CODESRIA

Governing "Ethnicized" Public Sphere: Lessons from the Nigerian Case

Orji Nkwachukwu
Ebonyi State University

CODESRIA

Abstract

This paper analyzes the role of power-sharing in governing the Nigerian public sphere. It examines the meaning, actors, procedures and practices of power-sharing in Nigeria. The paper assesses the opportunities and challenges arising from the use of power-sharing as a method of governing the public sphere and highlights the lessons that Nigeria's experience presents to other African countries struggling with the challenge of ethnic diversity. The paper argues that power-sharing as it is being practiced in Nigeria widens the asymmetrical and oligarchic power of the dominant elite groups, creates a dependency syndrome, and hampers the growth of democracy. It contends that the Nigerian case exposes the contradictions and limitations of power-sharing as an institutional approach to the regulation of the public sphere.

Introduction

Nigeria's heritage of ethnic diversity has had an overwhelming impact on the country's public sphere, leading to its "ethnicization". On the other hand, the stiff political competition among the elite has resulted in the "politicization" of ethnicity in the country. The result of the above is a highly contested public sphere, which has been made the arena of rhetorical confrontations between various ethnic groups in the country. However since the 1970s, the Nigerian political elite have adopted power-sharing as a strategy to manage inter-group relations, mitigate the negative effects of ethnic politics, and transform the "ethnicized" public sphere through the introduction of the discourse of "unity in diversity". The adoption of power-sharing is an outcome of the elite soul-searching that followed the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970 as well as a result of changes in the nature of federal-state relations in the country (see Orji 2008). Power-sharing in Nigeria expresses the tendency of the elite to govern the public space, manage ethnic diversity, and promote a Nigerian State project by avoiding divisive politics and emphasizing ethno-regional equilibrium in resource distribution.

This paper analyzes power-sharing as a method of governing the Nigerian public sphere. It argues that power-sharing serves as an arrangement to resolve the contestations among the plurality of competing publics. The paper gives an overview of the challenges and opportunities arising from the practice of power-sharing as well as the lessons that Nigeria's experience presents to other African countries struggling with the challenge of ethnic diversity. This paper is organized into three main sections. The first provides an

understanding of the concept of public sphere. It examines the Habermasian conception of public sphere and argues that Habermas' concept of public sphere is not an appropriate guide to the analysis of public sphere in ethnically diverse societies in Africa. Contrary to Habermas' idea of a single, all-encompassing public sphere, the paper argues that the public sphere in many African countries is atomized into a multiplicity of competing publics, creating the need to regulate inter-public interactions in the countries. The second section examines efforts to regulate the Nigerian public sphere through the practice of power-sharing. It highlights the key actors in the Nigerian public sphere, the power-sharing procedures they adopt, the challenges and opportunities of power-sharing as well as the ways in which the public sphere has been regulated within the context of power-sharing. The paper ends in the third section with analysis of the lessons that can be drawn from the Nigerian case.

The public sphere: a conceptual reflection

The concept of public sphere was popularized by German historian Jurgen Habermas. Habermas sees the public sphere as "a realm of social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (Habermas 1974:49). This realm represents an arena where people gather together to freely discuss and identify societal problems, and through discussion influence political action. The public sphere as a discursive space mediates between the "private sphere" and the "sphere of public authority"[1]. Habermas notes that newspapers, magazines, radio and television are the key media of the contemporary public sphere and agencies through which the authority of the state can be regulated. The media of mass communication promote the idea of participatory democracy through providing the framework for the formation of public opinion and the translation of the opinion into political action. Habermas distinguishes between literary and political public spheres. The political public sphere is the arena for public discussion of issues which are connected to the activity of the state, while the literary public sphere offers the people the freedom of assembly and association as well as the freedom to express and publish their opinions about matters of general interest. The major actors in the political public sphere are social organizations which deal with the state. Often, these organizations relate directly with state institutions or indirectly through the political parties (see Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards and Rutch 2002).

---

[1] The private sphere comprised the civil society while the state makes up the sphere of public authority.

In his analysis of the development of public sphere in Western Europe, Habermas identifies three major institutional criteria underlying the emergence of the public sphere. The first is disregard of status. Here, it is assumed that the public sphere promotes "a kind of social intercourse that, far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether" (Habermas 1989: 36). The second criterion is that the public sphere must constitute a domain of common concern. By "domain of common concern", Habermas maintains that discussion in the public sphere should highlight issues that affect the well-being of the entire society as well as *problematize* issues that have not been previously questioned. Lastly, there is the criterion of inclusivity, which requires that the public sphere must not "close itself off entirely and become consolidated as a clique" (Habermas 1989:36). Rather, the public sphere should represent an "inclusive public of all private people, persons who – insofar they were propertied and educated – as readers, listeners, and spectators could avail themselves via the market of the objects that were subject to discussion" (Habermas 1989:36).

The above "institutional criteria" outlined by Habermas have attracted strong criticisms. Nancy Fraser (1990) argues that the criteria do not fit the reality, because Habermas' bourgeois public sphere was characterized by hegemonic dominance and exclusion rather than inclusivity and disregard for status. Fraser claims that the Habermas' public sphere discriminated against women and people in the lower social strata of the society. She maintains that the bourgeois public sphere was an arena for recruiting bourgeois men into governing positions and as such, the sphere was made inaccessible to people considered inferior based on their gender, social status, ethnicity, and property ownership. Fraser also noted the difficulties associated with defining Habermas' criteria of "common concern". To her, "there are no naturally given, a priori boundaries" between private and public matters or matters of common concern (Fraser 1990:57). She cites the case of domestic violence, a matter previously regarded as private, but which has now been generally accepted as a common concern. In all, Fraser claims that Habermas' bourgeois public sphere did not offer a new, all-inclusive political realm. Rather, it shifted political power from "a repressive mode of domination to a hegemonic one" in which rule by power is replaced with rule by the majority ideology (Fraser 1990:62).

Another contested issue regarding Habermas' theory of public sphere is the question of whether and to what extent the theory could be applied to countries outside Western Europe. I will argue that Habermas' conception of the public sphere is not applicable to many African

countries for two reasons. The first reason follows an argument developed by Philip Huang (1993) that Habermas formulated his theory of public sphere as a Western European phenomenon, which is too historically specific to be a guide for analyzing public sphere elsewhere. The second reason points to Habermas' treatment of the public sphere as a "single, comprehensive public sphere" (Fraser 1990:62); and his failure to consider the fact that public sphere in some countries is constituted by a plurality of competing publics. As Ekeh (1975:92) warns, the "extension of the Western conception of politics in terms of a monolithic public realm morally bound to the private realm can only be made at conceptual and theoretical peril". Thus, the Habermasian conception of the public sphere falls short of being a useful guide for analyzing the public sphere in the African countries with multiplicity of competing publics.

