

# The Impact of Boundary Formations on State-Society Relations in Nigeria 1960 – 1996

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## Abstract

Boundary formations in Nigeria have been politicized since independence, with long term effects on state-society relations. Against this backdrop, this study argues that Nigeria's processes of boundary formations have been guided by manipulations by the elite that held on to power right from the point of independence to 1996. This has complicated relationships of the people and their perceptions on the state as an institution that has applied forced in administering and Balkanizing them. The year 1960 is chosen here because it marks the beginning of a period of formal or self-rule accompanied by the creation of domestic boundaries while 1996 on its part marks the end of boundary reforms in the country through a process of state and local government creations by the military regimes. Thus The work adopts a combined theoretical scheme and relies on both John Locke and Thomas Hobbes' social contract theories to show the joy that local groups express when boundaries are fixed in a way that favours them which improves smooth state-society relations on the one hand and the sadness that they also show when boundaries are created in such a manner that does not appeal to them which disrupts state-society relations. The study builds on a body of existing literatures which although have tackled issues on the politics of boundary formations in Nigeria, but have not discussed how and why such politics have diffused into or affected state-society relations in terms of the distribution of states and local governments, placement of state capitals, political participation, patronage, segregation and distribution of infrastructural development. Thus, using a historical research design, the work in a narrative form gives a historical analysis of the impact of boundaries on state-society relations in the country across regime periods stretching from 1960 to 1996. The study relied on both primary and secondary data such as archival materials, oral interviews and books in its methodology. The article proposes that the exercise of arbitrary boundary fixings in Nigeria has disrupted state-society relations in the country.

**Keywords:** Impact, Boundary Formations, State-Society Relations, Nigeria.

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## Introduction

Since independence in 1960, one fundamental area in the history of Nigeria where the state has played a major role and demonstrated power has been the creation of satellite states, local governments and boundary adjustments. Superintended by the immediate post-independence elite associated with the control of power and organs of the state such as the military, they have embraced and imbibed the use of force in their various structural reforms. Thus, in league with the political class and high profile bureaucratic and technocratic elite along with other segments of the powerful class in the country such as the domestic bourgeoisies (Jega, 2000: 26), they have come to assume and play a prominent role (aided by prolong military rule) in the Nigerian political landscape and economy. Consequently, they have continued with the colonial inherited coercive political legacies of tight and arbitrary boundary formations on citizens just to sustain a divide and rule mechanism. No wonder, the Nigeria National Boundary Commission a body responsible for delineating and adjusting boundaries in the country is bedeviled with thousands of boundary issues that have not been resolved arising from its politicization (Barkindo, O.I, 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2017, Adaji, 15 March, 2021).

Foraying into the trailblazing path of boundary formations since independence, the intellectual inquiry of this essay is to interrogate how boundary formation politics has impacted on state-society relations in the country 1960 – 1996. In Nigeria, the theme of boundaries has been a subject of discourse among scholars giving their insights from different perspectives. Much attention has been paid on the politics that was involved in the fixings. Such contributions among others include the works of (Ejobowah 2000, Dibua 2005, Omeje 2006, Ajiji 2011 Benjamin 2013, Mgbada 2013, Israel and Patrick 2017, and Onyekachi 2019). Their inability to discuss how such boundary fixings have impacted and improve or disrupted substantive smooth state-society relations in the

country is the gap in knowledge that our present work seeks to redress. Accordingly, the work commences with a brief account of its impact in Nigeria during the pre-1960 period and continues with the impact of subsequent reforms that were carried out across military regimes wrapping it up with that of Gen Abacha in 1996.

