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Fiscal Federalism, Ethnic Minorities and the National Question in Nigeria: Revisiting the Case of the Niger Delta People

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Abstract

This study, using content analysis, examined the impact of fiscal federalism and the struggles of ethnic minority groups in the Niger Delta on the trajectories of the national question in Nigeria. It discovered a positive relationship between the changes in the fiscal structure and the aggravation of ethnic minorities' struggles. It concluded that the interplay of these variables leads to the degeneration of the national question and

recommended, therefore, the revision of the fiscal structure on which the Nigerian federal system currently anchors as a panacea for resolving the national question.

Key Words: Federalism, Fiscal federalism, Ethnic minorities, National question, Niger delta peoples, Nigeria

Introduction

Ambedkar referred to nationality as:

Nationality is a social feeling. It is a feeling of corporate sentiment of oneness which makes those who are charged with it feel they are kith and kin.... It is at once a feeling of fellowship for one's own kith and kin. It is a feeling of 'consciousness of a kind' which on one hand binds together those who have it, so strongly that it over-rides all differences arising out of economic conflict or social gradation and, on the other, sever them from those who are not of their kind. It is a longing not to belong to another group (Ambedkar quoted in Abubakar and Ayokhai, 2008, p.105)

In the fifty-four years of independence, Nigeria's effort at nation-building has been severely challenged by the protraction of the 'national question'. The national question is conceived by scholars as consisting of the political mobilizations and struggles by dissatisfied and aggrieved groups to redress and exact more just and equitable accommodation from the Nigerian nation-state. It is also seen as being multidimensional, involving religious and ideological conflicts, fear of northern domination, the hegemonic contest among the Yoruba, Hausa-Fulani, and the Igbo, as well as the struggles of the ethnic minorities (Nwachukwu, 2005, p.41). In fact, nation-building efforts of successive governments and regimes have been frustrated by the national question.

The situation is such that it is argued in this study that Nigeria exists in reality only as a state, not a nation. Put differently, there is a Nigerian state but there are no Nigerian citizens. This position is illustrated by the fact that in spite of the one hundred years of amalgamation and the over fifty-five years of independence, Nigeria has failed to make citizens out of the diverse groups of peoples that inhabit the territory. For instance, while the Nigerian constitution acknowledges the existence of Nigerians in its citizenship provisions, the loyalty of the peoples is in practice to their primordial constituencies such as ethnicities, regions, religions, states, and, more recently, geo-political zones. Therefore, rather than Nigerians, Nigeria is made up of diverse groups who claim to be Fulani, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Ijaw, Urhobo, Tiv, Jukun, Gbagyi, Gede, Moslems, Christians, Northerners, Southerners, Middle-Belters, South-Southerners, Niger-Deltans, South-Westerners, South-Easterners, North-Westerners,

North-Easterners, to mention but a few of the primordial identities that enjoy the superior loyalty of the peoples over the Nigerian citizenship identity.

The intensity of the national question in Nigeria is such that the prophets of the Nigerian doom have predicted that the country would not exist in one piece beyond 2015. To what extent this prediction is true remains to be seen. Whether the insurgence of *Boko Haram* and the resurgence of the agitations of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the north-eastern and south-eastern parts of the country respectively are gravitating towards the fulfilment of the prediction of the disintegration of Nigeria is yet to be seen. However, what is not in doubt from the reading of the handwriting on Nigeria's wall is the fact that the preponderance of insurgent movements in the chequered history of the country is a reflection of the intractable nature of her national question.

One of the major dynamics held culpable for the intractability of the national question in Nigeria is the fiscal regime imposed by successive governments and the struggles of the ethnic groups, including the ethnic minority groups in the Niger Delta area, to overthrow it and enthrone a fiscal regime that does not only ensure social but also environmental justice. This study therefore attempts to provide answers to the following questions in subsequent sections of the paper. I) What is the structure of the fiscal federalism in Nigeria? II) Why are the ethnic minority groups in the Niger Delta opposed to the fiscal federalism in force in Nigeria? III) How has the struggle of the ethnic minority groups in the Niger Delta impacted on the national question in Nigeria? IV) What options are available for the resolution of the national question in Nigeria? Before attention is turned to answering these questions, it is expedient to first locate this study within the framework of theoretical explanations. To this attention is turned next.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on the theoretical premise that there are two main types of nation-states in the world (Iwara, 2004, p.22). The first is the ethnically and culturally complex states called 'political states'. The second type is the ethnically and culturally homogenous states. They are characterized as homogenous because they possess their own distinct language, way of life and homeland. They are therefore called 'cultural nations' (Iwara, 2004, p.22). Empirical evidence reveals that states that are largely composed of clearly distinct peoples adopt a federal constitution in recognition of their diverse and complex components while culturally homogenous nations adopt a unitary constitution (Ayokhai, 2010, p.23).