A look at many African countries shows that public life is not confined to a single, all-embracing public sphere as Habermas would expect. Instead, there exists a multiplicity of publics that relate with each other[2]. These publics follow the lines of social identity, including ethnic, race, class, religion, age, and gender. In Africa, ethnicity is still the most dominant form of identity. The tendency for individuals in the public sphere to identify themselves or to be identified with specific ethnic group has resulted in the atomization of the public sphere along ethnic lines[3]. In the "ethnicized" public sphere, the relations between the ethnic publics are usually conflictual because the rhetorical contestation among the publics is a part and parcel of overarching struggle by the ethnic groups to capture and dominate the state. In this circumstance, the marginal groups contest the primacy of the dominant groups, highlighting alternative ways to organize political relations and the society in general. The dominant groups, in turn, try hard to undercut the proposed alternatives and deliberately seek to block pressures for reform or change in the discourses.

Noting the above state of affairs, Eley (1991) concludes that the public sphere is an arena of conflict. He suggests that we think of the public sphere as "the structured setting where cultural and ideological contest or negotiation among a variety of publics takes place". Thus,

---

[2] In the 1970s, Peter Ekeh (1975:91) noted that "the experiences of colonialism in Africa have led to the emergence of a unique historical configuration in modern post-colonial Africa: the existence of two publics instead of one public, as in the West". The two publics include the primordial public - in which primordial groupings, ties, and sentiments influence and determine the individual's public behavior, and the civic public – which relates to Habermas' "sphere of public authority" and based on civil structures such as the civil service, police, and the military.
[3] The Nigerian case, where variegated ethnic public exists along with their associations, newspapers, books, film, lecture series, festivals and local meetings, is a good example.

the African public sphere can be conceptualized as a discursive arena where elites from different ethnic groups invent and circulate discourses and counterdiscourses, which help them to "formulate oppositional interpretation of their identities, interests, and needs" (Fraser 1990:67). Now, one key question that arises is what sort of institutional arrangement is useful in regulating hostile inter-public relations in the context of "ethnicized" public sphere. I will address this question in the following section drawing from the Nigerian case.

Governing "ethnicized" public sphere: the Nigerian example

Nigeria presents us with a case of how to regulate inter-group tension in an "ethnicized" public sphere. Before analyzing the structure and processes inter-group conflict management in Nigeria, I will first attempt to briefly outline the key actors in Nigeria's public sphere highlighting their identity, representation, interests, and strategies. The present-day Nigerian public sphere is dominated by elites from five major ethno-regional groups – the North, Yoruba, Igbo, Niger Delta, and Middle Belt[4]. The ethno-regional elite groups in Nigeria fit into a hierarchy of status and power based on their political influence[5]. Currently, the Northern elite are undoubtedly the leading group, followed by the Yoruba, Igbo, Niger Delta, and Middle Belt elites, respectively[6].

1.   *The Northern elite*

The Northern elite[7] originated in the Northern Region and is dominated by the aristocracies and ruling elite of Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, and Nupe ethnic groups - the ruling elite which the British met and conquered in the areas which later became the Northern Protectorate (Madunagu 1994[a]:19). The Northern elite draw their strength, resilience and cohesion especially from a common religion – Islam and a *lingua franca* – the Hausa language (Paden 1997:247, Falola 2001). Although the Northern elite appear cohesive, they are divided into various competing blocs (Paden 1997:246, see also Mustapha 2002, Miles 1987). For instance, there is a precarious balance between Sokoto[8] and Borno[9] since the era of colonial

---

[4] These ethno-regional elite groups developed along the ethno-regional boundaries created by the colonial and post-colonial governments (Nolutshungu 1990:89). These elites are essentially politicians who have a privileged access to the state, but there are also traditional rulers, senior military officers, administrators, professionals, academics, and businessmen (Madunagu 1994[b]:15).
[5] The political influence of each elite group is a function of many factors among which demographical, historical, administrative, and economic factors are most prominent.
[6] This hierarchy is certainly not static; there are possibilities of shifts depending on how much influence a group wields at any particular time.
[7] Also referred to as the Northern Oligarchy, Sokoto Caliphate, Hausa-Fulani, or simply the North
[8] The Sokoto Caliphate was established around 1804 after the Fulani Jihad overthrew the former Hausa states. The Sokoto Caliphate is an extensive empire made up of a cluster of states widely referred to as the emirate

rule[10]. There is also rivalry within the Caliphate; the most popular being the one between Sokoto and Kano[11] (Post and Vickers 1973:102, see also Dudley 1968, Feinstein 1987, Omoruyi 1989, Kukah 1993). Since the 1970s, there have been more manifestations of divisions within the Northern elite. In the 1980s, there was much talk about the existence of the "Kaduna Mafia", which entered into serious rivalry with the pro-Sokoto "Shagarite elements" that supported the leadership of the Sokoto-born Nigerian President, Shehu Shargari (Othman 1984, see also Ekwe-Ekwe 1985:619-620). The regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha further disrupted the cohesiveness of the Northern elite, when in their bid to stay-tight in power they tried to paralyze all political strongholds in Nigeria, including the Kaduna Mafia. The regimes also attacked the highly revered throne of Sultan of Sokoto. The attacks on the Sultanate whittled-down the influence of the Caliphate in the North.

To give the Northern elite a united voice within the Nigerian public sphere, the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) was established in March 2000 by Emirs, former Heads of States, and other prominent Northerners "to foster and strengthen the foundation of Northern unity"[12]. Over the years, the ACF has positioned itself at the forefront of the engagement between the Northern elite and elites from other parts of the country. The organization articulates and expresses the views of the Northern elite on issues such as the Sharia crisis, violent conflicts involving Northerners, and the debate over power-shift[13].

---

states. During the colonial era, the emirate states stretched from Sokoto in the west to Adamawa in the east and from Katsina in the north to Ilorin and Niger in the south.

[9] The Kanuri dominated area of Borno is the oldest Islamic community in sub-Saharan Africa - dating as far back as the 11th century - See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kanuri

[10] In the 19th century, when Sokoto attempted to conquer Borno, there was a standoff, and Borno's resistance to Sokoto has become part of the historical legacy of elite politics in the North.

[11] The rivalry between Sokoto and Kano resulted in a civil war in the 1890s. In March 1963, when the Premier of Northern Region, Ahmadu Bello (Sokoto), forced the Emir of Kano, Muhammad Sanusi, to abdicate his position on charges of corruption, many people in Kano interpreted the act as an attack on their kingdom by Sokoto. As a result, the Kano People's Party (KPP) was formed; there was also a demand for the creation of Kano State.

[12] Constitution of Arewa Consultative Forum, http://www.arewaconsultativeforum.org/acf%20constitution.htm

[13] See for instance, *Northern Political Agenda – the Way Forward*, a speech by Sokoto State Governor, Attahiru Bafarawa during the 2nd anniversary seminar of the Arewa Consultative Forum on 28th March 2002.