The role of government is to protect the natural rights of its people for example right to life, liberty and pursuit for happiness. Using an eclectic or combined theoretical framework, this study adopts both John Locke and Thomas Hobbes' social contract theories. Although each one of them talk about social contract, their social contracts are different. Thus, this work aligns with the aspect of Locke's social contract thinking that says leaders derive their authority from the people and so leaders should always seek consent from the people before taking any action (Locke 1690, Guteng Ebook edition:36). With regards to Hobbes' theory, the study identifies with his philosophy that says that the leader is the sovereign with absolute power and not accountable to the people (Hobbes, 1996, Glims and Glims copyright edition: 120-121). Both theoretical schemes are used here just to show how smooth state-society relations heightens when boundaries are fixed in a Lockean way that carries the people along as expressed through their joy on the one hand and on the other, to show how state-society relations gets disrupted when boundaries are fixed using Hobbesian means which does not carry the people along as seen through their expression or show of displeasure and sadness.

### **Impact of Boundary Formations in Pre 1960 Nigeria**

The amalgamation and subsequent balkanization of Nigeria by the British impacted greatly on state-society relations consequent upon the creation of regions, divisions and adoption of indirect rule. This system of administration discriminated between and among composite ethnic and regional groups across the country (Benjamin; 2012:96 - 97). This is so because each of these largely artificial regions that were created in 1939 (Fwatshak and Ayuba, 2014: 8) contained a concentration of a majority group that dominated in its respective region: the Hausa-Fulani in the North, the Yoruba in the West and the Igbo in the East. Consequently, with the granting of regional autonomy, the major groups became the "shareholders" of the federation. The minority groups in these regions felt marginalized, oppressed and dominated.

While we admit the fact that there is no absolute proposition in human civilization stating how a nation must be established because there is no country or state that was birthed by nature (Akinyele, 2003), however, what appears to be wrong that has impaired on state-society relations in Nigeria is the way and manner the 1914 amalgamation was fashioned out using force. The principal actors or designers of the amalgamation did not improvise efficient mechanisms to manage diversities and contradictions that were created therein in a way that will promote cordial state-society relations nor promote a common national purpose among its people without damaging the socio-economic development of the country. Although amalgamation was able to bring the country together under a unified system of government in addition to the centralization of revenue, security apparatus, judicial system as well as economic resources, the failure of amalgamation which generated strained state-society relations is the gross injustices meted on the various sections of the country. Right from the outset, the colonial state's boundary formation policy consequent upon the 1914 amalgamation was detested by various sections of Nigeria particularly the elite class from the South during the amalgamation discourses between 1947 and 1953 who pointed out their shared differences with the North (Fwatshak & Ayuba: 6). While rejecting the creation, they had demonstrated to the colonial state clearly that any state that emerged as a product of arbitrary fusion of two territories (north and south) would not function. To be sure, the southerners had their perceived distrust and contempt for the North. The northerners on their part felt that they have been cheated or shortchanged in the amalgamation exercise imposed by the colonialists. Their fears were largely built on the fact that their union under a centralization policy enforced by the British was going to expose the north to the corrupting influences from the south (Ibid).

The union was rejected by all groups in the new nation. But if we may ask, why was the union rejected by all the groups in the first place? It is safe to state here that the federation that the British sought to establish was rejected because the diverse peoples with varying cultures and religions were not willing to be together so long as the union did not factor in their diversities neither was their relative autonomy, independence and right for self-determination appreciated and guaranteed in clear terms. Amalgamation discourse therefore should have responded to the size and ethnic diversity of the country rather than an arbitrary exercise (Ibid, Oyeweso: 129) which was a show of disregard by the British.

In their respective condemnation of the exercise, Sir Ahmadu Bello Premier of Northern region baring his mind insists that the 1914 union was a big mistake in the history of the country (Ibid). In the same vein, Chief Obafemi Awolowo from the western region rejected the amalgamation and adoption of a unitary constitution and said that Nigeria was a mere geographical expression and not a nation and therefore cannot function as a state under a unitary arrangement as propounded by the British. Preferably, Awolowo opted for a federal system in order to accommodate diversities in the country so as to guarantee peace and stability (Awolowo, 1947: 47 - 48) where each nation in the country will be allowed to carry on its affairs independent of interference from other groups. Thus, Awolowo and the entire western region all through the colonial period preached in favour of

federalism as a requirement for equal national integration (Ibid).

