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Federalism, political culture and the Question of Remaking Nigeria

by

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Abstract

The practice of federalism in Nigeria had undergone different stages of structuring to resolve salient political issues. However, despite each change to the structure, the clamour for further change has not abated. Thus, bringing to the fore the question, are the issues affecting the practice of federalism rooted in the structural arrangement or with the attitude of the citizens towards the principles of federalism? This article, an exploratory study, interrogated the latter part of the question by examining the concept of federal political culture and its effect on the practice of federalism in the country. It analysed salient issues like Herders/farmers conflict and insecurity and complemented with a survey of 220 respondents. Preliminary evidence indicates the presence of a federal political culture among the citizens and concludes that remaking Nigeria lies in evolving policies that enhance this culture.

Key-words

Political Culture, Federalism, Restructuring, Diversity



1. Introduction

The practise of federalism in Nigeria has evolved from a three regional arrangement to 36 states. The evolution has come with its challenges as operators of the system constantly struggle with demands from various country sections that would guarantee a stable federal structure. Each attempt has thrown up new challenges or complicated the existing federal arrangements. This raises concern about the suitable institutional design that will balance and mitigate existing tensions among the country's various ethnic and religious groups. The literature on federalism in Nigeria is rich with narratives on institutional design, fiscal matters, judicial review, intergovernmental relations and constitutional matters (Adedeji and Ezeabasili, 2017, Arowolo, 2011, Ewetan, 2012, Olowu, 1991). The country operates a presidential system patterned after the American presidential system. The legislative arm is bi-cameral with an upper chamber called the Senate and a lower chamber called the House of Representatives. The federation is divided into 36 states with federal capital and 774 local governments. The 1999 constitution divides powers between the federal and state governments, with the latter has full rights to the exclusive list and both sharing competencies over the concurrent list. Though bequeath by the military government on the country's return to democratic rule in 1999, the constitution has arguably been the centre of most debate on restructuring of the federation. The legal document centralises legislative and fiscal powers at the centre, thereby creating super-subordinate relations between the federal and state governments (Omitola, 2005, Adefulu, 2005). The solution recommended from various studies has been to readjust the existing structures through constitutional amendment or convening a sovereign national conference to negotiate a new federal arrangement. These solutions certain scholars argue would address contemporary challenges of insecurity, inter-ethnic and religious conflict, and rising poverty levels.

Awofeso and Obah-Akpowoghaha (2017) in their discourse on the practice of federalism in Nigeria, observed that the advent of military rule, monolithic economy occasioned by dependency on oil, the civil war, ethnic and religious conflict and non-viability of states as the factors that have inhibited the practice of federalism in the country. The



authors recommend a review of the constitution to alter the power imbalance between the federal and state government. This was the same argument Oni, and Faluyi (2018) proffered in addressing the clamour for restructuring in the country. They advocated for the convening of a national conference that would culminate in reducing federal powers and addressing perceived horizontal group inequalities in the country. Lenshie and Yenda (2015) differ in their prescription to the challenges of federalism in Nigeria. The authors believe that the entrenchment of democratic values would assuage ethnic rivalry and end repeated calls for 'true federalism in the country. Orji (2010) examined the 'ethnicised' public sphere within the context of inter-ethnic conflict and concluded on devolution of powers as the preferred solution to Nigeria's federal system despite certain inherent tendencies. The synopsis extracted from these narratives on the diagnosis of federalism in Nigeria is that the political concept would function better with a redesign of the structure. The prescription mainly centres on de-concentration powers at the centre and re-concentration of same at the sub-national level. In addition, democratic principles must guide the exercise of governmental powers.

