The Net and the Integration of the South-South Niger Delta Micro-Minorities in Nigeria's Democratic Government

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Abstract

The paper seeks to explore the future of the South-South Niger Delta Micro-Minorities in a democratic order. Based on the observation that the current problems of ethnic minority and religious conflicts are not peculiar to Nigeria, but appear to be universal in character, the paper asserts that in the light of current knowledge and practice, two of the traditional means of dealing with ethnic minority problems have become untenable-that is assimilation and secession. This leaves the minorities with absolutely one alternative: the option of democratic integration into the national political process. One key obstacle to democratic participation and the peaceful resolution of conflicts is the existence of a local net that prevents economic resources from getting to the people. The fundamental objective of political participation in a democratic dispensation will be to destroy this NET in the interest of the people.

Key words: South-South, Niger Delta, Micro-minorities, National Integration

1. Introduction

One of the ironies of Nigerian politics today is the fact that the problem of the minorities in the country which Awa (1964:313) clearly identified as one of the "unsettled problems of Nigerian federalism" in the early 1960s, has not only remained a major preoccupation of most Nigerian governments ever since, it continues to pose serious challenges to the corporate, harmonious and continuing existence of the country as an entity.

The enduring nature of the minorities' problem in Nigerian politics in the last two decades and the spate of ethnic and religious violence that have been prevalent in the country since 1999 (Egwu, 2000), naturally led one to wonder whether Haruna (1994:68) not overly optimistic when he suggested in the early 1990s that the traditional variables of "colonialism, regionalism, ethnicity and religion" were becoming more irrelevant in the explanation of the political process in Nigeria. With the benefit of hindsight, one can argue that rather than abate, the quartet of traditional variables has assumed an undue prominence in the Nigerian political process thereby putting to question Haruna's hypothesis on the growing importance of the variables of class and class interest in the analysis of Nigerian politics. A plausible reason which can be advanced to account for this unwholesome state of affairs in Nigerian politics might be the increasingly overt, sinister and diabolical manipulation of these traditional variables by the ruling coalitions in Nigeria in their inter and intra class struggles for political and economic dominance on the one hand, and the overwhelming economic hardship to which the vast majority of Nigerians have been subjected over the last two decades. With more and more Nigerians being forced to flee to their ethnic homelands or the take up informal economic activities, the development of not just "contingent" but "consistent" class consciousness amongst the working peoples of the country has become virtually impossible. Now, according to Meszaros (1996), it is only a working class imbued with "necessary consciousness" that can perceive the contradictions of capitalism in their global relatedness rather than in isolated aspects.

Given the suggestion by Ashraf and Sharma (1983:764) that "there is a close connection between social-cultural, ethnic as well as economic interests and political behaviour", it is not unexpected that the weakening of the economic bond or interest among Nigerian working peoples, has facilitated the recrudescence of ethnic as well as cultural affinities. What is important here is the fact that accentuation of cultural and ethnic solidarities which has resulted in violent conflicts is not peculiar to Nigeria or Africa (Nnoli, 1978; Murapa, 1986).

Birch (1993) has observed that the consolidation of the nation-state produced concomitantly the contradictory trend of claims by ethnic minorities within some states for cultural autonomy or political independence. What is interesting about these claims is that some of them took place in some countries that could be considered fairly well integrated national polities such as Great Britain, France and Switzerland. He explained the rise of minority problems to changes in the political significance of group membership in terms of the salience of a particular identity at any given point in time.

If we relate this concept of the variable salience of group membership over time to the problem at hand, then ethnicity and minority identification will vary in their intensity depending upon whether the group has to deal with a foreign or local adversary at any given time or the extent of the threat posed to share values.

Thus not even in Western Europe could the assertion that "for most countries, the presence of linguistic minorities is not a real problem" (Smith, 1980: 14) be valid, given the widespread disruption of political and economic activities which the activities of minority groups such as the Irish Republicans of Northern Ireland, the Basque Separatists of Spain and the separatism of Dutch and French speaking groups in Belgium.

In the light of this world-wide development of ethnic minority politics in this last two or three decades, what is the future of the micro-nationalities of the South-South Niger Delta in Nigeria's current democracy? What prospects do these micro-nationalities have in Nigeria's evolving federation? Before proceeding to sketch out some tentative scenarios for these micro-nationalities, we need to identify which groups fit into this categorisation of micro-nationalities. Can they work out their future in isolation or do they need to work in collaboration with other nationalities?