A cultural nation typically 'arrogates to its self the power of the kinship myth portraying the whole society as an ethnic community and demanding the allegiance of its people in ways that echo the imperative of ethnic loyalty' (Iwara, 2004, p.23). In

this way, the nation is depicted as offering identity, security and authority to its members. In return, the nation demands the loyalty of its members.

Some states that possess a certain degree of cultural plurality opt to run their nation along lines of cultural nationalism. This is premised on the grounds that cultural nationalism offers a stronger basis for national integration, political cohesion and societal loyalty than political nationalism. This may also derive from the fact that political nationalism is sometimes perceived by the elites as both Western and colonialist in connotation (Iwara, 2004, p.23). When federalism is considered forced, as in the case with Nigeria, national integration becomes a major problem in the nation-building process, with components seeking greater autonomy of action and self-expression as with the Niger Delta (Ayokhai, 2010, p.23).

Also, some political states like Nigeria, despite their ethnic and cultural complexity, seek to portray their society as potentially culturally homogenous. On the premise of their pre-colonial history, they promote a set of dominant attributes and values around which nationhood is expected to evolve. Constitutional measures are also evolved to assure the groups that feel threatened and marginalized within the federal state. Nationhood is therefore defined in terms of equal rights, duties and status of all citizens. Ethnicity is thus portrayed as being politically irrelevant to the national politics of meritocratic governmental processes. It is on this ground that Iwara (2004) contends that:

The political state is then poised to accommodate the idea of a community comprising ethnic components or geographical zones, as in the case of Nigeria, with each component enjoying equal status, power and access to resources according to some formula of 'unity in diversity' (p.24).

Ordinarily, nations are expected to express themselves in a manner to typify any one category of nation-state. The empirical evidence from Nigeria suggests that it seeks to employ both formulations. For instance, while it claims to offer equal citizenship rights to all citizens irrespective of their cultural and numerical attributes, it, at the same time, defines the nation in cultural terms and gives priority of some kind to the major ethnic groups over the minority groups. Consequently, it is argued that where equal consideration is expected in an avowedly ethnically and geographically neutral meritocracy, what obtains is discrimination against some groups. This attracts varying degrees of resentment against the state, thereby undermining ethnic relations and nation-building (Ayokhai, 2010, p.24).

It is on this note that it is being argued that it is not entirely surprising that the nation has witnessed a series of successive ethnic rivalries which challenges the nation-building efforts of the federal state. Rather, it is argued that as long as the ruling elite continues to distort and disarticulate the practice of federalism, so long will ethno-

regional groups continue to find support and blossom in the country (Ayokhai, 2010, p.24).

The above submission leads us to the second theoretical premise of this study. It posits that political behaviour in any state is directly and critically related to its political culture. It is noted that political culture is characterized by the individualistic, the moralistic and the traditional subcultures (Elazar, 1972, p.95). Political culture is itself a product of dialectical historical materialism.

According to the foregoing characterization of political culture offered by Elazar, the moralistic subculture conceives politics as a way of promoting public interest in a manner that can advance societal conditions. Thus, it promotes 'a strong participatory norm' in which politics is a concern for both citizens and public officials (Peters and Welch, 1978, p.346). Consequently, the standard of public conduct is anchored on the moral code which eschews acts that are capable of jeopardizing public interest.

On the other hand, the individualistic subculture perceives politics as another way to get ahead. Therefore, according to Peters and Welch (1978, p.346), persons entering politics are expected to do so to accumulate wealth and gain personal esteem. In this case, the government is not meant to advance the public interest but individual interests and concerns. The traditional subculture shares the character of the individualistic in the sense that it is marked by an elitist political style in which 'public officials are expected to benefit personally from politics' (Peters and Welch, 1978, p.346). In the same vein, both cultures, as Elazar (1972) observed, have a high tolerance of corruption because politics is restricted to a class of elites (p.95).

