Int. j. adv. multidisc. res. stud. 2025; 5(4):986-994

Received: 11-06-2025
Accepted: 21-07-2025

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Critical Analysis of Crises in Nigeria: Situating Consociationalism in Nigeria's Federal System

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2025.5.4.4706
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Abstract
The article examines how consociationalism can be employed to fill the gaps in the present Nigerian federal system, resolve and manage the various conflicting and competing interests in Nigeria. Nigeria adopted federalism with the aim of accommodating the competing and conflicting interests within the Nigerian polity, which is deeply divided and heterogeneous in nature. However, despite adopting a federal system of governance by virtue of Lyttleton Constitution of 1954, various competing and conflicting interests still continue to fester on the Nigerian polity, as reflected in the Niger Delta conflicts, Biafra secessionists struggle, Boko Haram insurgency, continuous clamour for resource control, constant struggle for legislative competencies between the federal government and federating States etc. The overall aim of the article is to advocate a move towards consociational democracy in Nigerian federalism.
The objectives of the article include an examination of Nigeria's constitutional history and to study the various crisis in the country, it discloses that comparative study of federalism and consociationalism show that the integration of consociationalism in the practice of federalism in Nigeria is a veritable tool for achieving political stability and accommodating divergent regional interest of the federating states in Nigeria.

Keywords: Crises, Consociationalism, and Federal System

Introduction
Since the origin of politics, it has been surrounded with violence, crisis and a lot of political vices. In recent times, the events in Nigeria may compel many political analyst interested in the Nigerian polity to wonder what has gone wrong with the self-proclaimed giant of Africa", but for those who have been following the development in the country since independence this would not be a big surprise [1]. Therefore, this article work contains a thematic study of crises in Nigeria. This article focuses on an analysis of pre-colonial political and administrative crises in Nigeria, analysis of political and administrative crises during the colonial era, analysis of post-colonial political and administrative crises including a discourse on coups d'état in Nigeria, the Nigerian Civil War. The article also contains a discussion of consociational democracy, in a bid to examine the evolution of consociational democracy, identify consociational features in Nigeria and other jurisdictions as well as to contrast consociationalism with other concepts such as power sharing and federalism.

Definition of Terms
Crisis:
Crisis is defined as, an unstable situation, in political, social, economic or military affairs, especially one involving an impending abrupt change. From this definition, crisis in Nigeria is the unstable situation in political, social economic or military affairs in Nigeria's federal system.

[1] HN Mkirk-Greene, *Crisis and conflict* in *Nigeria* (Faber and Faber, 1971), 6.

Consociationalism and Consociation

Consociationalism suggests a package of proportionality, a grand coalition of communal leaders, group autonomy, and mutual vetoes to protect vital interests within a polity. The underlying philosophy is one of inclusion, representation, and power sharing [2]. Consociationalism, as proposed by Arend Lijphart proposes consociationalism as a framework to establish democracies in ethnically divided societies through political institutions that accept community differences and manage conflict. Consociationalism therefore governs consociations.

According to Gamer's Dictionary of Legal Usage, "...consociation is a political regime for power-sharing among competing groups within a given geographic area; it involves a coalition of political leaders from all segments of a pluralistic society [3]".

As a formal system to promote government through power-sharing, consociationalism has been successfully employed in plural nations such as The Netherland and Switzerland. Consociationalism explains a type of political system that is "willing to accommodate a variety of groups of divergent ideas in order to achieve the goal of unity. It is essentially a system of compromise and accommodation [4]".

Federalism

Federalism and consociationalism are useful means of understanding political systems. Federalism and consociationalism are both based on compound majoritarianism rather than simple majoritarianism and both represent modern attempts to accommodate democratic complexity and pluralism, but the two systems are not quite symmetrical [5]. However, the similarities of federalism and consociationalism relates to the very fact both political concepts are aimed towards forging a common ground amongst divergent and heterogeneous groups within a single polity. Therefore, it is not surprising that modern nation-states usually seek federal solution to resolve differences in the composition of the several peoples in the state.

Federalism is resurfacing as a significant political force just as it did in the transition from the late medieval to the modern era which took place from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. It is resurfacing as a political force because it reflects a practical embodiment of the principle that there are no simple majorities and minorities but that all majorities are compounded of congeries of groups, and the corollary principle of minority rights, which not only protects the possibility of minorities to preserve themselves, but forces majorities to be compound rather than artificially simple… Hence, it is not surprising that peoples and states throughout the world are looking at federal solutions to the problems of political integration within a democratic framework [6].

A federal system of government often arises from the desire of a people to form a union without necessarily misplacing their identities [7]. Along this line of reasoning, consociationalism explains a type of political system that is "willing to accommodate a variety of groups of divergent ideas in order to achieve the goal of unity. It is essentially a system of compromise and accommodation [8]". However, from a comprehensive study of both concepts, one dissimilarity between both ideas is the fact that federalism as a concept appears to be overly concerned with the structure of governance as opposed to consociationalism which seems to be fundamentally aimed at serving as tool of accommodating competing interests within heterogeneous and deeply divided societies. Therefore, federalism as a system of government, as opposed to unitary system, avoids overly centralized, top–down command and control mechanisms which national governments might otherwise tend to favor [9]. Federalism is mostly considered as a covenantal relationship or simply as a compact between different levels of government[10]. On the other hand, Lijphart developed consociational democracy as an alternative typology to centripetal and centrifugal democracies [11].