These are some of the questions that this paper seeks to answer in outlining some future scenarios for the micro-minorities of the South-South Niger Delta area. But you may rightly ask the question: which are the South-South micro-minorities?

2. *Conceptual Clarifications*

A number of conceptual terms need to be clarified or operationalised for ease of comprehension. The terms or expressions are namely:

  i. Nigeria's democratic journey;
  ii. The South-South Niger Delta micro-nationalities;
  iii. The future;
  iv. Alternative Scenarios; and,
  v. National integration

These five categories or concepts obviously do not have one precise meaning as several dimensions and extensions can be attached to each of them. We shall therefore first of all precise how we will use them in this paper.

i. **Nigeria's Democratic Journey**

Given the many decades of military and authoritarian rule in the country and the very disastrous impact this phenomenon left on the Nigerian society (Galadama, 1998), the need for a transition to democratic government was considered a vital prerequisite for the country to be able to meet the imperatives of the 21st century both at home and abroad. In spite of the fact that the "politics of transition" from military rule to democracy is often beset with many pitfalls (Olagunju, et al, 1993) and the observation that "democratization is a difficult process and many efforts fail completely or succeed only in the short run" (Janda, et al, 1995:51) the balance of opinion amongst political scientist is that it is the best form of government that is available (see the debate between Zinn and Hook in Diclerico and Hammock, 1998).

It is interesting that among the pressures identified by Janda, et al (1995) that makes democratisation difficult is the tension and conflict between ethnic and religious groups. On the other hand, it could be asserted that unless there is a full consolidation of democracy in a country like Nigeria, it might virtually be impossible for the country to fully resolve the ethnic and religious conflicts that plaque the country. Hence the three main ingredients of democratic governance namely the rule of law, the accountability of the leaders and a reliable or impartial judicial system appear to be useful pillars upon which society's problems could be resolved including the problem of ethnic minorities (Odock, 2006).

This is in addition to the general or universal popularity of democracy which has led "even dictators to believe that an indispensable ingredient for their legitimacy is a dash or two of the language of democracy" (Dahl, 1989:2), a development which is obviously regrettable as it tends to distort the real meaning of the term. However, the essence of democracy as a set of complex institutions that limits the power of those who govern and protects the rights and freedoms of the governed needs to be borne in mind. To that extent, we can hypothesise that Nigeria's capacity as a political community to resolve the problem of articulating a working relationship amongst the various communities that make up the country, will depend largely on the consolidation of the country's nascent democracy. This goal could be achieved through ensuring "greater participation, transparency and accountability" (Camilleri, et al 2000:121) in spite of Lijphart's (1977) assertion that it is difficult to build and maintain stable democratic government in a plural society.

ii.   The Future

The expression "the future of" can be used in one of two senses, both of which are interrelated. The first sense of the future is an expression of the present into a latter date, such as a boy today and a man in ten years, other things remaining unchanged. In a second sense the future of a phenomenon or an actor actually refers to its prospects and possibilities.

In the context of our paper, the future of the micro-nationalities of the South-South Niger Delta really tantamount to what these groups will become in the nascent Nigerian democratic dispensation. This question is really not as simple as it might appear at first sight. Now the future of these groups in the Nigerian federation has several dimensions: what will they do in Nigeria? How will they do it? Can they achieve their goals single handedly or do they need to ally with other groups? If an alliance is needed with other groups, will the basis of such cooperation be founded on cultural affinity, geographic propinquity, common economic interests or ideological and religious identity? Thus, on the basis of these multiple interrogations we come to the conclusion that the future of the South-South Niger Delta micro-nationalities is neither certain nor fixed, but will evolve largely on the basis of the working out of the complex sets of variables and factors enumerated above. A Nigerian scholar from the region who had tried to peep into the future of Nigeria argued that Nigeria's most basic need "is to develop a sense of national purpose" which will enable the country tackle many fundamental problems (Ake, 1988: 41).

