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PREDATORY STATE-ETHNO REGIONAL RELATIONS, PARASITIC OLIGARCHIC CLASS AND THE RESTRUCTURING QUESTION IN NIGERIA: HOW ETHICAL?

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Abstract

The state, according to Marxian class analysis, is supposed to be an independent and neutral force, standing above all societal forces. Its relations with the society are to maintain order and to treat all sections of the political society on the principles of equity and equality, being a product of a social contract arising from the people. However, the Nigerian state, due to its colonial descent and mission, sowed the seed of disorder by taking side with a section of the society. Determined to leverage one region against another, the state became partisan, exploitative and predatory in character and principle. From the favoured region has emerged a parasitic class, feeding fat on the resources and pains of other regions. Being the beneficiary of state predation, the class has constituted itself into a guardian class for the preservation of the

predatory state structure. Consequently, this perceived odious political structure has attracted the concerns of other sections of the country, whose insistence is on having the structure restructured so as to enable each region or zone take its fates into its hands. Four out of the six zones into which the country is divided have lent their support to restructuring, while two (the zones of the parasitic oligarchic class) are in vehement opposition to it. In analogous terms, their opposition is informed by the fear of a parasite losing its host, which corresponds to death.

Keywords

Ethics, Ethno-Regional Relations, Parasitic Class, Predatory State, Restructuring, Development

1. Introduction

In Africa today, the passionate desire for sustained economic growth and multi-sectoral development has further conduced to the transmogrification of the concept of development to a somewhat continental ideology. As the peoples' *weltanschauung*, it has since become the very analytic cum explanatory framework for accounting for many and diverse transpiring in the continent, while further making itself amenable for illogical defeatist analytical cyclicalism. In this sense, Africa's underdevelopment is cyclically blamed on lack of development factors. This, however, does not explain anything in the face of science and logic. At independence, the African states' greatest challenge was to stimulate development and industrialization. With no industry available, the task of development then fell upon the shoulders of the emergent state, to which the Nigerian state was no exception.

Notably, state-centric analysis of development explore diverse avenues through which societies could be bettered, and through which the winds of economic growth and development could be felt, not just by the material artefacts of the society, but essentially by the men of the society. In this latter sense, development is conceived as fundamentally human-centric, a perception that Nnoli (1981:35), described as "man as the centrepiece of development". The actualization of these material and human developmental cravings through the invocation of state policies and the utilization of the apparatuses of the state or its sanctioned/licensed partners, as against other independent social forces of the society, including their subjugation, is the *raison d'être* of state-centric theory of development. Yet, empirical historical facts have shown that states do not act in a vacuum, just as their policies are not channelled to the blues, but to the society, which is an amalgam of diverse elements. The implication of this realization became the imperative of fashioning means of state-society relations.

However, the nature and character of a given state further shapes and determines the specific dynamics of state-society relations at any given material time and clime. It is refreshing to note that states have been variously categorized and described as democratic, welfarist, capitalist, socialist, communist, rentier, consumerist, post-colonial, developmental, predatory, etc, to capture or reflect basically its capacity to fulfil the people's expectations, especially in line with the historical social contract theory, wherein the people parted with a substantial chunk of their rights for state protection and provisioning. Depending therefore on the policy orientation of a state, state-society relation may be benignant or malignant. A state-society relation is said to be benignant when it is characterized by kindness and graciousness in behaviour or appearance. It is a relationship that sees the two parties (state and social forces) as partners in development, with the former enjoying the legitimacy and support of the latter while the former sees and treats the welfare of the latter as the supreme task of government. Often, the net-product of this model of state-society relation is the transformation of the state into a welfarist and developmental state. Evans (1995), enunciated the importance of state apparatus (strong central government bureaucracies) in partner with other social forces and elements of the society to facilitate development in a developmental state. In this connection, Udeogu, *et al*; (2017:7) , had noted that the presence of "Embedded autonomy" (Evans, 1995) which connects bureaucracies and the surrounding social structure intensely is the key to the effectiveness of developmental state. Close relationships are established between elite bureaucracy and private sectors. Relations between the state and the private sector were crucial. Business and industry is under the state's guidance. Though the state does not replace private ownerships directly, it intervenes and instructs private sectors according to national strategies.