Analyses of Pre Colonial and Colonial Period

In pre-colonial societies in Nigeria, there were various administrative set ups within the various ethnic groups. The pre-colonial Africa (and in Nigeria) is characterized by weak and fluidly states with no clearly defined territories and borders. Though mistrustful and conflictual at occasions, yet there were many other factors that created some forms of cordial interdependence. Such included trade and commerce particularly in the exchange of such items over which there is comparative group advantage in its production or procurement, and which have been brought about significantly by nature (environmental and geographical variations).

Nonetheless, although there appears have existed intergroup relations in pre-colonial Nigeria [12] there was clearly a jungle in respect of interstate relations. African states were constantly at wars that were often nonsensical and unjust; but rather for the fun, frivolity and aggrandizement, spoils and slave-raiding [13]. In any case, although it is true that in some cases, for instance in the Oyo and Benin empires, the

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[2] Matthijs Bogaards, 'Consociationalism and Centripetalism: Friends or Foes?' (2019) (25) (4) Swiss *Political Science* Review; 519.

[3] AG Bryan, *Grarner's Dictionary of Law Usage* 3rd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011; 199.

[4] Lewis, 'The making of the Modern Nigerian State' p. 547.

[5] JE Daniel, 'Federalism and Consociational Regimes' <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.pubjof.a037543> accessed 17 October 2023.

[6] E D Judah, *Federalism and the University of Western Australia-Faculty of Law Research Paper Way to Peace*, in Bertus de Villiers (Ed.), 'Federations: Shared Rule and Self Rule in the Search for Stable Governance' (2013) 394.

[7] Ronald Watts. *Administration in Federal System* (Hutchinson Educational. 1970.

[8] Richard Peter and Darren Scott, 'The Making of the Modern Nigerian State, in Mark Joel and William, (eds.) *Introduction to Comparative Politics: Political Challenges and Changing Agendas* (Ed.-Wadsworth publishing 2009) 545-606.

[9] S G Calabresi and L D Bickford, 'Federalism and Subsidiarity: Perspectives from U.S. Constitutional Law' *Northwestern University School of Law* (2011) 13.

[10] D J Elazar, 'Federalism vs. Decentralization: The Drift from Authenticity' *Publius* (1976) 6(4) 9-19.

[11] Theodor Hanf, 'Power Sharing: Concepts and Cases'<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/beirut/05478.pdf> accessed 17 October 2023.

[12] T Babawale, *Nigeria in the Crises* of *Governance and Development* (Concept Publication, 2007).

[13] JO Odeyemi, 'A Political History of Nigeria and the Crisis of Ethnicity in Nation-Building' [2014] 3(1) *International Journal of Developing Societies;3.*

monarch and the chiefs on occasions embarked on power struggle for preeminence [14] nonetheless, the political conflicts in pre-colonial Nigeria was often centered on a struggle over land [15] and territory as well as economic resources between ethnic groups, while in the Hausa-Fulani land, the conflicts mostly revolved around religion. This is evident in Usman Dan Fodio's jihad war, which overran almost all Northern and some parts of Yoruba land for over one hundred years [16].

Basically, the era of colonialism is seen to have been characterized by different hurdles and the foundation of modern development crisis was laid during the period. "The period was characterized by disarticulation or incoherence, disarticulation of economy implies one whose parts or sectors are not complementary and in a coherent economy there is regional and or sectoral complementary and reciprocity." Both neo colonialism and dependency are product of imperialism, dependency was created during the colonial era by making sure that Nigeria were made to be the producer of raw material needed by the colonial masters without making any effort to be self-dependent [17].

There were various contradictions inherent in colonialism such as disarticulation of economy, institutionalization of corruption, integration of colonies to global capitalist system, financial dependence, and disarticulation of transport system. The problem in Nigeria today is not a new phenomenon, the recurring crisis of various magnitudes started even before the colonial era [18]. During the colonial period in Nigeria therefore, there were various political crises including what colonial historians have called the Aba Women's riots of 1929. This was touched off by the imposition of direct taxation and the introduction of new local courts and especially of warrant chiefs [19].

Also, there were other political crises in the country during this period. The eastern region was one of Nigeria federal division, dating back originally from the division of the colony; southern Nigeria in 1954, its capital Enugu was the region capital. It is officially divided in 1967 into three new states: East-central state, Rivers state and south eastern state. The east central state had its capital at Enugu, which is now part of Enugu State. In 1953, the old eastern region had a major crisis due to the expulsion of Professor Eyo Ita from Calabar. He was one of the pioneer nationalist for Nigeria Independence. He is an Efik man, the minority in the region, the Ibibio, Annang, Efik, Ijaw and Ogoja demanded state of their own, the Calabar Ogoja-River State (ORS) The struggle for the creation of (ORS) continued and was a major issue on the state of minority of Nigeria during debate in Europe for Nigeria independence.

The extent of this crisis went as far as joining of Nigeria and Cameroun during the July 1953 London constitutional conference, citing fear of Nigeria domination, Cameroun requested the unconditional withdrawal of the Southern Cameroun from the eastern region of Nigeria and its transformation into a separate region of Nigeria and its own in line with its trusteeship status.

Britain agreed and implemented separation in 1954, making the southern Cameroun (including Bakassi Penisula) a semi-autonomous quasi-region of the Nigeria Federation with its own house of assembly and executive bodies. Again, when Chief Anthony Enahoro moved the motion for self-government in 1959, the council of the ministers decided to remain neutral over the issue.

