

THE UNIFICATION PARADOX: THE 1914 AMALGAMATION AND NIGERIA'S CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AND SOCIO- ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

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Abstract

The 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria, which brought the Northern and Southern Protectorates together under British colonial rule, represents a significant paradox in the country's history. Intended to streamline administration and consolidate control, this policy inadvertently deepened regional and ethnic divisions rather than fostering unity. The amalgamation created a centralized colonial governance architecture that, while strengthening British rule, intensified tensions among Nigeria's diverse groups. These tensions have evolved into persistent political instability and socio-economic disparities that continue to beleaguer Nigeria today. Using a qualitative research method, this study interrogates the 1914 amalgamation, examining how the 'forced marriage' has shaped Nigeria's contemporary political landscape and socio-economic realities. By analyzing the enduring impacts of the amalgamation, the study highlights the complexities of colonial policies and their long-term consequences for governance and development in contemporary Nigeria.

Keywords: Amalgamation, Colonial Rule, Ethnic Tensions, Political Instability, Nigeria

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Introduction

The 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria, which united the Northern and Southern Protectorates under British rule, represents a pivotal but paradoxical moment in the country's history. While designed to streamline colonial administration and enhance economic exploitation, the merger inadvertently sowed the seeds of ethnic division and regional disparity, consequences that have persisted into Nigeria's post-colonial era. Prior to 1914, the region known today as Nigeria comprised numerous, diverse societies with distinct political, economic, and cultural systems. The amalgamation, which brought these groups into a single administrative entity, created a centralized governance structure that prioritized British colonial interests but neglected the socio-political realities of the indigenous populations (Tamuno, 2012).

Politically, the amalgamation laid the groundwork for ethnic-based competition for power, as regional elites vied for dominance within a colonial framework that favored indirect rule. Economically, the integration of the resource-rich South with the more agrarian North was aimed at creating a self-sustaining colony, but it also deepened regional inequalities (Fálolá and Heaton, 2009). Socially, the creation of Nigeria did little to foster a sense of national unity; instead, it exacerbated pre-existing divisions, leaving the country struggling to achieve internal cohesion. The legacy of this forced union continues to manifest in contemporary Nigeria through recurring issues such as ethnic politics, resource control, and regional insecurity. This essay examines the historical antecedents of the 1914 amalgamation and explores how this colonial policy has shaped Nigeria's modern political and socio-economic landscape, with particular emphasis on the Biafran secessionist movement and ongoing struggles over resource control.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Postcolonial theory emerged as a critical response to the deep and lasting impact of colonialism on former colonies. As the world began to witness the wave of decolonization in the mid-20th century, scholars and thinkers sought to understand and challenge the enduring legacies of colonialism that continued to shape societies, cultures, and economies long after independence was achieved (Nair, 2018). There are numerous viewpoints relating to post colonial theory, such as Homi K. Bhabha's concept of hybridity, which emphasizes cultural blending. Bhabha argues that colonized peoples do not merely adopt colonial cultures; they adapt and transform them, creating hybrid identities (Chibber, 2013). These identities challenge the rigid binaries of colonizer and colonized. Gayatri Spivak's *Subaltern Studies* is another critical shade, focusing on the voices of marginalized groups ("subalterns") that were historically silenced by colonial narratives. Spivak critiques the inability of dominant discourses to fully capture the experiences of the oppressed. Frantz Fanon adds a psychological dimension, exploring the mental effects of colonization, such as alienation and inferiority complexes. Fanon calls for a complete rejection of colonial structures (Chibber, 2013). However, this paper focuses on the postulation of Edward Said regarding the post colonial theory.

From Edward Said's perspective, postcolonial theory critiques how Western colonial powers created distorted images of colonized peoples, portraying them as inferior "Others" to justify domination (Said, 2002). In his book *Orientalism*, Said argues that these constructed identities and narratives persist, influencing global relations and maintaining unequal power dynamics—a form of neocolonialism. He emphasizes the need for formerly colonized peoples to reclaim their