State-society relations in the amalgamated country in relation to the south-west became sour when the introduction of a federal structure came up in the 1946 constitution. Naturally, the region felt that the state was not being fair to them in relation to revenue allocation. Why did the south-west reject the idea of a federal revenue system? The rejection of a federal revenue system by the south west points to the fact that the region preferred the application of true federalism in the country so as to give the regions their autonomy, independence and above all allow them good control of their resources. Thus, they wondered why the region's buoyant economy which contributed significantly in the nation's common treasury would not be reflected in the share of revenue allocated for the development of the region. Originally, they had opted for the application of the principle of revenue derivation in the alternative rather than the state using the huge revenue of the rich southern region to develop the north (Oyewese: 134).

The colonial state's reforms of 1939 that structured the country into three regions namely: Northern, Western and Eastern regions impaired so much on state-society relations as the two southern regions (eastern and western) were not happy with the arrangement that gave the north more prominence. The western and eastern regions rejected the partitioning because in their views, the colonial state showed bias in the division of the country for the north got twice the size of the two regions put together. But the question here is, was their rejection of the 1939 reforms only limited to the size of the regions? It is pertinent to observe here that the colonial state had imposed a unitary system of government in the country where power to administer and share revenue generated by the regions was transmitted to the centre to be shared to all the regions. The sharing formula had regards to the size and demography of each region. Although the bulk of the revenue came from the two southern regions, in terms of sharing, much more went to the north after the exercise. The western region was so emphatic that the reform or restructuring displayed so much biasness by showing that its region had the smallest geographical size and secondly, it gave the north advantage on the number of representatives in government, revenue allocation, outcome of elections and population census, uneven distribution of power among the three regions. For example in the 1951 Legislative House, a provision of 136 members to be elected indirectly was provided. Out of this number, 68 (fifty percent) were from the north while the eastern and western regions were left with 34 members each. Also, the 1954 constitution provided for 186 elected members in the Legislative House. The north alone had 94 members while the east and west had 42 each, 2 from Lagos and 6 from southern Cameroon (Olusanya, 2004: 518 - 544). This clearly shows that the two southern regions had preferred the adoption of federalism by the British and not a unitary ideology that was imposed on them.

### **State-Society Relations during the First Republic 1960 – 1966**

Strained state-society relations got heightened in the course of the post-independence period. This is so because the immediate post-independent state was just a mere replica of the colonial state in terms of its political agenda and policies bordering on regional creation in relations to the ethnic minorities in the defunct western region and the entire country at large. The minorities were dissatisfied with the distribution of regions, power and resources in the country (Benjamin: 96). Why were the minorities dissatisfied in this case? The minorities were not contented because if truly, federalism thrives by bringing people together from their diverse socio-cultural integrating ethnic and geographical leanings so that power and resources can be distributed equitably, why was it not applied to them?

The method that the NPC and NCNC coalition government implored in the creation of Mid-western region from the old western region was hostile, dictatorial and Hobbesian in outlook even in a system that ought to have showcased and lived within the tenets of real democracy. Resentments by the old western region and minorities of the Northern and Eastern regions against this unfairness culminated into strained relationships which sparked off violence in the west leading to a declaration of a state of emergency over the region (Dudley, 1966: 65-66). This impacted negatively on state-society relations and eventually laid the foundation for the military takeover of 1966 (Okpeh, OI, Lafia, 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2020; Fwatshak, OI, Jos, 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, Larab, 15:03:2021).

It is pertinent to note that the NPC made all strides to ensure that it used its geographical population of the northern region to get what it wanted. Given her position as leading the country and having gotten firm grip of the control of the national treasury, they were able to determine which projects were needed most and the region and people to benefit from many of its developmental projects and contract awards. We beg to ask here whether federalism breeds inequality amongst constituent units in terms of sharing power and resources. Certainly it does not because such a move negates the principles of federalism. This was the attitude that heightened the fear of domination that slipped into the politics of the 1960s. The people from the south feared that the NPC controlled government representing the interest of the Northern region would divert resources to the north, cut southerners out of their positions in the administration and the military and then gradually Islamize the country (Falola & Mathew, 2008: 165).

