

## LEADERSHIP, SEPARATIST/SECESSIONIST AGITATIONS AND PROSPECT FOR NATIONAL UNITY IN NIGERIA

Rufai Aliyu\*

\*PhD,

Center for the Study of Leadership and Complex Military Operations,

Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna, NIGERIA

Email id: rufai.aliyuuu@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

*Insecurity is one of, if not the most visible and widely discussed issue in contemporary Nigeria. Throughout the country, acts of insecurity occur on a regular basis. Nigerians are deeply concerned about this troubling trend. This study investigates the core reasons of insecurity in Nigeria and their consequences for the country. The study also examines the role of leadership and the sprouting of insurgency and separatist groups such as (Boko Haram, Niger Delta Avengers, MASSOB, IPOB, the Fulani herders conflict among others) and how it has affected the unity of the nation overtime. The study argues that leadership failure and structural dysfunction are the major triggers that led to the emergence of these separatist's groups. The study, offers/suggests measures to address these insecurities in the country. This study adopted descriptive and analytical method of historical research.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Dysfunction, Consequences, contemporary*

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### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria earned her independence from Britain on October 1, 1960, amid celebration of joy and merry. Nigerians were on the streets, as well as public and private homes and venues, to commemorate this landmark occasion. At this period in time, Nigerians' joy knew no bounds, especially when considered in the perspective of the people's subjugation, humiliation, and exploitation as a result of colonialism. To Nigerians, it was a dawn of a new era which will be an era of no colonialism and colonial subjugation; an era in which Nigerians would be in charge of their own affairs; and an era in which the country would grow economically. Citizens were told by the nationalists who took over the mantle of leadership from the colonialists that they would right the anomalies of colonialism and lead the country to economic growth and success. [1]

But after the attainment of independence, the long term problems set by colonialist began to hunt the newly independent nation. For instance, it has been explained by many scholars that the way and manner the Nigerian state was configured by the British colonialist "had not encouraged horizontal interactions, even though it had maximized vertical interaction between the various groups and the colonial administration." [2] For example, as seen by their actions and pronouncements, the colonial authorities representing the two sides of Nigeria were hesitant to unite the two groups. (North and South) This exclusivist attitude pervaded the "Nigerians" they educated toward statehood. [3] The *awareness of parochialism* [4] which the colonial authority

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imposed instilled suspicion, leading to mistrust among ethnic groups and widening the nation's fracture lines. It's worth noting that the colonial regime suppressed most of these separatist impulses and existing fault lines, which only fully manifested after they left.

Seven years after independence, the country was engulfed in a three-year civil war (1967–1970), which terribly affected the country's nationhood. The Nigerian state is currently undergoing regional agitations and centrifugal pressures from many parties and individuals fighting for space after nearly six decades of "nationhood." While some of these groups and individuals have become so vocal in their demand for the reconfiguration or restructuring of the so-called Nigerian "federal system state" to give more strength, power, and resources to the component units in order to drive development in the peripheries. Importantly, these organizations' contestation comes at a time when the component entities are badly weakened economically, politically, and structurally in relation to the central authority.

This paper will look back at Nigeria's political history and show how structural inequity and governance failure have resulted in separatist agitations and the creation of the various divides with grave ramifications for the Nigerian state's survival.

### **History and Emergence of Separatist Agitation in Nigeria**

There are several literature on the subject of separatist agitation, that have shown that the diverse-ethnic and diverse-religious construct of the Nigerian nation have created more problems for the unity the country. [5] The nation's plurality had created the ground for recurrent acrimony and tensions in the socio-political and economic processes both before and after independence. The British colonial administration's method of amalgamating these nations was largely responsible for the discrepancies. For example, the colonial government's amalgamation of 1914 was intended to create a political union of the North and the South, rather than to create a single country. [6] As a result, little attempt was made to unify the Northern and Southern Protectorates from 1914 until 1946. These Provinces were managed separately by the colonial authority, which battled hard to keep them apart. The feeling of nationalism and oneness, which is essential for the country development, was not instilled by British colonialists. Both provinces had their own institutions that they founded and maintained. Separation like this tended to increase ethnic identity and exclusivity, stoking the fires of ethnicity and sectionalism. [7]

