

CAN THE CENTRE HOLD? AN EXPLORATION OF NIGERIA'S FEDERALISM

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Abstract: *There is increasing concern that undermines the significance and robust value of the federal system of government in the Nigeria context. It is notable and universally known that federalism is the prototype of national development and economic growth for some countries like the United States of America. Despite evidence of positive outcomes in federal states, the Nigeria case is bedeviled with strives and unhealthy rivalries. There is an increasing upsurge of ethnic distrust, which is hampering the unity of Nigeria as a country—notably the anxiety of the south-east as well as the south-south peoples. The problem has been exacerbated under the government of President Muhammadu Buhari. Against this backdrop, this study appraised the pattern of agitation in the Nigerian federal system. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach that comprised qualitative and quantitative research. The sample size was 1320, and this was applied to the quantitative survey, while the qualitative survey was conducted among small size groups. Data were collated and analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The former applied structured questionnaires, descriptive statistics, and inferential statistics. The latter applied unstructured interviewing and thematic analysis. More than three-quarters of the 735 participants disagreed that the federal government enshrined national unity in the structure of federal appointments. The chi square estimate, $\chi^2 89.8$; $p < 0.01$, was significant in measuring the pattern of federal appointments and ethnic agitations. Qualitative data reveals that Indigenous peoples of southern Nigeria identified a skewed pattern of federal appointments in key military hierarchy and mainstream oil corporations that excluded their ethnic members. This is the major cause of agitation. This study suggests renegotiating the oil derivation dividend and reorganizing appointments in a significant oil corporation to support the host communities' consent to the development of natural resources.*

Keywords: *Renegotiation of federalism, resource control, ethnic groups, federal character*

Introduction

Nigeria is a federal state that operates under a republican constitution that defines the role of the state. The history of Nigeria is synonymous with a federal government. This draws from the fact that there is a unique pattern of state function and units therein. The federal government of Nigeria has a long history of statehood and governance in the post-independence period (Onanuga, 2014). The post-1966 military coup was a precursor to the establishment of federalism, which began in 1979. Since this period, Nigeria has witnessed incessant ethnic strife. Notably, federalism imposes the powers of a sovereign federal state

on federating units. The federal government has absolute power, and it is granted to the president or head of state to wield absolute power (Nweke, 2019). The 1979 constitution and its 1999 revised edition, as amended, provide for a presidential system in the federal state (Fadakinte, 2013). Historically, the agitation since 1979 has been vehemently centered around resource control. This is so because the 1999 Constitution provided sections for the power of the federal government and federating states in the exclusive list, concurrent list, and residual list (The 1999 Constitution Document, 2015). The constitution clearly states that the federal government shall legislate on an exclusive list and a concurrent list. Whereas the provision of an exclusive list takes away resource control from the states or regions where it is found, the federal government is empowered by the constitution through its organs to determine what is retained as royalties or derivations by regions that host the resources. This means the federating units are reduced to powerless control over the resources that were earlier used to develop regions that host mineral resources under pre-federalism. During regional government, the Western, Eastern, and Northern regions developed at peace with regional resources and only paid taxes to the central government. Nigeria was not engulfed in the orgy of devastating outlooks before the 1966 military coup. The absolute power of the federal state in Nigeria's multiethnic society has been the recipe for current disparaging tensions, agitations, and severe ethnic distrust (Etekpe, 2007). There have been numerous freedom fighter organisations, especially dominant in southern Nigeria.

