

# CHALLENGES UNDERMINING NIGERIA'S FEDERALISM

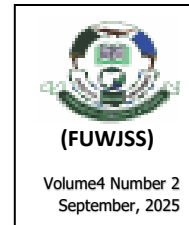
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## **Abstract**

This study focuses on the teething problem of Nigerian federalism, specifically examining the impact of geo-politics, federal character and power-sharing on governance within a federal system. The study highlights the relevance of federalism in addressing diverse societal needs and managing complex political landscapes. However, challenges such as geo-political tensions, issues of federal character and power imbalances have emerged as significant obstacles to effective federal governance in Nigeria. Thus, there is the need to understand how these factors influence power dynamics, resource allocation, inclusivity and cooperation within Nigerian federal structure. The objectives of the study are to analyze the impact of geo-politics on Nigerian federalism, examine the role of federal character in promoting inclusivity and assess the effectiveness of power-sharing mechanisms in mitigating conflicts and fostering cooperation among diverse groups in Nigeria. The research methodology of the study involved the systematic review of literatures which were content analyzed. The theoretical framework combined Federalism Theory and Political Geography Theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of the study. Findings established that power-sharing mechanisms are crucial in addressing conflicts and promoting cooperation among diverse groups within a federal system. The study concludes by highlighting the importance of addressing geo-political tensions, promoting inclusivity and implementing effective power-sharing mechanisms to enhance the functioning of Nigerian federal system. The study recommends that there is need for policymakers to prioritize inclusive decision-making processes, equitable resource allocation and transparent power-sharing arrangements to strengthen federal governance and promote stability in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Geo-politics, federal character, power-sharing, federalism, Nigeria

## **Introduction**

Nigeria, a country known for its rich cultural diversity and complex history, has been grappling with the challenges of federalism since gaining

independence in 1960. The concept of federalism in Nigeria was adopted as a means to accommodate the diverse ethnic, religious and regional interests within the country. Nigerian federalism, as defined by Olaoba and Oladunjoye (2020), involves the division of powers and responsibilities between the central government and the constituent states within the country. This system of governance is characterized by a multi-level structure where both levels of government have their own spheres of authority. In the context of Nigeria, federalism is seen as a mechanism for managing diversity and promoting unity among the various ethnic, cultural and religious groups within the country (Akinola, 2019). It is intended to balance the need for autonomy at the state level with the requirement for a strong and cohesive federal government to oversee national affairs. One of the key features of Nigerian federalism is the distribution of powers outlined in the Constitution, which specifies the exclusive, concurrent and residual powers of both the federal and state governments. This division of powers is intended to prevent conflicts and ensure smooth governance across different levels of administration (Arowosegbe, 2016).

However, researchers like Fagbadebo (2018) argue that Nigerian federalism faces challenges related to resource allocation, revenue sharing and intergovernmental relations. These issues have implications for the effective functioning of the federal system and the overall stability of the country. Overall, Nigerian federalism is a complex system of government that strives to accommodate the diversity of the country while maintaining a balance between central authority and regional autonomy. The implementation of federalism in Nigeria has been marred by various teething problems, including geo-political tensions, issues of federal character and struggles over power sharing. These challenges have hindered the effective functioning of the federal system and have contributed to political instability and socio-economic disparities within the country. The issue of geo-politics in Nigerian federalism stems from the country's diverse ethnic and regional composition, with over 250 ethnic groups spread across 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. This diversity has led to competition and conflicts between different regions and ethnic groups, as they vie for political power and resources. The struggle for control over key political and economic institutions has often resulted in tensions and power struggles that have undermined the unity and stability of the country.