The introduction of the quota system in the army which put recruitments from the North at 50 percent while the other two regions had only 25 percent each leading to the largely northern dominated Nigerian army

(who were largely uneducated) to be led by the southern educated class was a great source of anxiety. Although the colonial policy had appointed educated men from the south into the public service, the NPC led government used its influence to appoint mostly uneducated men in various positions of authority in order to bring the north at par with the south in the public service (Oyeweso: 142). Even the first national Development Plan gave more attention to the development of the north. In the area of funds allocations for development, funds earmarked for every sector went to projects in the north more than the entire south put together. But how could a government that was supposed to be winning people's hearts be the one hurting the same people? A government that was brought in through democratic means but just all of a sudden decided to turn into a dictator and not willing to apply the rule of law in governance clearly spoke to Thomas Hobbes. Southerners especially the elite class got disenchanted with the rate at which the state was disregarding hard work but favoured mediocrity based on ethnicity at the expense of merit and fairness to the regions (Ibid, Falola) thus, further deepening and impairing on state-society relations in the country. They were particularly unhappy imagining how resources from their area that sustained the country's revenue could be used to develop the north at their own expense (Oyeweso: 142). Although the two southern regions attempted to wrestle for power from the north, the north opposed to it and it was eventually responsible for the political crises and collapse of the first republic in 1966. By 1967, the eastern region denounced the amalgamation of Nigeria and announced the birth of Biafra a new Igbo nation which was a breakaway from the colonial project called Nigeria which eventually ushered in the 30 months civil war between the federal government and Biafra that ended in a "no victor no vanquished" as pronounced by General Gowon (Ibid).

It must be stated at once that the creation of Mid-Western region on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 1963 raised the minority group politics beyond the level of rhetoric and parliamentary debates and offered a fresh hope to several states movements which had every reason to believe that their goal will soon be attained. The creation of the mid-western state by the NPC and NCNC coalition regime spoke to the philosophy of Locke. At least for the first time, the minority groups started seeing some light at the end of the tunnel signifying that there was still hope. The creation politics resulted in forces which reinvigorated separatist agitations in the country. Sequel to dramatic developments within the eastern region bordering on domination and marginalization of the minorities in the region (Irons's centrist state). Isaac Adaka Boro a former classic undergraduate of the University of Nigeria Nsukka had on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1966 in total display of resentments over impaired state-society relations challenged the right of the federal government to control the resources located in the Niger delta with less commitment to develop the socio-economic infrastructures in the oil producing communities. Thus, he declared the Niger Delta Peoples' Republic and went ahead to protect it militarily. Although his action was quelled down by the federal might, the republic had survived and lasted for 12 days (Akinleye, 2003: 151). The question that requires an answer here is: What was the implication of Irons's centralization decree of 1956 on the political history of Nigeria? The implication is that it abolished the practice of true federalism that had been in place in the country since 1953. In practice, Nigeria's federalism before Irons's decree had recognized the autonomous status of all the regional entities with full powers over resource control or derivation but the decree suddenly supplanted it with a unitary system of government that took away the fiscal autonomy or powers of derivation of resources from the respective regions. The unilateral decision taken by Irons's regime having imposed a unitary system in Nigeria in spite of the absence of any form of consultation, inputs or opinion from citizens or the constituent units or regions was clearly an action akin to tyranny within the tenets of Thomas Hobbes. Consequently, with the power to share offices and distribute resources effectively transferred and bestowed on the central government, hence forth, revenue from the regions including Isaac Adaka's rich oil bearing Rivers were to be transmitted to the centre for the infrastructural development of the whole country. So how was the oil rich Adaka's mid-western region supposed to behave amidst this regimental style of leadership by the state? The best option left out for Adaka as far as the situation was concerned at that time, was to do exactly what he did as a mark of protest. There was also the north's pro-separation ("*Yan Araba Aware*") protest in Zaria following the 1966 January coup in view of its impact on the region having been interpreted as anti-north sequel to the killings of key northern politicians by the coup plotters. This event was followed by a northern Nigeria program that included secession but which was deleted following the British intervention (Fwatshak and Ayuba: 11).