The agitations of freedom fighters are conveniently located around a sense of inequality and a powerless outlook on resource control, which hamper regional development and create hunger, unemployment, poor policing, and insecure security, which question collective existence (Falana, 2018). It is argued by some scholars that federalism hampers the pace of growth for federating units, breeds overdependence on the center, creates lazy states, and fosters unhealthy rivalries and ethnic suspicions (Ake, 2001; Akinboye, 2001). Further, the groundbreaking contradiction is that ethnic unrest is fostered by federalism. Indeed, it may be argued that federalism has led to the creation of ethnic militias and organised pressure groups that compromise the safety and existence of the federal state (Osaghae, 2020). There is an uprising of militia groups on the one hand and the formation of an elite group on the other. Federalism creates patterns of agitation that may metamorphose and snowball into larger-scale conflict and civil unrest in a multiethnic state (Moshood, 2015). Nigeria has repeatedly witnessed this unrest and uprising, which have become synonymous with the government of President Muhammadu Buhari. There is public disenchantment and disillusionment against the Buhari government by peoples of the east and south due to state nepotism and discrimination that exclude ethnic people in the federal structure of appointment, project development, and military bureaucracy (Falana, 2018). Unfortunately, the situation in the south-east and south-south has deteriorated due to expressions of anger against the federal government. Yet, this region contributed significantly to Nigeria's mainstay economy. Against this backdrop, this paper is drafted to:

Analyze the geopolitical patterns of agitation in Nigeria among the southern regions of the country.

Literature Review

It is curious to know that federalism is a collective agreement in a social contract in which federating units have agreed to give up their self-independent rule (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). Notably, Nigerian federalism occurs in a multiethnic landscape, which brings together competitive groups. There is a conscious agreement that lays out compensation by amount of contribution to the national sovereign purse and redistribution of benefits. This accounts for federal allocation and the fiscal commission in Nigeria saddled with such responsibilities (Ogunyemi, 2014). It follows that suspicions around unbalanced and skewed agreements create fertile breeding grounds for agitation in the federal state.

Modeling Agreement

Fundamentally, a key difference between social contract theories is whether the parties have different or similar justifications. Everyone rationalizes in accordance with Rawls' (1996) contract, which reduces the collective choice issue to a single individual's decision. The choice of any one person affects everyone else indirectly. In these kinds of social contracts, the description of the parties—their motivations and the circumstances surrounding their decisions—does all the heavy lifting. After we have completely outlined the justification of one party, the contract has been defined. The opposing hypothesis holds that the parties still disagree in their assessments of potential social contracts even after identifying them (along with their values, information, and rationality). This viewpoint holds that a contract can only provide a predetermined outcome if there is a mechanism to balance out the various rankings of each member and get to a consensus (D'Agostino et al., 2003). This paper draws on two key models of agreement mechanisms: consent and bargaining.

Consent

Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau's conventional social contract theories profoundly bank on the notion of "consent". Only the "consent of free men," in Locke's view, could qualify someone to serve in authority (Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2017). This group of thinkers and subsequent discourses contend that the concept of "consent" includes the ability of an individual to hold themselves normatively. At the age of consent, individuals are allowed to choose any type of legitimately enforceable transaction. The initial modern contract theorists asserted that individuals had fundamental normative powers over themselves and self-ownership prior to joining the social contract. The theorists also opined that individuals are politically obligated to place consent at the epicenter of their contracts. A social contract resulted in obligation if the parties had the ability to work in unity and use normative authority. Covenants bind, as Hobbes contended; for this reason, they are "artificial chains" (Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2017). These factors, particularly the latter, have been criticized by modern social contract ideas. According to Buchanan (2000), the main advancement in recent social contract theory has been the ability to differentiate between the issue of what creates political obligation—which is the main focus of the consent tradition in social contract thought—and the issue of what constitutional orders or social institutions are mutually beneficial and stable over time. Individual morality governs how one should behave in relation to the law and social norms, whereas public or societal morality governs the creation and justification of political and social institutions (d'Agostino, Gaus & Thrasher, 1996).

In fact, Buchanan believed that the reorientation of political philosophy toward public or social morality rather than the obligation of individuals has been a key component of more contemporary contractual thought. Although some modern social contract theorists still speak in terms of consent, agreement is the central concept of this school of thought. Social contract theorists, however, come in a variety. Social contract theories are based on the commonsense concept of agreement (Freeman, 2007). It is possible to support or concur with a principle without being obligated to follow it in any way. Additionally, according to Freeman, when one is in agreement, it shows individuals' justifications. An agreement can also be seen as a test or heuristic. In the context of community political or social relationships, central to the purpose of a consensual collective bargaining agreement is to demonstrate our justifications for action (Freeman, 2006). Agreement serves as a reason-revealing act rather than a performative that imposes duty (Freeman, 2006). If people are sensible, their agreements will reflect the values they hold dear.

