

The Paradox of 1914 and the June 12: Nigeria's Unending Nightmares

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Abstract: The name Nigeria appears to bring multidimensional meanings to different people. Nigerians and foreigners have been amazed at the endurance the country has made amidst several military conflicts and civil disturbances over the years without eventually disintegrating. It has therefore been pre-supposed that the country will continue as one entity in spite of its cycles of instability following perennial political and social upheavals. But two events in history: its amalgamation in 1914 and the events surrounding June 12 1993 (pre- and post -) have been seen to be important landmarks in the country's destiny. This paper showed the significances of these two dates (and related ones) as well as their impacts in shaping the future of the country, which have been both nightmarish and positive on the country's present. Two broad perspectives are examined: the political construct of the Nigerian nation and its social characteristics. The former was examined in detail as the determinant of the secondary characteristics which are borne on the latter.

Key Words: Nigeria; Political; Country; June 12; 1914; Military; Constitution; Conference; Niger Delta; Election

I. INTRODUCTION

1914 and Nigeria's Destiny Sojourn¹

1914 has its memoir:
the birth of a nation
into decades of slavery.
1960; the nation's liberty
*Omi-inira*² it was
and that, the beginning;
the long walk to freedom but captivity
a ruptured sojourn.
1963, a seeming reality
of unity and prosperity.

¹ This is a poem written as part of the research paper, of which the actual title is *The June 12*.

² *Omi-inira* is a Yoruba language word which literally means 'water of affliction.' Ordinarily, it is spelt *ominira* and means freedom (or independence). *Omi-inira* has been applied to jocular representation of the state of the Nigerian nation which has passed through years of poor governance with a resulting high incidence of poverty and underdevelopment in spite of the rich resources and varied many opportunities at the disposal of the country.

But 1965,
expectations ruffled
sweat and blood made vain.

That June, the war came
You, me, all
Everything down, wasted
A sacrifice, a vanity
Vanity, forgotten.

But June 12
Of crisis and hope:
A darkened light
Demand of sacrifice
Of life, for life.

May 29, or October 1
Yet, June 12 haunts
A grave for the past
The nation's sacrifice.

Today and everyday;
May 27, May 29, or October 1
June 12, the consolation
The ruins rebuilt.

June 12 yet haunts
Nigeria's date with change
Of freedom (from self-colonialism)
From life's bondage.

So everyday

It's June 12!

Somehow, Nigeria's political adventure, or national existence could not but be dated to 1914, which saw critical creations in the nation's existence. The country is the heart of Africa. Karl Maier in his book noted that "to understand Africa, one must understand Nigeria."³ It is indeed a country of perennial ethnic tensions, a high level of poverty within enormous wealth, and on the brink of collapse which would be unprecedented. The implication of all these is reflected in the words of *Okehi Kalu*, a former local council chairman in *Abia* state, following a statement he made in 2009:

There is hunger in the land. A trip to the villages would convince you. There is no money to buy the very few things in the market. Nigerians are starving and as a matter of fact, they have been stretched to the limit. It is so pathetic [2].

Kalu's statement above could not be far from current realities as the quality of governance has dropped significantly with negative consequences for the people.

The recent republics (of Nigeria) have been under more stress and pressure than any others [3]. According to [3], "the crisis that befell the Western Region which collapsed the first republic, the malfeasance that led to the collapse of the second republic in 1983 and the diarchy of the third republic which crashed under the weight of the June 12 mayhem, cannot be compared to the catastrophe that has buffeted the fourth republic." This is because right from May 29, 1999 when the fourth republic took off, it has been traumatized by political, social, ethnic, religious and economic crises. And that, there was a handover on May 29 2007 (a first successful democratic handover) and thereafter till date, to new civilian governments is a testament to the resilience of the subsequent republics.

The issues of corruption, political *thuggery*⁴ and *godfatherism*⁵, rule of law and gross injustice have dominated the scene for the past years that this democratic dispensation came into being. From the controversial removals of four governors,⁶ to the perceived selective and president-orchestrated anti-corruption war by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) between 1999 and 2007, the country appeared subsumed in a collapse that will dramatically overshadow the serious socio-political crises

³ Karl Maier wrote the book, *This House Has Fallen: Nigeria in Crisis*. See [1].

⁴ *Thuggery* is a local word for youths who engage in social and political gangsterism and disorders.

⁵ *Godfatherism* refers to a mentoring relationship whereby the mentored treats the mentor as a god and a father. In Nigeria, it is commonly in the political landscape whereby the actions of the mentored are function of the mentor.

⁶ The four governors include Joshua Dariye of Plateau state, Rashidi Ladoja of Oyo state, Peter Obi of Anambra state and Ayo Fayose of Ekiti state.

recorded in countries like Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sudan and Ukraine, following people's perception of these actions as being ethnic-biased. And in the midst of these, the United States (US) government in the year 2000 even predicted the collapse of the country in about fifteen years' time [4].

Nigeria's birth in 1914 when the Sir Lord Frederick Lugard-represented British colonial government amalgamated the Southern and Northern parts started the sojourn which culminated in the independence in 1960. Between these years, it could be taken that the crises that evolved after independence were pictures of patched up, unsolved issues by the colonial government before the *Union Jack* flag was lowered. The 1967-1970 civil war (following a move for secession by the Eastern part of the country towards becoming *Biafra* republic) which almost tore the country apart, the Kano riot of 1962/1963, the crises over Nigeria's membership of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) between 1969-1986 and 1997, and the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election results – all almost ended the 1914 dream of the country called Nigeria.

While Nigeria experienced serious social and ethnic conflicts in the years following independence, it was difficult to understand the post-civil war Nigeria; why these conflicts yet remain after resolving the serious divisive issue following the civil war. [5] suggested a study of the civil war and its causes, as well as the analysis of the country's political and economic situations over the years for the resolution of the Nigerian question.

The emergence of the fourth ethnic dimension in Nigeria could not be pushed aside because of its rich oil resources. The *Ijaws*-dominated region (being the largest of the ethnic minorities from the South-South region and regarded as an ethnic minority upon which the trio of *Ibo*, *Yoruba* and *Hausa* thrive), through its militant youths, destroyed oil installations and lives, became a thorn in the flesh of the country having been marginalized for so long, from active political and economic participation.

The reality today is that of a sick Nigeria. The crisis in the Niger Delta though now subsided, along with the recent protests in the South-East for the actualization of *Biafra* republic, have continued to attract attention with negative implications on the economic and political landscapes of the country. Corruption is still a daunting challenge. Political structure is yet an issue of contention. Poor infrastructure and a high rising poverty have also become permanent features of the country. The country's top-2020 economy's dream appears unrealistic.

Of course, national conventions have been advocated and activated, that will consider interests along tribes and ethnics, religions, economics and politics. But on the need for a coming together to address Nigeria's social,

economy and political challenges, Ahmed *Guinza Momoh*, *Otoru of Auchi*⁷ comments:

“In the process of development, we must fall and rise, since you cannot fall unless you move and cannot rise unless you fall” [6].

Giving credence to the above and the need for a true socio-political conference are calls by Cornelius *Adebayo*, a former *Kwara* state governor, and Alfred *Ileate*, a former secretary-general of Ethnic Minority Rights of Africa (EMIROAF) at different times in 1994 and 1999 respectively, that

“The constitutional conference can be likened to the June 12 election that was unilaterally annulled by the military president. If the...government succumbs to pressure, to shelve the conference, another crisis which will have severe effects on our fragile federation will break out.” [6];

“The nationalities should meet to discuss the basis of their co-existence. The present structure cannot assist to develop stability. All that has happened for the past ... years in Nigeria, is completely a bad experience. We have to sit down and discuss.” [7].

So also, it is necessary to critically consider the view of Frederick *Rotimi Alade Williams*, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), who emphasized the need for a national conference,

“I believe that it is necessary for us to sit down and agree on how to structure the federating units within Nigeria. If we can do that, I believe that Nigeria will remain as one country. I believe we can and we must have a solution” [8].

The call for a national conference has been strange to especially the West African region. And so when it was first raised by pressure groups in Benin Republic in 1992, Matthew *Kerekou*, the then president, dismissed it, describing it as a “civilian coup d’état.” But having watched the country reel in recession culminating in long period of depression, a national conference seemed the cure to the political ills. The consequence was the four months’ socio-political standstill through industrial strikes [9].