The principle of federal character, which was introduced to promote inclusivity and representation of all ethnic groups in government institutions, has also posed challenges to Nigerian federalism. While the policy was intended to address historical marginalization and promote national unity, it has sometimes been manipulated to perpetuate ethnic favoritism and nepotism. This has led to a lack of meritocracy in governance and has fueled

resentment and distrust among different ethnic groups. The issue of power sharing in Nigerian federalism has been a contentious issue, with struggles for political dominance and control often leading to conflicts and instability. The competition for power sharing among the various political elites has resulted in a lack of consensus on key policy issues and has hindered effective governance and development in the country. In light of these challenges, it is crucial to critically examine the teething problems of geo-politics, federal character and power sharing in Nigerian federalism in order to identify potential solutions and reforms that can promote greater unity, inclusivity and stability within the country. Thus, the objectives of the study are to analyze the impact of Geo-Politics on Nigerian federalism, particularly in terms of power dynamics and resource allocation, to examine the role of Federal Character in promoting inclusivity and representation in Nigerian federal system and to assess the effectiveness of Power Sharing mechanisms in mitigating conflicts and fostering cooperation among diverse groups within the Nigerian federal structures.

### **Power Sharing and Resource Allocation Dynamics in Nigerian Federalism**

Geo-politics in the Nigerian context refers to the competition and tension among the various geo-political zones of (Northeast, Northwest, North-central, Southeast, Southwest, and South South) for political influence, resource allocation, and representation in the federal government. In another way, geo-politics in Nigeria also refers to the interactions between geography, politics, and power dynamics within the country. According to Adesina (2017), geo-politics in Nigeria is characterized by various factors such as ethnic, religious, and regional divisions. The author argues that these divisions have a significant impact on the political landscape of the country. Onuoha (2018) further explores the impact of colonialism on Nigeria's geo-politics. The author posits that the British colonial rule implemented indirect rule, which decentralized power and led to persistent clashes between ethnic groups and regions.

The allocation and control of oil resources in Nigeria also play a crucial role in the country's geo-political dynamics (Onuoha, 2018). Onuoha explains that Nigeria's vast oil reserves, primarily located in the Niger Delta region, contribute to competition among regions for a greater share of resources. This competition for political power and resources further fuels inter-ethnic rivalries. Boko Haram, an Islamist extremist group based in the northern region of Nigeria, adds another layer of complexity to the country's geo-political landscape. Adesina highlights that Boko Haram's activities disrupt social and economic activities while also creating political instability through bombings and attacks on schools, churches, and government

institutions. The involvement of regional and international powers in Nigerian politics is another factor influencing the country's geo-politics. According to Onuoha (2018), neighboring countries such as Chad and Cameroon are directly affected by the insurgency in Nigeria and have collaborated with the Nigerian government to combat it. Adesina (2017) explains that international actors, including the United States and the European Union, have provided support and assistance in countering Boko Haram.

Therefore, geo-politics in Nigeria encompasses various factors such as ethnic divisions, colonial legacies, resource distribution and the involvement of regional and international powers. These factors shape the political landscape of Nigeria and contribute to challenges in managing political stability. The country is thus, divided into six geo-political zones, each with its unique cultural, economic and political characteristics (Akinwale & Olusola, 2021). Thus, understanding the complexities of these zones is crucial in appreciating the challenges of Nigerian federalism.

The North-West zone comprising states such as Kano, Kaduna and Sokoto is known for its predominantly Muslim population and agricultural economy (Ogundiya, 2019). This region has historically wielded significant political influence, often serving as a kingmaker in national elections.

The North-East zone which includes states like Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa has faced the brunt of the Boko Haram insurgency, leading to ongoing security challenges and humanitarian crises (Okoli & Iortyer, 2021). The region's access to resources and political representation has been a source of tension within the federation. The North-Central zone encompassing states such as Plateau, Benue and Nasarawa, are characterized by their diverse ethnic composition and the contentious issue of farmer-herder conflicts (Akov, 2019). This zone has often been at the center of national political debates regarding resource distribution and power-sharing. The South-West zone is home to Lagos, Oyo and Ogun states, renowned for its economic and educational prowess, as well as its political influence (Aluko, 2019). The region's entrepreneurial spirit and cultural heritage have played a significant role in shaping the national discourse. The South-East zone comprising states like Abia, Anambra and Enugu, has a strong Igbo ethnic identity and a history of marginalization, which has fueled secessionist movements and regional tensions (Nnamani & Ogbu, 2022). The South-South zone, which includes states like Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Delta, is the hub of Nigeria's oil and gas industry, leading to conflicts over resource control and environmental degradation (Watts, 2022). The geo-political dynamics within these zones have profoundly influenced Nigeria's political landscape, resource allocation and power-sharing arrangements.