Here, Rawls' (1996) difference between "you and me," "the parties to the deliberative model," and "everyone in a well-ordered society" is crucial. In the two ways that are considered, the parties' agreement in the deliberative model is unquestionably hypothetical: it is an agreement between hypothetical parties. Yet, the purpose of the deliberative model is to assist "you and me" in solving our justificatory dilemma, which is to determine what kind of social structures are described as free agents with no dominion over one another (Rawls, 1996). Actually, Nigeria's union serves as a model for hypothetical justification. It is assumed that there will be one Nigeria made up of multiethnic communities that coexist in equality and harmony. The justifiable premise could be seen as justice for all, leading to the parties to consent. So, the participants' discussions and the circumstances in which they deliberate serve as models for our genuine beliefs in justification and justice.

Bargaining

Perhaps it is not surprising that the revival of modern contract theory coincided with the application of game-theoretic techniques, particularly bargaining theory, to philosophical issues. The rigorous approach of bargaining theory, established by Nash (1950) and Harsanyi (1997), simulates how reasonable people might come to an agreement to split a surplus or product. The bargaining model of agreement, in its most basic version, provides a group of people with unique utility responsibilities that are comparable to one another without directly necessitating interpersonal utility comparisons. If the parties concerned can come to an agreement on how to divide the stated product or goods, they shall get that division. Yet, if they cannot agree, they will instead receive the results of their disagreement, as is clearly the case in Nigeria. They might have brought this or some other specific amount to the table. One illustration is a straightforward demand game in which two players must specify how much of a given pot of money they desire. Each will receive what they typed down if the sum of the two "bids" is equal to or less than the pot; otherwise, neither will receive anything. Using negotiating tactics, such as those suggested by Braithwaite, is one option for parties to settle their disputes. Rawls (1958) acknowledged that "justice is fairness." Since he believed that this form of solution relied on threat advantage, Rawls himself rejected bargaining solutions to the social compact (Rawls 1999). Yet, Gauthier (1986) notably embraced this strategy, constructing *Morals by Agreement* on the Kalai and Smorodinsky's (1975) compromise strategy (Gaus, 2011).

Recently, Binmore (2005) and Muldoon (2017) both made advances in the social contract theory, which is based on the Nash bargaining solution, while Moehler (2014) uses a "stabilized" Nash bargaining solution. Although Gauthier (1986) changed his method to negotiation, it is still more similar to his initial solution than it is to Nash's solution. A disadvantage of all such techniques is the diversity of negotiating solutions, which can greatly differ, in conjunction with Rawls' (1996) opinion of threat advantage. Although the Nash approach is currently the most popular, its effects can be unexpected. Additionally, others contend that because bargaining solutions are inherently uncertain, the only way to make them certain is to make implausible or contentious assumptions (Southwood, 2010; Southwood, 2013). Games' equilibrium selection faces similar issues (Vanderschraaf, 2005; Harsanyi & Reinhard, 1988). Recent advances in the social contract and bargaining theory frequently use dynamic (Muldoon, 2017) or evolutionary approaches to stimulating negotiation (Skyrms, 2014).

Looking at how real people really bargain and come to agreements is a more empirically oriented approach that builds on the bargaining and game theory of Schelling (1960). The forerunners of experimental economics utilized lab tests to observe how participants responded to division problems (Smith, 2003). Unexpectedly, Smith (1982) indicates that significant and intriguing outcomes emanated from asymmetric bargaining games such as the ultimatum game. After the initial trials, numerous experimental works have been carried out on economic cooperative agreements and negotiating issues. The significance of social norms and traditions in deciding the outcome is a major theme in most of the most pertinent philosophical work (Bicchieri, 2016). Although relying on a bargaining solution could lead to social contract determinacy, doing so comes at the expense of shifting to an approach that should be based on the empirically contingent outcomes of socially and biologically evolution-oriented systems, or, in the case of axiomatic bargaining, relying on a contentious commensuration mechanism. Although it has been dormant for a while, the works of Alexander (2007), Thrasher (2014), Thoma (2015), and Muldoon (2017) are reviving the significance of bargaining in the social compact.