voices, challenge imposed identities, and resist Western dominance (Said, 2002). Ultimately, postcolonial theory, through Said’s lens, is about deconstructing colonial narratives and advocating for a world where marginalized cultures can define themselves. Nigeria’s experience with colonialism and its aftermath can be understood as a struggle against the persistent influence of Western-imposed narratives. During British colonial rule, Nigerians were portrayed as inferior and uncivilized, justifying British domination and exploitation. These colonial representations created a sense of “Otherness,” where Nigerian identities and cultures were marginalized and distorted. Even after independence in 1960, these colonial narratives continued to shape Nigeria’s global interactions and internal dynamics, a phenomenon Said would identify as neocolonialism. The imposed borders, languages, and governance systems left behind by the British have contributed to ongoing ethnic tensions, political instability, and cultural alienation in Nigeria. The dominance of English as the official language, for instance, reflects the lingering influence of colonial control over knowledge and communication. In the contemporary Nigerian climate, the legacy of colonialism is also captured in governmental style particularly in the early years of Nigerian independence.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Nigeria, as it exists today, is a product of the complex processes of colonialism, which reshaped African territories in ways that still have lasting consequences. The amalgamation of 1914, orchestrated by British colonial authorities, merged the Northern and Southern protectorates of Nigeria into a single entity. This fusion was driven not by the interests of the indigenous populations but by British administrative and economic priorities, especially the need to create a self-sustaining colony (Tamuno, 2012).

The roots of the 1914 amalgamation can be traced back to the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, where European powers, under the

leadership of Otto von Bismarck, divided Africa into colonial spheres of influence (Bourne, 2015). Nigeria, rich in natural resources in its southern regions, attracted British interest, particularly in the lucrative trade along the Niger Delta and Oil Rivers. The economic prosperity of the South stood in contrast to the largely agrarian North, leading the British to amalgamate the two regions to harness the South's resources for the benefit of the entire colony (Tamuno, 2012).

The amalgamation of Nigeria was not an isolated event but a gradual process. Before 1914, smaller unifications had already occurred, such as the 1908 merger of Lagos and the Southern Protectorate. These actions culminated in 1914 when Lord Frederick Lugard completed the unification, primarily motivated by the desire to ease colonial administration and reduce costs (Bourne, 2015). One of the key policies implemented by the British during this period was indirect rule. This system preserved the traditional institutions of governance but repurposed them to serve colonial objectives. While indirect rule was relatively effective in the Northern region, where centralized emirate systems existed, it encountered resistance in the more decentralized Southern regions, particularly in the Eastern part of Nigeria (Falola and Heaton, 2008). This uneven application of colonial policies sowed the seeds of future tensions and contributed to Nigeria's political fragmentation.

The colonial arrangement entrenched regional differences that persisted beyond independence. The North's subservience to indirect rule contrasted sharply with the South's defiance and entrepreneurial spirit. This divergence fueled political and ethnic rivalries, which became especially pronounced during Nigeria's post-colonial period. The emergence of ethnic-based political parties further fragmented the country, as groups competed for power and resources (Falola and

Heaton, 2008). At the heart of Nigeria's political instability is the enduring legacy of the 1914 amalgamation. Ethnic and regional divisions that were exacerbated during the colonial period continue to shape Nigeria's socio-political landscape. The Eastern region, in particular, has a long history of resistance, which culminated in the Biafran secession attempt in the 1960s. This reflects the broader struggles of the Nigerian state to balance ethnic diversity with national unity (Tamuno, 2012). The traditional characteristics of the different region in Nigeria would greatly contribute to the placement of power moving forward in the Nigerian state. Many fail to realize that the power arrangement in Nigerian politics today comes from a colonial power arrangement that seemingly appreciated the submission of the Northern region as against the defiant nature of the people of the Niger Delta region particularly what would evolve into being the Eastern region by the 1950s(Falola and Heaton,2008) . The growth of nationalist awakening in Nigeria was seen from different parts of Nigeria. The speed at which nationalism grew in the south was different from the North. By These nationalists were from different political parties which were plunged into an ethnic divide that would embrace conflict instead of cooperation(Falola and Heaton, 2008). At independence, the differences of the major three ethnic groups were displayed in the political arena. Like the formation of political parties which came from ethnic based foundations, the Nigerian state would be an ethnic jigsaw puzzle that was joined without consensus. For most of Nigerian history in the post colonial era, issues based on ethnic grievances emerged. During this era, a civil war, ethno-religious groups among others emerged giving rise to the many blaming the amalgamation of Nigeria as the major factor behind it all. In view of this, it is of public consensus that the 1914 amalgamation is considered a grave mistake which has placed Nigeria in a state of delirious statehood. In truth, the Nigerian state has faced numerous events that could have contributed to an overall dissolution of the Nigerian union, this