The Benin Republic’s success, after which a national conference was called, led to crucial changes in *Kerekou*’s transition process including the setting up of a transitional government led by the prime minister, and a multi-party system was introduced for the first time. This spread to other African countries including Togo, Niger Republic, Mali, Congo and Zaire (now Congo Democratic Republic), though was resisted by the presidents of Cameroon and Burkina

Faso, also believing like *Kerekou*, that the call for the reform conference was a coup d’état. Ghana’s president at the time, Jerry Rawlings also initially resisted political conference at a point in time but later went on with a pseudo-type in 1990 which was though not broad-based. In the case of Ibrahim *Babangida*, who was Nigeria’s military head of state between 1985 and 1993, he instead established a political bureau to encourage dialogue between the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), the ruling body, and the larger society. It did not however have the binding power of a national democratic conference. The conference put together by *SaniAbacha* (Nigeria’s military head of state between 1993 and 1998) also looked more like a fallacy, until under the democratic system when in the year 2005, President *OlusegunObasanjo* (the democratic president between 1999 and 2007) yielded to the call for a true and genuine national conference, which was carried out. But like what was available in other African countries, the recommendations have no binding powers and so was essentially a wasted exercise.

Nigeria’s socio-political problems was amplified with the events following the annulment of the June 12 presidential election won by MKO *Abiola*⁸, and his subsequent death in prison in 1998. The death of MKO *Abiola* also provided the opportunity for the country to progress politically. In spite of all these, and with the country’s continued upheavals though, the question that has continually come to mind is “was there a mistake in the 1914 amalgamation of the northern and southern parts of Nigeria?”

II. BEING FUTURISTIC...

Nigeria has continued to take crucial steps in order to address the dysfunctions that exist in its polity. Since 1999 when democracy was restored to the country, the number of civil conflicts has drastically reduced.

After about 104 years of Nigeria’s existence as one entity and 58 years as an independent nation, the country is still faced with certain characteristic challenges prominent of which are tribalism, structural imbalance and economic problems. According to [10], the British colonial foundation upon which the earlier political structure was built upon, was a fundamental problem in Nigeria’s present political situation. While the colonial state of Nigeria was created to serve the imperial interests of the British, the inability of the independence leaders to fashion out a national society led to a replica of the pre-colonial state, failing to provide the basic needs of the people, and the state was reduced from an institution for the pursuit of the welfare of all, to become a tool of self-interest of a selected few. The Nigerian state has also failed woefully in the area of adoption, goal attainment, integration and legal pattern maintenance. These are still the

⁷ This is a traditional office in *Auchi*, Edo state, Nigeria which Ahmed *Guinza Momoh* is holding.

⁸ MKO is *Moshood Kashimawo Olawale* in full, though *Abiola* is fondly called by his abbreviated name, MKO.

situation till today. Hence, the federal system is still being debated till date.

May 29 1999 provided Nigeria with another chance to take off, after two previous transitional attempts since the interruption of democratic rule following the military coup d'état of 1983. According to *Olusegun Obasanjo*, former president of Nigeria, following his election in 1999,

“Nigeria has another chance to make it. It is an opportunity to address some of the wrongs of the past and establish high standards for the present that future generations can build and improve on with pride and confidence” [11].

The deep-rooted wounds inflicted on the country following the annulment of the June 12 presidential election results have laid on every successive Nigerian government administration the responsibility to embrace the ideals of the June 12. The deaths of many innocent citizens, the murder of the judiciary, the pauperization of the middle-class and general mal-administration by the military were part of the ordeals that the nation was forced to go through. The country needs to avoid the 1960s civil war, or one reminiscent of the Arab spring in which hundreds of thousand people died, due to social hatred among the different social groups and supporters of different governments. *Mahmud Tukur*, in an interview with Weekly Trust, quoted in [11], provided more insight on this:

“The idea of a federation for Nigeria, should be to make it possible for the various groups to have as much say and control of those matters which concern them...”

June 12 events exposed the terrible weaknesses of the present political system of the country. The ‘non-federalist’ federal system has to some extent shown the powerlessness of the state and local governments as compared to the centre where the powers are concentrated thus making government and the benefits thereof so far away from people.⁹ This system obviously encouraged abuse of power. A constitutional amendment which will aggregate the feelings and opinions of the people in a true national conference may therefore be inevitable in restructuring the country, or in securing its future. The present system being operated does encourage abuse and mismanagement. It is therefore imperative to build good social and political structures that will encourage the rule of law and economic progress.

Nigeria’s present constitution which was architecturally designed by the military-led government of General *Abdulasami Abubakar* military government following the set-up of a constitutional review committee chaired by Justice *Niki Tobi* in 1999, as defective as it may

⁹ Nigeria stated in its constitution that it practises the federal system, even though it does not practise the typical federal system as powers are over concentrated at the centre.

seem to be, provided for a safe take-off ground for the country’s democracy. It was crafted on the 1979 Constitution rather than the more recent 1995 Draft Constitution prepared by the government of General *Sani Abacha*, which was a product of disputed legitimacy. The 1999 Constitution therefore addressed such fundamental issues like zoning and rotation of political offices, number of vice-presidents that could be, establishment of a constitutional court, proportional representation of political parties in the cabinet or retention of seats in the National Assembly, devolution of power, derivative formula and the land use act [12].

As earlier noted, and according to other contributors ([13] and [15] in particular), colonialism was at the root of Africa’s political wandering. This is because there is a wide incompatibility between liberal democracies, post-colonial heritage from the British, and the development in the plural ethno-cultural politics.

The reality is this: resident within the Nigerian system is still a silent raging fire which needs be doused. *Mathew Hassan Kukah*, current Bishop of the *Sokoto* Catholic Diocese, and former secretary-general of Catholic Secretariat in Nigeria and then secretary, National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) offers an explanation:

“This new dispensation must take on the challenges of a constitution that will take on board trials, failures, fears, anxieties, frustrations and even prejudices of our people”[2].

In order to enhance reconciliation and peace, and for progress to reign, the federal government under *Olusegun Obasanjo* in 2005 took certain critical steps including the setting up of the Human Rights Violations Investigation Committee (HRVIC) otherwise called the *Oputa* Panel (a resemblance of the South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission chaired by Bishop *Desmond Tutu*), headed by Justice *Chukwudifu Oputa* to foster reconciliation among Nigerians affected by past persons and governments. Also, the remains of the 1995 slain Movement for the Survival of *Ogoni* People (MOSOP) activists were returned to their people in 2004 for proper burial, in a bid to deepen the reconciliation process (see [16])¹⁰.

The NPRC also offered an opportunity for Nigeria to prepare a sustainable democratic platform upon which the rule of law will indeed be sovereign, and the country will prosper socially, politically and economically. The relevance of the NPRC was amplified by *Akinlolu Olujimi*, a former Nigeria’s Attorney General and Minister of Justice in 2005 (cited in [17]) as follows:

¹⁰ MOSOP is an activist organization fighting for the environmental rights of the *Ogoni* people, a village in Rivers state where some of Nigeria’s oil is explored. *Ken Saro-Wiwa* and eight other *Ogonis* were murdered by the government of General *Sani Abacha* in 1995 after being found guilty by the military tribunal set up to try them following their activism towards regaining the people’s fundamental rights, being faced with environmental degradation.

“What we have in the national conferences is a situation where people are brought together to sit and discuss several issues, which are of relevance to the political development of Nigeria’s constitutional arrangement, legal reforms and a few other areas. The views of the delegates will help to formulate a new constitution for Nigeria.”

III. ...WHILE DRAWING BACK

The NPRC was expected to provide a fruitful pathway for Nigeria’s prosperity. But the reality is different with the prevalence of tribal and sectional sentiments which disrupted the first and second republics. On rotational presidency for example, the northern representatives at the conference were pitched against the south (which had the middle-belt supporting along). While then, the committee on models and structure of government adopted a north-south rotation system, the committee on power sharing and human rights recommended a rotation around the six geo-political zones [18]¹¹. This was a position the northern representatives were never willing to take.

This scenario illustrates the palpable question mark still hovering over Nigeria’s future. It reveals the general discontent with the present political structure including its constitution. The recent pro-Biafra agitations could further lend credence to this deduction.¹² Emphasizing the defect of the 1999 Constitution, *Femi Falana*, a lawyer, SAN and human rights activist comments,

“A group of military men, acting like cult members, sat down to give us this constitution and had the temerity to say in the preamble that ‘we the people’. This is a fraud and you cannot sustain democracy on a fraudulent foundation” [8].