The 1946 Richard's constitution further compounded the Nigerian issue and encouraged separation by dividing the country into three regions: North, West, and East. As independence drew nearer, the three primary ethnic groups that ruled the three areas — Hausa/Fulani in the north, Igbo in the east, and Yoruba in the west — retreated to their ethnic cleavages, desperate to usurp power from the departing colonial administration. To accomplish their goal, the political elite separated into ethno-regional and religious divisions. Along these lines, political parties were founded, and each group rallied support from its regional and clannish bases, exploiting the underlying distinctions that exist among these groups in the process. [8]

For example, the Hausa/Fulani in the north align with the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the Yoruba in the west aligned with the Action Group (AG), and the Igbos in the south aligned with the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). Other ethnic or sectional political groups, such as the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), emerge to demand a separate Middle Belt State from northern Nigeria in order to advance their own interests in the power struggle. These

groups also manufactured and exploited the widespread fear of dominance and inter-ethnic inequality. [9] To mobilize support for their struggle at the center while at the same time intensely controlling their respective regions. [10] As noted elsewhere, “the socio-political and economic competition which was generated by the manipulation of these sentiments had far reaching consequences in post-independent Nigeria.” [11]

The attainment of independence in 1960 exacerbate the separatist sentiments previously mentioned. Various parties have taken up arms to compete or negotiate for place in the post-colonial Nigerian state over the last sixty years of "nationhood." as Onoja so brilliantly put it, “uniting either as a region, ethnic nationality or religious group, the north, east, west and south southerners have adopted this method of seeking redress to perceived injustice.” [12] Several examples would suffice here: The Tiv revolt or insurgency of 1964 was the first instance of uprising that expose the state fragility of Nigeria as a country. [13] From 1960 to 1966, a series of events within the Nigerian state centered on issues of governance, injustice, unfairness, marginalization, and distrust culminated in the Nigerian Civil War, which lasted from 1967 to 1970. The Nigerian civil war was the Igbos' most serious attempt at secession, which resulted in a full-fledged war. The concerns that sparked Igbos agitation and culminated in the three-year civil war are still unsolved nearly fifty years later.

Ten years after the Civil War, precisely in the early 1980's, an Islamic insurgent group known as the Maitatsine emerged. This group rejected the use of western technological products such as wrist watches, bicycles, radios and televisions. The leader of the group, Mohammed Marwa, who originally came from Cameroun, founded the sect and claimed to have divine revelations, which superseded those of the Prophet. [14] He appealed for an Islamic based system of justice, and an end to Western oriented corruption. He mobilized the young urban poor in a series of uprising from 1980 to 1982, first in Kano and later in Yola, Kaduna and Maiduguri, in which thousands died (including Maitatsine) and several property destroyed. [15] The police were unable to restore order when the riot broke out in Kano until the army and air force were drafted to nip the insurrection in the bud. As Ayuba has noted, the government blamed the trouble on religious extremism rather than underlying economic deprivation epitomized by governance failure. [16]

In the early 1990's, precisely ten years after the Maitatsine insurgency, another insurgent group - the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) –emerged in the southwest. Their grouse was to fight for the restoration of the presidential mandate of Chief M.K.O. Abiola, the acclaimed winner of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. According to its founding president, Fredrick Faseun, “the OPC was established to defend the rights of every Yoruba person on earth.” [17] The OPC took up arms against the state and made governance difficult particularly in the south western part of the country. The subsequent suspicious death of Chief Abiola compounded the crisis. The election of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo as president in 1999 did not pacify the Yoruba because he (Obasanjo) was viewed as a stooge, imposed by the northern elites to further their own interest. In fact, from 1999, the group had changed its *modus oparandi* – from defending the rights of all Yoruba and seeking self-determination for them – to crime fighting activities and the resolution of personal disputes. [18] The litany of OPC confrontation with the state indicate heavy losses were suffered from both sides with causalities in men and materials. For instance, in October 1999, there were skirmishes between the police and the OPC militia in Ilesa, Osun State, and in the Ajegule area of Lagos State resulting in the death of 23 persons. In July of the same year, the OPC engaged the Hausa settlers in Shagamu, Ogun State in a fierce clash which resulted in the

death of 50 people, while a retaliatory attack by the Hausa against the Yoruba in Kano caused the death of over 100 people. There were several other altercations.