Appreciating these complexities requires a delicate balance of regional interests, inclusive governance and a commitment to national unity.

Geo-politics plays a significant role in shaping Nigerian federalism, particularly in terms of power dynamics and resource allocation. Nigeria's federal system of government is designed to share power and resources between the central government and the constituent states. However, external factors such as geopolitical interests and dynamics have influenced this distribution negatively. Several scholars have highlighted the impact of Geo-politics on Nigerian federalism. For example, Okpeh et al. (2018) argue that power dynamics within Nigerian federalism are often influenced by external actors seeking to gain control over the country's valuable resources. These power struggles have led to challenges in resource allocation and decision-making processes.

Adeleye (2016) explores how geopolitical considerations can influence the relationship between the central government and the states in Nigeria. The author suggests that external pressures have shaped the power dynamics within the federal system, impacting the ability of the states to effectively govern and allocate resources. Ogunleye & Oseni (2019) point out those geopolitical factors, such as international relations and regional conflicts, have had a direct impact on resource allocation in Nigeria. These external influences have shaped the distribution of resources between the central government and the states, leading to disparities and tensions within the federal system. The impact of Geo-politics on Nigerian federalism is complex and multifaceted. External factors have influenced power dynamics, resource allocation and decision-making processes within the federal system, highlighting the interconnected nature of geopolitics and governance in Nigeria.

The power-sharing system in Nigeria refers to the allocation and distribution of political power among various groups, regions, and ethnicities within the country (Olawale, 2018). The power-sharing arrangement in Nigeria is often attributed to the need to manage ethno-regional conflicts and promote stability and inclusivity in the country (Odediran, 2020). It is based on the principle of zoning, which involves the rotation of key political positions among different regions.

The primary power-sharing mechanism in Nigeria is known as "federal character," which is enshrined in Section 14(3) of the Nigerian Constitution. This provision mandates that public appointments and resource allocation should reflect the diversity of Nigeria and ensure equitable representation of different ethnic and regional groups. However, critics argue that the power-sharing system has perpetuated identity politics and has sometimes been manipulated to consolidate power in the hands of a few political elites (Odediran, 2020). They contend that the system has not necessarily

addressed the underlying issues of corruption and inequality in the country (Olawale, 2018).

In recent years, there have been calls for reform of the power-sharing system to promote greater transparency, accountability, and efficiency in governance (Odediran, 2020). Some scholars propose the adoption of a more merit-based approach to political appointments, while still considering the need for diversity and inclusivity (Etim & Azodo, 2020). Overall, the power-sharing system in Nigeria is intended to manage ethno-regional tensions and ensure a more balanced distribution of political power. However, ongoing debates and discussions highlight the need for reforms to enhance the effectiveness and fairness of the system.

Power-sharing mechanisms in the Nigerian federal system are designed to address conflicts and promote cooperation among diverse groups by ensuring that different ethnic and regional interests are represented in governance and decision-making processes. These mechanisms aim to prevent the domination of any single group and promote inclusivity in the political landscape. Omotola (2018) argues that power-sharing arrangements, such as the rotation of political offices among different regions or ethnic groups, help to mitigate conflicts and promote cooperation in Nigeria. By sharing political power and resources among diverse groups, power-sharing mechanisms foster a sense of inclusivity and ensure that different interests are taken into account in decision-making processes.