Suberu (2018) examined the role of the Supreme Court in the practice of federalism in Nigeria. The Supreme Court is the last Court of appeal for cases emanating from lower courts and adjudicating disputes between the national and sub-national governments. The author examined litigations between the Federal and State governments on issues bothering on revenue allocation, the status of local governments and authoritarianism of the Federal executive and ruling political party. Numerous cases were analysed to extrapolate the dimension of federal jurisprudence in Nigeria. The author concluded that, based on the issues studied, the Supreme Court had played an essential arbitratative role in federalism in Nigeria. However, the Court is seen as being: 'an interpreter and enforcer of Nigeria's centrist constitution rather than as a transformational agent for the country's democratic decentralisation after years of hyper-centralising, extra-judicial military rule (Suberu, 2018:326).'

Thus, the Supreme Court upholds the provisions of the 1999 constitution, a legal document arguably perceived as entrenching a unitary than a federal political system.

Maiz (2013), however, thought that federalism could not be reduced to only institutional design without understanding the ideas and emotions behind them. The author's



argument is premised on the proposition that political actions are motivated by certain cultural beliefs, values and sentiments. The actions of political actors are not always based on rationality or calculated attempts at achieving their interests. Consequently, an understanding of these beliefs and values would provide a better interpretation of political actions. Thus, Maiz proposed that "federalism requires a self-sustainable and robust institutional design (a federation), a complex, decentralised party system and a set of attitudes and values; a shared political understanding that provides civic support for the system". The import of this statement is that apart from having a suitable federal arrangement that appropriate powers to the various levels with defined limits, there is also the need to have a common political across the federation. Duchacek (1987:341) referred to this as a federal political culture and defined it as " a set of orientations towards the federal political system and attitudes toward the role of self.....in the system". It is the presence of a shared federal political culture among the citizens that could guarantee the maintenance and stability of the federal system (Elazar, 1987). The essence of a shared federal political culture is to ensure that the various groups have a strong belief and commitment to the federal arrangement. A lack of it may lead to instability and secession threats. This perspective of a shared federal political culture offers an alternative insight into issues confronting the Nigerian Federation. While the extensive study on the practice of federalism in Nigeria had focused extensively on institutional design, little is known of a shared federal political culture and its effect. This paper seeks to offer insight into issues affecting the practice of federalism in Nigeria from the perspective of a shared federal political culture and a more effective path for restructuring in the country. The next section of the paper examines the federal political culture and practice of federalism in the United States, Canada and Australia.

2. Conceptual clarification

The concept of federal political culture, like every other concept in political science, is plagued with the dilemma of definition. In their operationalisation of the concept, Cole et al. (2004) observed that scholars tend to view it from a different perspective. This has hindered



the appropriate measurement of the concept. For instance, the authors observed that Duchacek, one of the few scholars to adopt the concept in interrogating the workings of federal systems, emphasised citizens' views and values towards the governmental arrangement. Thus, the people's orientations towards the federal system in terms of support for local initiative and responsibility presents evidence of a federal political culture. Other scholars like Elazar (1987), Wildavsky (1998) and Livingston (1968) have a different perspective on the concept. They believe that a federal political culture could be conceived of in terms of inter-ethnic relations and the degree of acceptance or rejection of diversity in the society. Therefore, federalism emerges in response to the various values politically salient in society.

The above perspectives on the concept of federal political culture complicate the attempt at having a precise definition. However, for clarity, this article adopted the meaning given by Brown (2013:298) that a federal political culture is "the extent to which the political attitudes and beliefs of a population reflect attachment to key values associated with federalism". This definition's key element is attitudes that could manifest as support for or rejection of federal principles, policies or structures. On this premise, this article investigates the concept within the context of the clamour for restructuring in Nigeria.

3. Federal political culture and practice of federalism in United States, Canada and Australia

Cole et al. (2004), in their study of the concept in the United States, Canada and Mexico, using a sample survey, designed three questions for respondents to ascertain if a pro-federal culture is in the majority or not in these countries. Based on the responses received on these questions and other variables, the authors hypothesise that Canada would tilt more towards a pro-federal culture. At the same time, the United States would fall between a most and least pro-federal culture. Their findings were in tandem with their hypothesis. Over half of the respondents in Canada and the United States preferred a federal government to any other kind of government. In the same vein, responses to the second question showed a large percentage of respondents in disagreement. However, answers to the third question were at variance with



the presumptions of a federal political culture. Most of the respondents were in agreement with the preference of a strong leader. This may be connected with citizens' appreciation for prompt response to issues affecting their daily lives than delays arising from consultations with various interest groups.