dissolution has not taken place. Many states in history have created divisions over issues that were considered crucial to the existence of the state. In Africa, an historical debacle in Sudan led to the division in Sudan giving birth to South Sudan. In most cases, these divisions arise from existing groups that differ in ideological lining. Throughout the existence of Nigeria, different groups have sought autonomy from the Nigerian state most notably the Ibo people. Defiance from the Eastern part of Nigeria predates the colonial period. The Aba Women riot which took place in 1929 showed the impasse held by the people of the Eastern region who are most notable for their free entrepreneurial and republican nature (Tamuno, 2012). In the Western part, apprehension towards the system of indirect rule varied greatly. The sentiment of apprehension was not seen in the Northern party of Nigeria. As T.N Tamuno puts it “since 1914, the majority of Nigerians associated themselves with the nation-state they had inherited from colonialism. The needs of colonial administrators thereby left a deep mark on Nigerian history”(Tamuno, 2012). From the acquisition of independence in 1960, amalgamation has always been lauded as a colonial legacy. Like in many parts of Africa, colonial rule removed and merged existing borders with one another without respect for the existing cultural differences existing in such areas. Sociocultural ties in preexisting areas added to the shaky marriage between the numerous groups in Nigeria. This has emerged into differing problems in the area of resource control, fiscal allocation, ethnic politics among others that has stunted the growth of the Nigerian state.

IMPACT ON RESOURCE CONTROL

Nigeria, a resource-rich state, was formed through the amalgamation of two distinct protectorates and a colony in 1914: the Northern

Protectorate, the Southern Protectorate, and the Lagos Colony, which was annexed in 1861 (Faga & Ngwoke, 2021). Prior to this, these regions operated independently with distinct administrative structures, political systems, and resource management approaches. The amalgamation sought to streamline colonial governance but led to complex and unequal outcomes in terms of resource control across these regions.

One of the immediate consequences of amalgamation was the centralization of political power under a single administrative unit. The newly unified legislative council, however, did not translate into equitable management of resources. In the Northern Protectorate, where indirect rule had been well established, traditional rulers retained significant control over resources, particularly in agricultural economies (Egugbo, 2016). The colonial government in the North relied on a pre-existing feudal system, ensuring continuity in the extraction of agricultural produce and taxes, while minimizing disruptions to the sociopolitical order.

In contrast, the Southern Protectorate, particularly the Niger Delta and Lagos Colony, experienced more direct colonial influence in resource management. The South, rich in palm oil, timber, and later oil, saw the imposition of new land tenure systems by colonial administrators, which disrupted traditional land ownership patterns. Communal landholding systems in the South were replaced or weakened by the introduction of British land laws that prioritized resource extraction for the benefit of the colonial state (Ugwu, 2019). This shift in control not only undermined local autonomy but also laid the groundwork for future conflicts over land rights and natural resources, especially in the oil-rich Niger Delta.

The economic implications of amalgamation further exacerbated regional disparities in resource control. While the amalgamation was intended to integrate the North and South into a cohesive economic unit, it disproportionately favored the development of the North. British

colonial authorities invested heavily in infrastructure projects, such as railways and agricultural development programs, that primarily benefited the Northern region. For example, the groundnut pyramids of Kano and cotton farming in the North were expanded under British guidance, while the South's diverse agricultural economy was left comparatively underdeveloped (Egugbo, 2016). This unequal resource distribution and investment pattern continued to shape Nigeria's political economy long after independence.

Additionally, the amalgamation played a critical role in shaping Nigeria's oil industry, though oil had not yet been discovered by 1914. The discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in the 1950s, and its subsequent exploitation, significantly altered the dynamics of resource control. As oil wealth became concentrated in the South, particularly in the Niger Delta, the federal government assumed greater control over this valuable resource, often to the detriment of local communities. The introduction of laws such as the Petroleum Act of 1969, which vested ownership and control of all petroleum resources in the federal government, further centralized resource control and fueled regional tensions (Faga & Ngwoke, 2021).

This centralization of resource control over oil led to increasing discontent among Niger Delta communities, who felt excluded from the wealth generated by oil extraction on their land. By the 1990s, movements such as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, highlighted the environmental devastation caused by oil exploration and the lack of fair compensation for affected communities (Faga & Ngwoke, 2021). This pattern of resource exploitation occurred without local benefits. Oil has always been a factor in the mindset of politics of Nigeria, creating a situation where the federal government ensures that the citizens in states

particularly in the South South geopolitical zone suffer in oil exploration through action and inaction (Ugwu, 2019). The impact of amalgamation on resource control also extended to human capital. Migration patterns shifted as people moved across regions in search of economic opportunities. The development of several areas at the expense of others contributes to this reality. This movement influenced the distribution of skills and labor, further shaping regional disparities in resource utilization and development (Egugbo, 2016). The amalgamation inadvertently contributed to the formation of distinct regional identities, fostering competition for resources and political power (Ugwu, 2019). In contemporary times, oil wealth has been a source of discord among states in Nigeria. For example, in 2012 there was a legal dispute between Akwa Ibom and Rivers over a large amount of oil wells numbering at about seventy six centered within the boundaries of these states. Even though Akwa Ibom won the case, this problem is a highlight of the issue of resource control in the contemporary space of Nigeria. (Alao et al, 2012). In this regard, amalgamation has fostered problems between the states and the federal government. In a bid to control resources, the states particularly in the Niger Delta region are not properly compensated for the extraction of resources creating tensions between the Federal government and these states. Also, groups such as the Niger Delta Avengers among others have often emerged as a consequence of resource control. Providing an equitable base on which the multiple resources in Nigeria can be managed gas always eluded the Nigerian state due to structural problems such as corruption among others.