Probably, the country’s continued crisis is because the constitution was prepared from a military mind-set. But then it is a draw-back for the nation as the modus operandi of the national document is reminiscent of a military decree. The Land Use Act (Decree No. 6 of 1978) which was as a result of a military edict, was an example of this thumb-down as it was retained in the 1999 Constitution, under a democratic government. It not only shows the militarization of our system of government but also as much trample upon

people’s rights which today has affected transactional dynamics, environmental and sustainable development, agricultural practices and housing issues among the lots.

The clique, that the law is an ass could indeed be true in this case, but against the letters of the 1999 Constitution (Section 33, subsection 1) which states that “Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in the execution of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria” [19]. Yet, it appears to contravenes itself in that the same Constitution states that, “A person shall not be regarded as having been deprived of his life in contravention of this section, if he dies as a result of the use, to such extent and in such circumstances as are permitted by law, of such force as is reasonably necessary.”

According to *Femi Falana* (cited in [20]), there are over 300 flaws identified in the constitution that have turned state governments into appendages of the federal government. Also for example according to the constitution, a state government cannot have a say in the appointment of its chief judge and other judges, but the assignment is the responsibility of the National Judicial Council (NJC) and the Federal Judicial Service Commission (FJSC). The two agencies are primarily those of the federal government. This exclusive jurisdiction could make the president abuse his power.

Segun Osoba, a one-time Ogun state governor, criticized this as not being in line with the spirit of federalism, while *Lucky Igbinedion* (a former governor of Edo state) thought otherwise, in that exclusive jurisdiction by the centre will make the judiciary independent, not under the influence of any governor.

Decree 107 of 1993 Constitution in respect of federal high courts which is now in Section 251 of the 1999 Constitution, makes the federal high court the exclusive jurisdiction in matters relating to the federal revenue, taxation of companies, diplomatic, consular and trade representation, citizenship, nationalism and aliens, bankruptcy and insolvency, aviation and safety of aircraft, arms, ammunitions and explosives, drugs and poisons, as it created that the federal high court is superior to a state high court [21],[19].

Two notable legal practitioners, *Tayo Oyetibo* and *Femi Falana*, bare their minds on Nigeria’s constitution as inimical of a federal system, and characteristic of a delayed justice system. It is also a problem in a case where many states share a federal high court. This accounts in part, why the country has embarrassingly a high number of delayed cases in its courts.

Also, there are many ouster clauses in the 1999 Constitution. Section 215 for example, on the appointment of the inspector-general of police and control of Nigeria Police Force, the constitution forbids any court from inquiring into

¹¹ The six geo-political zones are south-west, south-east, south-south, north-west, north-east and north-central (or the middle-belt, being located at the heart of the country and consisting of largely mixed ethnic groups).

¹² Biafra (or Republic of Biafra), from Bight of Biafra (the Atlantic bay to its south), is essentially an Igbo-tribe agitated country. It was an unrecognized secessionist state in south-east of Nigeria that existed between 30 May 1967 and 15 January 1970. The agitation for Biafra led to the Nigerian Civil War between 1967 and 1970. Some commentators have attributed the motivation for the agitation to the large mineral deposits in the south-south region, a close-by south-east neighbour which the Igbos hope to be able to secede with, other commentaries hinged the agitation on the Igbos not being able to hold a central political portfolio at the Nigeria political centre. In recent time and after over four decades of civil war, another Biafra agitation has started in the south-east. See [22], for more information on Biafra.

actions taken by the country's president regarding the police. This part tends more towards autocratic or military decree. On further analysis, the issue of revenue allocation also comes up as a vexation issue. Only 13 percent is given to the oil-producing areas while also, Lagos state which accounts for the biggest value-added tax (VAT) and company tax, hardly benefit as much as states that hardly contributes to the tax pool [23].

A system of government where the component units depend exclusively on the centre is somewhat abnormal, and this comes without the former's ability to develop their own resources. Examples from the 1999 Constitution include the complicated scenario where the governor of a state who is also the chief security officer is given limited powers over the federally-controlled police that operate in his state due to constitutional provision (Section 215, subsection 4) which requires that before the police commissioner in charge of a state complies with the order of a state governor, he must first "request that the matter be referred to the president or such minister of the federation as may be authorized in that behalf by the president for his directions." This part, as a case of constitutional lop-sidedness, has the tendency of not arresting emergencies on time and could encourage grave damages in cases of violence. It also leaves room for chaos and anarchy between the state and the federal.

Political crises have constituted the major setback in the country's march to progress. Political crises can evolve from feuds among politicians. This is similar to the one in the old Western region where the electoral process and the courts were discredited by the Action Group party in 1964, the consequence of which was a heated political crisis that almost split the nation.

Unconstitutional impeachments also characterized the country's first democratic sojourn after about twenty years of military rule. Between 1999 and 2003, about six governorship removals were undertaken by the different states' houses of assembly under questionable processes. The moral credence of states' chief judges is brought to public observation in coordinating the process before the states' parliaments can go ahead with impeachment proceedings. Unfortunately, political manoeuvres played major part in all these, leading to the chaos that later arose in *Ekiti* state in 2006 where three individuals claimed constitutional right to the governor's office. The Supreme Court's invalidation of impeachments of the governors of Plateau, *Oyo* and *Anambra* states are confirmation of the highly political processes involved in these removals [24].

The impeachments of governors and deputies cannot however be divorced from the activities of godfathers and corruption. From *Kwara* State between 1999 and 2003, to *Anambra*, *Ekiti*, *Oyo* and Plateau states, *godfatherism* have been at the foundation of the political crises that have ensued. According to Richard *Akinjide*, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), (cited in [25]), "*godfatherism* has become a

euphemism for treasury looting." Indeed, the points of contention of political godfathers and sons have been in total allegiance in political appointments, financial demands and supports, as was the case with *Obasanjo's* third-term bid.

Census results are another point of controversy in Nigeria's historical dateline. It is particularly true between Lagos and Kano states or more broadly, the south and the north. This is because population affects political representation in the House of Assembly as well as in fiscal allocations from the centre. Kano for example has 34 representatives in the House of Representatives, while Lagos has just 26, and this adjustment can only be done within constitutional provision. Structural demarcation into local councils also depends on the population of the state as according to the 1991 census provision, Kano had 5,810,470 persons while Lagos had 5,725,116 persons but with the former's number of local government areas at 44 against Lagos which had 20. According to the 2006 census results, Lagos' population was put at 9,103,534 persons while that of Kano stood at 9,383,682 persons. Other disagreements arose for other states and from the population results of women which is less than the men against the perception of most people for Lagos and other southern states. The previous census results of the years 1963, 1973 and 1991 have however been either discredited or cancelled altogether [26]. But then, the controversies over census figures portray the social and political differences that still exist between north and the south.

The Niger Delta and the South-East regions present another issue and as such barriers to Nigeria's stability especially with the high rate of kidnap and continued oil-flow disruptions. About 90 percent of Nigeria's wealth comes from the Niger Delta region but this has ironically left it poorer especially with the environmental degradation of the area following oil exploration that has destroyed their socio-economic means of livelihood like farmlands and rivers. And on the oil revenue derivation formula, while the region's representatives insisted on 50 percent, the conference agreed on just 4 percent up from the current 13 percent to 17 percent, which was strongly disagreed upon and a walk-out staged by the Niger Delta representatives [27].

The scrapping of the immunity clause in the 1999 Constitution, that protects political office holders from being prosecuted seems to also constitute a contentious issue during the review of the 1999 Constitution but this could be effective in the country's anti-corruption crusade. The third term tenure proposed for the president and governors seemed on the other hand, to cast doubts over the sincerity of the elite political class in tackling corruption (see [28] - [30]). It was notable therefore that executive lawlessness, dictatorship and immorality crept in during the third term project that would see the constitution amended to favour *Obasanjo* and the governors. The aftermath which was a defeat of the constitutional review process almost drove the nation into anarchy, with political persecution of key anti-third term

people by the president, *Olusegun Obasanjo*. According to a former head of state, General *Yakubu Gowon*,¹³ Nigeria needs “...to avoid the tendency of leadership prolonging itself. My experience, that of *Babangida* and *Abacha* should be a good lesson for today and tomorrow” [31]. Indeed, history is a valid guide into Nigeria’s future as the prolongation of the tenure of General *Yakubu Gowon*, *Ibrahim Babangida* and *Sani Abacha* brought the country to avoidable halts and a state of anarchy.