In every political system, it is the conduct and the activities of private and public officials perceived as norms that affect the promotion or otherwise of peace, stability and national integration. One of such norms is clientele politics. Here, politics is essentially based on patron – client relationships. According to Hague and Harrop (2001), clientele politics is a technique common to authoritarian leaders with strong inclination to structure political participation (p.116). It is also a relationship in which government agencies advance the interest of the client groups they are responsible for supervising and regulating (Heywood, 2005, p.364). Politics in a clientele state is therefore the practice where particular groups in the polity receive a disproportionate policy advantage on the basis of their access to policy makers at the expense of the larger society (Kesselman et al, 1996, p.633).

In a way, this may facilitate the consensus building process and benefit the polity in a developed state (Kesselman et al, 1996, p.633). However, in a developing state such as Nigeria, this is most likely to prove counter-productive, dysfunctional and impinge the course of peace, stability and progress. The enormity of the effect of clientele politics on Nigeria was noted by Kesselman et al (1996) when they observed

the manifest neglect of her public infrastructure and the prevention of the full utilization of her productive capacities (p.633). Having established the theoretical basis for this study, the next important task is to shed some light on the land of the Niger Delta and the peoples that inhabit it. This illumination is the subject of the next section of this study.

Land and Peoples of the Niger Delta

The Niger Delta hosts the oil resources which provide over eighty percent of the foreign exchange that runs the Nigerian state. The Niger Delta is a territory that covers about 70,000sq. kilometers (Olulu, 2003, p.15; Ekpo, 2004, p.1) in the southernmost part of Nigeria. It stretches from the Nigeria – Cameroon boundary in the east to the Ondo – Ogun states boundaries in the west of Nigeria. The area is also bounded in the north by Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Kogi and Ekiti states. It is generally bounded in the south by the Atlantic Ocean.

According to Omoweh (2003), the region comprises about 1,600 communities (p.12). The number of communities is put at over 3500 and the dialects at not less than 260 in 185 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and nine states of the federation, with a population estimated at over 20million (Ekpo, 2004, p.1). The four core states are Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta and Rivers. Others are Abia, Cross Rivers, Edo, Imo and Ondo states (See Onuoha, 2005).

The Niger Delta hosts over 95% of Nigeria's proven oil and gas reserves. Its natural gas reserves were estimated at 174 trillion cubic feet in 2005. Only about 20% of its gas is currently used to generate electricity. It is estimated that at its current rate of production, it will last another 110 years. Also, the proven oil reserves amount to 32billion barrels. At the current rate of production, it is estimated to last another 37 years (Olulu, 2003, 16; NEEDS Nigeria, 2004). The Niger Delta produces two million barrels of oil per day, which makes Nigeria the sixth largest producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). In addition, the Niger Delta is the world's second largest wetland, comprising mangrove swamps and low lying alluvial plains at the end of the Niger River, one of the great tributaries of sub-Saharan Africa, making it an incredibly fertile land (Hurst & Concannon, 2006, p.7).

There are more than fifty distinctive ethnic groups in the Niger Delta. The cultural mix of the peoples is as diverse as the languages they speak. Generally, the peoples of the Niger Delta belong to what has been described as the high context cultures. In other words, they are more communal than individualistic in lifestyle. The family is the basic unit of social organization with the father presiding over the affairs of the family. The major occupation of the peoples is farming and fishing.

By and large, though the Niger Delta and the peoples that inhabit the area are often perceived as a single cultural and, sometimes, political unit, the fact however is

that this is not historically correct. It is their common feeling of political alienation and marginalization in the regime of fiscal federalism in Nigeria that provides them the unity of purpose that generates the new identity of oneness in the public domain. This explains, partly, not only the horizontal but also the vertical direction of violent conflicts in the region.