Therefore, the study sets out to demonstrate the consequences of the object of the "social contract," the "collective agreement," and its constituent parts (equilibrium, bargaining, aggregation, and consent) in the Nigerian state, particularly in light of recent calls for renegotiation from some contracting parties.

Methodology

This paper is an empirical adventure undertaken by the researchers to investigate some of the factors associated with perceived tension among the peoples of southern Nigeria. The paper adopted a survey method using descriptive research and a cross-sectional design. The sample size was 1320 participants, who were discretely and purposefully selected. At the level of a quantitative survey, the target study population consisted of resident individuals who lived in some selected parts of the south-south and south-east Nigeria. In the south-east, the researchers purposefully identified Imo state, Abia state, and Anambra state, while in the south-south, Rivers state, Delta state, as well as Bayelsa state, were selected. These states were major hotspots of ethnic agitation and restructuring. At the level of a qualitative survey, groups such as IPOB/MASSOB, OHANESE INDIGBO, PANDEF, the House of Assembly, and the High Courts were identified for study. Similarly, the researchers

adopted purposive sampling and accidental sampling as sampling procedures. Using the purposive method, the researchers justified the inclusion of research objects, locations, and participants for the study. Accidental sampling was applied to select respondents for the study. These were individuals who were readily available and willing to consent to participate in the study. The research instruments for data collection consisted of a structured questionnaire and an unstructured interview. The former was applied to resident individuals, and the latter was applied among group discussants. A mixed-methods approach was employed. The method of data collection was quantitatively and qualitatively derived using statistical labeling and the text of the conversation. The data were analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The former applied descriptive and inferential statistics; the latter applied an ethnographic model using thematic analysis. Prior to data collection, the researchers obtained consent from participants and kept their identities anonymous.

Results and Discussion

Nigeria State's Agitation Trend

All of Nigeria's ethnic groups were expected to come together with the adoption of the Fourth Republic Constitution in 1999, which ushered in the current era of democratic rule. Inalienable rights for all people were acknowledged in Chapter 3 of the Constitution, regardless of racial superiority or inferiority. No part of the nation shall be barred from benefiting in the same proportion as other units, according to the same chapter of the constitution. The 1999 constitution's Section One expressly calls for the balanced development and acknowledgement of all ethnic groups. But the Nigeria of today exhibits dissatisfaction and mistrust. In light of this, Tables 1 and 1.2 in this subsection analyze the pattern of agitation that has persisted in the current makeup of the sovereign country.

Table 1: Characterization of Agitation Pattern by Respondents

Variables	South-East		South- South		Total	
	Freq= 642	Percent =100%	Freq= 678	Percent =100%	Fre=1320	Percent =100%
Which of these do you consider as major agitation of your geopolitical zones?						
Federal appointment	102	15.9	108	15.9	210	15.9
Federal project	13	2.0	13	1.9	26	2.0
Content of constitution	36	5.6	42	6.2	78	5.9
Marginalization	48	7.5	47	6.9	95	7.2
Resource control	443	69.0	455	67.1	911	69.0
Do you consider such agitation as collective struggle?						
Disagreed	36	5.6	42	6.2	78	5.9
Moderately agreed	210	32.7	217	32.0	427	32.3
Strongly agreed	396	61.7	419	61.8	815	61.8