On the other hand, a malignant state-society relation is symptomatic of state high-handedness or irresponsiveness to the plight of the people, and sometimes, repression and suppression of either a section or certain elements of the society or the entire society in general, thereby breeding discontent and reciprocal state hatred (anti-etatism) among the disgruntled elements of the society. Malignant state-society relations reign supreme under a predatory state. By predatory state, we mean a state built on strong foundation of political violence and unproductive economic extraction with little or no effort at stimulating objective economic transformation through a conscious effort at harnessing the human and material/ natural resources indigenous to the state. According to Shumba (2016:1), the predatory state is a ruling class anti-developmental accumulation and reproduction project characterised by: (1) party and

military dominance in the state; (2) state-business relations shaped by domination and capture; and (3) state-society relations shaped by violence and patronage. Therefore, in the words of Kalu (2017:2), a predatory state-society relation is a perverse state-society relations...defined by extraction and expropriation, especially of the resources of a section of the society, without a conscious effort at integrating the section into the scheme of things or development the section for greater economic windfalls. What becomes clear from the nature and dynamics of predatory state-social relations is that it is fundamentally antithetical to developmental state-social relations, with the incidental implication of large-scale developmental stagnation.

In Nigeria, as it is of course in many other African countries today, a specific modality of perverse or malignant state-social relation is fast establishing itself as a default national code of conduct in the form of predatory state-ethno regional relations. It is an aspect of malignant state-social relations that fans the embers of ethno-regional exclusivism and discrimination, even as the region in particular is the proverbial goose that lays the golden eggs. Being essentially a monocultural economy, oil accounts for over 90% of Nigeria's total foreign revenue. Unfortunately, the oil in question is exploited from this discriminated section of the Nigerian geography. It becomes ironic, indeed paradoxical, that the defunct eastern region (comprising the South-east and the South-south geopolitical zones), which is the breadwinner of the Nigerian hungry family is always at the receiving end (prey) of the Federal Government's adversarial dealings: from Pogroms in 1966, through genocide in 1967-70, the extra-judicial execution of Kan Saro Wiwa and the Ogoni 8, environmental despoliations of the region in the course of oil exploration and exploitation, the Odi Massacre of November 20th 1999, many years of lingering exclusion and poor representation in Federal appointments even in the face of Federal Character Principle that dictates otherwise, and finally to the recently concluded rebranded form of gun-boat diplomacy christened Operation Python Dance II (undue militarization and subsequent radicalization of the region) aimed at intimidating the region, and perhaps eventual annihilation or extermination. Yet on daily basis, oil is being constantly exploited with reckless abandon and utter disregard of the genuine plights of the people by the stiff-skinned Federal Government from the endangered regions. In our opinion, nothing best captures the relationship between the Nigerian Federal Government and the defunct eastern region than a predator-prey relationship under a supposedly democratic political arrangement that should not reflect any form of parasitic food chain relationship.

At different times in the trajectory of the Nigerian federation, serious concerns have been expressed by individuals, groups and sections to revisit this largely perceived odious system and arrangement that has historically put certain sections or regions of the federation at the mercy of the other and allowing certain unproductive class of people to feed fat on the labour and pains of others. Meanwhile a somewhat parasitic oligarchy or oligarchic class, being the beneficiary of the system, and having constituted itself into the custodian of the predatory state have remained absolute about their insistence for the continuation and maintenance of this predator-prey relationship status quo. In the interim, there appears to be resurgence of clamour, this time with even greater vigour and large appeal, for the Nigerian predatory state to be reconstructed. This wind of restructuring has been so pervasive that it found its way into the country's highest law-enacting assembly, the National Assembly as a bill.

The point of departure of this study is located in its establishment of a coherent dialectical nexus or interface between colonial exploitation and the emergence of predatory state in Nigeria, as well as the nurturing into maturity by the latter a parasitic oligarchic class whose political relevance and economic survival depends perpendicularly on the maintenance and guarding of predatory state-ethno regional relations. In the remaining part of the paper, effort is made to dig deep into the foregoing exposition. The next section historicises the study by critically exploring the colonial foundation of the Nigerian predatory state. This is followed by an analysis of the dynamics of predatory state-ethno regional relations in Nigeria. How this dynamics has led to the emergence of parasitic oligarchic class in Nigeria is examined then follows. The subsequent heading interrogates the restructuring question and the oligarchic class' opposition of it, while last heading concludes the study.

2. The Colonial Foundation of the Nigerian Predatory State

Nigeria remains an embattled offspring of British colonial escapades in Africa. For many years to come, the Lugardian experimentation with the peoples and society of the coastal region of West Africa was to continue to haunt her former colonies. Being a somewhat attenuating socio-economic ideology and heuristic political system, the British colonial mission (colonialism) in West Africa was founded on opportunistic humanism. As such, behind the veil of championing the vanguard of development and civilization of the Dark Continent of Africa lied the sinister of pathetic exploitation for the benefits of British citizens. To the British colonial masters, her colonies, including the area that was to be later designated 'Nigeria' was a massive

unharnessed property belonging to no other entity or persons other than Britain. It was therefore not a surprise that Joseph Chamberlain, the then Secretary of state for the colonies, informed the British Parliament in 1895 that he regarded many of our (British) colonies in the condition of underdeveloped estates, and therefore went ahead to announce the British Government's intention to consider the judicious investment of British money in British Crown Colonies to develop them for the benefit of their population and for the benefit of the greater population which is outside (Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates House of Commons, 22 August 1895, pp.640-44, cited in Carland,1980).