Furthermore, Ibeanu (2019) highlights the role of power-sharing in fostering cooperation and dialogue among diverse groups within the Nigerian federal structure. The author suggests that power-sharing arrangements, when properly implemented, can help build trust among different ethnic and regional communities and contribute to building a more cohesive and inclusive political system. Aghedo and Osumah (2020) on the other hand examine the effectiveness of power-sharing mechanisms in addressing conflicts and promoting cooperation in Nigeria. The authors suggest that power-sharing arrangements can help manage inter-ethnic tensions and prevent the escalation of conflicts by ensuring that all groups have a stake in the political process. Power-sharing mechanisms therefore, play a crucial role in mitigating conflicts and fostering cooperation among diverse groups within the Nigerian federal structure. By promoting inclusivity and ensuring that different interests are represented in governance, power-sharing arrangements can help build trust, reduce tensions and contribute to a more stable and cohesive political environment in Nigeria.

### **Federal Character and Inclusivity and Representation in Nigerian Federal System**

The Federal Character System in Nigeria is a policy designed to ensure equitable distribution of political and administrative positions among the diverse ethnic and regional groups in the country (Ojih, 2019). The system was established as a response to the perceived marginalization of certain ethnic groups in the Nigerian political landscape (Ojih, 2019). According to Etim and Azodo (2020), the Federal Character System is enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution, specifically in Section 14(3), which mandates that all government institutions must reflect the federal character of Nigeria in their composition and appointment of personnel. This provision aims to promote unity, inclusivity, and balanced representation within the federal system.

However, critics argue that the Federal Character System has not effectively addressed issues of marginalization and has instead perpetuated identity politics and regionalism (Ojih, 2019). Ojih (2019) argues that the system has resulted in the overemphasis of ethnic and regional considerations in political appointments, leading to the neglect of merit-based criteria. Recent discussions on the Federal Character System have focused on the need to strike a balance between the goals of inclusivity and competence-based appointments. Scholars suggest that reforms should be undertaken to ensure that the system promotes diversity without compromising on meritocracy.

Federal Character System in Nigeria is thus, a policy intended to promote balanced representation and inclusivity in the country. However, criticisms have been raised regarding its effectiveness, particularly in terms of promoting meritocracy. Ongoing discussions highlight the need for reforms to ensure that the system achieves its intended objectives.

Thus, the concept of federal character in the Nigerian federal system is designed to ensure inclusivity and representation of diverse ethnic and regional groups in government institutions and decision-making processes. This principle is enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal of Nigeria as amended and aims to promote national unity by preventing the domination of a particular group or region in governance. According to Akinyemi (2017), the federal character principle is essential for maintaining social cohesion and political stability in Nigeria. By ensuring that government positions and resources are distributed equitably among different ethnic groups and regions, federal character promotes inclusivity and helps to address historical marginalization and inequality. Adesola (2020) discusses how the implementation of federal character provisions has led to greater representation of marginalized groups in Nigerian politics and public administration. By prioritizing diversity and inclusivity in decision-making processes, federal character contributes to building a more inclusive

and representative government that reflects the country's ethno-cultural diversity.

Adebisi and Odebode (2018) highlight the role of federal character in promoting national integration and reducing inter-ethnic tensions in Nigeria. The principle of federal character fosters a sense of belonging and participation among different ethnic groups, contributing to a more cohesive and harmonious society. Thus, federal character plays a crucial role in promoting inclusivity and representation in the Nigerian federal system. By upholding principles of diversity and equity in governance, federal character helps to mitigate historical inequalities, foster national unity and ensure that all ethnic and regional groups have a voice in the decision-making processes of the country.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Federalism theory, primarily associated with political science and political geography theory provide valuable lenses for examining the challenges of geo-politics, federal character and power-sharing in Nigerian federalism.