2.   *The Yoruba elite*

The Yoruba occupy the area known for many years as "Western Nigeria" and it is constituted by several distinct sub-groups like the Oyo, Ife, Ijesha, Ekiti, Ijebu, Ketu, and Ondo (Law 1973:208). In the 1940s when regionalism was introduced in Nigeria, the Yoruba regarded the Western Region as their own, thereby "merging ethnic and regional identities as one" (Falola 2006:29). Considering the sub-ethnic divisions among the Yoruba, the elite tried to create a pan-Yoruba identity to unite the people in the context of ethno-regional competition in Nigeria. The central figure in the Yoruba unification effort is Obafemi Awolowo. In 1945, he established a cultural association known as the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* (the society of the descendants of Oduduwa) (Falola 2006:37, Sklar 1991). Through the *Egbe,* Awolowo mobilized the Yoruba elite to establish a Yoruba political party – the Action Group (AG) in March 1951 (Post 1966, Vaughan 1994, Adekunle 2006). Thus, much of Yoruba elite politics since the First Republic is dominated by opposition and support for Awolowo and his ideology[14] (Falola 2006:41, see also Adebanwi 2007).

The Yoruba had early access to Western education; this helped them to produce most of the educated elite that championed Nigerian nationalism. The Yoruba elite felt that their progress in education and social advancement would pave the way for them to lead Nigeria (Ukeje and Adebanwi 2008:570). However, attempts by two Yoruba elites – Obafemi Awolowo and M. K. O. Abiola at winning presidential elections during the First, Second, and Third Republics failed. The Yoruba blame Igbo and Northern elites for frustrating the ambitions of their sons[15] (Ibrahim 1999:14, Sklar 1991). In particular, the annulment of the June 12 1993 election which M. K. O. Abiola, a Yoruba, was the presumed winner by a Northern military ruler Ibrahim Babangida provoked the Yoruba elite (Abegunrin 2006). To appease the Yoruba elite, Babangida appointed Ernest Shonekan, a respected Yoruba businessman as the head of an interim national government while departing on 27 August 1993. Many Yoruba elite opposed Shonekan's government pressing for the upholding of the June 12 election. But on 17 November 1993 another Northern general, Sani Abacha toppled the Shonekan government. Abacha appointed prominent Yoruba elites into his government to pacify the Yoruba. But this

---

[14] The Yoruba elite were split between *Awoists* – who described themselves as "progressives" and *anti-Awoists* – who are seen as the "conservatives"

[15] For instance, they point to the alliance between the Igbo and Northern elites after the 1959 election, which kept the Yoruba elite out of power and eventually capitalized on a split in the AG to destroy the party and to imprison Awolowo and his supporters in 1963.

could not halt the opposition. Then Abacha adopted repressive tactics - assassination, imprisonment, and harassment of Yoruba elites opposed to his regime.

In order to create a united voice and defend Yoruba interest, a group led by former Ondo State Governor, Adekunle Ajasin formed the *Egbe Afenifere*[16]. A militant group, the *Oodua People's Congress* (OPC) was also formed by a former presidential aspirant, Fredrick Fasehun. The tempo of Yoruba agitation was however toned down following the sudden death of General Abacha and the resolve by Nigerian political elite to concede power to the Yoruba elite – a concession that produced Olusegun Obasanjo as president in 1999[17]. For a substantial part of Obasanjo's first four-year term, the *Afenifere* resented his leadership[18]. Obasanjo's response to the opposition by *Afenifere* was to paralyze the organization[19] (Adindu 2003). This measure brought Obasanjo and his cronies to the centre stage of Yoruba elite politics between 2003 and 2007.

3.   *The Igbo elite*

The formation of Igbo identity followed the demarcation of regional administrative boundaries by the colonial government (Harneit-Sievers 2006). In the pre-colonial era, the Igbo area suffered scarcity of land and poor harvest due to over use of the available land (Ibeanu 2007:23). The advent of colonialism therefore offered many Igbo people the opportunity to move away from agriculture and to embrace western education, which offered fresh opportunities in administration (Van Den Bersselaar 2005). The early contact with western education and massive urban migration by the Igbo marked the first phase of the

---

[16] Ex-Senator Abraham Adesanya became the leader of *Afenifere* following the death of Adekunle Ajasin. For an assessment of the *Afenifere*, see Olufemi Tosin Aduwo 2004. "Awolowo, Afenifere and the Yoruba People", *Sunday Vanguard*, 7 November.

[17] The concession allowed for only Yoruba candidates in the 1999 presidential election. Obasanjo contested under the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) while Olu Falae vied under the Alliance for Democracy (AD). The *Afenifere* and the OPC opposed the candidature of Obasanjo, ensuring that he lost in the entire Yoruba area to the AD, a party associated with the *Afenifere*.

[18] The opposition against Obasanjo stems from the belief that as a military ruler in 1979, Obasanjo failed to stand up in favor of his kinsman Obafemi Awolowo whose victory in a presidential election was robbed by the Northern elite. Obasanjo was also accused of not supporting the struggle for the upholding Abiola's presidential election victory annulled by a Northern military ruler. These allegations portrayed Obasanjo as pliant and conservative figure who works at cross-purposes with Yoruba interest, which *Afenifere* stands for.

[19] First, he co-opted a key member of *Afenifere* – Bola Ige into the inner core of his government. Through Ige, a rival group – the Yoruba Council of Elders (YCE) that opposed *Afenifere's* Yoruba nationalist ideology was established. Finally, the political arm of *Afenifere* – the AD was rooted out from the South-west. This was achieved by sponsoring a splinter group within the AD; the intra-party crisis worked against the party's fortunes during the 2003 election - the party lost all but one of the six Yoruba states it held previously.

evolution of the Igbo elite[20] (Harneit-Sievers 2006:117, see also Ubah 1980, Olutayo 1999). The second phase of the evolution of the Igbo elite is between 1940s and 1960s, a period dominated by ethnic politics and in which the Igbo elite led by Nnamdi Azikiwe used the existing kinship solidarity and networks among the Igbo to mobilize political support (Wolpe 1969). At this time, *Igbo-ness* came to be defined in terms of opposition or support for the political ambition of Azikiwe[21]. The third phase in the evolution of Igbo elite is the period of Nigerian civil war (1967-1970). The mass killings of Igbo diaspora in 1966 and the traumatic war experience that followed produced a "community of victims" and a "community of suffering" in Igboland (Harneit-Sievers 2006:121, Spalding 2000). Through the war propaganda machine, *Igbo-ness* was framed around the war experience (collective suffering) and support for *Biafra*[22]. Since the end of the civil war in 1970, the Igbo elite have been engaged in efforts to re-integrate into Nigerian politics and society. In the early 1970s, the exile of Ojukwu, the ban on politics, and the proscription of ethnic unions left the Igbo without any personality or structure to mobilize politically. Since then, the political influence of the Igbo on national politics has waned seriously and no individual has been able to achieve broad acceptance as Igbo leader[23].

In the 1990s, the Ohaneze Ndi Igbo – an umbrella socio-political organization took the center stage of Igbo politics[24]. Ohaneze centered its struggles on the issue of Igbo marginalization, which has become the dominant theme of Igbo mobilization in the post-war era. The activities of the organization received greatest attention in 1999 when it submitted a memorandum to the Human Rights Violations Investigation Panel (the Oputa Panel) about human rights violations against the Igbo during the civil war as well as post-war Igbo marginalization[25]. Since then, the activities of Ohaneze have been stalled by series of factional and personality

---

[20] Igbo migrants included the early educated elite who were employed by the colonial government or British corporations. Some personalities like Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chukwuemeka Ojukwu who later became prominent Igbo leaders were born and raised outside their home towns. Both Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chukwuemeka Ojukwu were born in 1904 and 1933 respectively, in Zungeru (Wushishi District, Niger Province later State) in Northern Nigeria.