Similarly, in the 1990s, the Niger Delta also revolted against the state in an attempt to expose the environmental degradation that greeted their environment. Historically, this was not the first time they were doing so. They had done so during the 1970s and 1980s but the climax of these sporadic protests took place in the 1990s under the umbrella of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). Initially a very peaceful campaign which was recognized internationally was embarked upon by MOSOP. However, a militant approach was later introduced to the struggle, especially after the execution of the Ogoni nine including its leader, Ken Saro Wiwa, by the state under General Abacha on 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1994. [19]

A more militant and rebellious dimension was introduced in the struggle in 1998 by the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), a confederation of youth associations in the Ijaw homeland which included an armed wing called the Niger Delta Volunteer Force, popularly called Egbesu Boys. The Egbesu Boys demanded control of local oil resources, focusing their campaign on multinational oil companies. In December 1998 the IYC issued the Kaima Declaration in which it gave oil companies a nineteen-day ultimatum to vacate Ijawland. [20] The group made good its threat as it sabotaged oil installations and pipelines and kidnapped oil company workers for ransom, prompting massive government repression. Elsewhere in the North, the Arewa People's Congress (APC) was formed to serve as a counterpoise to the activities of the OPC in the west. In the east, there was a resurgent activism by the Igbo who demanded for self-determination. Initially working under the umbrella of Igbo People's Congress (IPC), the emergence of a more extreme group – the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) - agitated for the dismemberment of Nigeria and the formation of a separate state for the Igbo.

By 1999, groups' resort to arms against the state became a common thing among the three major ethnic groups and a few minorities groups. While the arms struggle in the west took the form of ousting the regime of General Ibrahim Babangida from power following the annulment of the June 12, 1992 elections, the northern equivalent was formed in reaction to the activities of the OPC, which engaged in some altercation with the Hausa-Fulani in the west. The Niger Delta engaged in separatist agitations as reaction to the environmental degradation which was a consequence of oil exploitation by multinational companies. Thus, by 1999, the country was deeply divided and also engulfed in protracted disputes over land, politics, religion, ethnicity, resources, and money. The frequency and ferocity of these conflicts indicated governance failure.

Since the return of democratic governance in 1999, the Nigerian state has continued to grapple with several nation-building challenges arising from separatist agitations, militancy and ethno-religious conflagrations from several groups within the country. Other groups that emerged within the period include Bakassi Boys, the Egbesu Boys of Africa and the Hisbah Guards – all of which were militia groups that took over from the police, the function of protecting lives and property. These agitations, have no doubt, continued to threaten the cooperative existence and survival of the Nigerian state. Each passing day, the state is confronted with a new separatist scourge threatening the survival of the state, to the extent that it would appear the government is unable to respond.

## **Dimensions of Deepening Separatists Agitations Since 1999**

### ***Boko Haram***

Since 1960, the Boko Haram sect has been unquestionably the most feared terrorist organisation in Nigeria. The group first appeared in 2002 and reappeared in 2009, with Mohammed Yusuf convincing the destitute and despairing teenagers that they were the result of years of neglect by the ruling elites. [21] As a result of the corruption, frustration, and hardship experienced by the majority of unemployed youngsters, particularly in the northern region of the country, the group arose. They also blame the country's problems on Western-inspired values, which they believe are incompatible with Islamic thinking. According to them, Nigeria's democracy has only served to promote neglect, poverty, and pauperism among the people of the north, while politicians continue to live in luxury. In this regard, the organization considers anything Western to be bad and anathema to the existence of Muslims in Nigeria and its environs. Ayuba aptly captures the context in which Boko Haram should be understood thus:

The rise of Boko Haram demonstrates how the administration in northern Nigeria has gradually alienated the bulk of the indigenous population from their portion of the country's wealth. As a result, the group is a product of corruption-related poverty and unemployment.