Irons's ill-advised measures that he took especially his Decree 34 of 1966 which turned the country into a unitary state created serious problems. The liberal view appeared to say or suggest that a mistake had been committed in attempting to unite forcefully people who were unwilling to be united at that time. The proper interpretation was that the military Decree was meant to promote Igbo domination which eventually accounted for the overthrow of Irons's regime. On assumption of office, Yakubu Gowon instantly reversed the country back by abrogating the unitary decree and returned the country into its status before the January 1966 coup. Notwithstanding, if one may ask: Did Gowon's abrogation of the unitary decree actually revert the practice of true federalism in Nigeria back to its pre 1966 experience? To state the obvious, it did not. This is so because once the military took over power, they completely dismantled the nature and kind of Nigeria's federalism by

abolishing regional power and fiscal autonomy and centralizing same for the devolution of power and resources in the federation which was sustained through the process of increasing or creating more states. All these were concerns of Nigerian groups on whether to remain together as one Nigeria or not arising from the lopsided nature of state-society relations prevalent across the various sections of the country at that time (Ibid).

### **State-Society Relations during the Military Regimes (Gen Gowon – Gen Abacha) 1967 – 1996**

Subsequent regimes from Gowon to Abacha In trying to fix boundaries in Nigeria stretching from 1967, the state as we have noted earlier disregarded the constitutional provisions needed to establish states in the country. This arbitrariness negates the open democratic debates and other institutional frameworks that are required before new states can be created. Starting with Gowon's reforms of 1967, the following paragraphs showcase how the series of boundary creations by the military across regimes up to that of General Abacha diffused and impaired on state-society relations in the country.

Gowon's creation of twelve states for the country which aimed at stabilizing the country, allaying the fear of domination as well as liberating and granting economic and political power to the minorities in whose areas mineral and economic resources of the federation were concentrated had tremendous impact on the populace (Mgbada, 2012:113). Apart from giving the south and north equal status in terms of number of states, it also redressed the majority-minority imbalance of the erstwhile regional system.

While the minority groups saw the exercise as speaking to Locke as demonstrated in their expression of joy over the development thanking the state for yielding to their demands, the majority groups detested it and interpreted state's action as akin to Hobbes. Thus, they expressed sadness holding that the exercise was a clear case of bias and solidarity demonstrated by the state just to favour and equate the minorities with them (Vande, 2012: 40) more so that the principal state actors in the helm of affairs of that regime including Gowon himself were from the minority groups (Larab, 2021). The Igbo of the newly created East-central state led by Colonel Odumegu Ojukwu protested and accused the state of unfairness, holding strong feelings against them and giving the eastern minorities an edge over them. They wondered how and why in spite of their dominant demography in the region, the minorities had two states leaving them with just one (Ejitu et' tal, 2020:4).

On the very day that Gowon announced the creation of 12 states (27<sup>th</sup> May 1967), the Eastern Consultative Assembly mandated Odumegu Ojukwu to declare at the earliest practicable date Eastern Nigeria a free, sovereign and independent state by the name title of the Republic of Biafra. We need to pose a question at this juncture: Why did the Eastern Consultative Assembly ask Ojukwu to declare the Eastern Nigeria region a free and independent state? It will be reasonable to respond here that the Igbo had interpreted Gowon's action in creating just a single state for them in spite of their numerical strength and resource base devoid of any form of consultation to that effect, as purely an act of tyranny from a dictator and Hobbesian leader who did not value their corporate existence as citizens of Nigeria. Therefore, they needed to detach themselves utilizing the machinery of self-determination. Continuous protests by the Igbo in the race for dominance sparked off a civil war that lasted from 1967 to 1970 (Akinyele: 151) which had serious implications not only on state-society relations but also on inter-relations amongst groups in the country. Igbo people living in northern cities were killed while their properties were destroyed. Meanwhile, Victor Banjo declared a Midwest Republic out of Biafra. Along with the minorities of the defunct Eastern region, they pulled out from the war, aligned with the federal forces (Fwatshak: 10) and left the Igbo standing as lone rangers (Larab, 2021, Michael Agu, OI, Furaka, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2022).