[21] For many people victory or defeat of Azikiwe is interpreted as victory or defeat of the Igbo. Nnamdi Azikiwe eventually became the Premier of the Eastern Region, but failed in his bid for the position of Prime Minister. Thereafter, he became the Governor-General of Nigeria (a ceremonial head of state).

[22] Elites like Nnamdi Azikiwe that opposed the war were shut out of the Igbo community until Ojukwu's exile and Biafran defeat in 1970.

[23] For public discussion on the divisions among Igbo elite, see Peter Claver-Oparah 2003. "Who Heads the Ohaneze?", http://www.thisdayonline.com/archive/2003/11/22/20031122com02.html

[24] Though Ohaneze was formed in 1976, the organization was not well known until it was restructured in 2001.

[25] See *The Violations of Human and Civil Rights of Ndi Igbo in the Federation of Nigeria (1966-1999): A Call for Reparations and Appropriate Restitution*. Memorandum submitted by Oha-Na-Eze Ndi Igbo to the Human Rights Violations Investigation Panel, 1999. http://www.africaresource.com/war/vol2.2/ohaneze.pdf.

disputes among its members[26] (Irukwu 2007). The ineffectiveness of Ohaneze informed the emergence of a more radical group, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). MASSOB wants Igbo secession from Nigeria, but the body has failed to gain relevance in Igbo politics due to its inability to attract the support of many Igbo elite and the masses.

4.   *The Niger Delta elite*

The Niger Delta is defined geographically as "a triangle with its apex between Ndoni and Aboh, descending eastwards to the Qua Iboe River at Eket and westwards to the Benin River with its base along the Atlantic coast between the Bights of Benin and Biafra" (International IDEA 2000:239). Historically, the area consists of the present day Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers States[27]. In 2000, the Obasanjo regime expanded the definition of the Niger Delta to include all the nine oil producing states[28]. However, in political terms, the Niger Delta is restricted to the six states of the South-south zone, namely Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers[29]. The people of the Niger Delta are extremely heterogeneous ethnically and culturally[30] (UNDP 2006:48). But in spite of their ethnic and cultural heterogeneity, they share common historical experiences, which conditioned the growth of the Niger Delta elite.

The development of the Niger Delta elite was shaped by mobilization and resistance against the British colonialists[31], Igbo and Yoruba elites as well as the post-colonial Nigerian State. During the colonial era, the Niger Delta groups were split between the Eastern and Western Regions and brought under Igbo and Yoruba domination in the regions (see Saro-Wiwa 1989). The "servant-master" relationship that existed between the Deltans and the British during the colonial era was carried over to the post-colonial period, but this time the masters were Igbo and Yoruba elites. As a result, the initial resistance to British domination was

---

[26] For an analysis of these disputes, see Anayochukwu Agbo 2007. "Ndigbo's Divided House", http://www.tellng.com/news/articles/070208-3/news/nation_dividehouse.html
[27] See "Niger Delta" at Wikipedia - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niger_Delta
[28] This led to a distinction between the "core" and "peripheral" Niger Delta. The core Niger Delta includes Bayelsa, Delta, Rivers, and Akwa Ibom States; while the peripheral Niger Delta comprises Abia, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo, Imo, and Ondo States.
[29] This study adopts the political definition of the Niger Delta.
[30] Five linguistic and cultural groups dominate the area – the Ijoid, Edoid, Delta Cross, Yoruboid, and Igboid
[31] Between 1886 and 1898, successful Niger Delta trading kingdoms such as Opobo, Bonny, and Brass were subjugated and brought under colonialism. Attempts by leaders like Jaja of Opobo, Ibanichuka of Okirika, and Abbi Amakiri IV of Kalabari to resist British domination were crushed through British superior military power. The recalcitrant Niger Delta leaders were deposed, forced into exile, or imprisoned.

transformed to resistance against Igbo and Yoruba domination in the regions[32] (Naanen 2002:341). The provincial movement provided the groundwork for the subsequent demands for states creation in the Niger Delta.

The recent struggle of the Niger Delta elite is shaped by the rise of an oil economy in Nigeria (Mustapha 2003). The growing realization of the value of oil in the global market as well as the deplorable socio-economic situation in the Niger Delta have forced the people of the area to emphasize their economic strength vis-à-vis the political dominance of the three dominant groups (Obi 1998). In the post-independence period, the Niger Delta elite intensified their demands for accommodation in Nigerian politics, using oil as their "bargaining chip". Increasingly, this posture has pushed the Niger Delta elite into the fore-front of Nigerian politics[33]. In their struggles against the Nigerian state (dominated by the Northern elite), the Niger Delta elite have sometimes forged alliances with Igbo and Yoruba elites; though the alliances have often collapsed[34]. The recent effort by the Niger Delta to reach out to the Igbo and Yoruba elites contradicts an earlier posture where the "southern minorities seem to distrust both Yoruba and Igbo clusters, and prefer coalitions with northern zones" (Paden 1997:250). The vocal opposition of the North to demands by Niger Delta elites for greater "resource control" is perhaps the main reason for this new trend.

5.   *The Middle Belt elite*

In the First Republic, the term Middle Belt was defined politically as the area of Kabba, Plateau, and Benue Provinces (Paden 1986:343). Later, the term was extended to accommodate the political aspiration of minority groups in North-central Nigeria[35]. The Middle Belt consists of a large number of ethnic and linguistic groups that have historically resisted political and religious domination of the Muslim Hausa-Fulani[36] (International IDEA

---

[32] In 1941, for instance, the Ijaw Rivers Peoples' League was formed to press for the removal of Rivers territory from Owerri province. Some non-Ijaw groups like the Ogoni and Etche also made similar agitations. The colonial government eventually created the Rivers province in 1947.

[33] The zoning of the vice presidency to the Niger Delta and the emergence of Goodluck Jonathan as Nigeria's Vice President in May 2007 attest to the increasing profile of Niger Delta elites in Nigerian politics. This is in addition to the huge amount of money allocated to the area from the national revenue following the application of the 13 percent derivation principle in revenue allocation.

[34] The Southern Solidarity Forum (SSF) formed by Igbo, Yoruba, and Niger Delta delegates during the 1994 Constitutional Conference is a good illustration.

[35] Including the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, Benue, Plateau, Taraba, Kogi, Nasarawa, Kwara, Niger, Kaduna, Gombe, Adamawa, Yobe, and Kebbi States.