The disregard for the rule of law and constitutional processes thus became a feature of the *Obasanjo*’s administration. Disobedience to courts by government agencies and personnel as well as the president’s office (including *Obasanjo* himself) drew criticisms from the public including *Richard Joseph*, *John Evans* Professor of International History and Politics at Northwestern University, U.S. (cited in [15]),

“...constitutional democracy in Nigeria was not just overthrown three months after the general elections of 1983, it had also by then and there after till now been substantially eroded from within”.

Of course, it was observed further by [15] that, before the forceful overthrows of elected governments in 1966 and 1983, the civilian politicians have themselves grossly undermined the foundations of democracy through gross violations of the rule of law. President *Obasanjo* during his terms between 1999 and 2007 also allowed political differences to prevail against the rule of law notably in the issue of withholding the statutory allocation of the local governments in Lagos state despite supreme court’s judgement against his right to do so [32].

Religion is another issue of high sensitivity in Nigeria’s polity. The country’s high sensitivity to religion has over the years been a problem in its stability. Even right from the making of the 1999 Constitution, controversies consistently brewed among the ruling military class on whether to adopt *Sharia’h*¹⁴ or not in the constitution [33]. A concerned president *Obasanjo*, commented:

“If we have a community that is so divided that at the slightest provocation of ethnic and religious nature, we go on rampage, then something is wrong. The strength of this country is in diversity” [34].

Religious differences have been so entrenched in the veins of the individuals that beneficial policies from religious

inclinations have also divided the country. For example, the moves to enlist the country in the membership of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in the past was aggressively opposed, *Sharia’h* then became another big issue. Questioning the strong push for the *Sharia’h* legal system in the country’s constitution and the resulting conflicts that ensued, the conference of Catholic Bishops in their 2000 congregation stated,

“We warned that Nigeria, as we know it, cannot sustain a *Sharia’h* legal system parallel to the law of the land in any part of the nation” [34].

The religious conflicts became widespread over the country leading to attacks and killings particularly in the North. In reaction to religious killings of Christians by the predominant Muslims in the North, the South-East governors whose indigenes were most affected, questioned the continued fraudulent federalism practised by the country, calling for the adoption of a con-federal system of government [35]. The religious crisis following the implementation of the *Sharia’h* legal system in some parts of the North was further amplified and complicated with the support of two former leaders of the country, *Shehu Shagari* and *Muhammadu Buhari*¹⁵ (see [39]). The Northern governors of *Zamfara*, *Kano* and *Kaduna* states in response, implemented the *Sharia’h* legal system in their states. But as *Emeka Anyaoku*, a former secretary-general of the Commonwealth of Nations warned:

“We cannot guarantee Nigeria’s stability and development unless it remains a secular and democracy state” [34].

The height of Nigeria’s instability was the succession threats by the *Yorubas*, and principally the *Ibos*, seeking for the actualizations of the *Oduduwa* and *Biafra* republics respectively (see [36] - [38]).

IV. 1914 NIGHTMARES AND THE IDES OF JUNE 12

The pre-democratic years till 1993 have brought discordant tunes of historical moments in Nigeria’s struggles towards stability. A review of the impact of June 12 on Nigeria would amplify the country’s characters in times of challenges. Nigeria’s present democratic experience has much to appreciate the past for particularly June 12 because of the long-term gains from it notwithstanding the sorrows it brought along.

After more than two straight decades of military dictatorship, Nigeria was left in near collapse between the governments of General *Muhammadu Buhari* in 1984 and *Abdulsalami Abubakar* in 1999 (Table I shows Nigeria’s

¹³General *Yakubu Gowon* was Nigeria’s military head of state between 1967 and 1975.

¹⁴*Sharia’h* is an Islamic tenet and guide that governs Muslims’ conducts.

¹⁵ *Shehu Shagari* and *Muhammadu Buhari* were respectively, civilian president and military head of state between 1979 and 1985.

political timeline from independence till date). Military rule became synonymous with oppression, suppression, and murders. Chances over these years are that the country should well have collapsed, especially at the height of the June 12 crisis which seemed to be the probable cause upon which the 1914 solemnization of the ethnic tripartite would be dissolved.

While the question over the reason for the 1914 amalgamation may yet be unanswered, June 12 provided not just the answer but also the solutions to addressing Nigeria's social and political crises. The north-south bond was exemplified with the results of the June 12 presidential election indicating that there were some level of acceptance by the South of Bashir Othman *Tofa* who is from the North and likewise, northern acceptance of MKO *Abiola*, who is a southerner (see Table II). The results of the July 1992 National Assembly election further confirm that the country's socio-political crises can be resolved. While the National Republican Convention (NRC) which was primarily from the northern region swept the north by 50.6 percent of the votes, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) on the other hand which is from the south polled 49.4 percent (see Table III). On an individual basis, following the release of the June 12 1993 presidential election results, MKO *Abiola* (a candidate from the south-west and of SDP) polled 58.4 percent against the highly favoured northern candidate, Bashir Othman *Tofa* from NRC who got 41.6 percent (see Table IV). It must be noted that all the two presidential candidates at this election were all Muslims (including their vice presidential flag bearers). The north, officially also has the population advantage to take the winning votes yet *Abiola's* victory was more from the north.¹⁶ The victories recorded by *Olusegun Obasanjo* and *Goodluck Jonathan* at the 2003 and 2011 presidential election results respectively further made irrelevant the social and political sentiments so much emphasized as the major problems in the unity of the country (see tables V and VI). All these seemed to reverse the long-standing north-south divide which has been blamed on the 1914 marriage of the northern and the southern parts of the country.

The national political conference, according to [41], actually started on June 12 1993, when issues like power rotation, zoning of political offices, devolution of powers, revenue allocation formula, and so on, as have been variously discussed, were practically put to effect. June 12 1993 was therefore considered important in the annals of Nigerian history. This is because it defined Nigeria's socio-political characteristics: ethnicity, politics and religion. As [42] puts it,

“the incontrovertibility of the results, the size of the national mandate and the ethnic compromises clearly reveal why the annulment of the elections has so far traumatized a country whose dream for the beginning of a national consensus suddenly became a nightmare.”

¹⁶ See <https://maxsiollun.wordpress.com/2008/06/14/june-12-1993-election-full-results/>, accessed 15 January 2016.

Given the assumptions that the 1991 population census data is correct and accepted, and that the 1993 presidential election results were correct, a further analysis of the June 12 1993 elections are shown in the following submission[42].

While the June 12 1993 election results show that the various tribes lie along regional lines with the *Yorubas* to the South-West, *Igbos* to the South-East, and *Hausas* to the core North on which the actual three regions were based, the analysis shows that even though the regional constituency of each of MKO *Abiola* and Bashir *Tofa*, who were the contesting presidential candidates on June 12 1993 were favourable to themselves, the candidates recorded respectable votes in other regions (including, against each other). In the South-West region, the vote was a ratio 6:1 in favour of MKO *Abiola*; ratio 2.5:1 in the North-West in favour of *Bashir Tofa*; ratio 1.5:1 in the Middle-Belt (a northern bias region) in favour of MKO *Abiola*. *Abiola* also won with a ratio 5:1 in his home state of *Ogun*, while he also edged *Tofa* in the latter's home state. All these show the inter-regional acceptance of the outcome of the June 12 1993 elections, which may negate the perceived amalgamation of 1914 as a fallacy and a mistake.