Although the end of the war brought hope to Nigerians that the crisis of management of diversity was over following Gowon's declaration of "No victor no vanquished", the issue of abandoned property policy of returning to their Igbo owners' property held across various parts of Nigeria was not a huge success and left victims grumbling (Fwatshak and Ayuba, 2014: 11-12, Ijoma Okoro, 2014: 95 - 96). There was also the issue of declaration of the Biafran currency illegal after the war. Although the government reluctantly decided after few months of the war for all holders of Biafran money to return it to the central bank in exchange for twenty pounds irrespective of the amount one deposited, in many families, that amount was the only money available to feed and fend for them. This made life so difficult for a lot of Igbo people coming back from the war. Besides, the indigenization Decree of 1972 that nationalized certain enterprises dominated by foreigners just two years after the war did not favour the Igbo as they were not solvent or had any money to benefit from the measure (Ibid, Ijoma: 97). Besides, the Public Officers (Special Provision) Decree No. 46 of 1970 made nonsense of the amnesty proclamation of General Gowon at the end of the war to the effect that most public officers who took part in the war lost their jobs. Even those that were hesitatingly and unwillingly reabsorbed were treated as second class citizens in the perception of the Igbo people (Ibid: 96). It is worth asking here that if federalism frowns at inequality, recognizes fundamental human rights and preaches national integration, why was it not applied to the Igbo in these circumstances? It is hereby submitted that the issue boils down to the defective federal system being practiced in the country that undermines the fundamental principles and philosophy of federalism.

After the war, there was no effort geared towards rehabilitation and reconstruction of physical structures in the affected Igbo area. Public institutions such as roads, establishments and educational institutions still portrayed dents and scars of war. Above all, no Igbo person featured in Gowon's cabinet. Obviously, this must have been because of their secessionist outing and war. Even under General Murtala/Obasanjo, it was only Lt. Cdr. Ebitu Ukiwe that found himself in the cabinet. To the Igbo, the state was nothing but a Terror, quite Hobbesian both in outlook and action and above all, a hostile institution that exerted force and tormented them (Michael Agu, 2022).

Murtala's nineteen states restructuring arrangement gave the North ten states leaving the south with nine. This attracted heavy condemnation from different sections of the country. The minority groups in the country were sad and treated this as an alteration of Gowon's surgical reforms that had redressed and conferred equitable spread of states across regional and ethnic lines, thus balancing power between the dominant North-South and majority versus minority dichotomies in the country (Solomon, 2012: 98, Osaghe, 1986: 158-160, Ojo and Adebayo: 342). To the minorities, a regime that gave the majority groups preference over them spoke to dictators and Hobbesian leaders.

Once again, the Igbo were placed in a mood of sadness imagining how in spite of their numerical strength, landmass and economic potentials, the state could give them just two states out of nineteen (Michael Agu, 01). As far as they were concerned, no leader would have done such a thing if not a tyrant or dictator that was so much inclined to Hobbesian norms and doctrines. The Northern minorities interpreted state's action as an act of hostility and returning them back to the period of regionalism and Hausa/Fulani hegemony (Solomon, 2012: 98, Adeyemi, 2013: 165). The Igbo and the minority groups saw Murtala/Obasanjo reforms as pure Hausa-Fulani/Yoruba conspiracy agenda that gave the Duos an edge over other groups in terms of number of states more so that the two principal state actors were from the two ethnic divides (Vende, 2012: 40, Omotosho, 2004: 106, Adeyemi: 165).