[36] In the 19th century, groups in the Middle Belt were faced with the expanding Jihad movement. Jihad refers to the Islamic holy war waged in Northern Nigeria by Usman Dan Fodio and his Fulani armies in order to establish emirates of the Sokoto Islamic Empire. Except for parts of the present day Niger, Kwara, and Nasarawa States,

2000:283). However, the advent of colonialism in the Middle Belt introduced what has been called "Fulani sub-imperialism" (Kastfelt 1994:13). After the British gained control of the Sokoto Caliphate, they used the Caliphate foot soldiers to conquer communities in the Middle Belt. Thereafter, a large measure of political power was transferred to the Fulani, whom the colonial authorities intended to rule through - under the "indirect rule" system (Kastfelt 1994:12). Many of the non-Islamic ethnic groups which were independent of the Fulani in the eighteenth century now found themselves subjected under the administrative control of the Fulani through the military and political intervention of the British[37]. The simultaneous domination of the Middle Belt by the British colonialists and Fulani sub-imperialists split the people between Islam and Christianity[38] (Kastfelt 1994:14). Christianity became an alternative religion to "a people looking desperately for something to counter the dominance of Islam", which they associated with Fulani political domination (International IDEA 2000:284). Also, the advent of Christianity in the Middle Belt gave the people access to western education, which was crucial in elite formation and political mobilization.

Political mobilization in the Middle Belt centers on resistance to Fulani and Islamic domination. Under the leadership of Christian politicians, various ethnic associations in the Middle Belt allied in 1955 to form the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) with the aim of pushing for the creation of a separate Middle Belt State (Harnischfeger 2004:440). Beginning from mid-1958, the NPC regional government exerted immense political pressure on the UMBC, leading to a split in the party between pro- and anti-NPC elements. The UMBC was further subdued following the suppression of anti-NPC revolts in the Tiv Division in 1960[39] (Dent 1966, Anifowose 1982). During the Second Republic, the Middle Belt identity faded following the split of the Middle Belt elite into three political parties[40]. The elites tried to revive the Middle Belt identity and to give the **region a united voice through formation of**

---

the Jihadists could not establish emirates in most parts of the Middle Belt due to local resistance and the advent of colonialism.

[37] For instance, until 1945, the Emir of Bauchi ruled Jos through his relations. The Lamido of Adamawa administered most communities in the present Adamawa State through his Fulani kinsmen; while the Emir of Zaria appointed emirs and chiefs to rule over communities who were hitherto independent of Zaria in the pre-colonial era.

[38] The Christian missionaries who were restricted from operating in the Islamic emirates by the colonial administration were welcomed into the "pagan" areas.

[39] However, the rise of Lt. Col. Yakubu Gowon as the Head of State in 1966 and the eventual creation of a "Middle Belt state" (Benue-Plateau State) in 1967 brought much delight to the area.

[40] The most prominent Middle Belt politician and UMBC leader, J. S. Tarka, joined the Northern dominated NPN along with many politicians from Benue State; elites from Plateau State joined the NPP, while politicians from minority communities in Adamawa State joined the GNPP.

the Middle Belt Forum (MBF) in 1991 and the inauguration of a weekly magazine, The Meridein, in 1995 (Sen 2002).

The structure and processes of inter-group conflict management

The Nigerian public sphere has been dominated by a relationship of contestation between the ethno-regional elite groups discussed above. The key element in the dispute is the deep-seated fear of ethnic domination. However, an interesting aspect of inter-group relations in Nigeria is the existence of a relative balance of power among the groups – in the sense that the groups with the numerical capacity to dominate majoritarian electoral contest do not have the requisite human capital to dominate the state institutions (see Sklar 1965). Under this circumstance, there appears to be a division of labor between the groups that dominate the national electoral process and the ones that dominate the state institutions. Attempts by the groups to breakdown this apparent division of labor in the 1960s resulted in intense adversarial elite political competition culminating in a bloody civil war between 1967 and 1970. The soul-searching that followed the civil war reflected in the quest for elite consensus on how Nigeria should be governed to ensure stability and equity in resource distribution. This new mode of elite thinking transformed the Nigerian public sphere as the prime site for negotiating and constructing the processes and frameworks through which the elite seek to realize their interests within non-violent distributive politics.

The main institutional arrangement that has emerged as the modality for regulating tensions in the public sphere and avoiding divisive politics in Nigeria can be conceptualized as power-sharing. Power-sharing can be simply defined as the act of providing "every significant identity group or segment in a society representation and decision-making abilities on common issues and a degree of autonomy over issues of importance to the group" (Sisk 1996:5). The Nigerian political elite have implemented power-sharing through arrangements such as federal character, equity-based revenue allocation system, and states creation. The goal of power-sharing is to manage ethnic diversity and promote the Nigerian state project by emphasizing "unity in diversity". Through this process, it is hoped that individuals from different ethnic backgrounds would be constrained from acting in ways that would undermine the "common interest" of all Nigerians.

Let me briefly sketch the methods through which power-sharing has been implemented in Nigeria. The basic structure of power-sharing in Nigeria covers three major dimensions – the

territorial, fiscal, and political dimensions. The territorial dimension of power-sharing relates to federalism and creation of states, while the fiscal dimension of power-sharing relates to the revenue allocation system. Finally, the political dimension of power-sharing relates to the methods of office distribution. The process of power-sharing in Nigeria corresponds to most of the elements of consociational[41] and incentivist[42] models of power-sharing.

Creation of states facilitates sharing of territorial powers through the formation and distribution of federal units. The two forms of states creation prescribed by both the consociational and incentivist models can be identified in Nigeria. First, there is the creation of ethnically homogeneous states, especially among the geographically and demographically large ethnic groups like the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo. Then ethnically heterogeneous states were created to hold together several minority groups. On the other, the revenue allocation system guides the process of allocation of financial resources. This process is dominated by two important processes - at the vertical level, revenue allocation is characterized by fiscal centralization[43], while revenue allocation is based on the principle of equality of states at horizontal level[44]. The political dimension of power-sharing is defined by office distribution, involving two processes - the federal character and zoning. The federal character principle ensures that each state of Nigeria is considered in the selection and recruitment into government agencies while zoning is an informal arrangement in which the

---

[41] The consociational model sees "communal groups as the building blocks of a political order based on elite consensus and group autonomy" (Bogaards 2006:122). The key element in the consociationalism is elite cooperation. The political stability of consociational democracies is explained by the cooperation of elites from different groups which transcend cleavages at the mass level (Lijphart 1977:16). Related to this element are four important defining features of the consociational model. The first is *executive power-sharing* where each of the main groups shares in executive power in a grand coalition government. The other basic elements of the consociational model are (1) the application of *proportionality principle* in office distribution and revenue allocation; (2) *autonomy or self-government* for each group, particularly in matters of cultural concern; (3) *veto rights* that would enable each group to prevent changes that adversely affect their vital interests (Lijphart 1977:25).

[42] The incentivist model advocates the design of political institutions to provide incentives for elite and mass moderation. The model is based on Donald Horowitz's (1985) contention that consociationalism failed to highlight the incentives for elite cooperation and inter-group accommodation. Horowitz claims that even if the elites commit themselves to a consociational arrangement at the outset in a competitive political environment, centrifugal forces emanating from their followers and political opponents may easily undermine the durability of the agreement. He therefore, argues that what is needed to strengthen consociationalism is to create incentives for sustainable elite cooperation and inter-group accommodation (Horowitz 1991:139-141). This incentive can spring from modifications in the federal system, especially through states creation as well as by refining electoral systems to encourage *vote pooling*. Vote pooling refers to an exchange of the votes of their respective supporters by politicians who have been conditioned by the electoral system to be marginally dependent on votes by other groups for electoral victory (Horowitz 2002:23, 1991:167).