From the very onset of British colonial venture in Africa, the consciousness of exploitation, of tapping the colonies' rich resources, of taking without replacement or replenishing, of carting away fortunes from the region of much abundance but less developed to the region of least abundance but relatively better-off; in a word, of preying on the locals and real owners of the resources and fortunes had been alive, well and kicking. As a rule, predation never occurs, as it is inconceivable, in an environment with no prey (resources or people to be subtly or forcefully exploited and subjugated). In other words, a prey candidate must have a preying-value, which is interpreted here to mean self-sustaining and economically beneficial components. The insistence of Lord Grey (Colonial Secretary, 1846-1852) in Lord John Russell's administration that "the surest test for the soundness of measures for the improvement of an uncivilized people is that they should be self-sufficing (Robinson, et al 1961) drives the above point home. In contradistinction, the expenditure on a colony, not its revenues, is the best gauge of the degree of the commitment by colonial official to economic development (Mohammed, 2014:31).

To facilitate more exploitation and overcome some inevitable incidental challenges associated with the rather complex processes involved in extraction, assemblage and shipment of values to Europe, the colonial masters used the money from the central fund accruing from custom duties levied at the port, etc, to create infrastructure, as a means of further exploitation of what was later to be Nigeria so as to achieve their economic and commercial ends. The colonial regime begrudgingly embarked upon what Egerton (the then High Commissioner of Southern Nigeria) had called 'developmental expenditure.' As a result of the Egertonian development expenditure initiative, there was a general rise in the money spent on public work extraordinary from 1906 to 1909. According to Mohammed (2013:431), public works extraordinary expenditure peaked during the year of the great deficit, 1909. After that, the percentage of such

expenditure went down sharply and rapidly from a high of almost 22% to under 12% by 1912. More than anything else, this drop shows the declining willingness of the colonial office to give priority to the Egertonian developmental expenditure.

Table 1: *Southern Nigeria: Revenue and Expenditure, 1900-1913*

Year	Revenue	Expenditure	Surplus deficit
1900	£535,902	£ 424,257	£ +111,645
1901	606,431	564,818	+ 41,613
1902	801,737	619,687	+ 186,050
1903	760,230	759,953	+ 22,777
1904	888,123	863,917	+ 24,219
1905	954,748	998,564	-46,816
1906	1,088,717	1,056,290	+ 32,427
1907	1,459,554	1,217,336	+242,218
1908	1,387,975	1,357,763	+ 30,218
1909	1,361,891	1,648,684	-286,793
1910	1,933,235	1,592,282	+340,953
1911	1,956,170	1,717,259	+ 238,917
1912	2,235,214	2,410,498	+ 124,914
1913	2,668,198	2,096,311	+ 571,887

Source: Colonial Reports-Annual: Southern Nigeria, 1907-1912.

The departure of Egerton in 1912 and his replacement with Sir Frederick Lugard as the Governor-general of both Northern and Southern Nigeria remains a watershed in what would later become Nigeria's geographical structure, and characterize her governance and politics up till the present time. The colossal deficit that the colonial government had had to struggle to put up with for the administration of the Northern protectorate was eventually resolved (better still, transferred) through the amalgamation of the Colony and Protectorate Southern Nigeria with the Protectorate of Northern Nigerian into what has come to be formally known as and called Nigeria brought under one administration. As Mohammed (2013:432), accurately noted that the reasons for this consolidation were, as all students of the subject agree, administrative convenience and economy – that is, the quest for administrative rationality and efficiency. Amalgamation would solve, or at least put into cold storage, the problem of the borders. It would rationalize railway policy by bringing the railway under one authority. It would cure the financial insolvency of northern Nigeria by making the resources of its southern neighbor fully available

to it. Thus, making unnecessary further subventions from the imperial exchequer. It would rationalize administrative policy both at the centre and at the local level through uniform pattern.

Acknowledging the financial predicament of the North and the anticipated prosperity that would follow the projected amalgamation of the Northern protectorate with the Southern protectorate, Lord Lugard reported that “the prosperity of the Southern protectorate as evidenced by the liquor trade, had risen by 57 per cent. In fact, the liquor trade alone yielded revenue of One Million, One Hundred and Thirty-Eight Thousand pounds (£1,138,000) in 1913” (Ijomah, 2017). The true position is that the Northern administration could not have survived without the imperial grant-in-aid which in the year before the amalgamation stood at One Hundred and Thirty Six thousand Pounds, (£136,000) and had averaged Three Hundred and Fourteen Thousand, Five Hundred Pounds (£314,500) for the eleven years ending in March, 1912.