Fiscal Federalism and Minority Groups in Nigeria's Niger Delta

Nigeria is a rental state that depends for over eighty per cent of its foreign exchange revenue on the petrodollar collected from the multinational corporations for the exploitation of the petroleum resources domiciled in the Niger Delta region (Chimee, 2010, p.71). Since the collapse of the regional governments' structure in the First Republic and the restructuring of the country into the federal, states and local government areas which began under the military dispensation in 1967, the three tier system of government came to be characterised by a fiscal structure that ensured the central collection of state revenues by the Federal Government and a culture of revenue sharing (allocation) among the different tiers of the Nigerian government. According to Wantchkon &Asadurian (2002):

In Nigeria, states and local governments are thus mainly dependent on statutory revenue transfers from the 'Federation Account' presided over by the Federal Government, which also gets the largest share. The Federal Government itself is mainly dependent for government revenue, on the valorization of crude oil on the world market.

In this section of the paper, the focus is on historicizing the fiscal system that defines the character of the Nigerian federal state and understanding the perception of the ethnic minority groups in the Niger Delta region of the fiscal regime in Nigeria.

Historically, although the 1963 constitution did not make provision for the ownership and control of mineral resources by the host states, their entitlement to 50 per cent of the proceed, and a share in another 30 per cent, with the Federal Government being entitled to only 20 per cent was perceived as a true reflection of the derivation principle. However, the application of the derivation principle was significantly whittled down from the mid-1970s with the ascendance of oil and gas as the major sources of state revenue (Roberts &Oladeji, 2005, p.281). Thus, in the 1980s, the revenue realized by the affected states of the Niger Delta became negligible (Mbanefoh and Egwakhide, 1998, p.213) to the extent that the Revenue Mobilisation and Fiscal Commission (RMFC) noted that it was only fair and proper that the special contributions from these states to the resources of the federation should be explicitly recognised (Danjuma, 1994, p.59). Yet, the commission continued to set aside only one per cent of the Federation Account to be shared by the mineral producing states on the basis of derivation (Roberts &Oladeji, 2005, p.282). This was the situation until Section 162 (2) was inserted into the 1999 constitution which provided that 'the principle of

derivation shall be constantly reflected in any approved formula as being not less than thirteen per cent of the revenue accruing to the Federation Account directly from any natural resources' (Nigeria, 1999). Nonetheless, it took intense agitations by the states involved before the provision was implemented by the Federal Government. Even then, its implementation was limited to onshore oil because the percentage attributed to offshore oil was subtracted on the basis of extant laws which conferred ownership of offshore oil to the Federal Government of Nigeria. This fiscal structure of the Nigerian federal state gave rise to the feeling that Nigeria's fiscal federalism is perverse and unfair to the peoples and states in the Niger Delta region (Roberts & Oladeji, 2005, p.283).

This feeling against Nigeria's fiscal federalism by the peoples of the Niger Delta was rationalised on several grounds. From the perspectives of the oil producing areas, there are many reasons for the struggle. Though shades of opinions tend to vary between the communities, the states and the various groups that claim a stake in the struggle, it includes the fact that 60 per cent of the dollar value realised from the petroleum sector goes to the Federal Government while the balance of 40 per cent goes to the multinational oil companies (Ifeka, 2001, p.103) thus tilting the intergovernmental balance between the Federal Government and the states in the sharing of the proceeds from petroleum resources in favour of the Federal Government (Roberts & Oladeji, 2005, p.282). This is compounded by the perception of the Niger Delta elites that the relegation of the 'derivation principle' is a reflection of the politics of the elites of the majority ethnic groups, particularly of the north, to perpetually subordinate them in the intra-elite struggle for power that characterised Nigerian politics. Hence, they have argued that the intelligentsia of the ruling majority ethnic groups consider derivation as excessively favouring the minority oil producing states and therefore capable of enthroneing a radical shift in revenue from the very influential and powerful majority groups to the minority groups, a situation which could upset the status quo (Mbanefoh & Egwakhide, 1998, p.218). The Niger Delta peoples have thus anchored their agitation for a fair fiscal federalism on the return to the 'derivation principle' that subsisted in inter-governmental fiscal relations prior to the ascendancy of petrol as the major revenue earner for Nigeria. By this they mean a situation whereby the state governments control the mineral resources found in their territories, retain fifty percent of earnings from the resources, while the federal government gets twenty percent and thirty percent goes to the 'distributable pool' as was the case before the civil war.