Notwithstanding, the authors concluded that while there is no direct correlation between a country's federal structure and federal political culture, "there appears to be an interactive or reciprocal relationship between the two" (Cole et al., 2004:220). Worthy of note from these findings is that Canada, which had the most pro-federal culture, also has the most negligible centralised federal structure (Watts, 2002). Thus, bringing to the fore the question that more decentralisation of the federal system would lead to a pro-federal political culture? In a similar study carried out by Kincaid and Cole (2011), the results from a survey conducted in 2009 showed that Canada and United States still maintained a high level of pro-federal political culture. However, a slight difference was observed in the United States as the percentage recorded in 2004 had moved upward in 2009. This is despite the centralisation of power at the national level. This outcome raises doubt on whether decentralisation in a federation will enhance a pro-federal political culture. Again, the authors concluded that there appears to be a corresponding relationship between the country's federal structure and cultural patterns. They advocated for more in-depth research of other federal and non-federal countries to confirm or disconfirm their exploratory findings.

Dardanelli et al. (2018), in their study of De/Centralisation in federations, concluded that in terms of public attitudes towards federalism, the United States still has a high percentage of citizens who support the federal system. Likewise, the gravitation towards centralisation has not diminished in the country. The authors observed that "High economic integration and strong identification with the federation tend to foster centralisation" (Dardanelli et al., 2018:209). In contrast, Canada, which also has a strong identification with federalism, has a more decentralised federal system. Notwithstanding, their findings confirm earlier observations made by Kincaid and Cole (2011).

Brown (2012) and (2013) examined the concept of federal political culture in Australia. This was with the intent of ascertaining "the extent to which the political attitudes and beliefs



of the general population reflect attachment to key values associated with federalism" (Brown, 2012:311-312). The author used a sample survey containing questions that categorise respondents into a six-point cultural spectrum: strong federalist, clear federalist, conflicted federalist, conflicted non-federalist, clear non-federalist, and strong non-federalists. The classification of respondents into these categories was informed by the same rationale used by Cole et al. (2004) and Kincaid and Cole (2011). However, there was a slight modification to test which structural or institutional aspects of a multi-level system were desirable or undesirable. Thus, Brown went further to examine respondents' preferences for specific federal features. For instance, a solid federalist is an individual who finds the four attributes of the division of power, legislative diversity, political diversity and arguments between levels as desirable.

Clear federalists desire two of the attributes and consider either or both the remaining two undesirables. Conflicted federalists prefer division of power but consider other attributes as undesirable. This follows the reverse trend with the conflicted non-federalist and clear non-federalist. The strong non-federalist considers all four attributes as undesirable. The results from the survey indicate that the predominant political culture in Australia support federalism. The distinction, however, lies with the various features of a federal system. Respondents favouring a federal system all support a division of power but differ on legislative diversity, political diversity and arguments between levels. The data shows that Australia, like the United States and Canada, has a higher percentage of citizens who value a federal arrangement than those who do not. Likewise, it aligns with arguments on centralisation as the federation has been transformed "by a persistent and pervasive expansion in the role of the Commonwealth" (Fenna, 2018:48).

One factor that has facilitated a relatively stable federation is the support received from a large percentage of the citizens. This does not suggest that these federations do not have issues with the practice of federalism in their countries. It only indicates that the desirability for continuous practice of federalism may be found in the political culture of the citizens. Furthermore, Cole et al. (2004) and Kincaid and Cole (2011) observed that the attitudes expressed by these citizens might be based on their experiences with their country's federal



structure. Thus, the interface between the citizens and the federal systems may determine the predominant political culture.