Table 2: *Percentage of Northern Nigeria Revenue Paid by the Southern and the Imperial Grants (Figures in Pounds)*

Period	Lagos	Southern and Imperial Grants	South Alone	North	Imperial
1900-1901	1.79	-	-	2.12	64.91
1901-1902	2.97	97.88	32.97	1.39	87.93
1902-1903		98.61	10.68	4.57	81.23
1903-1904		95.43	14.20	10.56	79.61
1904-1905		89.44	9.39	16.80	72.47
1905-1906		81.41	8.94	21.87	63.30
1906-1907		75.17	11.87	26.70	59.20
1907-1908		73.30	14.10	28.15	58.07
1908-1909		71.85	13.78	33.14	53.86
1909-1910		66.86	13.00	41.01	45.54
1910-1911		58.99	13.45	44.35	44.36
1911-1912		55.65	11.29	56.67	36.06
1912-1913		43.32	7.27	76.42	15.24
1913-		23.58	8.34	82.88	17.12

Source: Abstract of Revenue, 1900-1913.

As has been stated elsewhere above, a prey candidate must have a preying-value. It must be self-sustaining and economically viable, and it is this self-sustaining capacity and economic viability that serve as the pull factor to the predator. Like the thief of John (10:10), a predator comes not, but to steal, kill and destroy. Unlike its Northern counterpart, the colony of Lagos was self-sustaining and economically viable. These virtuous values soon pulled the British

imperialist state acting through Egerton first, and then Lugard. The immediate concern of the British colonial regime as rightly noted by Mohammed (2013, p.433), was to develop the North commercially while preserving the administration's interest...such that in 1907, and with financial support from the colony and protectorate of southern Nigeria, northern Nigeria began building a railway line to link Baro and Kano (Mohammed, 2013:441). However, as remarked by Ijomah (2017), on Tuesday, January 31, 1911, there were attacks on the colonial secretary's suggestion that the South should advance a loan of Two Hundred Thousand Pounds (£200,000) to the North for the completion of the Baro to Kano railway, in addition to the sum of One Million, Two Hundred and Thirty Thousand which was required from the South.

These attacks and subsequent placation of the North generated much criticism from essentially the South. One of the criticisms of the Northern dependence on the South was voiced out by Honourable Sapara Williams who contended that before the loan was to be granted, the Secretary of State should settle the type of relationship that existed between Lagos and Zungeru, the two administrative headquarters for the South and the North respectively (Ijomah, 2017). Lugard, according to him, went further to lay bare in a letter written on November 22, 1912 to his wife (Flora, who as a fiancé to Lugard Christened Nigeria) explaining how he had used the Southern resources to finance the Northern deficit.

Table 3: *Combined Figures for Southern Nigeria and Lagos the Year they were Amalgamated*

Year	Total Public Work Extraordinary Expenditure	Percentage (%)	Total Public Work Extraordinary Revenue	Total
1906	£532,902	16.2	£1,056,290	£1,088,717
1907	242,065	19.9	1,217,336	1,459,554
1908	238,016	17.5	1,648,684	1,361,891
1909	358,453	21.7	1,648,684	1,361,891
1910	211,087	13.3	1,592,282	1,933,235
1911	216,375	12.6	1,717,259	1,956,176
1912	246,355	11.7	2,110,498	2,235,412

Source: Colonial Report-Annual: southern Nigeria, 1906-1912.

To plunder the South for the expedient need of developing the North and the ultimate goal of enriching imperial United Kingdom was the motive behind engineering one contiguous geographical entity (Nigeria) out of diametrically different civilizations. How pathetic it is that

before leaving in 1912, Egerton had made the unrepentant boast that one of the things I am proudest of in West Africa is that I found southern Nigeria with hardly any debt and I left it with a debt of five million pounds (Mohammed, 2014:431). That is the voice of a predator: a person or an entity steeped in the consumerist propensity of consuming without producing, carting away without replacement and destroying before leaving.

Table 4: Nigeria's Revenue Before and After Amalgamation

Southern Nigeria Imperial Revenue Before Amalgamation		Compared with Year	Nigeria Total Revenue After Amalgamation (1914-1927)	
Year (Yrs)	Revenue in Pound		Year (Yrs)	Revenue in Pound
Year Ending 3-31-1899	169,565		1914	3,048,000
Yr Ending 3 – 31 – 1890	164,106		1915	2,703,000
Year Ending 3 -31- 1891	380,894		1916	2,831,000
1901 Calendar Year	270,362		1917	3,450,000
1902	437,538		1918	4,014 00
1903	426,860		1919	4,911,470
1904	550,012		1920	6,738,042
1905	572,062		1921-Jan-Mar.	1,586,748
1906	1,088,717		1921-22	4, 862,220
1907	1,459,554		1921-23	5,505,465
1908	1,387,915		1922-23	6,260,561
1909	1,361,891		1923-24	6,944,220
1910	1,933,235		1924-25	6,404,701
1911	1,956,176		1925-26	7,411,983
1912	2,235,412		-	-
1913	2,668,198		-	-

Source: W.M.N. Geary, Op.Cit; P. 263.