Since re-emerging in 2009, the group has carried out a series of damaging attacks against security and non-security institutions, resulting in the loss of lives and property. Mohammed Yusuf, the group's leader, was apprehended and killed extra-judicially by the authorities on July 30, 2009. One of the sect's main issues is the failure to capture and prosecute the security officials who killed their leader extra judicially. Shortly after their leaders were assassinated, the group moved underground, enlisting the help, logistical, and financial backing of r organizations Al-Qaeda which is also an Islamic terrorist organization. [22] The organization reappeared in 2010 with vengeance, attacking security stations, churches, mosques, marketplaces, media outlets, and car parks, among other targets. [23] Since its resurgence it has killed thousands of people within and outside the country.

In the north-eastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Gombe, the group raised its flag in many local governments in 2014. Apart from pushing the armed forces to their limits, the group's operations forced the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to postpone the 2015 general election for a time in order for the armed forces to recapture parts of the territories taken over by the sect. Boko Haram was designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and a Specially Designated Global Terrorists Group by the US Department of State on November 13, 2013. This declaration was sequel to the internationalization of the activities of the group, following its supposed links with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). [24]

### ***The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA)***

The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) are a militant group negotiating for space in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. The formation of the group was revealed in March of 2016. Since its inception, the group has targeted oil-producing facilities in the delta region, resulting in the closure of oil terminals and a drop in Nigerian oil production to levels not seen in more than two decades. Attacks on strategic oil installations have resulted in the closure of some of these oil companies, which has had serious economic consequences. The NDA's goal is to establish a sovereign state in the Niger Delta. They have threatened to disrupt Nigeria's economy if the government fails to

meet their demands. Its members come from all walks of life, including the young, educated, and well-traveled.

After Abacha executed the leaders of MOSOP (popularly known as the Ogoni 9) and the belligerence of Obasanjo's presidency, the NDA emerged as an offshoot of a coalition of rebel groups that had existed in the Delta region. The NDA, like MOSOP and other early 2000 groups, objected to the region's continuous deterioration by prospecting oil firms without tangible compensation or benefits to the impacted populations. In what is known as the Amnesty Deal, the insurgents coerced a concession from President Yar'Adua in 2007. [25] The government offered amnesty or unconditional pardon to all Niger Delta militants who had directly or indirectly participated in the commission of offences related to militant operations in the Delta area as a result of this agreement. The government also pledged to provide the militants and other adolescents in the area with education, training, and empowerment in a variety of skills. The government had also promised sustainable development of the region.

The group resurrected its attack on oil installations in the area in 2015. The renewed offensive should be viewed in the context of President Buhari's policy, which seems to be at odds with the amnesty agreement. Apart from a slew of other demands, the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme, for example, must be permitted to continue and well supported. Furthermore, the group has requested that the government clean up all oil-polluted lands in the Niger Delta and compensate all oil-producing communities. The federal government's reluctance to heed these requests, as well as its attempts to pressure members of the group to stop agitating, radicalized its operations. The Nigerian state, which is an oil-dependent economy bled profusely, with terrible effects for the people as a consequence.

