Restructuring Nigeria: A Critical Study of Its Relevance in Sustainable Development

Chinweuba, Gregory Emeka, PhD
Philosophy Unit, General Studies Division, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, (ESUT) Enugu

Abstract
Nigeria has been recording unsustainable development due to poor leadership and governance. As such, the living condition of the citizenry has been harsh and brutish. This has resulted to political instability, agitation, militancy, insurgency, terrorism and economic recession, which has compounded the existence of the citizenry and threatens national unity. Against this backdrop, some stakeholders have proposed restructuring as an axiological panacea to Nigerian poor leadership and governance. This paper therefore studies the Nigerian questions and the indispensability of socio-political and economic restructuring in Nigerian administrative performance. It as well studies the philosophical foundation, import and implication of restructuring as a fervent answer to Nigerian questions. The study finds that socio-political and economic restructuring in Nigeria will bring diversification and growth of the economy, optimal performance in governance and enhance sustainable development. The study therefore concludes that restructuring will give diverse cultural nations in Nigeria a sense of belonging, full participation in governance, and will as well answer the diverse socio-political, economic and technological questions burdening Nigerian society.

Key Words: Restructuring, Critical; Study, Relevance; Sustainable Development

Introduction
Efficient political structure enhances economic diversification, strong exchange rates and growth of national income. Hence, political scientists and economists have advised developing countries like Nigeria to restructure her governance and economic base. This call has recently become imperative as crude oil that counts for 90% of the Nigeria’s revenues crashed in the international market. This condition left Nigeria with low Gross National Income (GNI) that enhanced the harsh living condition of the citizenry. More so, corruption at the low and high places has remained a menace to sustainable development. For the Nigerian political elites and their loyalists have hijacked and centralized political power and created a society with unequal distribution of rights, where the government is not accountable and responsive to the citizens and the great mass of the citizens are denied economic and political opportunities.

In fact, most Nigerians are poor because the nation is ruled by narrow and often incompetent political elites that alternate themselves with their loyalists in office. Thesez elites organized Nigeria for their own benefits at the expense of the vast mass of the people. Thus, “political power has been narrowly concentrated at the federal level, and has been used to create great wealth for those who possess it”, hence we have looters across the length and breadth of Nigeria (Acemoglu and Robinson, 3). To be true, the leadership is now used to thinking about survival of democracy in terms of personal gain and could not expunge tyranny and criminality from its activities. As such, universal recognition which is the fundamental human longing and the fulcrum of liberal democracy has eluded the citizenry (Fukuyama, 288). Unlike all true liberal democratic societies, Nigeria is dedicated to institutionalizing conventional sources of inequality and subscribing to personal good. The result has been poverty, political instability, militancy, insurgency, agitation and incompetency of Nigeria in the international community.
Consequently, most Nigerians today yearn for independence period when pristine restructured Nigeria recorded a strong and booming economy where one naira equals to one dollar in the exchange rates. Then, the country was among the top exporters of timber, rubber, cocoa, palm oil, groundnuts, etc. Coupled with these, Nigerian tourist centers and infrastructures in the likes of Yankari Game Reserve, Obudu cattle ranch, Oguta lake, Ikegosi springs, Gurara falls, Mambilla plateau, Presidential Hotels, recreation parks, etc were well managed. As such, foreigners holidayed in Nigeria, and loads of foreign exchange was earned by the federating regions. These predated to better condition of living other than what is existent at the moment. Because of the efficient management and healthy competition that goes with restructuring which guarantees federating units self-determination, political and economic powers, human institutions were well funded and adequately managed. For instance, the efficiency of education in the federating regions earned foreign exchange as it attracted foreign students. In fact, then were the days brilliance was respected. Gracing the restructured epoch in Nigeria was also different car assembly plants such as Anambra Motor manufacturing company (ANAMCO), Volkswagen, Peugeot, to mention but a few. The country also booms with industries producing steel, cement, shoes, bags, textiles, and transport system was efficient.

Indeed, pristine Nigerian restructuring adopted four federating units of Northern, Eastern, Western and Mid-western regions, and unveiled the fact that decentralized governance will to a large extent lead Nigeria to sustainable development. This is more so because of the vastness of the country, which makes it possible for decentralized government to oversee and adequately manage the affairs of these vast landmass and population. Decentralized government will as well enable most of the nations that make up Nigeria to be responsible for their existence. Thus, the current comatose of almost every sector in Nigeria is consequent upon centralized governance. What is now evident is a country of more than “178 million” entertainment, fashion and life conscious people without viable textile industries, shoe making factories, tourist centers, sports league, agricultural industries, to mention but a few (Chinweuba, 236).