#### *Federalism Theory*

The classical theorist often associated with Federalism is Alexander Hamilton, who articulated views on federalism in "The Federalist Papers" 1788. However, the theory was popularized by Robert Dahl (1982) who contributed significantly to understanding democratic federalism in his works, emphasizing the importance of federal arrangements for democratic governance. Daniel Elazar (1987) also played a critical role in popularizing Federalism Theory through his works on the three regimes of federalism: federal, unitary, and con-federal systems.

#### *Political Geography Theory*

Friedrich Ratzel is often recognized as one of the foundational figures in political geography for his contributions to the development of geopolitics and the notion of Lebensraum (living space). However, the theory was popularized by Halford Mackinder (1904) proponent of the Heartland Theory, which emphasizes the strategic importance of central Asia in global politics. Nicholas Spykman (1942) further developed the concept of Rimland Theory, arguing that the coastal fringes of Eurasia hold significant geopolitical importance. Federalism theory assumes that decentralization of power among different levels of government can promote effective governance, protect individual liberties and accommodate diverse interests within a political system. Political geography theory assumes that spatial factors, such as territorial boundaries, resources distribution and physical



landscapes, play a significant role in shaping political behavior, power dynamics and geopolitical relationships.

Critics of federalism theory argue that power-sharing arrangements can sometimes lead to inefficiencies, conflicts of interest and challenges in coordination among different levels of government. In addition, critics point out that those federal systems may not always adequately address the needs of marginalized groups. Critics of political geography theory often contend that the theory can oversimplify complex political phenomena and overlook the social, cultural and economic factors that influence geopolitical dynamics. Critics also question the deterministic view of geography's influence on political outcomes.

Despite the critiques, federalism theory and political geography theory remain relevant to the study of geo-politics, federal character and power-sharing in Nigerian federalism. By analyzing how power is distributed among different levels of government and how federal structures impact political dynamics, federalism theory can provide insights into the challenges of federal character and power-sharing in Nigeria. Through examining the spatial dimensions of political processes, political geography theory can help understand how geographical factors influence geo-political struggles, federal character dilemmas and power-sharing arrangements within the Nigerian federal system.

Thus, by utilizing federalism theory and political geography theory as analytical frameworks offers valuable perspectives on the teething problems of geo-politics, federal character and power-sharing in Nigerian federalism, despite the critiques raised against these theories. By critically engaging with these theoretical lenses, researchers can deepen their understanding of the complex interplay between politics, geography and federal structures in Nigeria.

### **Research Methodology**

Qualitative content analysis is a research method used to interpret and analyze the meaning, context and themes within textual, visual or audio data. Unlike quantitative content analysis that focuses on numerical data and frequencies, qualitative content analysis aims to uncover the underlying meanings, patterns and relationships present in the content being studied.

In qualitative content analysis, researchers immerse themselves in the data to identify recurring themes, concepts or emotions through a process of coding and categorizing the content. Rather than quantifying the data, the emphasis is on understanding the nuances, contexts and perspectives embedded in the content. Researchers often use open coding to identify initial themes and then refine the codes through a process of comparison and pattern recognition. Qualitative content analysis allows researchers to

explore complex phenomena, capture diverse viewpoints and gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter. It is particularly useful when studying subjective experiences, social constructs or interpretations within the data. By analyzing the content qualitatively, researchers can uncover rich insights, generate new hypotheses and provide detailed explanations of the underlying meanings present in the material.

### **Impact of Geo-Politics on Nigerian Federalism**

The impact of geo-politics on Nigerian federalism, particularly in terms of power dynamics and resource allocation, is a complex and multifaceted issue. One key aspect of this discussion is the role of regional power dynamics within the Nigerian federation. Adebayo & Omotoso (2020) argue that the uneven distribution of political power among the different regions of Nigeria has contributed to tensions and conflicts over resource allocation. They assert that the dominance of certain ethnic groups or regions has often led to the marginalization of others, fueling discontent and secessionist tendencies.