What is empirically evident from the foregoing analysis is that the history of colonial Nigeria is the history of imperial state predation. Joseph Chamberlain was the colonial secretary who was quoted in 1895 addressing the British parliament that expeditions were the only system of civilizing and practically of developing the trade of Africa (Ukpabi, 1970:384). In his view, the only way in which all the evils which desolated Africa in the past could be wiped out is by the use of force (Proceeding of the Royal Colonial Institute, Vol. xxvii, 1897-7, Annual Dinner, 31 March, 1897:236-7). When he was assailed in parliament for raising the West African

Frontier force, he pointed out that, in future, this force would be the instrument for bringing recalcitrant Africans to order (Mohammed, 2014:449).

Cases abound of when and where the colonial state, for the entrenchment of predation, brought naked and brute force to bear upon the subjects/citizens of the colonies. In the south, precisely on 18th November 1949, twenty-one (21) coal miners had to be mowed down by the British Police at the Iva Valley, Enugu, while 51 others had to be brutally wounded for demanding for better conditions of service in their workplace (Dailypost, 2016). Such was the nature of the state-society relation in colonial Nigeria. Under colonialism, the foundation of a predatory state perpendicularly lopsided against a region at the benefit of another region came to be firmly laid, such that when the colonial ship sailed back to Europe in 1960, every needed apparatuses of predation had been set in place. Outstanding and fundamental was the 1959 elections which were passionately rigged in favour of the northern apparatchik, who have doggedly and unrepentantly kept the candle of predation burning.

3. Dynamics of Predatory State-Ethnic Group Relations in Nigeria

According to Osaghae (2006:170), he avers that the adversarial characterization of relations between the state and ethnic groups is not very helpful. However, post-independence Nigeria has since played out the dynamics of predatory state-society relations, having inherited, in whole and not parts, the operational principles from the colonial masters. Writing wholly about Africa, Kalu (2017), observed that the new African leaders simply stepped into power and inherited all the extractive structures set up by colonial Europe. The implication being that there was little or no conscious effort to interrogate and dismantle the political arrangements and public service structures that fostered exploitation of the majority for the benefit of the colonial masters and their appendages. However, Kalu,(2017:4), acknowledged the fact that the reality is that the nationalists who took over political power at independence made no conscious effort to restructure the governance arrangements inherited from the colonial administration, and thus continued the exploitative tendencies that were the hallmark of colonial administration.

He was right to have contemplated that the new African leaders, having been exposed consistently to a life of exploitation, may have developed the same inclination towards their fellow Africans, for several centuries of slavery had almost institutionalised the master-servant relationship in African culture and society. The Nigerian situation is an eloquent example of where master-servant relationship reigns supreme. It should be borne in mind that predatory

state-society relations have class character to itself. In Nigeria, however, ethnic dimension has been weaved into its very fabrics too, such that the clearest manifestation of predatory state-society relations has evolved along ethnic lines. Under this unique form of predatory state-society relations, certain ethnic group or region, not the entire citizens, bear the brunt of the state's oppressive actions, and state resources are mainly devoted to serving the selfish interests of another ethnicity or region to whom the state is either an appendage or a prerogative. With this conditions satisfied, the stage is completely set for state personalization, ethicization and/or regionalization. Far from serving the interests of the citizenry, the state, its institutions and juicy governmental positions turn to *predends* and are parcelled out to cronies. Researchers like Clapham (1982); Jackson & Rosberg (1982); Ayitteh (1998), have aptly described this predatory governance system in which the state operates as if public resources were the private property of the head of state and his cronies, as 'state without citizens', or politics of patrimony or clientelism.

The emergence of General Muhammadu Buhari (ret'd) as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 2015 and his unabashedly lopsided appointments since becoming the President is only a blatant re-dramatization of a deep-rooted and long-time northern ethno-chauvinistic political agenda of 'northernizing' Nigeria.