TABLE I

NIGERIA'S POLITICAL SITUATION SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Years	Political Situation
1960-1966	Democracy
1966-1979	Military Regime
1979-1983	Democracy
1983-1989	Military Regime
1989-1993	Restricted Democratic Practice (Civilian Elected and Military Co-Exists)
1993-1998	Military Regime
1998-1999	Transitional Government (Spear Headed by Military Regime)
1999-2007	Democracy
2007-2011	Emerging Democracy
2011-2015	Democracy
2015-2019	On-going Democratic Practice

Source: African Elections Database

(www.africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html)

In his commentary, Femi Aribisala undertook an historical analysis of the June 12 1993 presidential election in Nigeria and the consequence of the annulment of the results on Nigeria, and the 1999 compromise in what he termed 'fake redemption' [43]. While elections are expected to represent the

TABLE II
JUNE 12 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS

State	No. of NRC votes	% of votes for NRC	No. of SDP votes	% of votes for SDP	Total votes	Winner
Abuja (FCT)*	18,313	47.84	19,968	52.16	256,500	MKO ABIOLA
Abia*	151,227	58.96	105,273	41.04	334,490	BASHIR O. TOFA
Adamawa	167,239	54.28	140,875	45.72	414,129	BASHIR O. TOFA
Akwa Ibom*	199,342	48.14	214,787	51.86	371,288	MKO ABIOLA
Anambra*	159,258	42.89	212,024	57.11	847,274	MKO ABIOLA
Bauchi	524,836	60.73	339,339	39.27	406,132	BASHIR O. TOFA
Benue	186,302	43.06	246,830	56.94	282,180	MKO ABIOLA
Borno*	128,684	45.60	153,496	54.40	342,755	MKO ABIOLA
Cross River	153,452	44.77	189,303	55.23	472,278	MKO ABIOLA
Delta	145,001	30.70	327,277	69.30	308,979	MKO ABIOLA
Edo*	103,572	33.52	205,407	66.48	427,190	MKO ABIOLA
Enugu	284,050	51.91	263,101	48.09	349,902	BASHIR O. TOFA
Imo	195,836	55.14	159,350	44.86	228,388	BASHIR O. TOFA
Jigawa	89,836	39.33	138,552	60.67	726,573	MKO ABIOLA
Kaduna*	356,860	47.80	389,713	52.20	324,428	MKO ABIOLA
Kano*	154,809	47.72	169,619	52.28	442,176	MKO ABIOLA
Katsina	271,077	61.30	171,162	38.70	286,974	BASHIR O. TOFA
Kebbi	144,808	67.34	70,219	32.66	488,492	BASHIR O. TOFA
Kogi*	265,732	54.40	222,760	45.60	352,479	BASHIR O. TOFA
Kwara	80,209	22.78	272,270	77.24	1,033,397	MKO ABIOLA
Lagos	149,432	14.46	883,865	85.54	357,787	MKO ABIOLA
Niger*	221,437	61.90	136,350	38.10	484,971	BASHIR O. TOFA
Ogun*	59,246	12.22	425,725	87.78	964,018	MKO ABIOLA
Ondo	162,994	15.58	883,024	84.42	437,334	MKO ABIOLA
Osun	72,068	16.48	365,266	83.52	641,799	MKO ABIOLA
Oyo*	105,788	16.48	536,011	83.52	676,959	MKO ABIOLA
Plateau*	259,394	38.32	417,565	61.68	1,026,824	MKO ABIOLA
Rivers	640,973	63.37	370,578	36.63	469,986	BASHIR O. TOFA
Sokoto	372,250	79.21	97,726	20.79	469,986	BASHIR O. TOFA
Taraba	64,001	38.58	101,887	61.42	176,054	MKO ABIOLA
Yobe	64,061	38.41	11,887	63.59	38,281	MKO ABIOLA

Source: <https://maxsiollun.wordpress.com/2008/06/14/june-12-1993-election-full-results/>

true and popular voice of the people, the cancellation of the 1993 election results plunged the country into a political turmoil that several years later, it still haunts the nation, that it took about six years to sheath swords and 'compromise', but yet unresolved as issues of political discrimination particularly of the South-East still headline politics; security

threats from socio-political organisations like the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) protesting and clamouring for the sovereign state of Biafra for the Igbos, the Shiite Muslims' group, the killings and destruction across the country by the Fulani herdsmen without any clear and constructive means to address same by the presidency, and Boko Haram;

controversies around the corruption crusade which is claimed to be one-sided; the sluggish economy and increased numbers of people in poverty; as well as lopsided appointments of political office holders by the president.

All these appear to form opinions and as well divide the country still in what could be an indication that Nigeria has not come off the bruises of the June 12 1993 election annulment hurts that seemed to be the only true exercise that expressed a common voice of the people, an election said to be the 'only free and fair' exercise in Nigeria's history till date, of which the analysis of the results says a lot about whether it was rigged or not, on contrast with the last elections result figures [43].

TABLE III

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS (HELD 4 JULY 1992)

Party	Senate			House of Representatives		
	No. of Votes	% of Votes	No. of Seats (91)	No. of Votes	% of Votes	No. of Seats (593)
Social Democratic Party (SDP)	7,494,228	47.43	52	8,354,791	49.42	314
National Republican Convention (NRC)	8,306,548	52.57	37	8,551,080	50.58	275

Source: African Elections Database

(www.africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html)

TABLE IV

JUNE 12 1993 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidate (Party)	Number of Votes	% of Votes
Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola (SDP)	8,341,309	58.36
Bashir Othman Tofa (NRC)	5,952,087	41.64

Source: African Elections Database

(www.africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html)

The main challenge of the African society, and by large, developing countries has been the issue of governance which has with its grave attendant consequence for the socio-political entity of these nations. Poor governance is highlighted by the high corruption indices of these countries, with Nigeria as example, having a corruption ranking between 142 position in 2006 and 136 in 2015, without improvement indicating that the quality of governance is still relatively the same, and the hovering concern that corruption has become institutionalised [44]. Poor governance also relates to the failure of the state in driving development as independent nations emerge and affluence increased among political and economic elites [45]. Socio-political conflicts are linked to poor governance.

Generally, Africa has a long history of events catching up with one another. Civil conflicts, the continent's deadliest danger to its stability have often been seen as norms. For example, the military government has mostly left in its wake, tribalism and weak social and economic institutions with negative effects on the country's stability. The apartheid days in South Africa, the massacres in Rwanda and those of the two countries of Congo are critical examples of this. Nigeria's case is not different.

TABLE V

APRIL 19 2003 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidate (Party)	No. of Votes	% of Votes
Olusegun Obasanjo (PDP)	24,456,140	61.94
Muhammadu Buhari (ANPP)	12,710,022	32.19
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu (APGA)	1,297,445	3.29
Jim Nwobodo (UNPP)	169,609	0.43
Gani Fawehimi (NCP)	161,333	0.41
Sarah Jubril (PAC)	157,560	0.40
Ike Nwachukwu (NDP)	132,997	0.34
Christopher Okotie (JP)	119,547	0.30
Balarabe Musa (PRP)	100,765	0.26
Arthur Nwankwo (PMP)	57,720	0.15
Emmanuel Okereke (APLP)	26,921	0.07
Kalu Idika Kalu (NNPP)	23,830	0.06
Muhammadu Dikko Yusuf (MDJ)	21,403	0.05
Yahaya Ndu (ARP)	11,565	0.03
Abayomi Ferreira (DA)	6,727	0.02
Tunji Braithwaite (NAP)	6,932	0.02
Iheanyichukwu Nnaji (BNPP)	5,987	0.02
Olapade Agoro (NAC)	5,756	0.01
Pere Ajuwa (LDPN)	4,473	0.01
Mojisola Adekunle Obasanjo (MMN)	3,757	0.01

Source: African Elections Database

(www.africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html)

Rebuilding Nigeria following long years of military occupation has become a massive undertaking. The most heart-healing requirement is unity of the constituent ethnic groups which though is difficult due to the fact that the Yorubas of the south (to which MKO Abiola's tribal mandate belongs) felt hurt by the annulment of the June 12 1993 presidential election result. Having won the presidential election, regarded as the freest and fairest in the country's history, MKO Abiola was denied his mandate as the results of

the election were annulled by the military government of Ibrahim *Badamosi Babangida* (IBB). This led to increase in the activities of pressure groups forcing IBB out of power in August 1993, and an interim government put in place. About four months later, a military government headed by *Sani Abacha* took over under whom gross human rights abuses were the highest. By June 11 2004, MKO *Abiola* declared himself Nigeria's president, and was subsequently arrested, charged to court on a three-court charge of treasonable felony, and died four years later in prison.

Pressure groups came together to strengthen the opposition against the military governments notable of which was the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), which gave the democratic struggles a stronger voice. Trade unions, especially the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), Trade Union Congress (TUC) and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) embarked on joint strikes that crippled the country's social and economic activities for months. Many pro-democracy activists got arrested and detained while a hand full of others fled into exile. Others have their houses destroyed, and many others killed. Among them were Alfred *Rewane* and the wife of MKO *Abiola*, *Kudirat*, murdered on 4th of June, 1996. That the pro-June 12 activities were not just to actualize *Abiola's* mandate but also to establish a permanent democracy in the country, 22 groups hence formed a coalition called the United Action for Democracy (UAD) in 1997, to put an end to military rule. According to UAD, the annulment of the June 12 election results was one of the main causes of the country's political problems [46].