Similarly, Ojogbo & Oluowaju (2019) explore how the concentration of economic resources in specific regions has influenced the power dynamics within the Nigerian federal system. They highlight how the control over oil resources, for instance, has been a source of contention, with different regions vying for a greater share of the national wealth. Ogunnoiki (2018) further emphasizes the impact of geo-political factors on the governance structures and decision-making processes within the Nigerian federation. The author suggests that the geographical spread and diversity of Nigeria's regions have created challenges in terms of coordinating policies and ensuring equitable distribution of resources.

Alozieuwa (2017) examines the influence of regional and international geopolitical interests on the dynamics of Nigerian federalism. The author argues that the interference of external actors, such as foreign governments and multinational corporations, has at times exacerbated tensions and conflicts within the Nigerian political landscape. Thus, in addressing the power dynamics and resource allocation within the Nigerian federal system, scholars have proposed various solutions. Adebayo & Omotoso (2020) recommend the implementation of a more inclusive and decentralized governance structure, which would empower the different regions and promote a fairer distribution of resources. Ojogbo & Oluowaju (2019) emphasize the need for institutional reforms, such as the restructuring of the revenue allocation formula and the strengthening of fiscal federalism, to address the imbalances in resource distribution.

### **The Role of Federal Character in Promoting Inclusivity and Representation in Nigerian Federal System**

The principle of federal character has been a key feature of the Nigerian federal system, aimed at promoting inclusivity and representation. Akinwotu & Olufemi (2020) posited that the federal character principle has been instrumental in mitigating the dominance of certain ethnic groups and regions within the Nigerian political landscape. They argue that the policy has helped to ensure a more balanced representation of different groups in government appointments and the distribution of resources. Similarly, Odion & Osarumwense (2019) highlight the importance of federal character in fostering a sense of belonging and increasing the participation of marginalized communities in decision-making processes. The authors suggest that the principle has been effective in promoting a more inclusive and representative federal system.

However, Ogundiya & Baba (2018) caution that the implementation of federal character has not been without its challenges. They contend that the policy has at times been manipulated for political gain, leading to the perpetuation of power imbalances and the exclusion of certain groups. Adebayo and Omotoso (2020) further explore the tension between the principles of merit and federal character, arguing that the latter has at times undermined the quality of governance and the efficient delivery of public services. They suggest that a balance must be struck between the two principles to ensure both inclusivity and competence in the Nigerian federal system.

Ogunnoiki (2018) offers a more nuanced perspective, acknowledging the complexities involved in the application of federal character. The author emphasizes the need for continuous refinement and adaptation of the principle to address the evolving dynamics of diversity and representation within the Nigerian federation. In all, the role of federal character in promoting inclusivity and representation in the Nigerian federal system is a topic of ongoing debate and analysis. While scholars recognize the potential benefits of the principle, they also highlight the challenges and limitations in its implementation.

The effectiveness of power-sharing mechanisms in mitigating conflicts and fostering cooperation among diverse groups within the Nigerian federal structures has been a subject of scholarly inquiry. Researchers have explored the dynamics of power-sharing and its implications for conflict management and national unity. Adebayo & Omotoso (2020) argue that the power-sharing arrangements in the Nigerian federal system have played a crucial role in managing the tensions and conflicts arising from the country's ethnic and regional diversity. They posit that the inclusion of different groups in the decision-making process has helped to promote a sense of fairness and

reduce the potential for marginalization. Similarly, Odion & Osarumwense (2019) highlight the importance of the federal character principle, which ensures the equitable distribution of political appointments and the allocation of resources among the various ethnic and regional groups. The authors assert that this mechanism has been instrumental in fostering a more inclusive and cooperative federal structure.