The Action group ministers unilaterally decided to support what is in their own opinion was an important motion being sponsored by their party. They decided to resign/vacate their seats in order to vote in favour of the motion. The North was not in support of the motion for self-government and the Sadaurna of Sokoto, backed by the Northern elements, decided to put up a counter motion thereby creating a rift between the North and the South; as the crisis over the motion for self-governance deepened between the North and the South.

The North became separatist in sentiments and openly expressed that the amalgamation of North and the South in 1914, was a regrettable mistake in the political/history of Nigeria [20]. The Northerners were especially wounded by the insults their representative received from Lagos mob following their attitudes to Enahoro's question of self-government for Nigeria. When the Northerners were still nursing the anger against the Southerners, the untimely campaign in the North in May, by S. L Akintola led to the Kano riot in which many Southerners were killed and their properties looted and destroyed. After the riot tribal hatred among Nigeria gradually developed [21]. Again, the political tussle during the colonial era reached a boiling point during the struggle for independence.

Analysis of Post Colonial Period

After attaining independence in 1960, there were still a number of unresolved issues in Nigeria. Added to these earlier problems were created by those to whom the rein of power had been lack of trust among the various tribe groups that made up and jostled for political and economic power of the federation between 1960 and 1966. Those latent divisive elements within Nigeria politics came to the fore front and this period witnessed political conflagration that engulfed Nigeria in the immediate post-independence era, including the issues of ethnic minorities, internal conflicts in the western region, which resulted in the breakup of the Action Group party, the census manipulated controversy of 1962-1964, and the electoral malpractices in the western and federal elections. These were all signs of political instability in Nigeria.

[14] Mayowa Abayomi-Alli, 'Pre-Colonial Nigeria and the European's Fallacy' [2014] (2)(2) *Review of History and Political Science;24.*

[15] AEF Paki and GS Edoumiekumo, 'Colonialism and Political Conflict in Contemporary Nigeria: The case of the Niger Delta' [2011] (1)(6) *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science; 278.*

[16] PE Nmah and UE Amanambu, 'A Critical Analysis of the Effects of the 1804 Usman Dan Fodio's Jihad on Inter-Group Relations in the Contemporary Nigerian State' [2017] (9)(1) *International Journal* of *Religion & Human Relations; 27.*

[17] *C Ake, The Political Economy of Africa* (Brooking Institute, 1982, 13.

[18] JS Olanrewaju, 'Understanding Nigerian Development Crisis' [2015] (VI) *(1) Afro Asian Journal* of *Social Sciences;9.*

[19] BA Adu, *African Perspectives* on *Colonialism* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 79.

[20] O Awolowo, *Paths to Nigeria Freedom* (Faber and Faber, 1947), 54.

[21] DI Ugwuja, 'Political Crisis and Electoral Malpractices in a Growing Nigeria Democracy' [2015] (10)(1) *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal; 25.*

To put the above in perspective, from Nigeria's constitutional history, there have been several political and administrative crises in Nigeria even after attaining independence in 1960. On this note, the First Republic did not last long. Soon after independence and, due to what appears to be a lack of tolerance among politicians and their willingness to abide by the rules of law and fair play in governance, political instability engulfed the country. This led to the fall of the First Republic and its governance headed by the then head of state, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Prime Minister Tafawa Belewa and herald in the first military coup carried out by Major Patrick Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu in January 15, 1966 [22]. A coup which was the first in several other military coups and counter coups in Nigeria.

The military regime of General Aguiyi Ironsi was followed by the regime of Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon and although improper as it was, the long reign of the Gowon's regime provided the country with a period of political stability, but not without initial political upheaval characterized by the bitter Civil War that engulfed the nation, when Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu attempted to secede out of Nigeria with Biafra [23].

This long period of political stability together with the oil boom of the 1970's might have tempted early economist and political printer to foresee a brighter future for the country. However, the crisis in Nigeria was elevated to the next level on the general elections of (1979 and 1983) when five political parties contested the 1979 general elections in Nigeria. These parties were NPN, UPN, NPP, GNPP and PRP. The climax of the 1979 general election was the presidential election.

At the end of the election, on August 16, 1979, Alhaji Shehu Shagari was declared elected president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The declaration was made by the Chief Returning Officer, Mallam Abubakar and the Assistant returning Officer, MFJ Okoro. The President-Elect, Alhaji Shehu Shagari who contested on the plat form of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) polled, 5, 688,857 votes to beat his opponents. Nonetheless, the NPP rejected FEDECO's declaration of Alhaji Shagari as the winner of the election. In a strongly worded statement issued at an extraordinary meeting of its executive committee in Nsukka, the party described FEDECO's result as Fraud [24].

Following this rejection by NPP, four other political parties rejected the FEDECO declaration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the President-elect, on the ground that he did not win 2/3 of the 19 States as stipulated in the constitution and they interpreted it to mean 2/3 of 13 States of the federation. Meanwhile, Shehu Shagari, the supposed winner of the election, won 2/3 of 12 States which FEDECO interpreted to mean 2/3 of 19 states as stipulated in the constitution.

The case was taken to the Election Petition Tribunal and the Supreme Court of Nigeria by the leader of the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Chief Obafemi Awolowo.