Another source of discontent is the fact that the revenue realised by the affected states of the Niger Delta region from the derivation principle is negligible (Mbanefoh & Egwakhide, 1998, p.216) while the region is relatively underdeveloped and officially neglected (Nigeria, 2002, p.12 and p.42). Also, the practice of the full implementation of the derivation principle before petroleum became significant seems to kindle the

feeling of marginalisation in the peoples and states in the Niger Delta region. This is not helped by their knowledge of the practice in other federations and other oil producing countries which decentralised the ownership and control of mineral rights. The need for environmental justice is an added source of discontent in the Niger Delta (Roberts, 2005, p.335). The brutal response and the violent suppression of the peoples' agitations for social and environmental justice which the struggle against the regime of fiscal federalism in Nigeria represents equally intensified the peoples' feeling of alienation from the Nigerian federal state. Finally, the insensibility of the Federal Government to the implementation of the thirteen per cent derivation principle enshrined in the 1999 constitution further aggravated the angst of the states and peoples of the Niger Delta (Roberts & Oladeji, 2005, p.283). These sources of dissatisfaction with Nigeria's fiscal federalism combined to alienate the peoples and states of the Niger Delta region and thus complicated the resolution of the national question in the country. The next section of this paper is preoccupied with an examination of the resort to insurgent activities by the ethnic minority groups in the Niger Delta and its impact on the vexed national question in Nigeria.

Ethnic Minority Struggle in the Niger Delta and the National Question

Depending on the politics, geographical and ethnic origin, various stakeholders have adopted contending positions in the fiscal federalism debate in Nigeria. Those who are prone to using violence, if necessary, to resolve the fiscal federalism debacle want 'absolute control' of the natural resources in their homelands with a willingness to pay appropriate taxes to the Federal Government. They claim to be acting on behalf of their communities and in defence of their peoples. Ifeka (2001) notes that an oil producing community:

...usually believes that its position as 'host' to an oil company means that they are...the 'real' owners of the resource. This emboldens them to claim that oil found under the waters or land...belongs to them and that they are therefore entitled to claim the revenues accruing from it (101).

The second group in the struggle for the institution of a just fiscal federalism in Nigeria is the political class. They are more conciliatory as they demand political autonomy within the Nigerian federation but insist on being allocated adequate share of the revenue derived from the resources in their states. However, what amounts to adequate share has been a matter of disagreement and ranges from 25 to 75 per cent. It has been noted that they often make this demand using the agitation for resource control as a bargaining chip (Roberts & Oladeji, 2005, p.283).

The third group in the contestations over fiscal federalism is the Federal Government, the major beneficiary of the status quo. It is predictably opposed to the agitations for resource control by the oil producing states in the Niger Delta region.

The position of the Federal Government is seen as approximating the position and interest of the states and peoples in the northern region who do not host the oil companies and therefore do not contribute to the oil revenue.

On the other hand, the northern states and peoples, the fourth group in the fiscal federalism debacle, regards the agitations of their Niger Delta counterparts as 'treacherous' arguing that oil being 'God-given' should belong to the whole country. Moderate elements in the north would rather that the Niger Delta elites advocate for favourable modifications in the revenue allocation formula and improved welfare conditions for their peoples, while the northern hardliners insist that the agitation for resource control would not be actualised within the framework of the Nigerian federation (Nzemeke, 2001, p.4). The attitude of the peoples in the Niger Delta to the position of those opposed to fiscal federalism is articulated by a member of the Federal House of Representatives when he stated in 1993 that:

That the oil in the Nigerian soil is regarded as national wealth only because it is found in the land of the southern minority ethnic groups. ... If petroleum were found in the soils of the majority ethnic groups, the law decreeing petroleum products a national wealth would not have been enacted (Nwankwor, 1993, p.18).

The impact of this longstanding bickering over fiscal federalism on nation-building is the increased polarisation of the country along ethnic and regional divides and the institution of the culture of violence promoted by radical ethnic and regional apologists. The manifestation of the popularity of the violence option in the resolution of the national question is the emergence and preponderance of militia groups of diverse sectarian persuasions across all the regions of the country. Some of these militia groups include the Arewa Peoples Congress (APC), the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), the Ohaneze Ndigbo, the Ijaw Youth Movement, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), the Movement for the survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Egbesu Boys, the Yandaba, and the Boko Haram.