Table 5: Full List of Appointments made By Buhari since Becoming President

S/N	Position	Name of Appointee	State	Region
1.	Aide de Camp to president:	Lt. Col Abubakar Lawal	Kano	North-West
2.	Special Adviser, Media and Publicity to the president	Femi Adesina,	Osun	South-West
3.	Senior Special Assistant, Media and Publicity	Garba Shehu	Kano	North –West
4.	State Chief of Protocol/Special Assistant	Lawal Abdullahi Kazaure,	Jigawa	North-West
5.	Accountant General of the Federation	Ahmed Idris	Kano	North-West
6.	National Security Adviser	Babagana Monguno	Borno	North-East
7.	Chief of Defence Staff	Abayomi Olonishakin	Borno	North-East
8.	Chief of Army Staff	Tukur Buratai	Borno	North-East
9.	Chief of Naval Staff	Ibok-Ete Ekwe Ibas	Cross Rivers	South-South
10.	Chief of Air Staff	Sadique Abubakar	Bauchi	North-East

11.	Chief of Defence Intelligence	Monday Riku Morgan	Benue	North-Central
12.	Director General, State Security Services, SSS	Lawal Daura	Katsina	North-West
13.	Chairperson, Independent National Electoral Commission	Prof Mahmood Yakubu	Bauchi	North-East
14.	Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority	Habibu Abdulahi	Kano	North-West
15.	Special Adviser, Niger Delta Amnesty Office	Paul Boroh	Delta	South-South
16.	Acting Director General, Nigerian Maritime Administration, Safety and Security Agency, NIMASA	Baba Haruna Jauro	Kano	North-West
17.	Executive Vice Chairman/ Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Communications Commission	Umaru Dambatta	Kano	North-West
18.	Executive Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Service, FIRS	Babatunde Fowler	Lagos	South-West]
19.	Director General, Budget Office of the Federation	Aliyu Gusau	Zamfara	North-West
20.	Secretary to the Government of the Federation	Engr. Babachir David Lawal	Adamawa	North-East
21.	Chief of Staff to the President	Alhaji Abba Kyari	Borno	North-East
22.	Comptroller-General, Nigerian Customs Service	Col. Hameed Ibrahim Ali (retd.)	Nassarawa	North-Central
23.	Mr. Kure Martin Abeshi	Comptroller-General, Nigerian Immigration Service	Nassarawa	North-Central
24.	SSA to the President on National Assembly Matters	Senator Ita S.J. Enang	Akwa Ibom	South-South
25.	Group MD NNPC	Emmanuel Kachikwu	Delta	South-South

Source: Authors Compilation (2018)

4. Emergence of Parasitic Oligarchic Class in Nigeria

Many and protracted years of ethnicization of the Nigerian state and its administrative institutions have birthed a class of parasitic oligarchs in northern Nigeria. This in itself is an organic product, manifestation and re-enforcement of the predatory cum prebendalistic state-ethnic group relations. Having captured the state and turned it into regional machinery with notorious national pretensions, the northern emirate aristocracy and the

historically dependent north as a whole have consistently and strategically positioned themselves along the passage of power and wealth. After donkey years (1960-1979; 1983-1999; 2007-2010; 2015 to present) of romancing with power, they have been able to corner for themselves the great resources of the south (oil wells and blocks). The dialectical relationship between political power and economic power is that they tend to be reciprocally reinforcing. Through this long-standing dynamic reinforcement, the foremost northerners who through their positions as former military personnel and bureaucrats got themselves adhesively embedded along the corridors of power have constituted themselves into a parasitic cum consumerist oligarchic class. While they have nothing else to offer to the nation by way of resources, they have consistently milked and exploited the resources of the south with the consenting gestures of the Nigerian predatory state with which they are partners in predation.

Table 6: *Richest Oil blocks in Nigeria and their Owners*

S/N	Oil Block	Owner(s)	State/Region	Descriptive remarks
1.	Sapetro	General Theophilus Danjuma	Taraba/North	Former Nigerian Army Chief of Army Staff from July 1975 to October 1979
2.	OML 110 (OBE oil)	Alhaji Mai Daribe	Borno/North	Borno Patriarch
3.	OPL 246 was awarded to SAPETRO	General Theophilus Danjuma	Taraba/North	Former Nigerian Army Chief of Army Staff from July 1975 to October 1979
4.	OML 112 and OML 117 were awarded to AMNI International Petroleum Development Company	Colonel Sanni Bello	Niger/North	An inlaw to Abdulsalami Abubakar, former Head of State of Nigeria.
5.	OML 115, OLDWOK Field and EBOK field	Alhaji Mohammed Indimi	Niger/North	An inlaw to former Military President Ibrahim Babangida.
6.	OML 215 is operated by Nor East Petroleum Limited	Alhaji Saleh Mohammed Gambo.	Borno/North	<i>Not much is known about him</i>
7.	OML 108 is operated by Express Petroleum Company Limited	Alhaji Aminu Dantata.	Kano/North	Former Kano State commissioner for