While many lives were lost, the heavy toll it had on the economy was unimaginable. International Business Machine (IBM)'s US \$1 billion investment computer manufacturing plant intended for Nigeria was moved to South Africa; American Power Commission (APC), the leading producer of uninterruptible power supply (UPS) equipment also moved its plant to South Africa citing political instability in Nigeria; Compaq also cited same reason and moved to Kenya; Italy's ENEL Gas pulled out its plan to buy up to 50 percent of Nigeria's US \$4.5 billion Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) and the remaining buyers, Eneas of Spain, Botas of Turkey and Gaz de France also took the way out of their intended investments [35]. Other casualties included the abortion of development aids worth US \$292 million to Nigeria under the Home Aid Accord, the Nigerian Telecommunication (NITEL) maintenance training programme, the university libraries projects, the Mambilla Tea Integrated Development Programme, Middle-Belt Agricultural Development Programme and the *Sokoto* Desertification and Environmental Protection Programme, as well as the pull outs of many other firms including the US drugs maker, Pfizer Corporation, which also owns Livestock Feeds Plc., along with several other pharmaceutical companies – all

leading to sharp fall in the share prices on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE)[35].

TABLE VI

APRIL 16 2011 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidate (Party)	No. of Votes	% of Votes
Goodluck Jonathan (PDP)	22,495,187	58.89
Muhammadu Buhari (CPC)	12,214,853	31.98
Nuhu Ribadu (ACN)	2,079,151	5.41
Ibrahim Shekarau (ANPP)	917,012	2.40
Mahmud Waziri (PDC)	82,243	0.21
Nwadike Chikezie (PMP)	56,248	0.15
Lawson Aroh (PPP)	54,203	0.14
Peter Nwangwu (ADC)	51,682	0.14
Iheanyichukwu Nnaji (BNPP)	47,272	0.12
Christopher Okotie (FRESH)	34,331	0.09
Dele Momodu (NCP)	26,376	0.07
Solomon Akpona (NMDP)	25,938	0.07
Lawrence Adedoyin (APS)	23,740	0.06
Ebiti Ndok (UNPD)	21,203	0.06
John Dara (NTP)	19,744	0.05
Rasheed Shitta-Bey (MPPP)	16,492	0.04
Yahaya Ndu (ARP)	12,264	0.03
Ambrose Owuru (HDP)	12,023	0.03
Patrick Utomi (SDMP)	11,544	0.03
Christopher Nwaokobia (LDPN)	8,472	0.02

Source: African Elections Database

(www.africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html)

Nigeria's historical watershed which began on May 29 1999 cannot therefore be traced without a mention of the June 12 1993 presidential election and the events surrounding it. Since 31 December 1983 after the democratic government of president *Shehu Shagari* was overthrown by the military, to the aborted dreams of June 12 1993, and the subsequent deaths of *Sani Abacha* and MKO *Abiola* – the two major actors in the country's socio-political dilemma since 1993, on 8 June 1998 and 7 July 1998 respectively, the country's third attempt at transition to democracy saw a same zoning of the presidency to the South-West region as a compensation for the June 12 loss by the region, as well as to bring peace to the country.

The 1914 amalgamation of the North and South did not take into consideration the distinct social characteristics

of the two regions. This led to the faulty foundation upon which the colonial authorities called for regional representations prior to their departure. It also accounted for the wrangling and conflicts which have continued in the system even when these are trivial issues [13]. The British colonialists may have known that it is impossible for Nigeria to unite, and only con-federal system can work, but the 1954 Constitution which was based on the principle of federalism was recommended, because of its advantages for Nigeria's continued existence.

Confirming the fallacy of the 1914 amalgamation, *Obafemi Awolowo*, a foremost Nigeria independence nationalist described the federal system as unworkable in Nigeria, and thereafter concluded that:

*"Nigeria is not a nation... there are no Nigerians."*¹⁷

This line of reasoning was also supported by *Abubakar Tafawa Balewa*, who was also an independent nationalist and the country's first indigenous prime minister,

"Since amalgamation ...Nigeria has existed as one country only on paper..., it is still far from being united. Nigerian unity is only a British self-actualizing intention for the country."

He further added that the problem with Nigerian federation was the mistake of 1914, which has come to light. This was also corroborated by *Ben Nwabueze*, a renowned university teacher and a former minister of education,

"The problem of governance in Africa is not so much in the failure of the ruler but in the context of the colonial system, a heritage which has held us all hostage." [47].

In its special editorial edition, *Tell* magazine [48] noted that the restructuring of the country is imperative in view of the questionable manner in which the country was amalgamated, resulting into a problem which *Ahmadu Bello*, a first generation nationalist called "the mistake of 1914." In it, *Tell* magazine quoted *Hugh Clifford*, one of the colonial governors in 1922, on the Nigerian nation as,

"a collection of independent native states, separated from one another...by great distances, by differences of history and traditions and by ethnological, racial, tribal, political, social and religious barriers."

Citing Professor *Wole Soyinka*, a Nobel laureate, [49] wrote that the nationality question which Nigeria is confronted with can only be solved through restructuring,

where a sovereign national conference (SNC) will handle such volatile issues from the more than 250 ethnic nationalities, and will form the basis for constitutional reform. According to *Soyinka*, the SNC has become inevitable, and on which the very survival of the Nigerian entity depends; a conference which reaches backwards into past dictatorships, made even more clamorous and unassailable by the events of the June 12 1993.¹⁸

Olusegun Obasanjo agreed with this and commented thus,

"I share the view that some fundamental changes have to take place if the much-awaited new political dispensation is to succeed." [48]. See further [50].

Unfortunately, the NPRC which *Obasanjo* constituted could not agree on many critical issues especial oil derivation formula to which the South-South delegates staged a walk-out. The opposition pressure groups did not also reckon with the conference as it held its own sovereign national conference (SNC). But then, and predictably, there were dissensions over resource control, tenures of political offices, rotational presidency, models and structure of government as well as the judiciary. The report was thereafter set aside.

June 12 1993 was a watershed in Nigeria's political history, and if the country has consolidated upon the gains, it would have achieved much success in its social and economic status. Its relevance is underscored by the setting aside of the date by Lagos and *Ogun* states as a public holiday (other South-West states of *Osun*, *Ondo*, *Ekiti* and *Oyo* have also done so at different times over the years). And currently, the federal government has declared June 12 a public holiday, with a bill to legalise this before the legislature, having admitted to its defining grace in Nigeria's political landscape. According to [51], June 12 replaces May 29 as Democracy Day, while the highest award of the Grand Commander of the Federal Republic (GCFR) was posthumously conferred on *MKO Abiola*, admitting to the error of the election annulment and declaring him as Nigerian president (that was not), with Grand Commander of the Order of Niger (GCON) conferred on *Babagana Kingibe* and posthumously on the late human rights activist, *Gani Fawehinmi* [52]. Lagos represents the platform for inter-ethnic coexistence and thus takes June 12 rather than May 29 as its democracy day, having always been at the receiving ends of most economic, civil and political issues.

Nigeria's fundamental problems as have been stated earlier started from the 1914 amalgamation. Part of this, according to [53], was the infamous conference of 1854 to 1855 when the European powers convened in Berlin, Germany and partitioned Africa, leading to the absurd

¹⁷See reference [13].

¹⁸ See further, reference [14].

division of the continent's heritage, its language, tradition and culture. Explaining further, [53] pointed out that some parts of the Yoruba race was then merged with the Republic of Benin having erased the imaginary boundary line along artificial and arbitrary barriers within the area; some parts of Hausa/Fulani speaking areas were also merged to form parts of Niger Republic, Ghana and Sierra Leone – resulting in different mix of separate ethnic divisions. Nigeria was particularly carved out based on the British selfish economic interest. The same was applicable to multi-ethnic countries like Burundi, Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Sudan and Angola. Countries like Spain, the United States and United Kingdom are stable because they are principally mono-cultural and speak the same language within their countries. This is why Nigeria has been regarded as not being a nation. The diverse backgrounds of the different ethnic groups affect their emotions and mentality, and rarely agree on anything.

V. THE CENTRE AND NIGERIA'S SOCIO-POLITICAL CONFLICTS

*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy loosed upon the world.*¹⁹

Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" appears to rightly define the Nigerian nation from 1914 till date. The author took some lessons from William Butler Yeats' poem, "The Second Coming," where he hinted in his book, "Things Fall Apart" about the resultant chaos from the collapse of a system. Achebe's revelation to Nigeria was that of socio-political disintegration following the British colonialism and of course, amalgamation of the country, resulting and creating monsters out of the leaders that later ruled the country in what is the outcome of the decayed Nigerian nation of today.²⁰

Nigeria's political governance has been rather centripetal for a federal system of government which should be centrifugal, as all resources are concentrated in the centre while the constituent independent units depend on it in order to meet their obligations. In his observation, and drawing from the words of *Obafemi Awolowo*, [54] noted that the problems of Nigeria are ancient and obvious, yet it appears relative that only a few people are prepared to pay the price and do anything about them. Stating further, he cited the country's present struggle with the basic concepts of nationhood wherein the need to answer the national question lies. Thus, the need to restructure the country: the military, police and intelligence agencies, public service, public finance system, and the political and economic structures,

with the involvement of various nationalities that make up the country.