[43] This gives greater amount of national revenue to the federal government vis-à-vis the state and local governments.

[44] The principles of fiscal centralization and equality of states are complemented by the centralized system of revenue collection and administration.

states in Nigeria are aggregated into zones or regions for the purpose of allocating offices. These processes correspond to consociationalism's elite coalition and proportional representation.

Power-sharing and the Nigerian public sphere

Power-sharing shapes the Nigerian public sphere in three major ways. First, it seeks to bring about a shift from the "discourse of ethnic competition" of the 1950s and 1960s to the "discourse of ethnic collaboration" since the 1970s. The dominant discourse in the pre-1970 era was the discourse of ethnic competition championed by the political elite who at various times claimed their groups' superiority over the other groups[45]. Since the 1970s, there has been a growing effort to change the discourse by forging closer inter-group collaboration among the elite through measures such as zoning and federal character principle[46].

The second way that power-sharing has shaped the Nigerian public sphere is through the regulation of the mobilization activities of the political elite and political parties. Over the years, new regulations have been introduced to guide the formation and behavior of political parties. These regulations restrained the formation of ethnic parties; made it difficult for regionally-based parties to be registered; and required parties to demonstrate a cross-ethnic/regional composition as a pre-condition for their registration and participation in national elections[47] (Phillips 1980, Whitaker 1981, Sklar 1981, Diamond 1982). The

---

[45] An example is the popular statement attributed to Igbo leader Nnamdi Azikiwe in which he claims as follows: …it would appear that the God of Africa has specially created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the ages…The martial prowess of the Ibo nation at all stages of human history has enabled them not only to conquer others but also to adapt themselves to the role of preserver. …The Ibo nation cannot shirk its responsibility… (cited in Coleman 1958:347).

[46] The shift to the discourse of ethnic collaboration is illustrated by the following statement: in a country like Nigeria with its diverse peoples and their corresponding diverse political, cultural and economic endowments, true federalism must reflect a genuine attempt to regulate relationship among the groups, as well as a reflection of these identifiable divergences within a framework of national unity… We in Nigeria must evolve our own power-sharing formula, take our own decisions and develop our own institutions anchored on our historical experiences (Federal Republic of Nigeria, *Report of the Constitutional Conference Containing the Resolutions and Recommendations,* Vol. II. Abuja: National Assembly Press, 1995:3).

[47] In specific terms, the Nigerian Constitution states as follows: (1) no association by whatever name shall function as a political party unless it is registered as a political party by the Independent National Electoral Commission[47] (INEC); (2) that associations wishing to be registered as a political party by Independent National Electoral Commission must: (a) register the names and addresses of its national officers with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); (b) make its membership open to every Nigerian, irrespective of his place of origin, sex, religion, or ethnic grouping; (c) register a copy of the association's constitution in the principal office (that is, the headquarters) of the Commission; (d) register every alteration in the Association's registered constitution in the principal office of the Commission within thirty days of such alteration being made; (e) ensure that the name, emblem or motto has no ethnic or religious connotation, and does not give the appearance that the activities of the association are confined to a part only of the geographical area of Nigeria; (f) situate their headquarters in the federal capital territory; (g) satisfy the Independent National Electoral

highpoint of this package is the provision requiring parties to display a "federal character" by including members from two-thirds of all states of Nigeria in their executive council[48]. These regulations were part of the overall efforts to ensure that Nigerian parties eschew sectional politics and develop national appeal.

Finally, power-sharing has inspired several media censorship rules that seek to control the content and broadcast of political speeches to ensure that they do not contain hate speech or are based on ethnic and other sectional bias. The *Electoral Act 2006* for example, outlaws campaigning or broadcasting of materials that are based on ethnic, religious or sectional bias[49]. The Electoral Act also stipulates that media time shall be allocated equally among the political contestants at similar hours of the day. These regulations mark a striking departure from the previous practice where political groups were allowed to own and operate media agencies at their own discretion. Within the context of power-sharing, there have been efforts to ensure that all political groups are given a fair opportunity to express themselves and project their identities and interests.

Power-sharing in Nigeria: constraints and opportunities

The practice of power-sharing in Nigeria holds both challenges and possibilities for inter-group relations in the country. The tendency of power-sharing to follow a hierarchy of power among the groups poses one of the greatest challenges to inter-group relations in Nigeria. I have argued elsewhere that power-sharing in Nigeria is not a partnership of equals (see Orji 2008). It operates based on a hierarchy of power among the different ethno-regional elite groups. The Northern elites are apparently the leading elite group because of the demographical and geographical superiority of the Northern region as well as the relative political cohesiveness of the group. They are followed by the Yoruba, Igbo, Niger Delta, and Middle Belt, respectively. Many observers believe that power-sharing as it is being practiced in Nigeria widens the "asymmetrical, oligarchic power" of the dominant groups (Agbaje 1998:132). This view has received the most vocal expression by the minority elite groups;

Commission that it has a properly established office in each of at least two-thirds of the States in the Federation and that officers have been duly elected or, as the case may be, appointed to run the affairs of such branch office (Sections 227-228, *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*, 1999; see also sections 219-224, *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,* 1989; and sections 201-204, *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,* 1979).

[48] See Chapter II, Section 15(3) (d), *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979*. Lagos: Federal Government Press, and Section 229 (1) (b), *The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999*. Lagos: Federal Government Press.

[49] See section 105, *The Electoral Act 2006*. Lagos: The Federal Government Printer.

especially those of the Niger Delta, with many individuals in the Niger Delta framing the hegemony of the dominant groups as "internal colonialism" (Naanen 1995:50). The reflection of inter-elite hierarchy of power in power-sharing is seen as a strategy by the dominant elite groups, especially the powerful Northern elite, to maintain their leading position. This strategy also includes the cooptation of the elite groups that accept the prevailing sharing arrangement. The problem with this tendency is that it has made inter-ethnic contestations more explosive and elite consensus more elusive.

There are two other major problems associated with power-sharing in Nigeria. The first is that the practice of power-sharing undercuts participatory democracy. The search for inter-group accommodation has forced many to take a strongly elitist and conservative stance. As Richard Sklar (1967:527) puts it:

> Nigerian conservatives…had a formula for peaceful development…It prescribes the full regionalization of all political organizations capped by an agreement among regional leaders to respect the political *status quo* and share the fruits thereof on an equitable basis. That conservative tendency was as strong among leaders in the South as among leaders in the North.