### ***MASSOB AND IPOB***

There are two separatist groups formed in the south east after the return of democracy in 1999, fighting for the revival of Nigeria's defunct state of Biafra. The MASSOB and the Indigenous People of Biafra are the two groups mentioned above (IPOB). While Ralph Uwazuruike, a lawyer, leads MASSOB, Nnamdi Kanu, a political activist living in the United Kingdom, leads IPOB. The establishment and recognition of the Republic of Biafra, which includes the south-east and south-south areas of Nigeria, is central to these groups' ideology. Despite the fact that MASSOB's doctrine is based on Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolence principles, the Nigerian government has accused the group of violence. For example, the group's leader, Ralph Nwazuruike, was arrested and jailed on treason accusations before being freed in 2007. He was jailed in 2011 together with 280 MASSOB members, but President Jonathan ordered his release a few days later. MASSOB has claimed that state agents have been arresting and assassinating its members since its formation. In 2008, the group produced a list of 2,020 members who were allegedly slain by security personnel between 1999 and 2008. Due to its insurgent activities, President Jonathan branded MASSOB as one of the extremist groups threatening the security of Nigeria. The president specifically declared that:

The Nigerian state faces three fundamental security challenges posed by extremist groups like Boko Haram in the north; the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra in the south-east; and the Oodua People's Congress in the south-west.

The Indigenous People of Biafra is another group in the south-east whose activities and goals are similar to or identical to those of MASSOB (IPOB). During the Nigerian Civil War, this group consisted of the indigenous ethnic groups that made up Biafra. Nnamdi Kanu, who was jailed by the Nigerian government in 2015 but released on bail in 2017, leads the group. This group, like MASSOB, is fighting for self-determination and the restoration of Biafra as an independent state from Nigeria. The group argues that Nigeria's current structural framework makes forming a viable union impossible. It has staged a number of rallies both inside and outside the country in order to raise awareness about its agitations. In the south-east, some of its protests halted commercial activity and caused disruptions here and there. Despite the fact that the group claims its rallies and agitations are peaceful, the Nigerian government has cracked down hard on its members. The Nigerian government claims that the group is illegal and that it is pursuing an illegal secessionist goal that threatens Nigeria's territorial integrity.

Furthermore, there are current happenings that bordered around the activities of these groups . The Federal Government has proscribed and declared IPOB as terrorist organization, IPOB attacks on security agencies, killing of police men, attacks on correctional service has become frequent in the recent times. To worsen it, the declaration of Mondays as sit-at-home days which has largely disrupted economic activities in the area is worthy to be mentioned and the attempt to deny citizens of their franchise by asking voters not to come out for the Anambra elections etc. although, of recent, the leader of the secessionist IPOB Group Nnamdi Kanu was re-arrested.

### ***Fulani (Herders) Militants***

The Fulani herders, who have continued to threaten numerous farmers and villages in Nigeria, are another group that uses weaponry to negotiate for space. In recent years, the group's actions have taken on a militia-like tone. The organization has been on the rampage for the past decade, targeting various villages, notably in the middle belt, killing farmers and destroying farm produce and lands. Because of the secrecy of its operations, particularly its hit-and-run methods, very little is known about this organization. Many rural communities are living in constant terror as a result of the hidden tactical approach used in targeting communities. Felix Igbahenah (2016:74) elucidates on these attacks in Benue State and elsewhere thus:

In recent times, some farming communities in Gwer-west local government area of Benue State have suffered series of attacks by armed fighters suspected to be mercenaries hired by Fulani nomads. These attacks have led to wanton loss of lives and properties, as well as displacement of native farmers. Describing one of such attacks .... The Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) said, the magnitude of the disasters and destruction (public buildings, basic services facilities, houses, agricultural lands etc) is horrific.

Several settlements in Benue, Nasarawa, and Plateau States have been assaulted and sacked by roving herdsmen in the recent decade. For example, on January 2, 2018, the group raided multiple villages in Benue State's Guma and Logo Local Government Areas, murdering a total of 73 people. The deaths so enraged the state's authorities and residents that they decided to hold a mass funeral for the victims. Following the mass burial, several other deaths occurred in these local governments and other Tiv-speaking areas, prompting the government to reluctantly launch Operation Cat Race, a military operation in the affected area.