iii.   The South-South Niger Delta Micro-Nationalities

The next term that needs to be explicated is the compound of "South-South Niger Delta micro-nationalities". For any one familiar with Nigeria's geography, the area "South-South Niger Delta" is fairly easy to locate. It effectively refers to the geographic area covered by present day Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers States. However, the substantive which the geographic expression South-South Niger Delta was used to qualify "Micro-Nationalities" appears to us worthy of comment and elucidation. While most political scientists would readily agree that nationality "refers to a segment of society united on the basis of religion, language, race, geographic contiguity, commonness of aspirations, ideas, and historical experiences" (Nanda, 1989:355), the attachment of the biological term is "micro", the short form of "microscopic" signifies that objects so qualified are not usually perceptible to the ordinary human sight. If however, we accept the generally held view that because the social sciences are relatively young, they are constantly at the mercy of the natural and biological sciences from which they need to borrow concepts even at the risk of possible confusion and misunderstanding (Landau, 1972: 220), then we can accept the expression "micro-nationalities" as referring to those nationality groups in the South-South Niger Delta that do not ordinarily catch the attention of the foreign tourist or visitor to Nigeria or those groups that are not part of the frequent struggles for the control of state power that takes place in Abuja on a regular basis. These groups include the Ijaws, the Kalabaris, the Ogonis, the Obollos, the Orons, Efiks, Quas, Efuts, the Ekoi, the Atam, etc (Osaghae, 1986; 1991).

On the other hand, these micro-nationalities taken together contribute a very large share of the oil revenue upon which the Nigerian economy depends. For example, between them Aka Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa and Cross River States contribute about 50-60% of Nigeria's total oil output with the balance coming from Delta, Edo, Ondo, Abia and Imo the other member states of the present Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

It must be borne in mind that the South-South Niger Delta micro minorities have had to make enormous sacrifices for the continued unity and development of the Nigerian nation (Osaghae, 2001). For several years in the 1990s Ogoni land was the scene of an armed uprising and massive state repression on account of the oil exploitation in the area. In 1999, a non oil bearing micro minority village Odi, also became a victim of Nigeria state terror. Nigerian state desire for an unhindered access to oil wealth in the larger Niger Delta accounted for the infamous Odi invasion (Aaron, 2005). Scholars from the zone have demonstrated how transnational oil companies have contributed in some specific ways to the economic backwardness of the Niger Delta area, a situation which tends to lend substantial weight to the demand for resource control (Udo, 1970; Isumonah, 2001; Ifeka, 2001; Ndebbio, 2002).

In fact other indicators of the disproportionate sacrifices of the micro minorities to national development can be seen from the word "scenario" which is of Italian derivation. The Business Dictionary (online) defines scenario as "internally consistent verbal picture of a phenomenon, sequence of events, or situation, based on certain assumptions and factors (variables) chosen by its creator…scenarios are used in estimating the probable effects of one or more variables, and are an integral part of situation analysis and long-range planning". It is a description of how things might happen in future. We must emphasise that this definition of the word is the one we accept against the alternative meaning which specifies that a scenario is "a detailed outline of a firm or play" given by the same source. Our intention in this paper is to outline two or three scenarios of the future of micro-minorities of the South-South Niger Delta in the unfolding Nigerian democratic transition.

iv. National Integration

This is definitely one of the most contentious of the terms used in this paper. This is so because national integration as used in a generic sense refers to several processes and phenomena that take place simultaneously and concurrently (Awa, 1983; Ade Ajayi, 1984). These processes include regional organisation, economic cooperation such as custom unions and common markets, social and cultural integration as represented by the current process of globalisation and its multiple consequences for the countries of the South (Khor, 2001). It is perhaps because of these multiple meanings of the term integration that Neuman (1976:1) had to raise the question as to whether "integration" is really a "conceptual tool or an academic jargon"?

However, whatever might be the difficulties in defining the concept of national integration, and specifying the independent and dependent variables that need to be taken into account in measuring, predicting and explaining the process of national and regional integration, one thing is certain: it is easy to identify national politics where the process of integration has been successful and others where it has been a total failure. Even this distinction between successful cases of national integration and those that a failure is not very clear cut for it can be observed empirically that some nations which initially had difficulties with their processes of integration had overcome those difficulties and gone ahead to break new grounds. Thus, it was with the United States of America, Nigeria, etc (these two countries share the historic experience of surviving civil wars). Similarly, countries that had initially appeared to have weathered the storms of national integration later suffered major reversals including total disintegration such as the former Yugoslavia that crumbled into its component units.

This brief exposition can lead us to summarise the process of national integration as follows:

> *The process whereby different communities that inhabit the territory of a modern state gradually evolve common goals, aspirations and mechanisms for the attainment of those goals and the resolution of conflicts between individuals and groups that are legitimate and binding on all the communities without the large scale use of coercion.*

It becomes immediately obvious that national integration defined in the terms outlined above continues to remain a major challenge for Nigeria, both in terms of the practice of democracy, and in the evolution of shared norms, goals, aspirations and the development of legitimate mechanisms for conflict resolution and the pursuit of agreed societal goals (Bello, 2012).