This conservative stance has forced the Nigerian public sphere to overly focus on issues relating to ethnic representation rather than holding the state accountable to the society through public opinion. Even while emphasizing elite dominance, the public sphere is far from being transparent. The tendency is for the ruling elite in Nigeria to converge under one or few national parties[50], while much of the activities of these parties and the process of national decision-making are shrouded in secrecy. Within the parties, the political elite are allowed maximum control over the political discourse and action within their localities without any meaningful space for popular participation in politics[51]. This situation breeds one-partyism, suppresses opposition/alternative viewpoints, and foments what is now popularly referred to as "Godfatherism". Godfatherism involves handing out of parts of the state, including specific territorial districts, to a group of elites, usually under the leadership of one or more notables who dictate the direction of political discourse and action essentially by use of force (Ibeanu 2007:9). Power-sharing encourages Godfatherism because it provides the basis for an individual or a small coterie of elites to control power or speak on behalf of an

---

[50] During the Second Republic, NPN was the 'umbrella' political organization; NRC and SDP were the nation-wide parties in the Third Republic, while PDP is the national party of the Fourth Republic.

[51] This situation has given rise to a phenomenon known as "god-father" politics in Nigeria, a situation where prominent political elite (the god-father) decides who takes up posts assigned to a particular area.

ethnic or regional group – such individuals many times suppress alternative viewpoints, eliminate competition, hijack local/national party organization and exploit government machinery for private gain (see Omobowale and Olutayo 2007).

The other problem associated with power-sharing in Nigeria is that it creates a "dependency syndrome" and sustains the "rhetoric of marginalization". The practice of power-sharing supports a tendency where groups look up more to what they can receive from the state than what they can contribute in the process of state/nation-building. This syndrome reflects in the rhetoric of marginalization where the dominant debate centers on access to share of federal resources (see Ibelema 2000). The problem with conceiving politics merely as the struggle for a share of the "fruits of power" is that it is hard to determine how much more than nothing the marginal groups would be satisfied with, or how much less than "all" would please the dominant groups (Nolutshungu 1990:108). This situation fuels inter-group tension rather than ease the contestations.

The above challenges notwithstanding, power-sharing has great possibilities for the management of inter-group relations in Nigeria. First of all, there is the belief in many quarters that a society as large and complex as Nigeria cannot be peacefully governed without some measure of inter-group consensus. Power-sharing features as the most acceptable modality for reaching elite consensus on how Nigeria should be ruled[52]. Because no elite group would tolerate being "out of power", there is the readiness by each group to collaborate with others for as long as it is assured of being "in power". For the dominant groups who are the main beneficiaries of the arrangements, there is a disposition to secure the system by undermining alternative viewpoints. This is why the North in particular is usually attentive to the grievances of other elite groups and is often ready to pacify them.

Conclusion: Lessons to be learnt

The analysis of the methods of governing the public sphere in Nigeria shows that ethnic differences cannot be wished away but must be recognized and managed. As this study illustrates, ethnic differences make consensus-building or the framing of public opinion very difficult. Central to Habermas' account is the view that the public sphere is a discursive arena where public opinion is formed. However, in the context of ethnicized public sphere,

---

[52] Although some may see it also as a strategy the North has used in getting different ethno-regional elite groups to agree to the rule of the dominant group – the North.

generating the consensus that would aid the formation of public opinion is hard due to intense inter-group discursive contestation. The Nigerian case therefore exposes the centrality of power-sharing as the institutional framework for inter-group consensus-building. Related to the above is the fact that the use of power-sharing in regulating inter-ethnic interactions limits the capacity of the public sphere to encourage popular participation in public affairs. Thus, societies creating institutional measures to regulate inter-ethnic relations must consciously seek ways of encouraging mass participation in public affairs since institutionally moderated public sphere cannot provide the appropriate platform for popular participation in public affairs.

Finally, one unfortunate aspect of institutions and institutional systems that we must acknowledge is that they create and distribute costs and benefits unequally. Therefore, it would be unrealistic to expect that institutionally regulated public sphere would offer full participatory parity and social equality. As the Nigerian case demonstrates, Habermas' emphasis on openness and equal access to the public sphere cannot be fully guaranteed. The partition of the Nigerian mass media according to different ethno-regional interests illustrates this point[53]. However, the proliferation of competing publics in multi-ethnic societies provides opportunities for marginal groups to invent and circulate counter-discourses to promote their identities and interests within the institutional boundaries.

References

Abegunrin, Olayiwola 2006. "Chief M. K. O. Abiola's Presidential Ambitions and Yoruba Democratic Rights", in Toyin Falola and Ann Genova (eds) *Yoruba Identity and Power Politics*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.

Adebanwi, Wale 2007. *Necrophilia and Elite Politics: The Case of Nigeria*. ASC Working Paper 71/2007. Leiden: African Studies Centre.

Adekunle, Julius 2006. "Yoruba Factor in Nigerian Politics", in Toyin Falola and Ann Genova (eds) *Yoruba Identity and Power Politics*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.

Adindu, Godwin 2003. "How Obasanjo Broke Arewa, Afenifere, Ohanese's back", *Daily Independent*, 1 May.

Agbaje, Adigun 1989. "Mass Media and the Shaping of Federal Character: A Content

---

[53] For an analysis of how sectionalism in the Nigerian press played out in the debate on the federal character principle, see Agbaje (1989).

Analysis of Four Decades of Nigerian Newspapers (1950-1984)", in Peter Ekeh and Eghosa E. Osaghae (ed.s) *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann.

Agbaje, Adigun. 1998. "The Ideology of Power-sharing: An Analysis of Content, Context and Intent", in Kunle, Amuwo; Adigun, Agbaje; Rotimi, Suberu and Georges, Herault (eds.) *Federalism and Political Restructuring in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum.

Anifowose, Remi 1982. *Violence and Politics in Nigeria: The Tiv and Yoruba Experience*. Enugu: NOK.

Bogaards, Matthijs 2006. "Democracy and Power-sharing in Multinational States: Thematic Introduction" *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 8(2): 119-126.

Coleman, James 1958. *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*. Benin City: Broburg and Wistrom.

Dent, Martin J. 1966. "A Minority Party – The UMBC", in John P. Mackintosh (ed) *Nigerian Government and Politics*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Diamond, Larry 1982. "Cleavage, Conflict and Anxiety in the Second Republic" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 20(4): 629-668.

Dudley, Billy 1968. *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria*. London: Frank Cass.

Ekwe-Ekwe, Herbert 1985. "Nigeria's Plight: From Shagari to Buhari" *Third World Quarterly*, 7(3): 610-625.

Eley, Geoff 1991. "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century", in Craig Calhoun (ed). *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Falola, Toyin 2001. "Schooling the Northern Nigerian Elite", *The Journal of African History*, 42(2): 333-335.

Falola, Toyin 2006. "The Yoruba Nation", in Toyin Falola and Ann Genova (eds) *Yoruba Identity and Power Politics*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.

Feinstein, Alan 1987. *African Revolutionary: the Life and Times of Nigeria's Aminu Kano*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner.

Ferree, Myra; Gamson, William; Gerhards, Jurgen and Rutch, Dieter 2002. Four Models of the Public Sphere in Modern Democracies" *Theory and Society*, 31(3): 289-324.

Fraser, Nancy 1990. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy" *Social Text*, 25/26: 56-80.

Habermas, Jurgen 1974. "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article" *New German Critique*, 3: 49-55.