				Economic Development
8.	OML II3 allocated to Yinka Folawiyo Pet Ltd	Alhaji W.I. folawiyo	Lagos/West	founder Yinka Folawiyo & Sons
9.	ASUOKPU/UMUTU marginal oil fields operated by Seplat Petroleum	Prince Nasiru Ado Bayero	Kano/North	Cousin to the then Central Bank Governor Lamido Sanusi
10.	Intel	Atiku, Yarádua and Ado Bayero	Adamawa, Katsina and Kano respectively (North)	They have substantial stakes in Nigeria's oil exploration industry both in Nigeria and Sao Tome and Principe.
11.	OML 112 and OML 117, Afren plc and Vitol	Rilwanu Lukman	Kaduna/North	Former OPEC Chairman
12.	OPL 245 was awarded to Malabu Oil& Gas Company	Dan Etete	Bayelsa/South	Abacha's oil minister
13.	OPL 289 and OPL 233 awarded to Peter Odili fronts, Cleanwater Consortium, consisting of Clenwater Refinery and RivGas Petroleum and Gas Company.	Peter Odili	Rivers/South	Former Governor of Rivers State
14.	OPL 286 is managed by Focus Energy in partnership with BG Group	Andy Uba	Anambra/South	Former Special Assistant on Special Duties and Domestic Affairs to President Olusegun Obasanjo
15.	PL 291 was awarded to Starcrest Energy Nigeria Limited	Emeka Offor	Anambra/South	Nigerian oil magnate and Entrepreneur
16.	Conoil (six oil blocks)	Mike Adenuga	Oyo/South	Founder of Globacom, Chairman of Conoil

Source: Authors' compilation from Akukwe, (2017).

The table above reveals that over 80% of the richest oil wells/blocks in Nigeria's Niger Delta are owned by the northern oligarchic class (Umoru and Erunke, 2013). Citing Peter Evans, Talabi (2013), rightly argued that predatory regimes are adept at extracting huge investable surplus for their personal uses, exploiting the people without regard for their welfare and as such, are best described as self-maximisers who impede economic transformation because the decision-making protocols which they use are not capitalistically sensible. A rather complex reinforcing synergy exists between the state and the oligarchic class. First, the state, in addition to being class compliant and ethnicized, is the legitimizing apparatus of the oligarchic class' parasitism. The oil wells and blocks were indiscriminately awarded to members of the northern oligarchic class by former heads of state of northern extraction. Second, the predatory state is the custodian (guardian class) of the predatory state. In practical sense; the oligarchic class equates the ruling class. They go any length to protect the predatory state, being the all time major beneficiary. Whenever the predatory state is threatened, the class whips up and activates religious and ethnic sentiments for its defence. In the end, the interest of the predatory state and the parasitic oligarchic class are one and the same-exploitation (predation) of the resources of a people (notoriously branded national wealth). This blurred distinction between the predatory state and the oligarchic class diminishes accountability, thus enabling the ruling elite unfettered access to well paid jobs, state resources and control over national budgets which accords them parasitic avenues for personal wealth accumulation and to dispense patronage" (Shuba, 2016:34).

5. The Restructuring Question and the Oligarchic Class' Opposition

The North has always been the Southern burden. Even in this administration, without the resources from the South, the North cannot make it. This is a gospel truth. But if the North believes it can go without the South, what prevents us from restructuring so that the North can be on its own and the South can be on its own. Let us call on our government to look seriously at this unworkable structure called Nigeria (Ijomah, 2017).

The above statement is that of Professor B.I.C Ijomah, a Professor of Political Sociology, in an open letter to Professor Ango Abdullahi for allegedly supporting the recent call for the Igbos to quit the North on or before October 1st, 2017. The clamour for restructuring is the admission that the existing structure as Ijomah (2017), puts it is 'unworkable.' As has been stated before, serious concerns have been expressed by individuals, groups and sections to revisit this largely perceived odious system and arrangement that has historically put certain sections or

regions of the federation at the mercy of the other and allowing certain unproductive class of people to feed fat on the labour and pains of others.

The true position is that since the colonial time, southerners have had to raise eyebrow against northern dominance and parasitic disposition towards the south as well as the placatory gestures of the central government (colonial and post-colonial). As has been noted elsewhere in this work, one of the criticisms of the Northern dependence on the South was voiced out by Honourable Sapara Williams who contended that before the loan for the construction of northern railway was to be granted, the Secretary of State should settle the type of relationship that existed between Lagos and Zungeru, the two administrative headquarters for the South and the North respectively (Ijomah, 2017). However, proposals for re-dividing Northern and Southern Nigeria into units of greater ethnic and economic coherence were rejected since they would each have broken the continuity of the existing institutions, upon which Lugard's one-man control depended (Kirk-Greene, 1968). As it was in the colonial time, so also is it today.

At the heart of the clamour for restructuring is resource allocation—economic and political. Economically, the issues that have consistently fanned the flames of the clamour for restructuring include natural resource control and resources allocation formula, which tilts unjustifiably in favour of the centre, breeding wastes, corruption, ineptitude and under-development of the constituent states. In this connection, the people of Niger Delta under different umbrellas, including the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND) have had to agitate for 100 percent control of the oil and its proceeds. Former federal commissioner for Information cum leader and advocate of rights of Niger Delta people, Chief Edwin Clark, has been unrelenting in the quest for restructuring and resource control by the people, insisting that if we don't restructure, restructure will kill us (Ogefere, 2017).