AMALGAMATION AND FEDERALISM IN NIGERIA

The amalgamation of Nigeria in 1914 set the stage for the country's federal structure, though the process of federalism evolved significantly over time. Two key schools of thought—the orthodox and the revisionist—offer contrasting views on the nature of federalism, both of

which help to contextualize Nigeria's experience. The orthodox view, championed by K.C. Wheare, emphasizes federalism as a fixed condition where power is clearly divided between federal and regional governments. In contrast, the revisionist perspective, led by Fredrich, views federalism as a dynamic process shaped by social and political factors (Okechukwu & Onyishi, 2014).

Wheare's classical model of federalism, which emphasizes the strict division of powers between central and regional governments, was initially reflected in Nigeria's federal structure following independence. The creation of regions—the Northern, Western, and Eastern regions in 1939—was a key feature of early Nigerian federalism. Each region had significant autonomy in managing local affairs, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and resource management. However, the federal government retained control over critical areas such as defense, foreign affairs, and national economic planning (Majekodunmi, 2015). The revisionist view of federalism as a process is more reflective of Nigeria's post-amalgamation reality. From 1967 onwards, Nigeria's federal system underwent a series of transformations, driven by socio-political and economic considerations. The creation of states and local governments, particularly in the wake of the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970), was a deliberate attempt by successive governments to manage the country's ethnic diversity and regional tensions. The proliferation of states, which grew from 3 regions in 1939 to 36 states by the 1990s, was intended to decentralize power and create a more inclusive federal system (Majekodunmi, 2015).

However, the evolution of federalism in Nigeria has been fraught with challenges, particularly in terms of resource allocation and regional autonomy. The Richards Constitution of 1946 marked an early attempt to formalize a federal structure by creating regional houses of assembly

and executive councils. This laid the groundwork for greater regional autonomy, but also highlighted the disparities in resource control between the regions (Okechukwu & Onyishi, 2014). The Lyttleton Constitution of 1954 further refined the federal system, giving more explicit powers to the regions while maintaining the central government's authority over key areas (Okechukwu & Onyishi, 2014). Despite these constitutional developments, Nigeria's federalism has been characterized by a centralizing tendency, particularly under military rule. The series of military coups between 1966 and 1999 often undermined regional autonomy, as the military regimes centralized power and resources. This centralization had significant implications for resource control, as the federal government assumed greater authority over the country's oil wealth, exacerbating regional disparities (Ebegbulem, 2011).

The return to civilian rule in 1999 marked a recommitment to federalism, with the Fourth Republic seeking to restore regional autonomy through a new constitution. This constitution outlined exclusive, concurrent, and residual powers, clearly delineating the roles of the federal and state governments (Majekodunmi, 2015). However, federalism in Nigeria continues to face significant challenges. An area where the Nigerian epileptic federal system shows is in the area of resource allocation and revenue sharing which remain key points of contention, particularly in the Niger Delta, where oil wealth has fueled demands for greater control over local resources. This problem emerges from a legacy of centralisation in the Nigerian state. Centralisation has seen the movement of resources from the top to the bottom, rather than the bottom up. This is deeply intertwined with the disbursement of oil wealth in Nigeria. The discovery of oil in the Niger Delta in the 1950s, and the subsequent centralization of oil revenue by the federal government, has added a layer of complexity to Nigeria's federalism. Control over oil resources has become a central issue in federal-state relations, with states in the Niger Delta advocating for greater autonomy

and a larger share of the oil. Issues such as resource allocation, revenue sharing, and regional disparities continue to test the resilience of the federal structure. The discovery of oil in the Niger Delta region added another layer of complexity, as control over oil resources became a central point of contention among the federal and state governments (Ebegbulem, 2011).

AMALGAMATION AND PARTY POLITICS

The formation of political parties in Nigeria has historically been shaped by ethnic and regional affiliations, often sidelining nationalist ideologies in favor of more localized interests. Since the advent of the Fourth Republic in 1999, this tendency has persisted, with political processes largely influenced by ethnic and regional considerations rather than purely ideological platforms. This trend can be traced back to the early 20th century when political activities, notably those of the Peoples' Union and the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), were centered around Lagos and its surrounding regions (Danjibo and Ashindorbe, 2018). These early political parties laid the groundwork for the ethnically fragmented party system that continues to shape Nigerian politics today.