4. Federalism and federal political culture in Nigeria: analysis of salient issues

This paper used secondary qualitative and primary quantitative data as used in studies on federal political culture in Canada, the United States, and Australia. The findings from the sample survey, which served as the source of quantitative data, are discussed in the next section. The aim is to explore the relevance of this concept in understanding the operations of federalism and how to chart a better path of restructuring the Nigerian federation. Similarly, it attempts to stimulate further study based on empirical data to validate or invalidate specific assertions of the concept.

Federalism in Nigeria has evolved from a non-centralised federation to a highly centralised federation. Several arguments were used to explain the gradual concentration of power at the centre. Some scholars argue that the military's incursion into the Nigerian political space led to the centralisation of the Federation (Akinsanya, 1999 and Oni and Faluyi, 2018). This centralisation of the federation by the military emanated from their hierarchical nature, which is based on command and control. Other scholars believe that the attempt at secession by the Eastern region and subsequent civil war served as the catalyst for the disaggregation of the constituent units into smaller and less viable states and the centralisation of the Federation (Lenshie and Yanda, 2015). This resulted in the weakening of the capacity of the states to challenge the dominance of the federal government (Adedeji, 2017). Based on these arguments, the prescription for resolving the salient issues of inter-ethnic rivalry and conflict, marginalisation and control over resources is the devolution of more powers to the states (Orji, 2010). While the arguments on the cause and solution to Nigeria's federal arrangement appear valid, there is a need to explore other dimensions of the issue. One of which is the presence of a federal political culture that supports the practice of federalism in the country. This is pertinent as the continued sustenance of the federation hinges on support received



from the majority of the citizens. Centrifugal forces in terms of inter-ethnic and religious conflict precipitate a disintegration of the country. Responses of the federal and state government to these issues have most likely developed a set of attitudes and beliefs towards these levels of government. This set of attitudes and beliefs could either be the pro-federal or anti-federal arrangement.

To analyse the concept of federal political culture in Nigeria, citizen's responses towards the RUGA policy of the federal government was used. The policy was proposed in the wake of the persistent conflict between herders and farmers across the country. This was juxtaposed with the responses from citizens of the southwest region to the security initiative of the state governments of this region codename 'Amotekun'. The initiative came about from the rising cases of insecurity in the area allegedly perpetrated by Fulani herdsmen. Both policy initiatives generated responses from the citizens, and this could serve as a gauge of the presence or absence of a shared federal political culture in the country. Coincidentally, each policy initiative also generated responses from the federal and state governments. For instance, when the federal government proposed the RUGA policy, some state governments opposed it and even initiated a counter policy. Likewise, when the state governors of the southwestern region proposed the security outfit, the federal government voiced some concerns. In each case, the citizen's responses could serve as a measure of support or antagonism to these policies.

The herders/farmers conflict though predating the Buhari administration, took an upward trajectory from 2015. Apart from the lives that were lost, the conflict took an ethnic dimension, with the herders (perpetrators) identified as Fulani nomads and farmers (victims) being minority ethnic groups in Northcentral states (Ekpo and Tobi, 2019 and Ningxin Li, 2018). The media reporting of the conflict and the President being of Fulani extraction further heightened the conflict (Ciboh, 2017, Ekpo and Tobi, 2019). The federal government proposed a cattle settlement policy called 'RUGA' under The National Livestock Transformation Plan (NLTP) to resolve the conflict. The policy intended to have a designated area for herders to rear their cattle with adequate social amenities and grass. Thus, with the herders restricted to a designated location, the likelihood of herders grazing into farmlands



would be eliminated and avenues for conflict reduced. The policy was to commence in selected states in the North-Central, North-West, South-West, South-South and South-East regions.