Having lost the regional autonomy far back in 1966 following a military coup, the present system seems to be just locomotive-driven, unable to guarantee a sustainable political progress. This is why the centre will continue to use its controlled forces of the security against the other constituent units of government [54]. That this was, can be attributed to the military's style of governance, which produced the 1999 Constitution. It recommends a pretentious federal system while indeed the practical effect is a centralized unitary system which has negated the competitive communalism of post-independence years that led to rapid regional development.

Some of Nigeria's major crises have emanated from the structural defects that a strong and rigid centre-type government offers. The 1957 Constitution which was the pre-independence constitution changed the division of functions to exclusive legislative list (over which the federal government has exclusive legislative powers), and concurrent legislative list (over which both federal and regional governments can legislate). This was an update to the 1954 Constitution which transferred the allocation functions of the central and regional governments to the central government. This form of power sharing between the federal and the then regional governments, inherited by the Republican Constitution of 1963, carried over to the 1979 Constitution was wrong in itself as it did not represent a truly federal state where the federating units concede certain agreed powers to the federal government so that any powers not listed for concession are vested in the governments of the federating units, given the fact that there is no room for "concurrent powers" to be shared between the two levels of governments under a federal constitution.

It is noteworthy that neither the four regional governments nor the twelve states in 1967 enjoyed a true legislative autonomy, though the present 36 states enjoyed less fiscal autonomy since most of them rely heavily on federal allocations to meet their needs.

VI. NIGERIA AND THE "FAILED STATE" TESTAMENT

In 2005, the United States National Intelligence Council (NIC) predicted that in 15 years' time, Nigeria would fail, in a document titled, "Mapping Sub-Saharan Africa's Future" (see [55],[4], [56]). In 2005, Nigeria was ranked 15th of the 177 countries surveyed in the failed states index (FSI)²¹, and among the worst 20 states, based on social,

¹⁹ This verse appeared in both William Butler Yeats' poem, "The Second Coming" published in 1921 and Chinua Achebe's novel, "Things Fall Apart" published in 1958. See public.wsu.edu/~brians/Anglophone/achebe.html. Accessed 20 January 2016.

²⁰ See <https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/things/quotes.html>. Accessed 20 January 2016.

²¹ Failed state index is now referred to as fragile state index (FSI), hosted by the non-governmental organization, The Fund for Peace (FFP). A failed state is one that is perceived as having failed at some of the basic conditions and responsibilities of a sovereign government. The following attributes, according to The Fund for Peace, are the indices of a failed state: (i) loss of control of its territory, or the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force therein; (ii) erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions; (iii)

economic and political analyses, though the measures have been extended to include demographic pressures, refugees and internally displaced persons, group grievance, human flight, uneven development, poverty and economic decline, legitimacy of the state, public services, human rights, security apparatus, factionalized elites and external intervention.²²

Nigeria continues to rank low on the FSI with 2015 where it placed the 14th fragile state and a high alert indicator, with a greater possibility of collapse than ever (see Table VII). That Nigeria is more vulnerable than such countries like Egypt, Rwanda, Congo Republic, Sierra Leone, Myanmar (Burma) and Libya ravaged by perpetual war, famine, drought and poor governance (see Table VIII), tells of the need to urgently address the resurgent problems of socio-ethnic and political conflicts which have the country's composite scores as discouraging in high refugees, vengeance and grievances, human rights abuses, uneven development, poverty, public service deterioration, deepened corruption, dysfunctional institutions and the rise of factionalized elites [59], compounded by widespread sectarian and ethnic violence in the north of the country leading to an increased humanitarian crisis with the high internal displacement of people put at over two million persons [60], the Boko Haram menace and failed infrastructures with power and roads as notable among them and contributing significantly to the rise in poverty and economic decline.

Reference [61]'s report of a lecture by Professor Bolaji Akinyemi noted that Nigeria is challenged in all indices of socio-economic and political development particularly in infrastructure, security, education, power, and corruption. Professor Akinyemi noted that the FSI in which Nigeria was ranked 14 out of 177 countries is a reflection of the country's governance and structure with the country wanting in such parameters like leadership, military, police, judiciary, civil service and media.

The January 2012 revolt against increase in fuel pump price that lasted over a week underlines the crave for good governance by Nigerians more than any time in history of the country. Helped by the social media networks such as facebook and twitter, Nigerians have become better informed and are indeed now more revolution-minded and committed to changing the state of things. Reference [62], in its analysis on topical issues among Nigerians and quoting the description of Nigeria as a "forced marriage between the poor husband (the North) and the rich wife (the South)," but advocated the adoption of national unifying values and symbols that unite diverse people under a national identity, substantiating why these people should substitute broad-based national values for primordial loyalties and identities. This, can however

an inability to provide public services; (iv) an inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community (see [57]). These attributes directly relate to governance which bear characterization with social, political and economic conditions of the state. See further, fsi.fundforpeace.org.

²² See reference [58].

happen where the leaders are responsible and provide good governance.

TABLE VII

FSI RANKING AND MAPPING OF NIGERIA, 2005 - 2015

Position/ Indicator & Year	Very High Alert	High Alert	Alert	High Warn- ing	Warn- ing
2005					54
2006			22		
2007			17		
2008			18		
2009		15			
2010		14			
2011		14			
2012		14			
2013			16		
2014			17		
2015		14			

Source: The Fund for Peace (various years from fsi.fundforpeace.org)

Events following the 2011 presidential election results released in which Goodluck Jonathan won followed by killings in the North, traced to the political elites who lost in the same election, plus the January 2012 subsidy removal protest, have shown that Nigeria is indeed sitting on a keg of gun powder.

In his assessment of the United States' prediction of Nigeria's possible failure, [63]highlighted six contentious political issues addressed at the NPRC that could define the country's continued existence to include geographical restructuring; true or fiscal federalism, revenue allocation and resource control; the ethno-regional movement of the presidency and to some extent, the movement of chief political offices of the states and nation; 'presidential' versus 'parliamentary' system of government, or their amalgam; citizenship and indigeneship; and the electoral system, elections and political parties. On Nigeria's imminent collapse, the prediction said Nigeria will witness more religious crises, which along with other problems, would lead to the outright collapse of the country within the fifteen years that follow[64],[65]. In [58] Nate Haken noted in his article, "Beating the Odds: Nigeria Defies Predictions of Doom," that the country's March/April 2015 elections was a sure bet the country would collapse but this did not happen as Nigeria stepped away from the brink, though concluded that the risk drivers are still ever present and assuming.

TABLE VIII
FSI RANKING AND MAPPING OF COUNTRIES, 2015

Year	Very High Alert	High Alert	Alert	High Warning	Warning	Low Warning
Nigeria		14				
Egypt			38			
Rwanda			37			
Congo Rep.			33			
Sierra Leone			31			
Myanmar			27			
Libya			25			
Gambia				51		
Jordan					81	
Israel & the West Bank					68	
South Africa						113

Source: The Fund for Peace, 2015

The role of Nigeria in meeting the global oil needs particularly that of the United States has necessitated the latter's formation of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2007 following the prediction of Nigeria's possible disintegration and break-up within 15 years [66]. The apprehensiveness over Nigeria's future has been predicated on, and by series of crises including the leadership crisis following the demise of the former president, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2009, the crisis in Jos and several other heart-breaking catastrophes linked to the country's social and political structures.

The doubt over Nigeria's continued existence is further amplified by [55], when he stated that the country's chances of survival are slim having been in the list of failed states for nearly five consecutive years 2005, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. He noted from the analysis of a former United States ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, who linked the possible collapse of Nigeria to the 2011 polls, the build-up which was characterised by lack of agreement over zoning of the president and other political offices, the fragile electoral process, split of politicians along ethnic lines, religious tensions and the fragile peace in the Niger Delta – all these which could induce military take-over.