They've also targeted communities in Adamawa, Borno, Kaduna, Gombe, and other states in the far north. Later, the group's operational strategy shifted to the country's eastern and western regions. The Fulani militia has invaded practically every zone in the country in the past three years. Unlike other terrorist and rebel organizations with well-defined goals, the Fulani militia's goals are mostly unknown. Individuals from the Fula people, a semi-nomadic pastoral ethnic group found in numerous West African countries, make up the little-known tribe. It has been suggested that, despite certain government victories against terrorist organizations, rising instability in the Central African Republic (CAR) and Nigeria has aided the group's spread. Although the motive and objective of the group remains unknown, as much as 92 percent of their attacks target private citizens, reflecting the group's primary concern over the ownership of farmland and related resources.

Due to the intensity of their attacks, the Global Terrorism Index (2015:43-44) indicates that Fulani Militants (mostly herders) were the fourth deadliest terrorists group in 2014; using machine guns and other sophisticated weapons to attack villages and intimidate farmers. For instance, after killing about 80 people from 2010-2013, the group killed 1,229 in 2014 and most of these deaths occurred in Nigeria's Middle Belt Region particularly in the states of Kaduna, Nasarawa, Plateau, Benue and Taraba, which recorded 847 deaths.

### **Leadership Failure and Structural Dysfunction**

Nigeria is currently at a cross road as a result of these aforementioned issues. Nigeria's current predicament can be explained in terms of structural flaws and governance shortcomings. After six decades of "nationhood," the Nigerian state is currently experiencing centrifugal tensions from a variety of parties and individuals vying for space within the country. While some of these groups and individuals have become so vocal in their demand for the reconfiguration or restructuring of the Nigerian state to give more strength, power, and resources to the component units in order to drive development in the periphery, others have become so vocal in their demand for the reconfiguration or restructuring of the country to give more strength, power, and resources to the component units in order to drive development in the periphery. [26] However, as the restructuring debate continues, there are various competing viewpoints on the nature of the reorganization. We've grouped the competing issues into...

For example, some are advocating for economic restructuring [27], Another faction believes that the politics, not the economy, needs to be restructured. Another group argues that the restructuring that should take place should be both economic and political in nature. The third group contends that the country does not require economic or political transformation; rather, moral restructuring is required. There is also a fourth group that believes there is no need for restructuring at all, and that the so-called restructuring clamor is being pushed by politicians, particularly those who failed in the 2015 elections. They claim that these types of politicians were merely looking for relevance in the 2019 election, and that they were asking why they did not start restructuring when they were in power. The fifth group stated unequivocally that what is wrong with Nigeria is the process by which Nigerians carry out their responsibilities, not the structure. According to individuals who hold this viewpoint, the country has to restructure its procedures rather than its structure. This viewpoint is comparable to those who believe that the country's institutions should be strengthened rather than restructured. There is also a sixth group that is entirely opposed to any restructuring since they believe it will result in the country's



complete dissolution. Those who do not believe in Nigeria's cooperative existence but believe that "Nigeria's unity is settled and not negotiable" espouse this viewpoint.

The author strongly agrees with some Nigerians who are calling for the Nigerian state to be reconfigured due to several shortcomings that have been a stumbling block to progress for a long time. Regardless, there is a sense that no matter how we rebuild, until the nation's governing mechanism and process are adjusted, the country will not progress. By governance, we mean both the leadership and the people who follow it, both working together to achieve the nation's goals. This is crucial because it is frequently attempted to delink followership in order to explain governance factors; in this situation, it is intended to appear as though the follower should be a passive participant in the governance process. However, effective government necessitates meaningful engagement between leaders and followers. "Clearly, leadership and governance necessitate active and meaningful interaction between leaders and followers as a means of setting minimum criteria essential for emerging societies to offer checks and balances, as well as to open a communication channel between both sides."

A symbiotic link between governance, leadership, and followership is required to achieve the goals of governance, especially within the framework of liberal democracy. "The leader represents the public wheel that drives the country to higher political and economic heights in order to create national and worldwide impact," in a democratic context like ours. [28] While followers are expected to keep the leadership accountable for their public actions or inactions. Unfortunately, many of these characteristics are lacking in African leadership and followership, particularly in Nigeria.