However, the reactions that trailed the announcement of the policy made the federal government suspend its implementation. To actualise the policy, the federal government needed the support of state governments in allocating land for the scheme. The Governors of some states voiced opposition to this policy with active support from their citizens (The Punch newspaper, 2019). For instance, the Governor of Benue State in the North-Central region vowed that no part of the state would be ceded for RUGA, having previously enacted an anti-grazing law in 2017 (Kwaja and Ademola-Adelehin, 2017:7). This action by the Governor in passing the anti-grazing law may be responsible for the disaffection between him and his political party, the All Progressive Congress. This is the political party controlling the federal government. After intense pressure, the Governor left the political party and joined the opposition party (The Vanguard newspaper, 2018). This response by the Governor towards the policy and the support he received from the state's citizens could probably be seen as a lack of support for federal government solutions to their problems.

The International Crisis Group report (2021) observed that the lack of multi-stakeholder consultations is responsible for the criticism that heralded the announcement of the RUGA initiative. The report noted that highly placed Northerners perceived the RUGA scheme as a covert move to acquire land legally in the South for ominous reasons. With this view held by those in the South and Central regions and a lack of consultations to ensure buy-in, the policy could not take off. Furthermore, the legality of the scheme was challenged in Court. The Benue state government filed a suit at the Federal High Court, Makurdi and sought, among other prayers, the interpretation of the Court on the legality of the scheme within the context of the Land Use Act. The Federal High Court ruled in favour of the State government and issued a perpetual injunction restraining the Federal government and its agencies from implementing the scheme in Benue state (Ibekwe and Onyewuchi, 2020). The Court ruling notwithstanding, the RUGA scheme had suffered enough backlash necessitating its suspension by the Federal Government.



Paradoxically, when the South-West governors collaborated to establish 'Amotekun' a regional security outfit to curtail increasing insecurity in the region, it received massive support from its citizens. This is despite the note of caution expressed by the federal government. Like other regions in the country, the South-West region had come under the persistent attack of kidnappers and bandits. Noting the limited capacity of the Nigerian Police Force to curtail the upsurge, the South-West Governors launched the regional security outfit on the 0f ,2020 (The Punch newspaper, 2020). The security outfit aims to assist the regular police personnel with information and apprehension of criminals in the region. However, through the office of the Attorney General of the Federation, the federal government voiced concern over operating a parallel security outfit without legal backing (The Vanguard newspaper, 2020). Again, there was a wide condemnation of the federal government response and voice support for the actions of the South-West governors from the citizens (The Guardian newspaper, 2020a). The deductions from these instances showed that in the case of the RUGA policy proposed for resolving the Herders/Farmers conflict, the citizens from the states concerned opposed it and supported their governments' responses towards the policy. However, the citizens opposed the federal government's response towards the security outfit while supporting their governors for initiating it. The support that came for the RUGA policy came mainly from the North West and East. These are regions that share an ethnic affinity with the President. In contrast, opposition to the South-West regional security outfit came from the same areas. Citizens of these regions view it as an attempt to subjugate their citizens' interest in the South-West (The Guardian newspaper, 2020b). This brings another dimension to the discourse as Nigerians are more likely to support views and actions of their ethnic groups represented through the state governments than the federal government. Thus, it could be inferred that citizens tend to support their ethnic nationality vis-a-vis the state governments than a federal government that is the distance from them.

Notwithstanding, this does not presuppose the absence of a federal political culture as support for or against the federal government and state government policies differ across each region. Similarly, while support for the Federal government policy came from one region, opposition to it came from another region, likewise with the state government policy.



Arguably, there appears to be the presence of a federal political culture as there exists some support for the federal government policy. The challenge may be the degree of presence which may differ across each state of the federation based on experience of the citizens with the practice of federalism. The next section analyses the data obtained from the sample survey and was used to make further deductions.