In fact it may be arguable that the frequent recourse by individuals and groups to personal and group violence as a means of resolving disputes and grievances points to the incipient nature of the evolution of common goals and aspirations as well as the rudimentary nature of the legitimacy of common institutions.

One important hypothesis that can be formulated on the basis of the concept of national integration is that the future of the micro-nationalities in the South-South Niger Delta region is to a very largest extent dependent on and also a reflection of the level of and success of the process of national integration in Nigeria as a political entity.

3. *The Future of the South-South Niger Delta Minorities in Nigeria: Three Contending Scenarios*

In order to be able to set out clearly the contending scenarios of the future of the South-South Niger Delta micro-minorities in Nigeria's evolving federalism, it might be necessary for us to note some of the sources of the rise in ethnic, religious and other conflicts among various groups in Nigeria as identified by Suberu (1996). Among the four sources of conflict three are indigenous to Nigeria: namely the persistence of the minority problem and its improper solution over the years; the various political programmes embarked upon by various military regimes to mobilise the people and finally the gross abuse and mismanagement of national problems affecting the minorities in the country, whether in Kaduna or in Rivers State.

However, a related source of minority restiveness has been the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and the prominence which the ethnic problems in Central and Eastern Europe assumed in the early 1990s. Thus, Mayal (1994:1) was substantially right when he wrote that in the new global context "the rights and obligations of minorities have become an acute question for minority peoples, for the states in which they dwell and for the world order generally".

Faced with the problem of ethnic, religious or cultural minorities on a global basis, different states, regions and even the United Nations have been at a loss in the search for viable solutions. According to Mayal (1994:4) it appears that three possible options are available to states, regional groupings and even the UN for the management of minority problems:

> *Establishing minority rights-that is the right of minorities to receive equal treatment, to practice their culture, religion and language and to participate fully in the political and economic life of the state-appears to be one of the more promising approaches to this problem. It avoids extremes of secession and assimilation, and offers a way forward which is compatible with civic democratic pluralism.*

If we assume that establishing minority rights as defined by Mayal (1994) above really part of the process and essence of national integration, then we can conceive of the future of the minorities in any particular nation-state as directly linked to three different scenarios as outlined above namely:

i.   Assimilation of the minorities by the majorities
ii.   Secession, and,
iii. National Integration.

What are the prospects for the South-South Niger Delta micro-minorities in each of these scenarios?

i. Assimilation

This simply refers to the wholesale absorption of minority groups by majority ones in such a way that the language, the culture, the religion, the attributes and other characteristics of the majority groups become the accepted way of life of the minorities. It must be admitted that assimilation has been the pipe dream of powerful majorities throughout the ages. For it appears to completely stamp out the assumed nuisance created by the minorities in a go. But its failure has been as spectacular as the aspiration to dominate and absorb other groups. Even in present day Nigeria, at the root of many of the spectacular ethnic, religious and other conflicts have been the overt or covert, manifest or latent attempts by some dominant groups to assimilate some minority groups, a process that has often fuelled ethnic classes in North Central Nigeria.

In fact, given that the assimilation effort often goes hand in hand with varying degrees of coercion, most attempts at incorporation of minority groups often lead to firm resistance by the target group, often compounding the relational problems that the assimilationist policy was designed to solve at the inception. It is therefore not a major surprise that assimilation is no longer considered a viable solution to the problem of ethnic minorities any where in the world.

ii.   Secession

This has been one of the most effective instruments which minorities have adopted to counter the attempts by majority groups to incorporate or assimilate them forcefully. In spite of secession being an ultimate solution to the challenge of assimilation, it is also an expensive and very risky solution. Given the monopoly over the means of organised violence possessed by the modern state vis-à-vis the opponents of the state, attempts at secession are often heavily repressed by the state with the result that saves in the case of the dissolution of pre-existing empires as a result of war, only Bangladesh has in recent times succeeded in breaking away from Pakistan.

In fact even the case of Bangladesh illustrates the point that only the intervention of India made it possible for Bangladesh to go free with her rebellion. Unfortunately only few minorities have strong states as their neighbours ready to use their military might to support them. The former Katanga province in Congo Democratic Republic and Eastern Nigeria learnt in the 1960s that secession is really not a viable solution to the problem of ethnic domination and conflicts within a national context. In particular, the secession attempt in the Niger Delta by Isaac Boro and his fellow compatriot was quelled by the Nigerian state (See Boro, 1982).