The Murtala/Obasanjo regime as we have seen earlier, had set up a committee to coordinate the exercise which shows that in spite of its status as a regime led by military officers who were expected to be dictatorial in exercising power, yet, they felt that the people's consent was necessary. This was a responsible way of thinking and indeed, a good one. But it also needs to be stressed here that the very essence or core values of Nigeria's federalism was to accommodate the heterogeneous and multi ethnic set up in the country. If that was the case, it then follows that, a situation that propped majority groups over and above minority ones in terms of number of states was indeed, an abnormal one and negates the principle of federalism. Clearly the voice of the minorities did not seem to have spoken or appealed to the state or that in the alternative, the voice wasn't heard enough.

Although no boundary reforms were carried out by the regime of Alh Shehu Aliyu at the national level in the course of his administration, however, his ability to have not only granted amnesty to the "warlord of Biafra" Colonel Chukwumeka Odumegwu Ojukwu but also ensuring his safe return back to Nigeria in 1982, an action that the military regimes before him couldn't handle is enough reason to applaud his effort for being a leader that cherished the integration of the country and its people. To be sure, Shagari's decision appealed to the entire Igbo nation where he earned their respect. At least, this was a strong way of winning people's hearts by showing them love, not hurting them nor promoting hatred and anger against them. It was indeed, an avenue that fostered a smooth state-society relation at that time.

Babangida's restructuring exercise of 1987 that created only Akwa Ibom and Katsina states out of the multiple requests presented before him came under tense criticisms and attracted reactions from all sections of the country. The state was accused of bias in favour of key political figures and gladiators from the states in question and equally of extending political and economic corruption agenda in favour of the dominant interest of Hausa/Fulani (Timothy, 2014: 66). The accusers in their opinion contended that Babangida's decision was purely that of a military dictator and typical of a Hobbesian leader and philosopher. His 1991 reforms which gave the north five states leaving the south with four portrayed the state in bad light. Various sections of southerners condemned the exercise as a clear case of bias in favour of the north thereby occasioning an imbalance in relation to the distribution of sixteen states in the north as against fourteen in the south (Johnson, 1991, Adeyemi, 2013: 155-174).

Moreover, the emergence of the Delta and Jigawa states as products of the exercise were received with mixed feeling. Whereas a section of the polity interpreted Babangida's regime as Lockean having satisfied their yearnings, others saw it as Hobbesian having not been able to satisfy their interest. But to be fair to Babangida, the mere fact that the state under him as a military officer that had the power to do and undo but nevertheless, subjected the exercise to scrutiny by a committee was enough reason to exonerate him as his action spoke much to Locke than Hobbes. In Delta, it was a situation of sadness and joy. Joy because a new state was created but sadness characterized by detestation and disappointments followed sequel to the role of Maryam (wife of General Babangida) in the sitting of the state capital in Asaba an Igbo town that doubled as her home town contrary to the expectation of advocates of the new state (Ojo and Adebayo, Adeyemi).

In Jigawa, the experience was also that of sadness and joy given the reactions that trailed after the

announcement of its creation. Joy because the pro-Jigawa elements who were indeed close allies of the military president had brought their influence to bear and had Jigawa state created for them with headquarters in Dutse as requested. On their part, the opponents that had in the alternative requested for the creation of Hadeja state with capital in Hadeja, the experience was that of sadness as the state declined their prayer. They had hoped that even if the state was not favourably disposed to creating Hadeja state, it should have alternatively sited the capital in Hadeja. In their view, Dutse was not comparable to Hadeja in terms of growth and development (Dankofa & Auwalu, OI, Dutse, 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2021, and Abubakar, OI, Hadeja, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2021).