In addition to these, revenue generating rights and institutions such as; education, mining, agriculture, tourism, transportation, taxation, etc has been taken by the federal government leaving the states pathetically dependent. Each tier of government now waits every month for proceeds from the meager oil revenue sorely managed by federal government. Since this political condition is not autochthonous with Nigerians, it has weakened infrastructural responsibilities that could have been carried out efficiently had the country continued with the pristine restructured federating units. Worst still, this has encouraged intense unhealthy ethnic competition for the control of the federal government, leading to full scale instability, nationwide corruption and unsustainable development. To rebuild Nigeria and ensure better living conditions for the citizenry therefore, the country will have to be restructured, for through this means socio-political and economic capacities that enhances sustainable development and better coexistence will be facilitated.

The Concepts “Restructuring” and “Sustainable development”
The word ‘restructuring’ presupposes an existent unpalatable situation, condition or structure. Thus, it points to a shift from what is on ground to something better. Restructuring can be understood as “changing the way in which something such as a government, business or system is organized” (Bullon, 1405). Based on the current Nigerian condition, restructuring is a call for devolution of power and restoration of confederation, which are the foundational structure to which all Nigerians subscribed, as encapsulated in independence constitution of 1960 (Osuntokun, 13). Con Federation in accordance with Ofoegbu is a system of governance where the confederating units are autonomous and independent, but agree to
have a central but weak government which depends on the sovereign units or states' contributions for its survival (51).

It therefore stands that restructuring is a return to pristine Nigeria that worked for human progress and sustainable development (Oduamakin, 9). In other words, it is a return to the fundamental processes of rational universal recognition upon which liberal democracy stands. Magstadt calls it remodeling democracy for a better understanding, participation and development (112-114). Restructuring is thus replete with rational partition of a country to enhance management, decentralization of power, governance and diversification of economy for human and national sustainable development. In multicultural societies like Nigeria, restructuring is the magic policy that keeps a country united, self-sufficient and stable. Thus, restructuring is a fervent answer in an increasing complex existence that ensures efficiency and optimal performance. Graan and Ukpere share this idea when they posit that complex countries should undergo restructuring to facilitate optimal performance and sustainable development (11917).

With proper management, innovation and optimal performance that accompanies restructuring, it stands that the process is an imperative socio-political and economic strategy that enhances sustainable development. And sustainable development is a continuous change in the positive direction from one advanced social, economic, educational, cultural, political, scientific and technological level to another (Agbanusi, 84). It is characterized by continuous fulfillment, increased skill and capacity, self-discipline, responsibility, creativity, material wellbeing and actualization of potentials of both natural endowments and human person (Ndubuisi, 225). Sustainable development cannot be properly understood except by comparing existing structures, institutions, productions, and achievements in one country with another. It is thus an existential process that meets the needs of the present population of a nation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs (Dalhatu and Bagaji, 58). This is why United Nations avers that sustainable development is “a pattern of resource use that aims at addressing human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present but also for generation to come” (Amos, 6). As such, sustainable development bothers on taking adequate care of the basic needs of the present generation without compromising the social, political and economic needs of the next generation. Between the processes of restructuring and sustainable development is therefore a significant link glaring in the fact that the latter is to a large extent guaranteed within the context of the former.

Nigerian Questions and the Imperative of Restructuring.
Nigeria attained independence in 1960 and consequently, fashioned a federal constitution that incorporated Eastern, Western, Northern and later, Mid-western regions as federating units. This structure reiterated in 1963 republican constitution, made governance and full participation of all cultural nations within Nigeria possible. This pristine constitution was however suspended in 1966 as a result of military incursion in Nigerian politics which concentrated functional political and economic powers at the federal level (Otomoghegua, 67). This was the cradle of political absolutism in Nigeria and what Fukuyama calls megalothymia, (that is, absolute domination) which subtly finds its way into democratic dispensations through manipulation of the constitution and capitalizing on its inadequacies. Indeed, the years of democratic rule from 1979 to 1983 and subsequently from 1999 till date saw the resurgence of this dysfunctional trend with more powers being concentrated at the center by the 1999 constitution. This act not only amounted to negation of the terms of independence by Nigerians, it as well set in motion a chain of disastrous unitary sociopolitical and economic events that have today become excruciating to the majority of the citizenry.

