



**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OYE-EKITI**

**11<sup>th</sup>**

**INAUGURAL  
LECTURE**

**TITLED:**

**Nigeria and the  
Undying Spirit of Separatism**

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# **NIGERIA AND THE UNDYING SPIRIT OF SEPARATISM**

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Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

## **Preamble**

It is my pleasure to present the second inaugural lecture from the Faculty of Social Sciences and, incidentally, the second from the Department of Political Science. My friend and brother, Professor J. Shola Omotola, blazed the trail on 14 December, 2021 when he presented *The Troubled Trinity: Democracy, Elections and Development in Nigeria*. This inaugural lecture is the 11<sup>th</sup> in the history of the university, with Professor Olufunke Akintayo setting the ball rolling, followed closely by Professors Bakare

Ojo Rasaki, Shola Omotola, Mojisola Oyarhekua, Emmanuel Olumayede, Olugbenga Amu, Tajudeen Opoola, Abiodun Ajiboye, Bukola Bolaji and Babatunde Afolabi in that order. I am also delighted to stand on this podium and give a reflection encompassing some aspects of my academic works in the past two decades.

My love for inaugural lectures started from my undergraduate days at the University of Ibadan. After attending my first one as a “Jambito”, which was the 92<sup>nd</sup> inaugural lecture at the University, titled “Mosses and Mankind”, delivered by Professor Adeyemi Egunyomi of the university’s Department of Microbiology, I cannot remember ever missing any in the series throughout my period of study in the university. Each time I listened to the scholars; I would imagine myself standing on the podium one day to give a lecture of such magnitude to such a sophisticated audience. Today, it has come to reality. It is my turn, and here I am.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, academia was not initially my childhood dream. Growing up, I longed to be a journalist and I had taken as my role models great journalists and columnists like Ismail Babatunde Jose, Abiodun Aloba, Alade Odunewu (Allah-Dey), Tola Adeniyi (Aba Saheed), Eric Teniola, Gbolabo Ogunsanwo, Areoye Oyebola, Sam Amuka Pemu (Sad Sam), Mohammed Haruna, Pini Jason, Stanley Macebuh, Felix Adenaike, Peter Ajayi, Niyi Oniororo, Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbese, Yakubu Mohammed, Dare Babarinsa, Dele Olojede, Nosa Igiebor, Mike Awoyinfa among others. My desire for the pen profession was so strong that I entered the Polytechnic Ibadan for a National Diploma in Mass Communication. I emerged on top of the class and won the departmental prize as the best graduating student. The desire for more academic excellence that would make me a better journalist drove me to enroll for a degree in political science at the

University of Ibadan, again emerging on top of the class. But there are ways our desires and ambitions are shaped by forces operating beyond our mortal control. By the time I left UI after the first degree, my perspective had changed, and I had started looking in the direction of academia. However, immediately after my youth service, rather than the newsroom or the classroom, I found myself in the civil service. But after a stint of five years, academia beckoned again, and I joined the Political Science Department at the University of Ado Ekiti, (now Ekiti State University) as an assistant lecturer. Fifteen years after, in year 2020, I was headhunted to join the Federal University, Oye Ekiti, as a Professor of Political Science. So far, it has been a splendid job experience that has taken me to different parts of the globe.

The inaugural lecture is rooted in British academic tradition. In its pristine form, it is a tradition where academic colleagues will have the opportunity to listen to a newly made professor. The modality is that shortly after attaining that status, the new professor will give a talk to colleagues on key aspects or findings of his/her academic endeavours, or a reflection on a current societal problem for the purpose of enlightenment (Oyeweso, 2006:2). The presentation will be done in such a simplified manner that people who are not in the same field with the professor will understand what he or she has come to say. It used to be strictly an academic exercise meant only for academic gatherings. In fact, such talks were given over a cup of tea or coffee at the faculty club (Makinde, 2004:1). However, over the years, inaugural lectures, in the Nigerian context, have undergone a cultural transformation and have now become the academic equivalents of “*iwuye*”, that is, chieftaincy conferment (Makinde, 2004:1). Of course, an inaugural lecture is not an *iwuye*, and such social additions should not in any way diminish the rich academic tonic it is designed to offer.