The case was decided in favour of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, both by the Electoral tribunal and the Supreme Court of Nigeria, a decision which was strongly criticized by several political pundits in Nigeria [25]. Alhaji Shehu Shagari thereby served as Nigeria's president in the Second Republic and was elected, on August 6, 1983, to a second term in office. Again his keenest rival was Chief Obafemi Awolowo. Awolowo made a prediction as to the ills which would befall the country if the polls were rigged.

As he rightly predicted, the country returned to military rule when the military seized power on January 1984, and ruled the country for another thirteen years. The military in its central command image concentrated so much power at the central government and weakened the component units. Again, General Ibrahim Babangida took over the administration of the country on 27 August, 1985 because according to his team, General Buhari was autocratic and that there was abuse of human rights of individual Nigerians. However, owing to perceived lack of strict financial discipline by the Babangida's administration which economic revivalist strategy such as SAP entails, Nigeria, which was among the twenty economically independent nations in the world immediately after independence later ranked among the 13th poorest nation.

The result of this development was the sporadic IMF riots across the country. Also, the Babangida's administration was criticized for certain corrupt activities [26]. However, the last straw that appeared to have broken the camel's back for the Babangida's administration was the annulment of the June 12 election which led to widespread political unrest in the country.

It started with the successful organization of 12 June 1993 of a presidential election globally adjudged the most peaceful, fair and free in Nigeria's post-independence political history. The Babangida administration was praised for evolving an 'original' method of election that took into account the problems of political skullduggery and thuggery hitherto characteristic of Nigerian Politics.

The election ought to have constituted the crescendo of the government's political transition programme, began in 1987, and therefore, the new foundation for a democratic polity and transfer of power to the democratically elected president. But tragically, this was not to be as the government unilaterally announced the 'annulment' of the election on the 23rd June 1993 [27]. This led to an interim government led by Chief Ernest Shonekan which was subsequently toppled by the General Sani Abachi led military regime. Further, at the demise of General Abacha, the military through General Abdulsalami Abubakar, handed over power to civilian rule [28].

During the military era, whilst laws enacted by the central government were referred to as decrees, whilst laws made at

[22] Siollun Max, 'The Inside Story of Nigeria's First Military Coup (Part 1) https://www.abusidiqu.com/the-inside-story-of-nigerias-first-military-coup-part-1/ accessed 16 July 2018.

[23] N Muller, Aggressive *political participation* (Princeton University Press, 1974, 15.

[24] R Hague and A Harrop, *Comparative Government and politics* (Palgrave Handmill, Basingstoke and Hampshire 2001).

[25] AM Olu, *'Awolowo v. Shagari* -A Case of Compromise Between Law and Political Expediency' [1982] (24)(1) The *Indian Law Institute.*

[26] DA Anthony, 'Nigeria's Leadership Dilemma: The Challenges of Our Time 1979-2007' [2013] (1)(12) *Singaporean Journal of Business and Economics, and Management Studies;64.*

[27] O Tunji and O Soji, "The June 12 Struggle as a Phenomenon in Nigerian Political History' [2014] (5)(5.2) *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences;5.*

[28] Oladipo Adelowo, 'How Abdulsalami, others made me President in 1999 - Obasanjo' <http://www.tribuneonlineng.com/106866/>accessed16 July2018.

the unit levels were called edicts. Under a military regime, decrees are enacted by the highest legislative organ of the military administration. For example, "the Gowon administration (1966-1975) and the Buhari regime (1983-1985) called it the Supreme Military Council, the Bagangida regime (1985-1992) called it the Armed Forces Ruling Council, and the Abacha administration (1993-1998) called it the Provisional Ruling Council" [29].

Nonetheless, an obvious element of conflict in these military coups and counter-coups was the different military decrees, which were often promulgated to undermine democratic institutions and legislations, including the constitution. For instance, even after the military regime of General Aguiyi Ironsi, the succeeding regime led by Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon also exhibited a penchant to subdue constitutional democracy and erode federalism practices in the country. As such, the Constitution (Suspension and Modification) (No. 10) Decree of 1966 was promulgated by the Yakubu Gowon regime as an amendment and reiteration of the contents of the Constitution (Suspension and Modification) (No. 1)1966.

In relation to the supremacy of the above Decrees over the Nigerian constitution nonetheless, the Nigerian Supreme Court took certain positions that appeared to be an attempt to safeguard the supremacy of the provisions of the constitution. For example, in the case of *Lakanmi v. Attorney General (Western Nigeria),* [30] the Supreme Court of Nigeria viewed the Yakubu Gowon administration as a short-term emergency government without the authority to enact laws that were not required by the situation. Specifically, in *Lakanmi's* case, in opposition to the attempt by the Federal Military Government to place the federal constitution subject to Decrees and Edicts, and to limit the powers of the courts to adjudicate on military Decrees and Edicts, the court held that the federal military government was not a revolutionary government but an interim military government, which came into existence only because of the unfortunate coup of 15 January 1966. As such, the Supreme Court further held that the provisions of the constitution must be assessed by looking at the position prior to and after the event of 15 January, 1966 [31] is noteworthy that the position prior to the coup of 15 January 1966 was that the legislative arm of government cannot legislate to oust the jurisdiction of the court. This is obvious from the decision of the court in *Doherty v.Balewa* [32]. Again, prior to the event of 15 January, 1966, the court had decided in the case of *Williams v Majekodunmi* [33] that where there was no sufficient evidence that the restriction of a citizen was reasonably justifiable, the court would make a declaration to that effect. These decisions showed the limitation of the powers of the federal government in relation to its attempt to suspend provisions of the constitution or restrict the jurisdiction of the courts.