The 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria's Northern and Southern Protectorates fundamentally changed the political landscape, necessitating the formation of national political parties. This shift reflected the growing need for a unified approach to governance, though the transition from regional to national politics was slow and often fraught with tensions. The emergence of political parties like the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), and the Action Group (AG) in the West was heavily influenced by regional affiliations and ethnic considerations

(Akinola, 2014). These parties did not merely represent political ideologies but were rooted in the interests of their respective regions, creating a political system dominated by ethnic and regional factions.

The political landscape of Nigeria has often mirrored the country's complex ethnic diversity. This is especially evident in the nature of political competition during the First Republic (1963-1966), when ethnic and regional tensions were heightened. The competition among the NPC, NCNC, and AG intensified the political struggle, which eventually resulted in instability and a series of military coups (Akinola, 2014). The NPC's dominance in the North, the NCNC's power in the East, and the AG's influence in the West reflected not only the ethnic diversity of Nigeria but also the entrenched regional rivalries that made national unity difficult to achieve. In essence, political parties served as vehicles for regional and ethnic interests rather than instruments of national unity.

The involvement of the military further complicated Nigeria's political evolution. The military coups that followed the collapse of the First Republic were a direct result of the political instability caused by these entrenched regional and ethnic divisions. When military rule ended and Nigeria transitioned to the Second Republic (1979-1983), the political parties that emerged, such as the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) and the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), continued to reflect regional affiliations, despite nominal claims to national unity. This republic was short-lived due to another military coup, which underscored the fragility of Nigeria's political system (Danjibo and Ashindorbe, 2018).

Similarly, the Third Republic (1993), though short-lived, revealed the continued entrenchment of ethnic politics. The emergence of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC) appeared to offer an ideological difference, but regional and ethnic affiliations still played a significant role (Danjibo and Ashindorbe, 2018). The annulment of the election results

further demonstrated how deeply entrenched ethnic and regional interests were, even in the face of attempts at ideological politics.

The Fourth Republic, inaugurated in 1999, saw a more enduring civilian rule but also highlighted the persistence of ethnic and regional politics. The dominance of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and, later, the All Progressives Congress (APC) demonstrated attempts to create more nationally inclusive political platforms. The APC's formation, which was a merger of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), and the All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) along with a breakaway faction of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) (Danjibo and Ashindorbe, 2018). This republic has witnessed regular elections, power shifts between parties, cross carpeting (which involves the movement of politicians from one party to another). and the evolution of a multi-party system. The return to civilian rule in 1999 marked a new chapter in Nigerian party politics (Omamuyovwi, 2020). The Fourth Republic saw the emergence of new political parties alongside the rejuvenation of some historic ones. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) have become dominant players in the political landscape, attempting to transcend regional and ethnic affiliations to present a more national outlook (Omamuyovwi, 2020). In the recent 2023 elections, there were calls for ethnic solidarity in several gubernatorial elections in Nigeria, particularly Lagos. The candidate of the Labour Party, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour was scrutinized greatly for his biological affiliation with the Igbo people. This points to a lack of national outlook in Nigeria, whereby in the regions, ethnicity is placed higher than competence in most cases.

AMALGAMATION AND MILITARY SERVICE

The 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria's Northern and Southern Protectorates significantly impacted the country's military structure, unifying previously separate regional military forces into a single national entity. Before amalgamation, the military forces of the Northern and Southern Protectorates operated independently, each with its own traditions, languages, and recruitment practices (Oluwabiyi and Duruji, 2021). The British colonial administration sought to merge these forces into the Nigerian Regiment, primarily to serve colonial interests. However, the amalgamation process was skewed in favor of Northern recruits, as the British perceived the North as more amenable to colonial rule, leading to an imbalance in the military's composition (Oluwabiyi and Duruji, 2021).

The integration of the Northern and Southern forces posed significant challenges. The colonial authorities had to standardize military training and recruitment while reconciling the distinct traditions and languages of the two regions. The dominance of Northern soldiers in the military created a disparity that persisted into post-independence Nigeria, where the military became a central institution in national affairs (Bamgboye, 2014). This imbalance not only reflected regional divisions but also contributed to the military's significant role in shaping Nigeria's political trajectory.

Following amalgamation, the military's centralized command structure enabled the colonial administration to maintain control over the newly unified territory. However, the ethnic and regional tensions within the military mirrored broader societal divisions, which influenced its internal dynamics and often surfaced in moments of political upheaval (Silloun, 2009). The dominance of Northern soldiers continued to play a role in the post-independence period, particularly as the military became more involved in governance.