It is an unavoidable fact that post-colonial Nigeria's past is littered with leadership vacuums. Several of the country's leaders, at all levels of government, never had a clear vision of effective governance- the vast majority having no clue where they wanted to lead Nigerians. Many have attacked previous leaders and governments, condemning them for failing to match the people's expectations, amid this backdrop of leadership myopia. Nigerian authorities have proceeded to aggressively widen the nation's fault lines economically, politically, socially, and otherwise, entangled in a web of their incompetence and lack of vision. As a result, rather than being ideologically driven, politics is and has always been ethno-politically entwined. [29] Politicians seeking power have frequently exploited these fault lines and differences to feed the flames of discord among the populace.

In the long run, some of these fault lines and diversities have proved impossible to control, resulting in corruption, instability, poverty, high unemployment, economic deterioration, infrastructural collapse, and underdevelopment (these include: road, health, education, transport infrastructure, etc.). Since independence, all that has passed for public policy has been misery, hunger, marginalization, exploitation, dominance, and deliberate impoverishment. [30] The multiplier effect is the increasing number of separatist agitations among various groups, earning the country the label of failed state. Nigeria has scarcely ever been so successful in any endeavor that its example should serve as a lesson to other countries on the continent or around the world, owing to poor governance.

As previously stated, in a democratic setting, the leadership/followership synergy is a critical component of the social compact. As a result, there is a link between critical citizenship and active followership in order to create democratic balance and benefits. To put it another way,

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critical and active followership and a country's progress have a mutually reinforcing relationship. Unfortunately, as the Nigerian example indicates, this link between leadership and followership has been lacking in Africa. Whereas successive leaderships have failed to deliver effective leadership, the followership has grown increasingly disengaged from the political and governance processes. As a result, the detachment of followership from leadership, as well as, to a significant degree, the governing process, has remained the bane of the country's change. [31] While it is true that bad leadership contributes to the problem, leadership can and does work when followers or citizens hold leaders accountable for their acts and inactions. For example, in Nigeria, it is followership (traditional, religious, and community, among others) that encourage public officials to steal; it is followers who snatch ballot boxes from politicians during elections; it is civil servants who engage in fraudulent and corrupt bureaucratic bottlenecks; and it is student union leaders and labor leaders who bestow awards on corrupt and under serving officials. We could go on and on about this. The truth is that the only way to solve Nigeria's leadership crisis is through followership. [32] As Rick Ungar rightly observed, citizens should hardly "expect strong leadership without good followership." Invariably, followership capital is a needed resource for political transformation, good governance and development.

## CONCLUSION

Nigeria is today on the verge of falling off the cliff as a result of separatist movement. These protests stem from the nature and character of the Nigerian state's foundation, which has resulted in structural discord. In the last fifty-eight years, this imbalance has elongated the nation's fault lines. The creation of a weak, clannish, provincial, self-centered, corrupt, and visionless leadership, which has severely impoverished the people, is one of the primary contradictions that has resulted from this. It is sufficient to acknowledge that the core causes of these issues are political. All of the economic challenges that the modern Nigerian state faces arise from the way political power has been, and continues to be, monopolized by a small and greedy elite.

Individuals and groups in Nigeria have gotten so disillusioned with the government that they have resorted to using weapons to negotiate space. This is due to the fact that the country has been and continues to be dominated by a small elite who have arranged society for their own personal gain at the expense of the great majority of the population. Political power has been concentrated to such a degree that it has been exploited to generate enormous wealth for those who have it. While economic institutions are important in deciding whether a country is impoverished or successful, politics and political institutions decide which economic institutions a country will have. Nigerian politics, governance, and political institutions are so clannish, biased, and myopic that they have failed to build robust economic institutions that will drive or accelerate growth. Who will come to our aid? The followership must rise to the challenge and create a society in which political rights are more widely distributed; where merit governs human affairs and career opportunities are open to talents; a society in which the government can be held accountable and must be responsive to citizens; and a society in which the vast majority of people can take full and maximum advantage of economic opportunities. This will not be easy; the followership will have to battle for, and gain additional political rights, which they will then utilize to increase their economic chances.

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