However, even in present day Nigeria, there are still evident signs of political instability in the country. It is obvious to observe from our everyday news that the world lament about the crises in the North Eastern part of Nigeria, i.e., the Boko Haram insurgency, [34] the clamour for resource control by persons of the Niger Delta axis, [35] yearnings for additional State creation, [36] the reignited push for secession by individuals agitating for the Sovereign State of Biafra in the South Eastern States of Nigeria, and so on [37].

Discussing the Reasons for the Recurring Crises in Nigeria

There have been recurrent crises within the Nigerian polity, often occasioned by a confluence of political, social, economic, and cultural elements. A diverse approach is necessary to comprehend these intricacies, and study on the topic frequently looks at several aspects. The following summarizes the main causes of Nigeria's on-going crises:

Ethnic and Religious Diversity

Although there have been several research and discussions on the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria (Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa),[38] nonetheless, it is important to mention that more than 250 different ethnic groups call Nigeria home; [39] each has its own language, customs, and culture. There are sizable populations of Muslims and Christians in the nation as well. There are often rivalries between these disparate groups for wealth, political dominance, and cultural supremacy causes tensions [40]. Conflicts between different ethnic and religious groups often arise, especially in areas where these divisions are most noticeable.

Historically, the British colonial administration applied the indirect rule policy in Nigeria [41] . However, the implementation of indirect rule policies by the British colonial authorities during the colonial era seemed to have favoured some ethnic groups and marginalized others, thereby intensifying ethnic fragmentation and differences within the Nigerian polity. As such, the nation's social, political, and economic landscape is shaped by historical

[29] VOS Okeke and C Ugwu, 'Nigerian Political Culture: the Saga of Militarism' [2013] (2)(3) *Review* of *Public Administration and Management,92.*

[30] (1971) 1 U.I.L.R.201

[31] DO Ashe, 'Nigerian Federal Military Government and the Judiciary: A Reflection on *Lakanmi v Attorney General* (Western State of Nigeria)' *Journal of the Indian Law Institute* (1971) 13(4)573.

[32] (1961)1 All N.L.R.604.

[33] (1962) All NLR 413.

[34] Ugwuja, 'Political Crisis and Electoral Malpractices in a Growing Nigeria Democracy' p.26.

[35] E Emeseh. 'The Niger Delta Crisis and the Question of Access to Justice', in Obi, C. and Rustad, S.(eds), *Oil and Insurgency in the Niger Delta: Managing the Complex Politics and Complex* (ZedBooks,2011),55-70.

[36] Ebho Ebho, 'Nigeria Basis for Agitation of States Creation' *http://allafrica.com/stories/201408120785.html* accessed on 17/6/2018; Chris Onuoha, 'Create Additional State in S/East to End Agitation – Kalu 'http*://sunnewsonline.com/create-additional-state-in-seast-to-end-agitation-kalu/ accessed* 17 June 2018.

[37] Njoku Lawrence, Ebiri Kelvin, Akhaine Saxone and Alabi Abdulganiu, 'South-East Governors' Bid to Stop Agitation for Biafra Fails'<https://guardian.ng/news/south-east-governors-bid-to-stop-agitation-for-biafra-fails/> accessed 17 June 2018.

[38] EA Edlyne, 'Ethnic Conflict and Democracy in Nigeria: The Marginalization Question'[2000] (15)(1) *Journal of Social Development in Africa;66.*

[39] OU Samuel, 'Ethnicity and Development of Political Parties in Nigeria' [2016] (28) *Journal* of *Poverty, Investment and Development;3.*

[40] Ukoha Ukiwo,'The study of ethnicity in Nigeria' [2005] (33) (1) *Oxford Development Studies;7-9.*

[41] IN Anthony, 'The Role of Propaganda in the Development of Indirect Rule in Nigeria, 1890-1929' [1981] (14)(1) The *International Journal of African Historical Studies;* 65,66.

injustices, discriminatory laws, and ingrained power dynamics - all of which continue to exist despite efforts to foster national unity and cohesiveness [42]. These are some examples of this legacy's manifestation in interethnic relations today, as contemporary Nigeria is still greatly affected by the legacy of prejudice and favouritism which affects interethnic relations even till date.

Resource Allocation and Distribution

Nigeria is "superabundantly endowed with natural resources, especially crude oil and natural gas" [43]. Even though there have been various concerns that the country seems to place too much reliance on its natural resources, [44] nonetheless, the reality remains that these natural resources provide for a sizable amount of Nigeria's revenues. However, there are now economic differences within the polity, largely due to poor management, corruption, and unfair income distribution. Conflict is frequently stoked by discontent over the distribution of resources, especially in the Niger Delta region where oil extraction occurs [45]. Hence, historically marginalized ethnic groups often perceive themselves as disadvantaged in the distribution of resources and political power. As such, "virtually, every region in Nigeria has expressed desire for self-determination [46]."

This clamour for secession appears to be tied to decades of favoritism towards certain ethnic groups in government appointments, resource allocation, and development projects have created deep-seated grievances, which often surface in the forms of secessionist agitations, militancy and insurgency [47].