The military's involvement in politics became a defining feature of Nigeria's post-independence history. Regional and ethnic disparities

within the military, rooted in the amalgamation era, contributed to its frequent interventions in politics, including several coups during the 1960s. The Biafran War (1967-1970) further exposed the regional divisions within the military, as the conflict was largely driven by ethnic and regional tensions (Silloun, 2009). Despite these challenges, the military played a crucial role in preserving the unity of the country during the war. After the Biafran War, the military became increasingly politicized, and its role in governance expanded. Successive coups and military regimes in the post-war period entrenched the military's involvement in national politics, weakening civilian institutions and exacerbating political instability (Oluwabiyi and Duruji, 2021). By the 1980s, the military's reputation had declined due to its involvement in corruption and political interference, further eroding the professionalism that once characterized Nigeria's armed forces (Silloun, 2013).

The amalgamation of Nigeria's Northern and Southern Protectorates had a profound and lasting impact on the military. The British favoring Northern recruits during the integration process created an imbalance that shaped the military's role in national affairs, both during and after the colonial period. This imbalance, coupled with the politicization of the military, contributed to the challenges Nigeria has faced in maintaining a unified and professional military force.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

Contemporary Nigeria, like many functional states in the international system, faces its own unique set of challenges. It is a common belief that many of Nigeria's problems stem from the nature of the state, which comprises various entities vying for dominance over the country's

status. These issues have largely emerged from historical factors and external influences that have driven the entrenchment of their goals and aspirations within Nigeria (Osuala & Muoh, 2015). Nigeria's problems—such as secession, banditry, Islamic fundamentalism, and minority rights—are deeply rooted in its complex history and internal dynamics.

As an organized society, modern Nigeria is a conglomerate of heterogeneous parts, often in conflict with one another over the necessities of the state. The conflicts within Nigeria span numerous lines, serving as the basis for various actors seeking their place. Frequently characterized by critics and international analysts as a "ticking time bomb," the current state of Nigeria reflects a multitude of underlying issues. Many of these problems are attributed to the 1914 amalgamation, which effectively created the Nigerian state (Osuala & Muoh, 2015).

In addition to historical grievances, Nigeria faces significant infrastructural deficits, a rise in separatist insurgencies such as Boko Haram in the Northeast and the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) in the Southeast, widespread corruption, and institutional decay. These issues underscore the decay of the Nigerian state. While the 1914 amalgamation is often blamed for the country's current state, a careful historical analysis reveals deeper insights into these problems. Nigeria, much like the United States and India, is a project of heterogeneity. This diversity, however, has not always been managed in a way that fosters meritocratic governance, resulting in persistent tensions between the historically predominantly Muslim North and the predominantly Christian South (Tamuno, 2012; Siollun, 2008). These regional differences have impacted mutual perceptions and relations within the country.

For instance, the North often views the South as a region of religious infidelity, while the South perceives the North as a conservative and underdeveloped area plagued by poverty and illiteracy. Such

ideological divides have historically influenced Nigeria's political evolution. Similar to other African states, Nigeria's ethnic diversity has had profound implications for its socio-economic, political, and cultural landscape. The Rwandan genocide, involving the Hutu and Tutsi tribes, represents a high point of ethnic intolerance and violence in Africa. Nigeria's issues permeate all aspects of life, including corruption, infrastructural decline, and institutional deficiencies (Falola & Heaton, 2008).

One of the most enduring challenges in Nigeria's post-colonial history has been secession. The country has experienced several secessionist movements, starting with Isaac Boro's attempt to create the Niger Delta Republic in February 1966. Although less discussed, this event was a significant early instance of advocating for minority rights in Nigeria (Oriola, 2013). The most notable secessionist effort was the Biafran War, initiated by Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu in 1967 due to the anti-Igbo sentiment following the January 1966 coup, which was mistakenly labeled an "Igbo coup" (Siollun, 2008). The subsequent counter-coup in July 1966 led to significant bloodshed and deepened ethnic tensions.