Which of these is major limitation of constitution?						
Structure of constitution	232	36.1	253	37.3	485	36.7
Powers of the president	40	6.2	39	5.8	79	6.0
Resource control	285	44.4	289	42.6	574	43.5
Formulation of the constitution	85	13.2	97	14.3	182	13.8
Does presidential system deprive your geopolitical zone?						
Disagreed	65	10.1	67	9.9	132	10.0
Moderately agreed	139	21.7	148	21.8	287	21.7
Strongly agreed	438	68.2	463	68.3	901	68.3
Do you think Federal project(s) in your geopolitical zone is sustainable?						
Disagreed	379	59.0	392	57.8	771	58.4
Moderately agreed	153	23.8	162	23.9	315	23.9
Strongly agreed	110	17.1	124	18.3	234	17.7
Do you think federal projects & infrastructures in your geopolitical zone promote sense of belonging?						
Disagreed	381	59.3	410	60.5	791	59.9
Moderately agreed	197	30.7	200	29.5	397	30.1
Strongly agreed	64	10.0	68	10.0	132	10.0
What type of marginalization does your geopolitical zone experience in Nigeria?						
Political marginalization	82	12.8	89	13.1	171	13.0
Economic marginalization	92	14.3	103	15.2	195	14.8
Local government creation	18	2.8	21	3.1	39	3.0
Appointments Military hierarchies	450	70.1	465	68.6	915	69.2
Do you think such marginalization trigger conflict?						
Strongly agreed	239	37.2	257	37.9	496	37.5
Moderately agreed	165	25.7	175	25.8	340	25.8
Disagreed	238	37.1	246	36.3	484	36.7
Do consider that resources in your geopolitical zone can sustain growth?						
Disagreed	172	26.8	192	28.3	364	27.6
Moderately agreed	97	15.1	94	13.9	191	14.5
Strongly agreed	373	58.1	392	57.8	765	58.0

Source: Researchers' Field Survey, 2021

The table above shows results for the pattern of agitation expressed by participants in this study. Pattern measures factors or phenomena that endure over time and constitute

distinctive shapes in human behaviour. Over time, there has been agitation by people of eastern and southern Nigeria, drawing upon observed inequity in the distribution of national wealth. This study was curious because it explored explicit factors that contradicted the prevailing federalism in Nigeria. Respondents were asked to identify major agitations in the geopolitical regions. Against this backdrop, appointments at the federal level (15.0%), projects from the federal level (2.0%), constitutional content (5.9%), marginalisation (7.2%), and resource control (69.0%) were listed. However, the case for resources was magnified as being central to the agitation. In the case of the south-east, 69.0% opted for resource control and 67.1% in the south-south.

A further probe was conducted when respondents were asked whether or not the agitation was a collective struggle. This study sought to validate some literature that verified that southern and eastern ethnic groups were united in the struggle to restructure federalism (Ebizim & Onyemere, 2018). Results in the current study showed that 61.8% strongly agreed and 32.3% moderately agreed that agitation was a collective struggle and collective goal of the people. Explicitly, 61.7% and 61.8% strongly agreed in the south-east and south-south, respectively. Unfortunately, the posture of ethnic agitation in the geopolitical zone is gradually spilling over into ethnic hatred, distrust, and inert violence. Indeed, ethnics in the study area displayed jaundiced opinions and a lack of commitment to Nigerian federalism and found fault with the federal constitution. Here, 36.7% held that the structure of the Constitution is faulty; 6.0% faulted the powers of the president as empowered by the Constitution; 43.5% identified the placement of resource control that the Constitution hindered; and 13.8% faulted the formulation of the Constitution, which lacked a unified contribution. Some authors have faulted the Nigerian Constitution and tagged it a military Greek gift that hinders universal development (Etekpe, 2007). Resource control also appeared dominantly among participants in the south-east (44.4%) and south-south (42.6%).

The presidential system of government and the governance structure around it have become major concerns for political thinkers, professionals, and public affairs commentators in Nigeria (Thrasher, 2014a). It is not that this system is faulty, but the practice and configuration that subjugates elements within it is the red alert depleting the value (Etekpe, 2007). In this study, 68.3% strongly agreed that the red alert has remained a stifling disadvantage in the presidential system. Yet, 68.2% and 68.3% strongly agreed in the south-east and south-south, respectively. Participants shared the opinion that the 1999 Constitution as amended empowered the president beyond rationality of governance and sometimes exercise of power, which posed serious concern. Some have indicated that the Nigerian president is powerful and absolute, and this impedes uniform development or gains in a multi-ethnic society like Nigeria. Buttressing the point here, a discussant said: A major part of federal revenue comes from oil. The community that produced the oil suffered from major degradation. These communities are only offered 13% derivation, which is very meager. Before the war, revenue was shared according to derivation. The majority of revenue went to areas that contributed largely to the revenue. Now the federal government takes the lion's share. The communities that produced the oil and contributed largely to the revenue suffer degradation... Appointments to key and strategic positions are held by people from the north. The Igbo contribute to oil exploration.... But the zone is openly excluded... managers of Nigeria's oil company are from the north. The Board of

the NNPC is largely dominated by people from the north. The south-east is deprived and excluded. (IDIs/High Court Judge/South-East/2021)