The perception of unfair treatment fuels resentment and distrust between ethnic groups in the country. This perception often stems from historical injustices, systemic inequalities, and discriminatory practices that have persisted over time, leading to tensions and conflicts over access to land, jobs, government contracts, and other opportunities. This is especially the case in relation to the crises within the Niger Delta region of the country, where there has been a persistent clamour for resource control, in relation to crude oil deposits [48]. It is therefore important to mention factors such as historical grievances, socioeconomic inequality, and environmental damage brought on by oil extraction operations within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria as being the main causes of the cry for resource control in Nigeria [49].

The Niger Delta of Nigeria is one of the biggest wetlands in the world [50]. The region is rich in gas and oil deposits, which have been a significant source of income for Nigeria. The local inhabitants have endured widespread poverty, underdevelopment, and environmental deterioration despite the region's enormous natural richness[51]. In 1956, crude oil was discovered in Oloibiri, Bayelsa State within the Niger Delta region, which later became Nigeria's economic engine [52]. Nonetheless, the local communities within the region have not benefited equally from the wealth created by oil being explored in their lands. Worse still, operations related to oil production and exploration have seriously harmed the ecosystem of the Niger Delta region, by causing deforestation, gas flaring, oil spillage in the local communities as well as "local detrimental impacts to soils, surface and ground waters [53]. Local ecosystems have been completely destroyed, waterways have been contaminated, and traditional livelihoods like farming and fishing have been threatened [54].

The Niger Delta's communities are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation; they have seen farmlands destroyed, biodiversity disappear, and health issues related to oil contamination. Therefore, the local population's resentment and angst have been exacerbated by environmental degradation. Hence, the locals have often expressed their dissatisfaction with these challenges through militancy. For example, militant organizations, including the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), Niger Delta Avengers, Adaka Boro Avengers, Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF), have emerged as a result of the Nigerian government and oil firms' unwillingness to address the aforementioned problems of the Niger Delta communities. Attacks on pipelines and oil infrastructure by militant groups have halted oil production and affected the number of crude oil barrels being produced in Nigeria [55].

It is pertinent to mention nonetheless, that while it could be argued that some militant operations are often ill-motivated by criminal activities, others generally stem from legitimate complaints about the exploitation of natural resources,

[42] EN Chidi, CP Ukorah, IC Nwosu and IP Udegbenam, 'Social Injustice and the Threat of Insurgency in Nigeria: An Evaluation' [2023] (2)(3) *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies;*3.

[43] EK Ogunleye, 'Natural Resource Abundance in Nigeria: From Dependence to Development' [2008] (33)(3) *Resources Policy;169.*

[44] CA Akujuru, 'Revenue Allocation in Nigeria and the Dependency on Oil Revenue: The Need for Alternative Solutions' [2015] (3)(2) *Global Journal of Arts Humanities and Social Science;* 19.

[45] Adeleke Adegbami, 'Resource Control and Revenue Allocation Problems in Nigeria: Implication for National Peace' [2013] (3)(1) American *International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social* Sciences; 141,144.

[46] Michael Nwankpa, 'The Politics and Dynamics of Secession in Nigeria' [2021] (2)(1) Journal of *Central and Eastern European African Studies;41.*

[47] CE Joseph, 'Ethnic Politics and Conflicts in Nigeria: Theoretical Perspective' [2011] *Khazar Journal* of *Humanities and Social Sciences;83,84.*

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[51] A Ejovi, S Ebie and OR Akpokighe, Globalization and Environmental Degradation of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria' [2014] (4)(13) *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences;* 147.

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Ben Tantua, Devine Joe and Maconachie Roy, 'Oil Governance in Nigeria's Niger Delta: Exploring the Role of the Militias' [2018] (5) (3) *The Extractive Industries and* Society; 302,303.

environmental degradation, and socioeconomic exclusion being suffered by host communities in the region [56].

Political Instability and Governance Issues

Political instability in Nigeria's past has been typified by military takeovers, flimsy democratic institutions, and problems with governance [57]. Socioeconomic disparities are made worse by corruption, nepotism, and a lack of accountability, which further weaken public confidence in the administration. Inadequate leadership fosters animosities between disadvantaged populations and creates an environment conducive to insurgencies and violent extremism.

Political instability is a major problem that hinders democratic government, intensifies conflicts between different ethnic groups and regions, increases insecurity, and impedes economic growth in Nigeria. In order to resist political instability, it is necessary to uphold democratic institutions, encourage inclusive politics that take into account the concerns of marginalized groups, fight corruption, and promote good governance. Nigeria can only attain stability, peace, and prosperity for all of its population by making a concentrated effort to construct powerful and responsible governmental institutions.

In Nigeria therefore, political instability is a major contributor to a number of socioeconomic, security, and governance issues as well as a major cause of crises [58]. As such, political instability within the Nigerian polity has reflected in the forms of military coups and military regimes. Nigeria has had repeated military takeovers and periods of military rule throughout its history of political unrest. Nigeria went through several coups and military dictatorships between gaining independence in 1960 and returning to civilian administration in 1999. As a matter of history, "the Nigerian military has been a dominant intervening force in the country's political process since 1966 [59]. Under military dictatorships, political unrest frequently resulted in violations of human rights, restrictions on civil freedoms, and the weakening of democratic institutions. This unrest hampered government authority and extended a turbulent political cycle [60].