However, Ogundiya and Baba (2018) caution that the implementation of power-sharing arrangements in Nigeria has not been without its challenges. They argue that the politicization of the process has, at times, led to the perpetuation of power imbalances and the exclusion of certain groups, undermining the intended objectives of the mechanism. Akinwotu and Olufemi (2020) further explore the dynamics of power-sharing, noting that the process has been influenced by various factors, including political interests, elite bargaining and the dynamics of ethnic mobilization. However, Ogunnoiki (2018) emphasizes the need for a balance between the principles of merit and equity in the application of power-sharing arrangements. The author argues that the overemphasis on equity can sometimes come at the expense of competence and efficiency, which may ultimately undermine the effectiveness of the federal system. In all, the effectiveness of power-sharing mechanisms in mitigating conflicts and fostering cooperation among diverse groups within the Nigerian federal structures is a complex and multifaceted issue. While scholars acknowledge the potential benefits of these arrangements, they also highlight the challenges and limitations in their implementation.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The exploration of geo-politics, federal character and power-sharing mechanisms within the context of Nigeria's federalism crisis has unveiled critical insights into the challenges and opportunities that shape the nation's governance framework. Looking through the complexities of Nigeria's diverse sociopolitical landscape, this study foregrounds the interconnectedness of these elements and their collective impact on the federal structure. Thus, the analysis reveals that geo-political dynamics significantly influence the allocation of power and resources across Nigeria. The interplay of regional interests, historical conflicts and economic disparities underscores the necessity for a nuanced understanding of how these factors affect national cohesion. Strategies for equitable resource distribution must account for regional disparities and local socio-economic contexts, as failure to do so exacerbate tensions and deepen mistrust among various groups. On the other hand, the role of federal character emerges as a vital component in promoting inclusivity and representation within Nigeria's political system. While the principles of federal character aim to ensure fair

representation for Nigeria's myriad ethnic groups, the implementation has often been inconsistent and subject to manipulation. For federal character to effectively enhance inclusivity, it must be accompanied by genuine political commitment, institutional integrity and active citizen engagement. This would foster an environment where marginalized voices are heard, thereby enhancing legitimacy and trust in the federal system. On power-sharing, the assessment mechanisms shed light on their potential as tools for conflict resolution and cooperation among Nigeria's diverse groups. While power-sharing has been employed to manage political tensions, its effectiveness hinges on the broader political culture and the willingness of leaders to prioritize collective interests over ethnic loyalty. A more participatory approach to power-sharing—encompassing dialogue and adaptive mechanisms—can facilitate problem-solving and reconciliation among factions, thus paving the way for a more stable federal system.

Finally, the prognosis for Nigerian federalism is one that necessitates a comprehensive reevaluation of the existing political frameworks. Therefore, taking account of the intricacies of geo-politics, enhancing the efficacy of federal character and revitalizing power-sharing arrangements are fundamental to mitigating conflict and promoting national unity. Policymakers must embrace a holistic approach that recognizes the interplay of these dynamics to foster a resilient and equitable federal system. The path forward requires not only structural reform but also a genuine commitment to inclusivity, representation and cooperation among Nigeria's diverse groups, laying the foundation for a more harmonious and cohesive nation.

The following are the main recommendations of the study:

**Strengthening Institutions:** Enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of key institutions responsible for implementing federal character principles and power-sharing arrangements can help in promoting transparency, accountability and equitable representation.

**Dialogue and Conflict Resolution:** Encouraging constructive dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms among different geo-political zones and ethnic groups can foster greater cooperation and understanding, reducing tensions and promoting national unity.

**Consensus-Building:** Engaging in inclusive decision-making processes that involve a broad spectrum of stakeholders can help build consensus on key issues, ensuring that the interests of all groups are taken into consideration in policy formulation and implementation.

**Education and Awareness:** Increasing awareness and understanding of the importance of federalism, geo-politics, federal character and power-sharing among the general public can enhance civic engagement and promote a culture of inclusivity and respect for diversity.

Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation: Regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of federal character principles and power-sharing arrangements can help identify challenges and gaps, allowing for timely interventions and adjustments to enhance their effectiveness.

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