5. Analyses of data

All The sample survey used in this study was obtained using an online platform to distribute the questionnaire to purposively selected respondents. The questions were designed as closed-ended to facilitate better responses as most respondents tend to ignore open-ended and lengthy questionnaires. The sample survey intended to juxtapose the responses with the findings from the literature on the presence of a federal political culture in Nigeria. However, there are some limitations observed in the course of administering the questionnaire. Notably is the lack of funding to conduct a more comprehensive sample survey and the reluctance of respondents to fill the questionnaire despite repeated promptings. However, the study aims not to make generalisations applicable to most federal systems and Nigeria. Instead, it seeks to ascertain if there exists the presence of a federal political culture among citizens and how it could facilitate a better working of federalism in the country.

The data obtained from the questionnaire is presented in tabular form using frequency and percentages below.

**Table 1: Age group of Respondents**

Age	Freq.	Percentage
18-25	148	67%
26-35	39	18%
36-45	23	10%
45 and Above	10	5%
Total	220	100%

Table 1 above, shows that a larger percentage of the respondents fall between the ages 18 and 25. An indication that the experience of the majority of the respondents on the practice of federalism was under the present democratic experiment.

Table 2: Geopolitical Zone of Respondents

Geopolitical Zone	Freq.	Percentage
South-West	130	59%
South-East	11	5%
South-South	24	11%
North-Central	16	7%
North-West	24	11%
North-East	15	7%
Total	220	100

Table 2 shows that a larger percentage of respondents came from the Southwest geopolitical zone when compared with respondents from other zones.

**Table 3: Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Freq.	Percentage
Female	83	38%
Male	136	62%
Void	1	0.4%
Total	220	100%

Table 3 shows that more males responded to the survey than females

Table 4: Educational Qualifications of Respondents

Educational Qualification	Freq.	Percentage
SSCE	83	38%
Diploma/Degree	74	34%
Postgraduate Diploma/Degree	63	28%
Total	220	100

Table 4 shows that the educational qualification of the respondents appears evenly distributed with the number of those with O/Level qualification slightly higher than others.

Table 5: Employment Status of Respondents

Employment	Freq.	Percentage
Paid Employment	51	23%
Self Employed	169	77%
Total	220	100%

Table 5 shows that a higher percentage of the respondents are self-employed.



Table 6: Which level of government do you feel will provide better services to you if given the power to do so?

Level of Government	Freq	Percentage
Federal	94	43%
State	80	36%
Local	46	21%
Total	220	100%

Table 6 shows that a slightly higher percentage of the respondents hold the opinion that the Federal government will do better if given the power to do so than States and Local governments. The deduction from this question is that there is still some higher level of confidence in the federal government than the State and Local governments in the provision of services.

Table 7: Which Level of Government do you trust more in Nigeria's federal system?

Level of Government	Freq.	Percentage
Federal	80	36%
State	140	64%
Total	220	100%

Table 7 indicates overwhelming support for the State governments than the Federal government. Therefore, the respondents hold more affinity to their State governments than the Federal government. The implication of this is that in terms of support for government decisions and actions, citizens may be skewed in favour of their State governments than the Federal government. This appears in contrast to the question in table 6 as respondents believe more in the capacity of the Federal government than their state governments.

**Table 8: Is your State treated fairly in Nigeria's Federal System?**

Options	Freq.	Percentage
Yes	106	48%
No	114	52%
Total	220	100%

The question in table 8 was to ascertain the respondents' perception of the status of their state in the federal system. There is marginal difference between those that hold the view of unfair treatment to those of fair treatment. Consequently, the treatment in terms of allocation of infrastructure, financial resources and federal appointments given to each state in the federal system may not have met their expectations; it does not appear to be overtly unfair.

Table 9: Which level of government do you think deserves more powers?

Level of Government	Freq.	Percentage
Federal	77	35%
State	143	65%
Total	220	100%

Table 9 shows a significant margin between those that want more powers for the State government than the Federal government. Thus, confirming the argument made in the literature on federalism in the Nigeria that States need to be given more powers to handle the issues that confront their citizens.

**Table 10: Do you prefer a federal system to a unitary system?**

Options	Freq.	Percentage
Yes	139	63%
No	81	37%
Total	220	100%

The question in table 10 is one of the questions intended to measure the presence of a federal political culture and from the data obtained, more of the respondents still prefer a federal system to a unitary system.

