-gritty but the antecedents of politicians in terms of recruitments and appointments based on ethnic, political and religious characteristics are some of the cause for concern about the creation of state police. At the 2014 National Conference, those who advocated for Centralized Police advanced the following arguments: State Police will lay the foundation for the eventual break-up of the country; the current crop of political leadership will misuse the organs of State Police to intimidate political opponents; very few states in Nigeria can at the moment fund and maintain the Police Force; that even the developed countries of the world are moving towards centralised Police; and there will be serious conflict in operational jurisdiction between the Federal and State Police (National Conference Report, 2014: 255-56).

On the other hand, those agitating for decentralized police insist that given the current augmentation of the fund to the Police by State Governments, States should be allowed to establish their own Police Service, which will complement the efforts of the NPF. Other arguments include: Personnel of State Police are likely to do better intelligence gathering and rapid response actions because they know the terrain, speak the local languages and even probably know the criminals; that the argument that Governors will abuse a State Police assumes that the Federal Government has more integrity than the State Government; this according to them is yet to be empirically proved, given the experiences of some States to the contrary; that the on-going invasion of most States in the North Central by terrorists without apprehension by the NPF questions the integrity of the Force; and the idea of State Police will enhance cooperation and partnership between Federal and State Governments to stem the tide of insecurity in the country (National Conference Report, 2014: 256-58).

Therefore, the conference decided that there shall be a Federal Police with areas of jurisdiction covering the entire country and on clearly spelt out matters and offences; deployment of Police Officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) and below should be done to their States of origin. This will address concerns about the need for such officers to understand the language and culture of the people of the State, especially as this group of Officers actually constitutes the operational component of the Force; Funding of the NPF: The funding of the Police should be seriously enhanced and given priority attention. All logistic needs of the NPF should be met by Government, and the enactment of the Police Trust Fund Act should be expedited to complement Government funding; Minimum manpower (General Duties) requirement for the Force should be worked out to achieve optimum police service delivery on the basis of Nigeria's current population. Other factors such as crime rate and industrial development should also be considered in Police deployment; Police Council should remain the body responsible for Force policy, finances, organization and standards. It should play a far greater role in shaping the aims and objectives of the service. It should be responsible for the appointment of the Inspector-General of Police on the advice of the Police Service Commission; Police Service Commission should continue to be responsible for appointment, promotion and discipline of all officers below the I.G.P., except the operational control of the Force which is vested in the IGP. It should be independent enough to guard against nepotism in recruitment, discipline and promotion and the dominance of the service by any single or few ethnic groups. In other words, it should implement the requirement of the Constitution to reflect Federal Character in recruitment. Memberships of the Commission should be apolitical and should comprise men and women of proven integrity; the Inspector-General of Police should be made accountable to the Police Council for the effectiveness and efficiency of the Force; rehabilitate, expand and equip the existing police institutions to enable them meet the training needs of the Police; training the trainers to acceptable standards while appropriate incentives should be introduced for trainers to attract some of the best in the Service; screen the existing manpower, weed out the bad and the untrainable ones and commence the retraining of the retained ones (National Conference Report, 2014: 256-58).

It could be drawn from the 2014 National Conference Report that most of those who are agitating for the restructuring of the country based on security reasons are ignorant of the operation and application of the State Police. Therefore, the conference ended up giving recommendations that will strengthen the Nigerian Police Force not the establishment of the State Police. The reason is informed by the antecedents of how recruitment of civil servants is done at the State and Local Government levels, therefore the State Police will end up being from the dominant ethnic group, political or religious groups associated with those in power at that time. In this sense, politicization, ethnicization and parochial sentiments will be the order of the day in the State Police hence anarchy reign supreme

Furthermore, the study has found out that most of the media both print and online that are championing the cause for the restructuring of Nigeria are own by the southerners. The Vanguard and The Sun Newspapers, Guardian are the leading national dailies that are at the forefront, zooming the agitating for the restructuring out of proportion while AIT, Channels, and Sahara TV online. This correlates with what Giddens (2006) viewed as a moral panic. Moral panic is a term used by sociologists to describe a media-inspired overreaction towards a certain group or type of behaviour. Moral panics often emerge around public issues that are taken as symptomatic of general social disorder; moral panics have arisen in recent years over topics such as youth crime and 'bogus' asylum seekers (Giddens, 2006).

5. WITHER SOCIOLOGY?

Sociology as a discipline is a product of turbulent eras in Europe and Africa which shaped the ideas of the social thinkers and the knowledge they produced. Sociologists such as Ibn Khaldun, Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Ibn Khaldun, Max Weber and Herbert Spencer produced knowledge that was shaped by the social events in their lifetime. The Sociology was purposely developed to the address the prevailing societal challenges and turmoil at any particular epoch starting from the social upheavals in Arabian Peninsula during the time of Ibn Khaldun and in Europe during the time Comte and Sociologists that followed him. For example, Comte was appalled by the breakdown of the social order of his days and he called for the reconstruction of a moral community. Comte lived in the aftermath of the French Revolution. He was disturbed and distressed by the disorder of his time and by the material and cultural poverty of the people. His fundamental and lifelong preoccupation was how to replace disorder by order, how to accomplish the total reconstruction of society. He saw the French Revolution as the crucial turning point in the history of human affairs. The old order had gone which was totally inadequate for the trends and conditions of scientific knowledge and industrialization. A new polity was necessary for the complex industrial society (Davis, 1996).