Thus, it could be stated that the future of South-South Niger Delta micro-nationalities does not lie in secession from the Nigerian federation, but in the process of national integration.

iii.   National Integration and Micro-Nationalities: Options and Mechanisms

Given that the option of national integration is accepted as the most viable political option for the micro-nationalities in Nigeria's nascent democracy, the option in itself is does not resolve the attendant problems of strategies and mechanisms for achieving the desired goal.

It must be admitted that setting aside the problems of details or specifics as they relate to each micro-nationality, the solution in general terms can be as consisting in Nigeria, and especially in relation to the micro-nationalities evolving a political system that will ensure that the (micro and macro) minorities receive equal treatment in the country, have freedom to practice their culture (or at least the positive aspect of that culture), religion and language, and the opportunity to participate fully in the political and economic life of the state.

It seems clear that only a fully developed democratic order can provide a conducive environment for the achievement of such a programme. Unfortunately, Nigeria's political legacy characterised by such phenomena as "military federalism" in opposition to "democratic federalism" appears a difficult environment in which to promote minority rights (Etzioni in Suberu, 1996; Tamuno, 1998; Anugwom, 2000; Lergo, 2011; Ibaba, 2010-2012).

This imposes a major political obligation on politicians and citizens in the zone to make political choices that enhance the development of democratic federalism rather than the consolidation of regional and ethnic hegemonies (Olumide, 2011:74-75).

However, our use of the micro-minorities in a collective sense might give the impression that we are dealing with a homogenous mass of people. This is far from correct in so far the population of the groups under study is highly differentiated both in terms of gender and of economic classes and interest. While in the first instance the immediate challenge of the micro-minorities is to work in concert to secure a fairer participation in the various decisions that affect their own lives (Isumonah, 2001; Ako and Okonmah, 2009), in a second instance there will be stronger need to ensure a more rational allocation of resources between and among the various nationalities that makes up the micro-nationalities. This second dimension of the problem has much to do with the fact that at present there exist in the zone under reference some groups such as traditional rulers, some local politicians, bureaucrats and others whose main function has been to serve as "the Net" which "utilised for gaining access and control over scarce and private resources" (see Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, 1986, Ifeka, 2000; Ibaba, 2011).

Of course it is widely known that many of the conflicts and tension in the zone of our discussion, be they directed at the oil transnational corporations, the Federal Government of Nigeria or the different States and Local Governments, can be traced directly or indirectly to the activities of the "NET" constituted by traditional rulers, local politicians and other local officials who present themselves to the foreign companies as representatives of the people, collect huge sums of money, and use same to build mansions for themselves or send their children to schools in western countries while leaving the communities in squalor. The same goes for politicians appointed to prominent national positions such as ministers, commissioners and ambassadors as representatives of the micro-minorities but who represent no one other than themselves (Ifeka, 2001; Adeyeri, 2012).

Also, the structure of community development assistance administration of oil transnational companies in the Niger Delta area has never been of oil communities' interest. For instance, the Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDCN) administers its aid to oil communities in a manner that encourage the networking of the NET (see fig. 1). It is obvious that the local government officials, traditional rulers, cooperative societies and women and youth development association in this diagram constitute a net.

In discussing the problem of the integration of the South-South micro-minorities, it is necessary to take precaution over the use of collective data to mask the reality on the ground. According to a report published on the back page of the Guardian (Lagos) of Tuesday October 1, 2002, we read the following headlines "South-South tops federal appointments list, says government" (p.120, see tables 1 and 2). However, we need to note that the South-South zone as presently constituted is made up of six states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River State, Delta, Edo and Rivers. Of these six, four belong to the South-South Niger Delta micro minorities while the others belong to the South-West Niger Delta.

There is no doubt that a detailed analysis of the beneficiaries of these appointments (see tables 1&2) will demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that these beneficiaries really constitute part of the Net that obstructs the development of the area. Rather than these appointments being a part of integration, they show the influence of the Net as a problem of the South-South micro-minorities. Consequently, in spite of the many decades of oil exploration and exploitation in the area, the region has remained largely rural compared to other parts of Nigeria (Ebob, 2002; O' Rourke &Connolly, 2003).