Political instability in Nigeria has also surfaced in relation to weak democratic institutions and practices within the polity. The democratic institutions in Nigeria are still feeble and susceptible to manipulation even after the country's 1999 transition from military rule to civilian government [61]. Election-related disagreements, violence, and anomalies have plagued the democratic process on numerous occasions. Again, the position of the judiciary has often been questioned, owing to the seeming weakness of the judiciary and somewhat inability of law enforcement agencies to perform their tasks within the Nigerian polity [62]. These situations appear to also increase political unrest and erode public confidence in the government.

Another aspect of political instability in Nigeria has been in relation to corruption and nepotism [63]. Nigeria's political system is rife with corruption, with politicians and government employees frequently embezzling public monies for their own personal gain. It is a known and verifiable fact that corruption erodes public confidence in government, [64] as it also stifles economic growth, and threatens the rule of law. As political elites put loyalty to their ethnic or regional friends ahead of meritocracy and sound governance, nepotism and patronage networks serve to further entrench corruption within the Nigerian polity.

Youth Unemployment and Political Marginalization

Nigeria's young population presents both a demographic advantage and a risk for instability [65]. Excessive unemployment rates, particularly among youth, intensify destitution and dissatisfaction, fostering an environment that is conducive to the recruitment of criminal groups, extremist organizations, and militant groups [66]. Economic marginalization contributes to violent cycles and stirs up societal dissatisfaction. There is no doubt that young people are often at the vanguard of political protests and movements that call for reform and change. Youth political mobilization has increased as a result of social media's rise, giving them the ability to plan, coordinate, and amplify their voices. In Nigeria therefore, youth activism has surfaced as one of the potential catalysts of political instability.

This is because the teeming unemployed young population of the country could potentially challenge the existing quo and topple established power structures, but it can also be a force for good and democratic regeneration. The ENDSARS protest of 2020 is one example of this concern. The protest which occurred in the year 2020 appears to have been powered by the young demographic population of the Nigerian state. The protest was directed at expressing the discontentment of the youth towards the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigerian police force [67].

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[57] PM Lewis, 'Endgame in Nigeria? The politics of a failed democratic transition' [1994] (93) (372) African Affairs; 323, 324

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[59] Oko Okechukwu, 'Lawyers in Chains: Restrictions on Human Rights Advocacy under Nigeria's Military Regimes' [1997] (10) *Harv. Hum.* Rts.J;257.

[60] ML Peter, 'Nigeria: Elections in a Fragile Regime' [2003] (14) J.Democracy; 131.

[61] UJ Otaigbe, Strong Institutions and the Challenge of Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic' [2019] (15)(1) *Canadian Social Science;31.*

[62] Oko Okechukwu, 'Seeking Justice in Transitional Societies: An Analysis of the Problems and Failures of the Judiciary in Nigeria' [2005] (31) *Brook.* J. *Int'l* L;9.

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[64] MA Seligson, The Impact of Corruption on Regime Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Four Latin American Countries' [2002] (64) (2) The *Journal* of *Politics;* 408-433.

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[66] Ibid.

[67] Ugba Dajo and Akor Linus, 'Youths as Vanguards of Change in Nigeria: The #EndSARs Protests in Focus' [2021] (1)(4) *Journal of International Relations Security and Economic Studies;52,53.*

Geopolitics and External Factors

Nigeria's geopolitical significance and its regional influence make the country vulnerable to outside influences and regional dynamics [68]. Security issues from transnational criminal networks, refugee crises and cross-border conflicts seem to affect Nigeria and intensify domestic strife. In 2019 for example, Nigeria's then President, Muhammadu Buhari blamed the crises situation in Libya as the cause of the insecurity experienced in Nigeria [69].

Nigeria is a prominent player in regional politics and diplomacy [70]. Nigeria is a significant force in West Africa, and its decisions and policies affect the security and stability of the entire continent. However, Nigeria's dominance in the region also makes the country susceptible to rivalries and conflicts both within the West African sub-region and with its neighbours. Political instability and violence can be intensified by past grudges and competing interests. This was evident in the recent political tension between Nigeria and the Republic of Niger, which forms one of the five countries under military rule in Africa [71].

In the same vein, Nigeria shares borders with a number of nations, including Cameroon, Benin, Niger, and Chad. These countries often witness various forms of armed conflicts and tensions from time to time. Hence, cross-border conflicts, migration, and international criminal activity are serious security threats that seem to also fuel crises within the Nigerian territory. For instance, it has often been contended that the activities of Boko Haram in Nigeria is often aided by Nigeria's porous borders in the North, as the group's base in Yobe and Borno states is located close to Niger, Cameroon and Chad, thereby allowing the group to migrate from one territory to the other and escaping the reach of the Nigerian army [72].

Similarly, Nigeria's domestic politics and stability is also impacted by its foreign policy decisions and diplomatic ties with other nations and international organizations. This is because Nigeria's security posture and strategic goals may be influenced by its alignments with non-state actors, regional blocs, or world powers. That is, divergent interests and competing priorities among Nigeria's international partners can sometimes exacerbate political divisions and instability within the country, as different factions seek to leverage external support for their own agendas. This was the case during the Nigerian Civil War when "Nigeria broke diplomatic ties with diplomatic relations with Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Tanzania and Zambia, during the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970), because they recognized and traded with Biafra-The Break way Eastern Region of Nigerian" [73].