Similarly, Abu Zayd Abdel Rahman Ibn Khaldun whose life and writings were intricately interwoven with the great political and military dramas of his times, a veritable fountain of original thought. Khaldun's goal was to explain the historical process of the rise and fall of civilizations in terms of a pattern of recurring conflicts between tough nomadic desert tribes and sedentary-type societies with their love of luxuries and pleasure (Cheddadi, 2000). Karl Marx (1818–1883), was troubled by the striking inequalities of industrial society. They hoped that the new discipline of sociology would not just help us understand society but also lead to change toward greater social justice (Macionis, 2008). Therefore, sociology at its infant stage survived the most challenging time, where early social thinkers offered explanations, interpretations and solution for the social problems which bedevilled the human beings. Notwithstanding in the 21st century, sociology cannot and has not shown any sign of withering away, in fact, most theoretical perspectives in the discipline have been advanced and expanded beyond the where the early thinkers left it, now there is Neo-Marxists, Neo-Functionalism. Paraphrasing Giddens (2006) the jostling between theories in the discipline is not a sign of weakness but the vitality of the sociological enterprise.

CONCLUSION

There is no any system of government that is devoid of politics and power struggle. Power is the major force driving political rhetoric which is at the heart of persuasion. The political power brokers utilize political rhetoric because persuasion is an important factor in soliciting for support, especially in a democratic era. There are politicians who viewed the restructuring as a subtle mechanism to woo support from other parts of the country who are dissatisfied with the current arrangement as the 2019 General Elections is drawing closer that is they are leading the

agitation in order to actualize their political ambition. Similarly, media and political communication is a veritable tool in disseminating the information to the targeted audience. Rhetoric is central to politics, even when politics takes the form of war (Jackson and Krebs, 2003) whereas political communication is an interactive process concerning the transmission of information among politicians, the news media and the public. The process operates down-wards from governing institutions towards citizens, horizontally in linkages among political actors, and also upwards from public opinion towards authorities (Norris, 2004).

It is in recognition of the significant and important role of the political communication that politicians desirous of capturing power use the media to create a moral panic, generates debates and put them at the centre of national discourse in order to the achieve the politically motivated motives. This is evident that none of the recommendations and white paper of previous national conference and constitutional conferences has been fully implemented by the government. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that the current federal system is not the problem in Nigeria but the operators of the system who failed to act in accordance with the laid down rules and regulations agreed upon. In this regard, good governance and rule of law should be the focus of the politicians, community, religious, and ethnic leaders not restructuring that may plunge the country into a situation that is worse than the present condition that is secession or breakaway. This is because even if the country is restructured, it is the same set of people who prevented in the present system to prosper that will be leaders in the new or restructured Nigeria, at best it would be rotation within one axis and worse motion without movement.

At this juncture, sociology cannot and will not wither away, however, the daunting social challenges confronting human beings in all institutions provides a fertile ground for Sociology and sociologists to survive and develop. Basically, it was developed to address social disorder by identifying social problems (whistle-blowing) and debunking social misconception. An important national issue like restructuring, sociology takes the leads by urging people to go beneath the surface level understanding of the issue at hand. That is the motive behind the demands, antics of the agitators and implication of such demands on the corporate existence of Nigeria as well as betterment of the lives of the citizenry. Therefore, in adopting this sociological mode of thinking, people cannot be carried away the mere political rhetoric, media passion debates, parochial interests and primordial sentiments of the chief priests of the restructuring.

In sum, there is no need to discard the existing federal structure because the problem does not lie in the system but on those who are operating the system. The emphasis should be on good governance, delivering the deliverable for the benefit of the citizens. Provide mechanisms that ensure full implementation of the tenets of federalism, where there is adherence to rule of law, and institutionalized democracy. The emphasis should be on the protection of lives and properties and the security agents operate in accordance with international practices. In doing so, the interests of ethnic groups, religious organizations and political parties will be taken care off. Equitable distribution, efficient management and judicious appropriation of public funds will reduce or bring an end to constant and nagging claims and counter-claims of marginalization in different parts of the country, groups and political parties. Therefore, restructuring is beyond what the mass and social media portrayed and the empty political rhetoric of politicians who are hell-bent to score cheap political points as the 2019 General Elections is fast approaching.

Concerted and deliberate efforts by leaders at all levels should be made with a high sense of patriotism and selflessness to ensure that interests of all diverse segments of Nigeria are protected and promoted in the present federal structure. Because whether the country is restructured or divided, the same elites who superintended the very system that people are complaining will be the same set of the elite that will control the restructured system. This will be akin to old wine in a new bottle, South Sudan is a classic example. Similarly, the agitation for the creation of States

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in Nigeria has shown that when new states were created, new sets of majority and minority were created, hence the complaint of marginalization and underdevelopment continued. But if the system is working, it would address or solve most of the burgeoning problems that are based on primordial sentiments and selfishness.

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