Thus in the final analysis the future of the micro-nationalities of the South-South Niger Delta depend on the extent to which the citizens of the area will work in concert to destroy this NET of domination over them or drastically curtail its activities. Democracy and good governance remains the avenue that will enthrone the needed atmosphere to break the NET (Ibaba, 2011) but breaking or weakening the NET is an uphill task as the prevailing democratic structures and federalism in Nigeria stifles such efforts. For example, the Niger Delta had one of its worst encounters with the Nigerian state in the prevailing fourth republic, where entire communities were destroyed by invading Nigerian armed forces (TheNews 1999; Aaron, 2005). Thus, an atmosphere of helplessness prevails among the South-South micro-minorities of the Niger Delta. This situation is worsened by the fact that the Goodluck Jonathan presidency (a president from among the South-South minorities, 2011-date) is yet to impact positively on the lives of South-South minorities of the Niger Delta.

4. Conclusion

The current democratic dispensation in Nigeria provides both the micro-minorities of the South-South Niger Delta region and the Nigerian government an opportunity to jettison military federalism with all its limitations in favour of democratic federalism which enhances the capacity of the people to take decisions that affect them and implement them.

Such a democratic dispensation will over time provide a means for redressing some of the injustices that they have suffered in the past and therefore become significant stakeholders of the Nigerian polity towards whose welfare and well-being they have always made far reaching material and human contributions.

The subject matter of this paper; Nigeria's democratic transition and the future of the South-South Niger Delta micro minorities is interesting and topical because it focuses on the problem of the minorities that has been an integral part of the development of federalism in Nigeria.

In addition to the wider context of the minority problem in Nigeria, there has emerged the peculiar problem of the micro nationalities that inhabit the South-South Niger Delta region of Nigeria characterised by the specificity of being very small in population that taken individually they do not matter very much, but taken collectively they are very significant because of the disproportionate contribution they make to the nation's national economy.

Having established some conceptual foundation for our discussion, the paper went forward to note the fact that ethnic minority problems and conflict in Nigeria is part of a global process of centralisation and decentralisation in international relations in which individuals pursue their quest for group identification based on ethnic, religious or cultural criteria.

Since ethnic minority problems world wide have been at the root of and the result of transition to democratic governance, the paper explored the three alternative futures for the micro nationalities of interest to us namely: assimilation by the majority groups, secession to form their own sovereign nations and national integration within Nigeria. The non feasibility of the first two options was clearly demonstrated, thereby leaving only the option of national integration as the only viable alternative.

However, it was demonstrated that the current focus on the micro-nationalities as a special development area is defective in so far as it leaves in place the structures of domination of the people of the zone by the neighbouring majority groups. The view expressed in the paper is that only extensive devolution of power and economic resources to the states and local governments will facilitate extensive participation of the people in determining their own affairs.

However, this future state of affairs can only be actualised if the people of the area actively mobilise to participate in politics and can form constructive alliances with other majority and minority groups.

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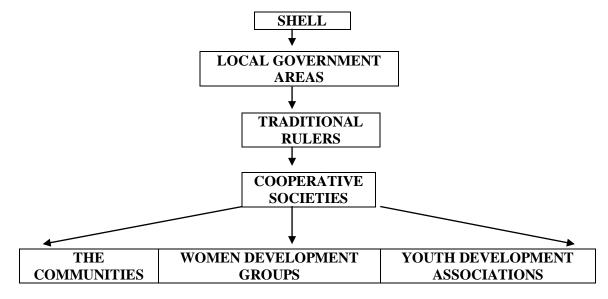
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Fig. 1: The Structure of Community Development Assistance Programme of Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria

Source: Ibe, 2002, p.55

Table 1: The Distribution of Federal Appointments among Geo-Political Zones

S/N	Zone	No. of Appointees	%
1	North-East	221	16
2	North-Central	229	17
3	North-West	219	16
4	South-East	215	16
5	South-South	246	18
6	South-West	242	17
	Total	1,372	100%

Source: The Guardian (Lagos), Tuesday 1, 2002, p.120

Table 2: Ethnic Compositions of Nigerian Cabinets in Percentages, 1960-2004

Regime/Ethnic Group	Hausa/Fulani	Igbo	Northern Minorities	Yoruba	Southern Minorities
Alhaji Abubakar T. Balewa (1960)	60%	13%	Nil	20%	6.7%
Gen. Yakubu Gowon (1975)	21%	Nil	21%	36%	21%
Gen Murtala Mohammed (1975)	25%	Nil	35%	35%	5%
Alhaji Shehu Shagari (1983)	38%	8.8%	20.5%	14.7%	17.6%
Gen. Mohammadu Buhari (1984)	35%	10%	25%	20%	10%
Chief Olusengu Obasanjo (2004)	30%	15%	18%	18%	18%

Source: Ibaba, 2012, p. 16