To raise resources to prosecute the civil war in 1967, the taxation and revenue rights of the regions and eventually the states were finally hijacked by the federal government
(ElRufai, 4). This was how the center was more absolutely strengthened and the federating units that were later divided into states were weakened to total dependence on the federal government. As a result, most of the ills plaguing the country today are directly or indirectly consequences of anti confederal structure the past leaders forced on the citizenry to enhance their easy command, control and egoistic aggrandizement. For more than fifty years, Nigeria is in principle a federation, but without true federalism. The unitary system till date portends national failure even in delivering public goods and protecting human lives and property. Worst, the system keeps metamorphosing into what Fukuyama refers to as predatory system which gives rulers opportunities to use their expertise in the organization of violence to extract resources or rents from the rest of the society (210). This gives credence to Evans' assertion that the rationale behind most elites' seek for power in the predatory states is the access power gives them to economic rents (561). With the capture of political power therefore, most of the members of the ruling class work to extract the highest level of resources they can from the underlying society and divert them to their own private uses (Fukuyama 210). Thus, leadership and government offices in Nigeria are no longer viewed as a service to the people but a means of accumulating personal wealth (Onuigbo, 27). Forsyth resonates this institutionalized spoil system; where national resources is looted by combatants from the winning party and observes that this orientation exhibited by the ruling class shows that;

in Nigeria political power means success and prosperity, not only for the man who holds it but for his family, his birth place and even his region of origin. As a result, there are many who will go any length to get it, will surpass themselves in order to get it (15).

These, according to Oladapo cast the burden of grave injustice, human right abuses, tribal and ethnic discriminations, marginalization, irresponsible governance and political neglect on the citizenry. (6). It is this obnoxious condition that made Ilochi to aver that Nigerians are currently dissatisfied and this dissatisfaction is real, profound and deep; for no people with corruption, centralized governance, absolute domination and mismanagement of resources can survive as a nation (1). Beside the military incursion however, the need for restructuring Nigeria also anchors on other known factors. These factors revolve around ethnic bigotry, rivalry, cultural conflict, religious conflict, class struggle, politico-economic mismanagement, corruption and conflict of interest among politicians which constantly heat the polity. In addition to these unpleasant condition is the mono oil economy which led to the neglect of other sectors of the economy. Consequently, revenue generation of the Federal Government decreased greatly with the crash of oil which is the mainstay of Nigerian economy. With corruption in the petroleum sector as well, the structure of Nigerian society and polity became monetized by politicians and this adversely affects the citizenry. Thus, the gap between the massive dominated poor and few subjugating rich widened. This political class of course has no permanent political party or ideology but permanent political interest geared towards enriching themselves from the national treasury. Politics thus became the game of the highest bidder and the business of the elites who alternates themselves in leadership and political positions.

Indeed, it is all these social ills that became visible in nationwide systematic institutionalized corruption, which permeates transactions, recruitment processes, negotiations, budgets and in fact every aspect of societal life. Besides, the situation also led to institutional failures. Thus, educational, legal, security, religious, family and law enforcement institutions have been compromised via corruption paving way for injustice and abuse of fundamental human rights (8). In reference to this, Igwe states that the tentacles of corruption reaches everywhere in Nigeria; from the office of the President to the smallest administrative unit of government, and has tragically devastated Nigerian society and made
millions of people poor and destitute despite the enormous human and material resources (3). Today, Nigeria experiences deep security challenges and massive loss of human lives and property worth millions of Naira. As such, the news about Nigeria has not been encouraging for Nigerians and Nigeria’s friends:

the national question, political uncertainty, economic impoverishment, social ills like unprecedented corruption, monopoly of public office, diversion of public funds into private pockets, inadequate health and education services, crumbling infrastructure and general poverty (Asiegbu, 1).

It is therefore all these that underscores the discontentment of the majority of Nigerian population at the moment. This discontentment has led to national discords and awakened secessionist movement of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and the clarion call for restructuring the country.

Restructuring as a panacea to Nigerian Questions
Faced with the current fledging and grim politico-economic outlook as well as a structure inimical to sustainable development, Nigerian pattern of existence has to change to ensure its survival as a country. Based on this, generating and sharing of government revenue must give way to a new structure consisting of the present states, geopolitical zones or other sizable independent federating units that will drive sustainable productivity and knowledge based economy. Such quasi-independent political entities has to wield devolved powers that guarantees within their territories an exclusive control of human capital development, mineral resources, agriculture, education, transportation, taxation, security and electricity with obligatory financial contribution to the federal government. With this arrangement, corruption and secessionist movements will reduce, and attention will be devoted to wealth areas that will boost the economy and favour the larger population.