The activities of these militia groups would appear to have been the greatest threat to nation-building efforts in which the resolution of the national question is central in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. For instance, while the insurgent activities of the Boko Haram group in the north-eastern part of Nigeria which started in 2009 is still ongoing and have complicated the national question and posed a daunting challenge to nation-building efforts, the activities of the militia groups in the Niger Delta which grounded to a halt the economic foundations of the country in the struggle to actualise fiscal federalism rubbished the gains of national reconciliation ushered in by the concession of the presidency of Nigeria to a Yoruba under the democratic dispensation of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. The activities of the militia groups in the different regions

of the country appear to have a way of popping up at major junctures of nation-building efforts to complicate the national question. When we add up the forgoing militia activities to the recent activities of the militia groups in the farmers – pastoralists' conflicts that currently overwhelm the central Nigeria/middle-belt states, the complexity of the national question in Nigeria could only be imagined. The frequency and the quantum of sectarian violent conflicts in Nigeria makes one to ponder if there could be any hope of significantly resolving the national question and building a nation out of Nigeria now or in the near future.

Towards Resolving the Debacle

Fiscal federalism is a major element of a federal system of government. Fiscal federalism denotes the structure of fiscal relations that exists among the federating units in a federation. It entails the devolution of the powers to own, control, allocate and use the resources of a nation and the fiscal value derived from them by all the federating units in a manner that recognises their relative autonomy and interdependence. In the case of Nigeria, it has to do with the ownership and control of revenue generating resources and the allocation of the fiscal values derived from such resources among the different tiers of government. Arriving at an acceptable system of governance anchored on the principles of federalism for the oil and gas resources found in the Niger Delta region and allocating the fiscal value derived from them has been a source of virulent debate and violent confrontation between the Federal Government and the states and peoples in the Niger Delta region. The dynamics of this process has led to the emergence and growth of different shades of agitations, including the violent forms which manifest in the confrontation of the Federal Government by ethnic militia groups in the region. Also, inter-ethnic and inter-regional relations between the elites of the ethnic minority peoples in the Niger Delta region and the elites of the majority ethnic groups, particularly in the northern region, became frosty over contestations over fiscal federalism in Nigeria. This, in turn, has translated into mutual inter-ethnic and inter-regional suspicion among the different peoples, thereby creating the fertile ground for recruitment of people into ethno-regional insurgent and militia groups. The activities and the counter-activities of these insurgent and militia groups, purportedly in the defence of the interests of their peoples, have further complicated the national question to the point that nation-building in Nigeria in the over one hundred years history of coexistence since amalgamation and fifty-five years of independence have failed to mitigate the centrifugal forces militating against the transformation of the Nigerian state into a Nigerian nation capable of attracting and sustaining the supreme loyalty of the different peoples that inhabit the country. What therefore should be done to reverse this trend and promote the resolution of the national question?

In line with the finding of this study that there is a positive correlation between the struggle by the ethnic minorities in the Niger Delta for fiscal federalism and the deteriorating national question in Nigeria, it is recommended that the Nigerian state

should be restructured away from its current unitary orientation that promotes hegemonic and patriarchal relations among the different tiers of government and ethnic nationalities. This should be done in such a way that promotes complementarities, cooperation and equality among the tiers of government, the states and the different peoples. The establishment of a federal fiscal regime in line with global best practices in federal systems of government is sine qua non for the national inclusiveness that has eluded the country in the last one hundred years and essential for the resolution of the protracted national question in Nigeria.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that the struggles of the ethnic minority groups in the Niger Delta to realise fiscal federalism should be conceived and perceived as part and parcel of the national question. Most of the great nations of the world have had to confront the challenge of the national question at one time or the other in their nation-building processes. While most have successfully resolved the issues that constitute their national question, a few have failed and thus have experienced fission. For Nigeria, the difference will be, as it has been, in the political culture that defines inter-elite, intergovernmental, inter-ethnic and inter-regional relations. Once the political culture that promotes the emergence and sustenance of a clientele state continues to be dominant in Nigeria, the national question will continue to militate against the progress of nation-building. However, if the power elites in all the regions of the country reform themselves away from their current individualistic and traditionalist political subcultures and embrace the moralistic political subculture, instituting fiscal federalism and resolving the national question will be a simple task to accomplish in the process of nation-building in Nigeria.

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