Table 11: A country in which everyone speaks the same language is preferable?

Options	Freq.	Percentage
Yes	155	70%
No	65	30%
Total	220	100%

The question in table 11 is intended to ascertain the preference for homogeneity which is attributed to unitary systems and heterogeneity, which is attributed to Federal systems. The response contradicts earlier question on federal and unitary systems. However, this could be an indication of the perception of the respondents that the diversity of the country is what breeds conflict and a common lingual Franca could facilitate harmony.



Table 12: Having a strong federal government is better than a weak federal government?

Options	Freq.	Percentage
Yes	200	91%
No	20	9%
Total	220	100%

Table 12 shows that while the federal government is considered more powerful than the State government in the present arrangement, the respondents do not support a weakening of that power. Again indicating a support for a federal system where the national government is strong enough to discharge its functions as against a weak one.

Table 13: When making decisions, government should consider the interest of all ethnic and religious groups?

Options	Freq.	Percentage
Yes	206	94%
No	14	6%
Total	220	100%

This question deals with accommodation of diversity in decision making and from the responses obtained, there is a preference for this attribute. Thus, indicating the perception that citizens prefer decisions that emanate from wider consultation with diverse groups to decisions that excludes them.

The observation from the literature and the sample survey clearly indicates the presence of a federal political culture as opinions expressed by citizens does not indicate a support for disintegration of the federation rather for a better working of the system. This is evident by the support given to both the federal and state governments on certain policy choices and the preference of a federal system to a unitary system. The degree of presence



however varies across each region depending on the experience of their citizens and the salience of the political issues.

6. Conclusion

From the analysis above, the issues appear to be more on practice than the principles of federalism. How it is been operated is more likely to shape the experiences of citizens and determine their support or rejection of the system. This experience in terms of the impact of federal government policies on their social existence has not been meaningful. There exist a gap between what the principles of federalism espouse and the experience of citizens. Notwithstanding, there is evidence of a federal political culture as extant literature establishes a relative level of support for the federal government. This support is a reflection of the citizens' attitude towards the continued existence of the Nigerian Federation. Data from the sample survey also suggest the presence of a federal political culture. However, caution needs to be applied here as this does not suggest a high or low degree of presence. On the contrary, the data shows the acceptance of a federal system over a unitary system. Thus, confirming the presence of a federal political culture.

The question of remaking Nigeria focuses on identifying a more suitable and effective path of restructuring the federation. Advocates of restructuring argue for devolution of powers to the constituent units in order to meet the expectations of their citizens. The argument for devolution gives the impression of a weakening of the federation which could lead to disintegration. This probably explains why there are counter arguments against devolution of powers to federating units. The survey highlighted certain perspectives which appear germane to the debate on restructuring. For instance, more of the respondents believe in the capacity of the federal government to deliver services than the state governments. Likewise, they desired a strong federal government to a weak federal government. On the other hand, respondents expressed more trust for the State governments than the federal government. Devolution of powers to state governments should be done in a way that creates a balance. The state government should have powers and revenue sources that ensure effective discharge of their



responsibilities. The federal government on its part should retain powers that ensure its ability to guarantee stability and cohesion in the federation. Powers to be devolved and retained by the federal government should be done in consultation and negotiation with state governments. The outcome of such negotiations could change the narratives on the practice of federalism and create better experiences for the citizens. This could in the medium and long term reinforce the federal political culture of Nigerians.

In conclusion, attitudes, perceptions and beliefs of citizens expressed in the form of support or rejection for federal structures and policies arguably has the potential to create stability or instability. How these attitudes and beliefs are developed is a function of the interface between the citizens and the government. This analysis is by no means a conclusion on the discourse of the concept of federal political culture. On the contrary, it is to stimulate further interrogation of the concept in Nigeria preferably with empirical data to identify the degree of presence and causal relationship if any with the practice of federalism.

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