It then stands that the solution to Nigerian problems requires the restructuring of the entire socio-political and economic system in a way that enhances adequate management. The restructuring as proposed here have to assume a pattern that will reduce the current attractive character of politics, and distribute political rights broadly, make government responsive to the citizens and create economic opportunities to the masses (Acemoglu and Robinson, 4). In view of this, the conservative and liberal models of restructuring call to mind. The conservative model aims at adopting minor administrative changes but still preserve the larger part of the present status quo. This portends measurable devolution of exclusive powers on critical sectors, reduction of federal government exclusive list, leaner bureaucracy, local government autonomy, resource sharing, state police and federal character principle. The conservative model of restructuring will guarantee some amount of meaningful position on education, mining, agriculture, transportation, power, security, construction of roads and critical infrastructures, etc to the federating states which consist of the present state and local governments. With this model, the federal government acts as a watchdog and comes in when the state or local governments fail. This model works under a federal constitution. The liberal model on the other hand is a confederal arrangement consisting of making the federating units quasi-independent governments wielding exclusive fundamental powers in its territory for internal defence, customs, immigration, internal relations, legislation, judiciary and some amount of foreign relations. With this model of restructuring, each region will have its own constitution adopted by its own citizens. Each region or federating unit will also control its own resources and economy. The federating units under this arrangement can create states, local governments or merge existing ones as deemed suitable.

The liberal model of restructuring allows the federal government to operate only on flexible constitution and acts as an umpire over the federating units which will comprise more of homogenous people. The flexible constitution here reduces the power of the federal
Restructuring unitary and human capacity building and capital base that foster sustainable development. The restructuring because (11916). Unpredictable implications of restructuring Nigeria

Unpredictable but viable economic environment like Nigeria requires firm management to facilitate discovery of innovative ways of improvement and sustenance. Based on this, Graan and Ukpera note that restructuring is a management strategy that improves efficiency (11916). Supportive of this assertion, Kaplan and Weisbach aver that improved efficiency and proper management of people and resources is dependent on restructuring (107). This is because restructuring guarantees functional democracy and competitive advantage even within the global context. On this note therefore, Bergh and Ngah-King observe that restructuring is a purposeful reaction to governance, strategy and industrial pressure (594). The implication of these postulations is that restructuring guarantees strong internal governance, viable democracy and refocused corporate strategies (Chatterjee, 87-96). It again paves way for efficient generation and management of resources, and enhances human capacity building and capital base that foster sustainable development.

Since Nigeria is an economically viable environment, restructuring will as well create and enhance functional institutions that will give incentives to invest and to work hard. These are the rationale behind Economists' admonitions for countries and organizations running a unitary system of administration to restructure in order to attain optimal performance. Without restructuring of governance therefore, democracy can lead to oligarchy, plutocracy, partitocracy and tyranny as envisaged by Plato and Aristotle (Aghamelu and Ani, 95). The
presence of these conditions in Nigeria in fact made the despot Sani Abacha to mockingly describe Nigerian governance as “home-made democracy” (Arua, 79). Referring to this political situation, Odey argues that the government is not by the people but by an organized clique, cabal, political jobbers, Looters and robbery consortium that collaborate with imperialists and convert leadership into breeding ground for unemployment, insecurity, hunger and hopelessness (14-15). It therefore means that true and functional democracy exists in a restructured state which fosters large participation of the people in governance. In this arrangement, government is closer to the people and nomination of candidates for governance happens among people who have a better knowledge of themselves and the candidates. Based on its downsized nature, such autonomous entity with less population is a breeding ground for rule of law, prioritized security, booming economy, increased understanding and consensus as well as reduced ethnic and religious conflicts.