The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) highlighted the incompatibilities within the Nigerian state. Despite the defeat of Biafra, the quest for secession continued, giving rise to groups such as IPOB and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). Nnamdi Kanu's leadership has reinvigorated the Biafran secessionist agenda, manifesting in protests and sit-at-home orders in the Southeast (Igwedibia, Ekeh, & Esimone, 2024). Similarly, the Yoruba people have promoted Yoruba Nationalism, seeking the need of the Yoruba people to forge their destiny in Nigeria. Secession is one of the core issues facing the Nigerian state today because of the untenable union called Nigeria. Secession is often influenced by the need to create

a state for a particular ethnic group, or ethnic groups that share similar problems (Bourne, 2015)

Owing to the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state, there has always been the problem of minority rights. The Nigerian state is constructed around three major ethnic groups namely the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa sometimes placed as Hausa/Fulani. This could be better explained with the numerous geopolitical zones in Nigeria numbering to about six in number namely North Central, North East, North West, South West, South South(also known as the Niger Delta area) and South East. These geopolitical zones in Nigeria depict the heterogeneous nature of Nigerian society. For example, in the South East, there is the predominance of the Igbo people who represent a major ethnic divide in Nigeria. Arriving at this point in their history was the procession of numerous historical events. For example, the rise of the Fulani in Nigerian history in general is often credited to the Sokoto Jihad in 1809 which gave birth to a more Islamized Northern region contributing to the reduction of other ethnic groups to minority status. For Yorubaland, the expansive Oyo Empire came to an end owing to significant problems which came from within the empire. Insubordination from officials such as Bashorun Gaa and Are Ona Kakanfo Afonja among others contributed to a century of warfare in Yorubaland. For the Igbos, there was the spread of missionary activities in the region which would bring about the adoption of colonial rule with the use of pacification and supposed protection treaty. In the midst of these three ethnic groups, other ethnic groups can be found. Some of these ethnic groups developed their own forms of governance namely the Benin Empire known for their powerful Obas and their expansive state. The Nupe who are known to have caused issues for the Oyo Empire at a point in time in history, the Kanem Bornu Empire which was an Islamic empire based in Northern Nigeria between modern day Nigeria and Chad with the Tiv, Ibibio, Itsekiri among many others which were mostly independent for their existence(Falola and Heaton, 2008). Minority rights was not a

major problem during colonial rule owing to the British colonial power to be perceived as the main threat to everyone (Bourne, 2015). However, post colonial Nigeria greatly suffered from agitations on minority rights in Nigeria. Often manifesting in the guise of state creation, Nigeria has been splintered into numerous states. These states have grown to be heterogeneous in nature whereby the inhabitants often pay homage to their differentiated past brought together under federalism. In the midst of the larger ethnic groups, other ethnic groups have advocated for their grievances to be heard. In contemporary times, the place of minority rights finds expression in different parts of Nigeria. In the North, there is the dominance of the Hausa/Fulani group in the region, overshadowing ethnic groups such as Kataf, Zango and Tiv among others. The inability of the Nigerian state to capture these ethnic groups have caused clashes in parts like Southern Kaduna where religious and ethnic tensions have led to conflicts among different groups in the region. Another example can be pointed towards the Niger Delta region (Oriola, 2013). Being one of the primary regions which contributes to internal revenue in Nigeria, the rights of the individuals especially in the Ogoni region has been overruled by the interests of multinational cooperation and the government. Also from minority rights, the issue of state creation has often emerged in national discourse (Silloun, 2009). Being a multiethnic state, the Nigerian government is often streamlined along bringing the interests of every ethnic group to bear on the state. Even in the existing thirty six states in Nigeria, there are splintered ethnic groups (most of which claim affinity with one of the larger ethnic groups either based on religious or historical similarities, for example, in the North, many indigenous people still subscribe to the suzerainty of the head of the Sokoto Caliphate in their affairs even though it is in a ceremonial

position currently). The issue of minority rights can be used to explain the issue of revenue allocation in Nigeria

Revenue is important for any entity. For governments, it is the lifeblood from which programs can be pushed into the public view, and for individuals, a source of revenue means a viable stream of income that would ensure a better standard of living in society. Throughout Nigeria's post colonial existence, the issue of revenue allocation has always been a problem. Many committees have emanated seeking to provide a more equitable means of allocating revenue. As dating back to colonial rule, the bulk of the Nigerian economic output was based in the Southern part of the country. In the bid to effectively manage the proceeds of the revenue stream that Nigeria possesses(which has primarily been oil since the 1970s), several sharing quotas have been devised over the years to cater for the federal government and the state. However, this has generated discontent as states who contribute greatly to the revenue of the state are not well catered for and others which are not very economically efficient have the larger share. Currently states in the Niger Delta like Delta, Bayelsa among others argue that 13% is a rather miniscule amount considering the revenue gained from oil on the international markets (Ugwu, 2019). This inequality has carefully graduated into mass corruption whereby government officials and many others engage in appropriating money to their financial standing. On the side of the average person, entrance into crime such as oil bunkering among others is seen as a means to tap into the national cake. Many revenue allocation formulas have been drafted throughout Nigeria post colonial existence that have not met the expectation of states in the regions (Tom and Ataide, 2021).