VII. THE LESSONS FROM THE PAST

The need to keep the three regions (or major tribes) within the Nigerian polity led to the continued adoption of the present federal system which is though a pseudo-federalism. But this seems to have also been the bane of the country's instability. The fundamental values consistent with a democratic state: sovereignty of the people; respect for human rights; equal political, economic and social

opportunities; equity, justice, and fair play as ethical basis of politics and national unity; transparency and accountability as basis for governance, have all been almost non-existent. Following years of military rule, a negotiated agreement has always been canvassed. In the Yoruba's agenda presented to the National Political Reform Conference (NPRC), the following are highlights of the recommendations for the Nigerian nation²³:

- 1) a federal Nigerian state with six regional governments based on the current six geo-political zones operating federal and regional constitutions respectively;
- 2) a single legislative list which will be the exclusive legislative list consisting of only 30 items including mines and minerals;
- 3) an adoption of the Westminster model of parliamentary government²⁴;
- 4) an oil revenue allocation of 25 percent to the oil-producing states;
- 5) a regional and state police force structure;
- 6) the establishment of a constitutional court with jurisdiction over inter-governmental cases and petitions from elections of the National Assembly;
- 7) an informal role for traditional rulers in the political structure;
- 8) self-financed stations must be maintained by political parties prior to elections;
- 9) an open secret ballot system for voting in election processes; and
- 10) the abrogation of the Land Use Act decree.

The reason for the continued practice of the present pseudo-federal system of government has sometimes being attributed to the lack of strong economic structure of some states. But according to [68], since every state has at least one mineral resource in commercial quantity, each can stand on its own and maximize the potential of such resource for its economic development while the central government agrees with the states on its own share. Over-dependence on oil and on the central government has destroyed the pre-independence competitive communalism of the regions, as states now grope under lack of development.

A. *The Problems of Federalism and National Restructuring in Nigeria*

In the words of [69], "federal arrangements are often political systems designed to respond to particular political, social, cultural and economic realities and balances in any social formation."²⁵ In a sense, the federal system is a viable mechanism to provide justice, fairness and equity to all, while also ensuring unity among different states. Its lop-

²³The recommendations were adapted from [67].

²⁴ See reference [2].

²⁵ President Olusegun Obasanjo delivered this paper at the International Conference on Federalism in Brussels.

sidedness has often resulted in secession moves, coups, endless civil and political unrests, and an unstable entity.

The present federal system is therefore a unitary-type system where the centre has all the controlling powers: economic and political. The 1979 Constitution as opposed to the 1954 Lyttleton Constitution made the centre too strong for a federal system of government. This led to the collapse of the Second Republic and a return of military which held onto power for sixteen years [70]. Presently, the second tier of government (state government) has become an appendage of the centre, and the third tier (local government) is under the control of the state. This was the picture of the *Obasanjo*-led government which negates the provision of Section 2 (2) of the 1999 Constitution that states that the nation “shall be a federation consisting of states and a federal capital territory.” The 2004 seizure of funds allocated to local governments of *Abia*, *Ebonyi*, *Lagos*, *Nasarrawa* and *Niger* states by the federal government exemplifies the loss of a true federalism, or the drift towards a unitary system of government. Reference [71], in his seminal paper, agreed that even though the 1999 Constitution qualifies itself as a federal constitution, “its unitary features are too large and fundamental to be sufficiently responsive to the yearnings of the federating states for a reasonable degree of autonomy.”

The 1967 violent rejection of unitary government when the military government of Major-General *Aguiyi Ironsi* was overthrown and subsequently led to a 30-month civil war says much about Nigeria’s non-receptive nature of the system. The chaos and crises that have therefore befallen the country since 1983 when the military took over again, and throughout the civilian administration of *Obasanjo* may be attributed to the unitary system in practice. The states, in the words of [71],

“... are clearly overwhelmed with the enormous powers of the federal government and in almost every matter, have had to wait for one guideline or the other from Abuja before decisions can be completely taken in a good number of matters. The nation cannot move forward that way.”

While the 1914 amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates may have been to serve the British selfish interest, the British colonial government had by 1945 observed that there exists a great cultural diversity among the Nigerian people of which the unitary system of government cannot be the way out, but a federal solution.

Since 1993 when the June 12 presidential election results were annulled, the country had been on the brink of collapse. The United States National Intelligence Council (NIC) reported in 2005 on Nigeria’s imminent collapse, predicting that Nigeria would witness more religious crises, which along with other problems, would lead to the outright

collapse of the country within the fifteen years that followed [64], [65]. Reference [72]’s position was in agreement with NIC’s prediction as he cited some critical symptoms of the imminent collapse to include the continued intraparty crises especially among the majority parties, as evident in Peoples Democratic Party (PDP); reminiscent of the intraparty-induced collapse of the First Republic in 1966, a consequent of the party’s dictatorial-like government from *Obasanjo* to Goodluck Jonathan, elections irregularities, politicization of religious practices in the country, the Niger Delta crisis and other political crises with premise on ethnic biases.

Nigeria’s socio-political structure is such that it has over 400 ethnic groups, over an area of approximate 913,000 square kilometres with linguistic groups numbering between 700 to 15,000 [73]. The country’s languages are about 248 within a population of about 179 million people, with Christianity dominating the South and Islam in the North [74]. This, according to [73], will help appreciate the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian society and the imperative of federalism as a more efficient system of government.

B. The Recourse to Federalism

The consequence of the 1967 attempt to introduce unitary system of government into Nigeria has underlined the capacity of federalism as the right system of government. And though it may have failed such countries like Yugoslavia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Ethiopia, it had however given Nigeria the capability to withstand shocks that may have disintegrated the country. While the 1914 amalgamation has though been blamed for the country’s present political problems [73], the country’s misimplementation of the system may be its undoing. The *Kano* riot of 1953, Civil War of 1967-70, *Ife-Modakeke* and *Warri-Ijaw* crises, the June 12 and the Niger Delta crises, all point to the problem of lack of integration within the system. A true federal system will make the centre less attractive and concentrate on the state or default to regional resolution of political issues with a command of loyalty to own constituency.

The contention that the regional arrangements of the independence era have failed Nigeria is underlined by the possibility of disintegration of the country which culminated in the political crisis that later ensued, against its development capability which brought on competitive communalism among the regions, and stimulated developments thereon. According to the *Oputa* Panel report in [75],

“The regional arrangements, which were introduced gradually through constitutional changes between 1945 and 1954 created more problems than they were designed to solve. They

deepened the centrifugal tendencies, which amalgamation had set in motion and which were encouraged by colonial administrators.”

The more disturbing thing about true federalism in Nigeria was that the periods of self-governance by regions only brought about regional development but discouraged national integration even after independence. This also, underlined the colonialists' self-interest as the *Oputa* Panel reports,

“It is clear now that the decision of the colonial administration to merge both the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 was informed by reasons of British economic interests and not those of Nigeria.”

So, there was a conflict of interest between what the colonialists desired and what Nigerians want, and the defect in the inherited system was allowed to grow more and encircled the country's socio-political system. The four main political parties that emerged thereafter were also ethnic-based.

VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The general indifference to the present federal-type system practised in Nigeria might be an explanation for the 'mistaken' amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates of the country in 1914. With the unending nightmares that followed it and including June 12, and the success of the system during the pre-independence era, the federal structure practised then would have to be defined and made distinct from that of the present.

The challenge that June 12 brings is a precipitate of the 1914 amalgamation, a fall out of the political differences that arose due to the socio-cultural differences of the constituent peoples. The experience of June 12 might though not clearly show this, but then, it is evident in the aftermath of the immediate crisis that ensued especially during the NPRC in 2005.

This paper is certainly a brief overview of the challenges following the 1914 and the June 12 socio-political events. A comparative synthesis of the circumstances of the events suggests that tribal sentiments will always come up, and will still always put the country on collapsible circumstance except certain reforms are made starting with the adoption of a true federal system of government. Nigeria may not in a short while be able to attain the status of countries like China and Brazil due to its multi-social challenges, it will definitely experience a gradual social integration in years to come when the ethnic border lines that presently existed would have been consciously (or unconsciously) erased.

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I warrant that this work is original and certify that the

research is my whole effort and take full responsibility for all its content. I believe the manuscript represents honest work without prejudice, and to the best of my knowledge, contains no misrepresentations. While I appreciate the contributions of some people only in preparation of the manuscript, there is no any other input, in cash or kind, neither is there any conflict of interest whatsoever to be disclosed, and all my affiliations including Stanbic IBTC are indemnified of any potential connection to this work.

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