Another avenue through which geopolitics plays a significant role in the conflict situations in Nigeria is in relation to humanitarian and refugee crises, especially in the West Africa sub-region [74]. Nigeria's geopolitical significance makes it a focal point for humanitarian crises and refugee flows from neighbouring countries affected by conflict, instability, or natural disasters. The influx of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) strains resources, exacerbates social tensions, and poses security challenges [75]. Coordination and collaboration amongst multiple parties are often necessary to manage humanitarian emergencies and refugee crises, both nationally and globally [76]. The volatile nature of the Nigerian state coupled with its economic woes, makes it difficult for the country to effectively cater for its international displaced population. Hence, the additional burden of having to deal with these sub-regional refugee crises exposes the country to even more crises.

Inadequate Social Services and Infrastructures

Nigeria has difficulties in delivering necessities including education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. As such, "the inability of the Nigerian state to provide for its teeming population" [77] contributes to the recurring conflicts in the country. This is because poor people's chances for socioeconomic mobility are restricted and poverty is sustained by inadequate access to high-quality healthcare and education. Poor infrastructure, such as unpredictable power supplies, absence of clean water, sanitation and poor transit networks, impedes economic growth and heightens social unrest.

The lack of social amenities and infrastructure erodes public trust in government institutions and undermines accountability [78]. Citizens perceive government officials as incompetent or corrupt if they fail to deliver essential services and infrastructure projects. The impoverished and marginalized populations in Nigeria are disproportionately impacted by lack of these essential social amenities, thereby creating a fertile ground for social unrest and political instability in the country, as the marginalized and poor

[68] Stuart Elden, 'The Geopolitics of Boko Haram and Nigeria's 'war on terror" [2014] (180) (4) *The Geographical Journal;414.*

[69] Busari Kemi, 'Again, Buhari Blames Gaddafi for Nigeria's Insecurity' Premium Times Newspaper (9 January 2019).

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[71] Mohammed Idris, 'An Invasion of Niger Could Lead to a Humanitarian Crisis in West Africa' (25 August2023) <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2023/08/25/an-invasion-of-niger-could-lead-to-a-humanitarian-crisis-in-west-africa/> accessed 22 January 2024.

[72] Elden Stuart, 'The Geopolitics of Boko Haram and Nigeria's War on Terror' [2014] (180) (4) *The Geographical Journal;414.*

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[74] AA Aduloju, O Abimbola and OA Lawrence, 'Boko Haram Insurgency in North-Eastern Nigeria and its Implications for Security and Stability in West African Sub-Region' [2014] (4) (2) *International Journal of Development and Conflict;* 104,105.

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[76] O Eweka and OO Toluwanimi, 'Management of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa: Comparing Nigeria and Cameroon' [2016] (10)(1) African Research Review; 193,194.

[77] Nkemdili Austin Nnonyelu, 'Governance Failure, Poverty and Ethno-Sectarian Conflicts in Nigeria: Implications for Sustainable Development' [2013] (15) (4) Journal of Sustainable Development in *Africa;* 5.

[78] MA Seligson. 'The Impact of Corruption on Regime Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Four Latin American Countries' [2002] (64) (2) The *Journal* of Politics; 408-433.

groups feel excluded from the benefits of economic development and government services [79].

In the same vein, low levels of trust in government, as a result of the absence of these basic amenities, often lead to disillusionment with the political system and undermine democratic governance. Lack of transparency and accountability in public service delivery further erode confidence in the government's ability to address the needs of the population. This is obvious from the various pockets of violence and protests within the country.

Comparing Federalism and Consociationalism

As noted above, federalism and consociationalism are important tools for dealing with political systems with deeply divided interests. However, what is obvious is that both concepts cannot be used interchangeably, as they possess inherent similarities and dissimilarities. This segment therefore contains an examination of both concepts, identifying the similarities and dissimilarities of both concepts.

Similarities between Consociationalism and Federalism

The similarities between federalism and consociationalism seem relate to the very fact both concepts are aimed towards forging a common ground amongst divergent and heterogeneous groups within a single polity. Therefore, it is not surprising that modern nation-states usually seek federal and consociational solutions to resolve differences in the composition of the several peoples within the state. Both federalism and consociationalism represent an acceptance of non-majoritarian democracy rejection of majoritarian democracy. As opposed to concentrating power in the hands of the majority, non-majoritarian democracies or consensus model of democracy, such as federalism and consociationalism, seeks to share, disperse and restrain power in different ways [80].

Characteristics of non-majoritarian democracy, which is obvious in both federalism and consociationalism, include "(1) executive power sharing, (2) balanced executive-legislative relations, (3) strong bicameralism, (4) multiparty system, (5) multi-dimensional party system, (6) proportional representation, (7) federalism and decentralisation, and (8) a written constitution and minority veto" [81]. As such, the overlapping nature of both concepts often suggests that "consociationalism plus some additional attributes spells federalism and vice versa" [82].

One similarity between consociationalism and federalism is that both concepts are usually employed in an attempt to attain and maintain unity in diversity [83]. For example, in the Nigerian situation, federalism was adopted in 1954 as a way of managing the heterogeneous nature of the country [84]. In the same vein, the establishment of a corporate consociational system as the de jure power sharing arrangement between various competing groups in Lebanon in 1943.

[79] AN Nkemdili, 'Governance Failure, Poverty and Ethno-Sectarian Conflicts in Nigeria: Implications for Sustainable Development' [2013] (15)(4) *Journal* of *Sustainable Development* in *Africa;* 103,104.

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[83] JE Daniel, 'Federalism and Consociational Regimes'[1985] (15) (2) *Publius*; 19,20.

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