**Philosophical foundations of the argument**

The history of philosophical inquiry shows that the idea of restructuring is a product of philosophy. Yet, the views of Philosophers vary as pertains to what must constitute restructuring. The idea of restructuring is the product of the universal change which Heraclitus conceives to be the eternal order in the cosmos. The doctrine of flux or universal change is the most outstanding observations of Heraclitus, which is commonly expressed in the phrases; “all things are flowing”, “you cannot step twice into the same river for fresh waters are ever flowing in” (Russell, 52). By implication, Heraclitus also meant that patterns of governance undergo some qualitative or quantitative change, or both. In other words, nothing is, for everything is becoming. Russell affirms this process of change that affects democracy and argues that governance in the physical world consists in re-arrangement of elements (54). It is therefore based on these philosophical postulations that the idea of restructuring came to exist in a political state. Nevertheless, Protagoras provided a relativistic foundation for restructuring as a democratic order (Odimegwu, 15). His argument that man is the measure of all things signifies the ability of man to review a socio-political and economic system to the advantage of the society. On the other hand, the art of rhetoric and political education taught by Protagoras and his fellow Sophists (Trasymachus and Gorgias) paved way for the sustained restructuring of Greece into city states. Meanwhile, Hegel's absolute idealism saw the absolute spirit in eternal dialectical movement, manifesting itself in nature, history, politics and ideologies to actualize universal freedom. In fact, the modern political state with new democratic ideas like restructuring is according to Hegel, an outstanding stage of this evolution of the absolute idea (Stumpf, 335).

Moreover, Karl Marx generally views politics as a superstructure that grows upon economic substructure (Marx and Engels, 28). Indeed, the principles developed in his dialectical materialism are strictly part of the contents of socio-political and economic restructuring of human society. Even Hobbes' thoughtful transition of human existence from natural to civil state gives clue to restructuring as an inevitable activity in human society. In addition, the utilitarian Philosophers; Bentham and Mill posit that since happiness is the highest human value, the structure of politics should be adjusted to gratifying this basic irrepressible impulse of man. Thus, they taught that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the criterion of morality and the end of the state (Stumpf and Abel, 394). This utilitarian philosophy forms the basic foundation of the call for restructuring Nigeria, and underscores electoral processes as well as basic democratic cultures around the modern world (Laslett, 380). Tracing the foundation of political restructuring, Ayn Rand contends that ethics derives from metaphysics and epistemology, and restructuring is based on ethics. As such, the idea of restructuring a society is always to ensure adequate application of ethics to social questions (Ayn, 351).
From the foregoing therefore, it stands that philosophy is the foundation of sociopolitical and economic restructuring. This is based on the fundamental presuppositions and suppositions that determine restructuring as a substantial aspect of liberal democratic theory (Odimegwu, ix-1). Indeed, these philosophical presuppositions and suppositions form the background of every political theory and praxis. For the being of any object, theory, idea and ideology, or the possibility of its conception and definition denotes the necessary existence of the ground that serves as its source and fulcrum. Philosophy is thus the foundation of restructuring in the sense of reasons, evidence, arguments, analysis and criticism wherewith philosophy justifies the grounds, terms, position, advantages, structures, ends and concept of restructuring a country. These mean that philosophy provides the consciousness and cognition of socio-political and economic restructuring, as well as its logical and factual consistency which makes it desirable to the citizenry.

Therefore, the clarion call to restructure Nigeria is raised and sustained by philosophical beliefs, convictions and positions. And the crisis of contemporary Nigeria which led to call for restructuring is not unconnected with the dislocation or disregard for philosophic foundations in the practice of politics and exercise of governance. Nze captures this philosophical foundation when he avers that the present crisis in Nigerian politics that calls for restructuring results from colonial shattering of traditional philosophical foundations (1-10). Okolo then insists that it is the duty of Philosophers to define and clarify the meaning of daily used political concepts and terms to the political leaders and the masses (1-23). It is thus evident that the principles evolving from philosophical inquiries and thoughts are broadly applied in diverse countries of the world, and their application amount to restructuring.

**Conclusion**

The history of existing societies is the history of class struggle (Marx & Engels 3). For the unjust way governance and economy are distributed deepen the excruciating state of the masses who are constantly dominated. Stability can therefore characterize the political state when a new system of governance that favours the existence of the masses is brought in place. Thus, societies are forced by challenges to review and adapt management structures that address the challenges of meeting up with the needs of the citizenry (Ogbonna & Harris, 512). As human existence and needs become increasingly complex, the need to change the organization and management structure of governance becomes imperative. The current complex socio-political and economic challenges in Nigeria have reached this peak hence the clarion call for restructuring. Unless Nigeria is liberally restructured, the present arrangement will continue denying the citizenry a better existence. It has therefore become evident that the current socio-political and economic arrangement deprives Nigerians of access to better education, good health services, gainful employment, equal political rights and economic opportunities. This has made many citizens restive, agitated and vulnerable to violent extremist groups like *Boko Haram*. This despicable condition has also rendered many as veritable cannon fodders for escalating restiveness existent in the country (Nwodo, 1). Nigeria must therefore undergo restructuring to sustain its existence and unity.

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