Another core issue stems from corruption. Corruption has become a mainstay in the parlance of the common man. Structural corruption has evidently eaten deep into the Nigerian state and exists at every level of governance. Importantly, corruption exists as a product of man and is ubiquitous across all parts of human society. Historian

Max Silloun predates the widespread culture of corruption to the 1970s and 1980s which was firstly evident in the Nigerian civil service. Corruption was widespread owing to the decadence of the Nigerian system that has affected everything (Silloun, 2013). Corruption is a human vice that cannot be completely rooted out but reduced to a certain degree. However, the idea of avarice in African politics is a rather expansive topic to cover. There is no nationalistic ideal that forces Nigerians to honor the state higher than their interests. In 2020, there was the mismanagement of COVID-19 funds that affected the handling of the crisis. Palliatives meant for citizens were shared and stored away for the benefit of the ruling class. The issue of ghost workers in the civil service is another depiction of corruption, an example is in the case of Plateau state in 2017 (Ofonmbuk and Akpan, 2023).

This part of this paper does not cover all aspects of Nigeria's problems but rather a segmented part. There are numerous issues which faces Nigeria both internally and externally. These issues mostly developed from historical differences which have continually played a role in the procession of the past colonial state of Nigeria. Moving forward, these issues can be tackled on the basis of having national coherence in the area of leadership which is meant to gear other aspects of society into better areas.

However, the nexus between amalgamation and secession in Nigeria lies in the complex historical and political dynamics that followed the unification of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914. The amalgamation, orchestrated by the British colonial administration, created a diverse nation with distinct ethnic, religious, and cultural identities. Over time, these differences contributed to regional tensions, leading to secessionist movements such as Biafra's attempt to break away in the late 1960s. The amalgamation sowed seeds of internal strife

as different regions sought autonomy due to perceived inequalities and grievances. While amalgamation aimed at administrative efficiency, its aftermath revealed deep-seated challenges in fostering national unity, eventually culminating in secessionist aspirations and conflicts in Nigeria's history.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The effects of the 1914 amalgamation of Nigeria are viewed from various perspectives. Many interpret the amalgamation as a failed attempt to unify diverse ethnic groups that lacked a cohesive understanding of one another. This process resulted in Nigeria's heterogeneous identity. Similar to countries like the United States and India, Nigeria's internal conflicts are often attributed to a lack of cohesive ideology among its diverse groups. For instance, India's complex socio-cultural history and its diverse religious outlook significantly influenced its post-colonial state (Khilnani, 2003). In contrast, Malaysia, under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, managed its heterogeneity by embracing diversity without imposing a single defining ideology (Koh, 2009).

The United States, with its history of racial and ethnic clashes, including the enslavement of Black Americans and the displacement of Indigenous peoples, demonstrates how diverse groups can struggle within a unified state (Baker, 2015). Nigeria's most significant conflict, the Nigerian Civil War, arose from ethnic strife and is often linked to the 1914 amalgamation, which completed the Nigerian state (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Today, Nigeria is officially a secular and indivisible state, as outlined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Many Nigerians, however, blame the 1914 amalgamation for the country's current challenges. This paper argues that Nigeria's diverse identity, often viewed as a disadvantage, could instead be seen as a strength. Historical governance failures and institutional decay have exacerbated Nigeria's problems.

Like modern Britain, which has become a diverse society through migration, Nigeria's heterogeneity could be viewed as a social experiment in ethnic coexistence. Nigeria, alongside other diverse nations such as India and Brazil, illustrates how a union of many cultures can survive through effective cooperation among its people. The British colonial administration capitalized on ethnic differences, a legacy that continues to affect Nigeria today. The lessons of history suggest that Nigeria's challenges, particularly those stemming from the 1914 amalgamation, have both positive and negative aspects. The negative aspects are often highlighted in the media and public discourse, including issues like banditry, Boko Haram insurgency, kidnapping, and vandalism. However, no entity is free from problems; it is the effort to address these issues that differentiates successful states. Nigeria's future hinges on forging a strong nationalist identity that transcends ethnic barriers. The contemporary Nigerian experience reflects ongoing issues tied to the 1914 amalgamation. The inability of different ethnic groups to collaborate in fostering a unified national identity has been evident since the 1950s with the emergence of ethnically oriented political parties. This regionalism, coupled with ethnic superiority, has led to a national consciousness that prioritizes ethnic identities over national unity. This division threatens the stability of the Nigerian state. In other heterogeneous states like the United States, issues such as national security help bind disparate racial groups together. In Nigeria, differing views and ethnic rivalries often hinder collective action. Despite the amalgamation's historical role, Nigeria's future depends on the ability of its diverse groups to cooperate on a nationalist platform. Addressing these issues collectively will be crucial for the survival and progress of the Nigerian state.

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