Habermas, Jurgen 1989. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Harneit-Sievers, Axel 2006. *Constructions of Belonging: Igbo Communities and the Nigerian State in the Twentieth Century*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.

Harnischfeger, Johannes 2004. "Sharia and Control over Territory: Conflicts between 'Settlers' and 'Indigenes' in Nigeria" *African Affairs*, 103(412): 431-452.

Horowitz, Donald 1985. *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Horowitz, Donald 1991. *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Horowitz, Donald 2002. "Constitutional Design: Proposals Versus Processes" in A. Reynolds (ed) *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Huang, Phillip 1993. "Public Sphere/Civil Society in China?: The Third Realm between State and Society" *Modern China*, 19(2): 216-240.

Ibeanu, Okechukwu. 2007. *Breaking the Promethean Chain: Protecting Popular Electoral Mandates in the South-East Zone of Nigeria*. Onitsha: Nigerian Political Science Association (South-East) Chapter.

Ibelema, Minabere 2000. "Nigeria: The Politics of Marginalization" *Current History*, 99(633-641): 211-214.

Ibrahim, Jibrin. 1999. "Political Transition, Ethnoregionalism, and the 'Power Shift' Debates in Nigeria" *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, 27(1): 12-16.

International IDEA 2000. *Democracy in Nigeria: Continuing Dialogue(s) for Nation-Building*. Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

Irukwu, J. O. 2007. *Nation Building and Ethnic Organizations: The Case of Ohaneze in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum.

Kastfelt, Niels 1994. *Religion and Politics in Nigeria: A Study in Middle Belt Christianity*. London: British Academic Press.

Kukah, Matthew H. 1993. *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum.

Law, R. C. C. 1973. "The Heritage of Oduduwa: Traditional History and Political Propaganda among the Yoruba" *The Journal of African History*, 14(2): 207-222.

Lijphart, Arend 1977. *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Madunagu, Edwin. 1994[a]. "Nigeria's Power-blocs" *The Guardian*, 14 April.

Madunagu, Edwin. 1994[b]. "Notes on the Power-blocs (1)" *The Guardian*, 21 April.

Miles, William 1987. "Partitioned Royalty: The Evolution of Hausa Chiefs in Nigeria and Niger", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 25(2): 233-258.

Mustapha, Raufu A. 2002. "Coping with Diversity: The Nigerian State in Historical Perspective", in Abdi. I. Samatar and Ahmed I. Samatar (ed). *The African State: Reconsiderations*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Mustapha, Raufu A. 2003. "Transformation of Minority Identities in Post-Colonial Nigeria", in Attahiru, Jega (ed.) *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics Under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*. Kano: Center for Research and Documentation.

Naanen, Ben 1995. "Oil-producing Minorities and the Restructuring of Nigerian Federalism: The Case of the Ogoni People", *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 33(1): 46-78.

Naanen, Ben 2002. "State Movements", in Alagoa, Joe and Derefaka, Abi (eds) *The Land and People of Rivers State: Eastern Niger Delta*. Port Harcourt: Onyeoma Research Publications.

Nolutshungu, Sam 1990. "Fragments of a Democracy: Reflections on Class and Politics in Nigeria" *Third World Quarterly*, 12(1): 86-115.

Obi, Cyril 1998. "The Impact of Oil on Nigeria's Revenue Allocation System: Problems and Prospects for National Reconstruction" in K. Amuwo, A. Agbaje, R. Suberu, and G. Herault (eds) *Federalism and Political Restructuring in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Spectrum.

Olutayo, Olanrewaju 1999. "The Igbo Entrepreneur in the Political Economy of Nigeria" *African Study Monograph*, 20(3): 147-174.

Omobowale, Ayokunle and Olutayo, Akinpelu 2007. "Chief Lamidi Adedibu and Patronage Politics in Nigeria" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45(3): 425-446.

Omoruyi, Omo 1989. "Federal Character and the Party System in the Second Republic", in Peter Ekeh and Eghosa E. Osaghae (ed) *Federal Character and Federalism in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Heinemann.

Orji, Nkwachukwu 2008. *Power-sharing: The Element of Continuity in Nigerian Politics*. PhD Dissertation, Central European University - Budapest.

Othman, Shehu 1984. "Classes, Crises and Coup: The Demise of Shagari's Regime" *African Affairs*, 83(333): 441-461.

Paden, John 1986. *Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria*. Portsmouth, N.H: Heinemann Educational Books

Paden, John N. 1997. "Nigerian Unity and the Tensions of Democracy: Geo-Cultural Zones and North-South Legacies", in Beckett Paul A. and Crawford Young (eds) *Dilemmas of Democracy in Nigeria*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press.

Phillips, C. 1980. "Nigeria's New Political Institutions, 1975-79" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 18(1): 1-22.

Post, Kenneth and Vickers, Michael. 1973. *Structure and Conflict in Nigeria, 1960-1966*. London: Heinemann.

Post, Kenneth W. J. 1966. "The Action Group: The Crisis of 1962 and Its Aftermath", in John P. Mackintosh (ed) *Nigerian Government and Politics*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Saro-Wiwa, Ken 1989. *On A Darkling Plain*. Port Harcourt: Saros Publishers.

Sen, Yima 2002. "The Minority Question in Northern Nigeria", in Abubakar, Momoh and Said, Adejumobi (eds) *The National Question in Nigeria: Comparative Perspectives*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Sisk, Timothy 1996. *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflict*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Sklar, Richard 1965. "Contradictions in the Nigerian Political System" *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 3(2): 201-213.

Sklar, Richard 1967. "Nigerian Politics in Perspective" *Government and Opposition*, 2(4): 524-539.

Sklar, Richard 1981. "Democracy for the Second Republic" *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, 11(1/2): 14-16.

Sklar, Richard 1991. "Nigerian Politics: The Ordeal of Chief Awolowo", in Richard L. Sklar and C. S. Whitaker (eds) *African Politics and Problems in Development*. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner.

Spalding, Nancy 2000. "A Cultural Explanation of Collapse into Civil War: Escalation of Tension in Nigeria", *Culture and Psychology*, 6(1): 51-87.

Ubah, C. N. 1980. "Western Education in Africa: The Igbo Experience", *Comparative Education Review*, 24(3): 371-388.

Ukeje, Charles and Adebanwi, Wale 2008. "Ethno-nationalist Claims in Southern Nigeria: Insights from Yoruba and Ijaw Nationalisms since the 1990s", *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31(3): 563-591.

UNDP 2006. *Niger Delta Human Development Report*. Abuja: United Nations Development Programme.

Van Den Bersselaar, Dmitri 2005. "Imagining Home: Migration and the Igbo Village in Colonial Nigeria", *The Journal of African History*, 46(1): 51-73.

Vaughan, Olufemi 1994. "Communalism, Legitimation and Party Politics at the Grassroots: The Case of the Yoruba", *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 7(3): 419-440.

Whitaker, Jr., C. S. 1981. "Second Beginnings: The New Political Framework" *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, 11(1/2): 2-13.

Wolpe, Howard 1969. "Port Harcourt: Ibo Politics in Microcosm", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 7(3): 469-493.