Although Abacha's 1996 restructuring exercise moved the number of states from 30 to 36, it re-introduced the majority-minority dichotomy as it moved the number of states for the so-called majority groups to 22 leaving the minorities with just 14 states in the country. The minority groups across the country detested it and expressed their grievances alleging injustice, marginalization and unfairness by the state in the exercise that shortchanged them in terms of number of states (Solomon: 100). Although the minorities generally saw the state as being Hobbesian in view of the arbitrariness and application of force in fixing the boundaries, it is submitted that whatever people may say, you can never have a perfect situation in any boundary reform or exercise. Abacha's action as far as the exercise was concerned, points to the consultative style of Locke. Even if the people's voice wasn't heard enough, it is clear that he at least subjected the exercise to close scrutiny through a committee that collected views from the people about its conduct. On the whole, the Igbo have maintained that throughout the period of the military regimes and their reforms in the country from General Gowon to Abdulsallam Abubakar, they did not fare well with regards to states and local government creations on the one hand and political appointments and patronage on the other (Ijioma: 98).

The circumstances and experience that accompanied the creation of Nasarawa state from the defunct Plateau state ushered in a moment of sadness and joy across the state. Citizens were generally happy that the state had yielded to their demand and created a state for them. To them, the state was Lockean in nature having carried them along in the process. However, their sadness reflected the fact that the sitting of the capital was distorted. Their sadness was a way of telling the state that it had metamorphosed and adopted the values and thoughts of Thomas Hobbes when it fixed the capital in Lafia as against Akwanga their popular choice. Having been influenced by the Kanuri factor, Gen Abacha fixed it in Lafia just to confer advantage to the Kanuri dynasty there so that the emir can enjoy the automatic chairmanship of the state's Council of Chiefs and Emirs. The overwhelming majority population of the state interpreted this as a clear case of political corruption and nepotism orchestrated by the state in favour of Abacha's Kanuri kinsmen (Allumaga, OI, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021, Dadu, OI, 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2021). This was the nature of state – society relations in Nigeria during the period under review.

## Conclusion

Our subject of discussion in this work was to examine the impact of boundary formations on state- society relations in Nigeria 1960 - 1996. It was noted that the amalgamation and formation of boundaries in the form of regions, divisions and adoption of indirect rule in pre 1960 Nigeria was detested and rejected by all sections of the citizenry. This was so because the amalgamation agenda did not factor or improvise efficient mechanisms to manage diversities that would have promoted cordial state-society relations. This led to strain state-society relations, discrimination between and among regional groups and further promoted marginalization and domination of minority groups by the majority. It was further noted that the abolition of federalism and adoption of a unitary system by the military in the series of creation of new states and local governments impacted ostensibly on state-society relations. The study proposed that the exercise of arbitrary boundary fixings in Nigeria has disrupted state-society relations in the country. Throughout our discussion, we demonstrated how the military regimes while fixing boundaries in Nigeria operated in strict observance of John Locke's ethics and values where state-society relations flourished well and smoothly but got disrupted each time when leaders acted in tune with the philosophical doctrines and norms of Thomas Hobbes. Because this is the pillar for our intellectual inquiry, we have proved our case.

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### Oral Interviews

- Prof. Bawuro Barkindo, male, 75 years, Abuja, Former Director General, National Boundary Commission, Abuja, Nigeria, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- Prof. Okpeh Ochai Okpeh, male, 56 years old, Lafia, Academician, 15/12/2020
- Dr A. A. Adaji; Male; 58 years old, Abuja, Director General, National Boundary Commission, Abuja, Nigeria, 15/03/2021
- Larab Tangshak Ayuba, Male, 49 years old, Jos, Academician, 15/03/2021
- Bar Zakary Allumaga; Male, 58 years old, Lafia, Community leader/Public servant, 25/03/2021
- Benjamin Dadu; Male, 60 years old, Lafia, Community leader/public servant, 05/04/2021
- Ali Dankofa Limawa; Male, 58 years old, Dutse, Civil servant, Ministry of Education, Jigawa state, 25/06/2021
- Auwalu Mohammed Bello; Male, 57 years old, civil servant, Ministry of Budget and planning, Jigawa state, 25/06/2021
- Mallam Musa Abubakar, Male, 54 years old, Malamidori, Hadeja, Jigawa state, business man, 10/08/2021
- Michael Agu, Male, 62 years old, Furaka Junction, Jos Jarawa, 30/03/2022