In the preliminary, the text above was commonly observed among the discussants in the study. There is quick access to open meaning in the text. Geopolitical zones lacked the power to retain revenues from zones that produced from mineral resources found around them. The Constitution neither envisions nor arrogates this power. Rather, the power of the president in Nigeria is absolute and overarching. Unfortunately, there was growing disaffection against federal projects and federal infrastructure distributed in the geopolitical zones. In this case, 58.4% of the respondents held that federal projects were not sustainable, and 59.9% held that such existing projects in the zones were not sufficient to promote a sense of belonging. In the south-east, 59.0 percent expressed major concerns around federal projects, and 57.9 percent in the south-south faulted federal projects in the zone. The expression reflected a lack of even distribution, project abandonment, a lack of commitment to federal unity, and the distribution of resources, which reflected a contribution to national revenue.

In the submission of a discussant, the comment was:

The zone is championing resource control, equitable distribution of power, and true federating units. The tenet of the constitution should truly be implemented, which states that all federating units are equal. Like what we have today, a negation of the constitution, especially in federal appointments. Appointments by the federal government tilted obviously to a section of the country, the northern extraction. There won't be peace. Let the country separate. Let the zones be independent and go their way. (IDIs/High Court Judge/South South//20201)

Another interviewee offered a similar theme-related statement:

There is no trust between the north and east. The north is concerned that Igbo leadership of the country will lead to northern dominance. There is a fear of dominance. MASSOB and IPOB agitate for equity and the redistribution of infrastructure in the Nigerian state. (IDIs/High Court Judge/Southeast/2021)

There is an explicit appearance of disaffection and a continuous placement of feeling, which undermined federalism in Nigeria. This posture remained patterned in the geopolitical zones. In the light of the statement above, participants listed items that consisted of economic marginalisation (14.8%), political marginalisation (13.0%), the creation of local government (3.0%), as well as military hierarchies (69.2%) as forms of marginalisation suffered by the geopolitical zones. Indeed, discrimination in the appointment of military officers was reckoned as a major disservice to south-south and south-east people in the administration of President Buhari. Respondents in the survey felt that the composition of the military was not a true reflection of its multiethnic character or that this perhaps violated the spirit of its federal character (Osaghae, 2020). As a follow-up to probe further items of research, respondents were asked to show the implication for peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. Unfortunately, 37.5% attributed observed marginalisation as a prelude to conflict and ethnic distrust in Nigeria, and 25.8% moderately agreed. On average, half of the participants attributed marginalisation to conflict. In the case of the south-east, 37.2% attributed marginalisation to conflict, and 37.9% in the south-south expressed a similar opinion. The study further probed the role of control as a panacea for peace and growth in the geopolitical zone. Results showed that 58.0% agreed, connecting

resource control as a solution base. In a similar vein, 14.5% moderately agreed, and 27.6% canvassed for extension beyond resource control.

In the words of discussant:

The effect of oil exploration in the Niger-Delta is overwhelming. The construction of a one-kilometer road in the zone cost not less than one billion naira or more. But in other zones, the amount is much lower due to topography. Oil exploration has degraded the environment. We are championing resource control to develop our zone. The federal government is depriving us. We are suffering for it. We experience pollution, gas flaring, oil spillage, and environmental degradation. We are the people in the midst of the danger. They don't understand our pain. Resources should be distributed according to their source. Let people benefit fairly from their God-given resources. (IDIs/High Court Judge/South-East/2021)

The abundant fact above reflected the internal collective struggle in the geopolitical zones as a major area, which has become a monster threatening the commitment of ethnic peoples and lack of national unity. Discussing the theme of resource control, a discussant said:

A major part of federal revenue comes from oil. The community that produced the oil suffered from major degradation. These communities are only offered 13% derivation, which is very meager. Before the war, revenue was shared according to derivation. The majority of revenue went to areas that contributed largely to the revenue. Now the federal government takes the lion's share. The communities that produced the oil and contributed largely to the revenue suffer degradation... Appointments to key and strategic positions are held by people from the north. The Igbo contribute to oil exploration.... But the zone is openly excluded... managers of Nigeria's oil company are from the north. The Board of the NNPC is largely dominated by people from the north. The south-east is deprived and excluded. (IDIs/High Court Judge/South-East/2021)

Unfortunately, the resource control has remained indelible since the time of republican government and spilled over into the ongoing Fourth Republic. There is no respite in foresight, and the ethnic people of the southern zone remain committed to the course of restructuring current federalism.

Table 2: Cross Tabulation of perception federal appointment and national unity

Level of perception	I believe in the unity of Nigeria			Total
	Disagreed	Moderately agreed	Strongly agreed	
Poor	488	242	132	862
Fair	130	133	0	263
Good	117	39	39	195
Total	735	414	171	1320

In the table above, perception was rated as covering the current configuration of federal appointments on the one hand and believing in the unity of Nigeria on the other. Perception was rated poor (862), fair (263), and good (195). This was a reflection of existing agitation that faulted federalism in Nigeria due to its geopolitical nature and inequity in the distribution of resources. A reflection of this was the proportion of participants (735), which disagreed with proponents of national unity.

Table 2.1: Chi Square

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	89.814 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	119.077	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.135	1	.714
N of Valid Cases	1320		

The chi square test showed that perception and belief were related and showed similarity. This is because the chi square was significant at χ^2 89.8, p .000, which indicates that the perception held by participants in the survey predicted a pattern of belief in national unity. Therefore, perception is an independent variable that explains the belief system in the study.

**Table 2.2: Correlation
Symmetric Measures**

	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval Pearson's R	-.010	.029	-.367	.714 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal Spearman Correlation	-.007	.028	-.237	.813 ^c
N of Valid Cases	1320			

Using the value for Pearson's moment correlation, a further test was conducted to update the results in the chi square. Correlation value was negative (-.010) and p value $>.714$. This implied that perception and belief, as shown in the correlation, differed in their tendency to alter one another. The linear relationship was negative, or inverse. As a result, perception held by participants was insufficient as a predictor of belief, whether poor, fair, or good. Looking further in the column of standard error, the range was .029, or 97.1 percent confidence interval. This offers leverage because intervening factors have predicted the association between perception and belief. Ultimately, perception shapes beliefs, but in the case of this study, perception did not independently predict beliefs. It follows that perceptions held by people in the geopolitical zones were shaped by other factors that influenced beliefs held. In the meantime, there was a dominant belief that federalism in Nigeria was a precursor to ethnic discrimination and depreciated the value of national unity.

Conclusion and recommendations

There is a curious assertion to state that federalism is skewed when it is considered in the space of southern peoples, as evidently showed. There is an asymmetric pattern in the structure of benefits accorded, and this formed the basis for disgruntled voices in the space of Nigerian federalism. Originally, federalism offered a choice of consent and bargaining in the agreement to give up self-governing regional ethnic groups in the south and north of Nigeria. The consent is laid down to accept the federal state and belong to one Nigeria. This consent is reinforced by the recognition of multilateral interests. The bargaining power also derives from the agreement to redistribute federal resources according to contribution

and the entrenchment of the principles and ethics of the contract. This offers the foundation for a sustainable federal state, which guarantees continuity. Government that shortchanges such agreement becomes tainted with suspicion, especially around multiethnic groups. Unfortunately, the trend that beclouds the government of President Muhammadu Buhari is second to none in shaping public opinion and ethnic uprisings in the southern and eastern regions of Nigeria. Resource control dominated the types of agitations that participants from the east and south listed in the survey. Although the 1999 constitution provides for benefits from oil extraction for the people in the south and east, there has been considerable opposition to this provision. These agitations were shown to have the unsettling ability to cause division within the group and eventual discontinuation of unity or cessation in the country. In light of this, this study suggests renegotiating oil extraction incentives in order to justify the host communities' approval of natural resources. To achieve success in implementing this recommendation, renegotiation should follow a bottom-up strategy.

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