The political push for restructuring centers on Nigeria's badly skewed federalism which almost every section of the country, except the direct beneficiary (the north), have come to acknowledge is a far cry from ideal true federalism. Former Secretary General of the Common Wealth Organisation, Chief Emeka Anyaoku frowns at Nigeria's federalism which allows too much power and resources at the centre to the detriment of the country's ethnic nationalities. According to him, the founding fathers would be "disappointed to find that instead of a few viable federating units in which effective economic development can be planned and pursued with security, better policed and maintained, we now have what I would describe as a plethora of nonviable federating units with an all-powerful central government (Ogefere, 2017).

In the South-west, *Afenifere*, the pan-Yoruba socio-cultural group has recently joined its South-east and South-south counterparts-*Oha Na Eze Ndigbo* and the Indigenous People of Niger Delta, respectively-to agitate for the restructuring of Nigeria. They had to vent their dissatisfaction and anger over the issue following the Ife clash between Hausas and Yoruba. As noted by Ogefere (2017), they were particularly bitter that the government of the federation controlled by the Hausa/Fulani exhibited bias and discriminatory attitude towards the Yoruba in the handling of the crisis.

In the interim, four geopolitical zones of the country favour restructuring to free the zones to function within their different spheres of capacity, while two zones are vehemently opposed to it. A breakdown of this shows that the entire South (South-West, South-South, South-East) including one northern zone (North-Central) are in support, while North-West and North-East are against it. As such, conscious efforts at restructuring Nigeria have been thwarted by the Northern parasitic oligarchic class. They instigated the Northern delegates at the National Political Reform Conference convened by former President, Olusegun Obasanjo in 2005 when the Federal Government conceded to slightly review the derivative principle upwards as a way of accommodating the demand of the Niger Delta delegates on restructuring, calling it a blackmail. In the same vein, the implementation of the 2014 National Conference which recommended the restructuring of the country in specific lines has remained a herculean task because the same elements have been up against it. In the final analysis, the northern emirate aristocracy have consistently opposed any move to restructure the political status quo. The only dissenting voice from the northern oligarchs, perhaps, is former Vice President, Atiku Abubakar. Atiku has seized every available opportunity to harp on the matter, contending that Nigeria as presently structured is economically unproductive and politically weak. He was quoted to have said that the restructuring that I have been calling for involves changes to the allocation of powers, responsibilities and resources among the states or zones and between them and the federal government (Ogefere, 2017). But why is the north afraid of restructuring?

The reasons for the northern opposition to restructuring are well understood. No less a northern academic, political and Islamic figure than the Emir of Kano, Muhammad Sanusi II acknowledged that the North will be worse off in a restructured Nigeria (Ogefere, 2017). What sustains the North currently is in the South, and with restructuring, the sucking proboscis of the northern parasitic class would be plucked out of its source of sustenance. This is in tandem with

William Shakespeare's truism that: "You take my life when you take the means whereby I live"
(*The Merchant of Venice*: Act 4, Scene 1).

6. Conclusion

The Nigerian state is a predator upon its citizens, especially to the people and resources of the South. In other advanced climes of the West, especially Eastern Europe, class relation is the only manifestation of the adversarial state-society relations. In Africa to the contrary, particularly in Nigeria, perverse state-society relation finds expression in punitive ethnicity and tribalism. The Nigerian predatory state is not of a contemporary origin. Rather it is a recurring phenomenon with age-old historical antecedents (colonialism) contrived to maintain a continuous flow of income generated by the resource-abundant and industrious people of the south to the rest of northern Nigeria and then to Europe. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914 and the extension of indirect rule from the Northern Protectorate into the Southern Protectorate contributed to ineffective colonial rule in Nigeria and laid the foundation for the deepening of predatory state-ethno regional relations that has persisted till date.

So long as the current political structure and odious arrangement that has historically put certain sections or regions of the federation at the mercy of the other and allowing certain unproductive class of people to feed fat on the labour and pains of others remains, agitations and clamour for its restructuring will never cease. The current wide support for political restructuring in Nigeria is an indication that restructuring is an idea whose time has come. As John F. Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States of America rightly remarked: "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable". To restructure is to make adjustments on an existing structure. While it is true that the opportunistic northern oligarchy, whose interests the present structure serves will continue to oppose peaceful restructuring given their vested interests, it is also true that adjustments of indescribable magnitude could be brought upon the current odious and exploitative structure via the peaceful means of going through the National Assembly and/or Sovereign National Conference or by force, the signs of which have started manifesting.

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