Over the years, there have been different approaches to inaugural lectures. Some scholars have used the opportunity to explain the relevance of their disciplines to the society; some to call for more attention and funding to their line of research; others to catalogue their publications; and still others to comment on topical issues of national, international, or human importance. I am here to give a reflection on a national issue that has dogged the evolution and operation of the Nigerian state from inception, which fall squarely within my line of academic research.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, choosing a topic for an inaugural lecture in political science can be agonizing (Ayoade, 1997:1). By the nature of our discipline, we are confronted with a barrage of topical issues, even when operating within a narrow area of specialty, and settling down for one is often problematic. However, after much reflection, I settled for “**Nigeria and the Undying Spirit of Separatism**”. I chose this title because the greater part of my academic activities has revolved around peace and conflict resolution, governance, and international relations within the context of the Nigerian state and Africa. Without a doubt, the spirit of separatism hovers around the Nigerian state. At times, the possibility of dismemberment appears real. The voices of people dreaming, seeking, or mouthing separation get louder by the day. The hangman seems primed for action, and the butcher is waiting with his knife, apparently ready to begin dismembering the fallen behemoth. What accounts for this? What are the historical and contemporary contents of the spirit of separatism in Nigeria? How do we exorcise such spirit from our body politic?

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, sir, I will in the following pages of this lecture, be “wrestling” with the spirit of separatism, by answering the foregoing questions.

Following on the preamble that I have done, I will give a brief talk on political science, as a way of acknowledging the discipline that propelled me to this podium. Then, I will do a reflection on the state with a focus on the African and Nigerian variants. This will be followed by conceptual and theoretical analyses on the interface between the state and separatism. Thereafter, I will provide some historical and contemporary insights into separatism in Nigeria. I will also discuss reasons for separatist agitations over the years in the country and suggest ways of exorcising such spirit from our body politic. After this, I will conclude the presentation with a theoretical position on the Nigerian context.

### **The Field of Political Science**

Adebayo Williams (2004:399) once observed that political science presents “an elegant but troubling oxymoron” because its object of study, the behaviour of human beings, is the least of all things that can ever be subjected to scientific exactitude. Drawing from Shakespeare’s face-mind dichotomy, Williams noted the difficulty of a scientific study of an object that is characterized by unpredictability. In his words, “the probability and prospects of a science that captures and codes the great irrational dynamics of politics or the greater irrational dynamics that propel its paradigmatic personalities appear more remote”. He did not stop there. He made a major observation that:

... the most seminal and celebrated “political scientists” of all time are often historians, social commentators with acute perceptions and even journalists with an attitude: Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, Ibn Khaldun, Machiavelli, De Tocqueville, Antonio Gramsci etc; or they are philosophers with a social axe to grind: John

Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Hegel, Marx etc  
(Williams, 2004:399).

Earlier in 1967, James Davies had heralded William's observation as follow:

There is some ground for dismay in noting the large number of books that have had enormous impact in political science but have been written by outsiders, by those who did not dwell in academia, or if they did, made and tested their constructs with tools unfamiliar to political scientists (Davies, 1967:162).

Davies listed Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), Roberto Michel's *Political Parties* (1911), Erich Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (1941), Else Frenkel-Brunswick's *Authoritarian Personality* (1950) and Robert Ardrey's *Territorial Imperative* (1966) as examples of great books in political science written by non-political scientists. In fact, Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* was despised and rejected by some scholars in Oxford and Cambridge of his time. Yet, the book remains one of the greatest books ever written on the state, for it is therein that Hobbes made the often-quoted phrase that in the state of nature, "Man's life was solitary poor, nasty, brutish, and short".

I accept the veracity of the above statements: the challenges of scientific study of human's political behaviour; and the influence of non-political scientists on the discipline of political science. Over the years, however, political scientists have developed and, in some cases, borrowed tools and techniques with which they can predict and indeed measure human political behaviour with appreciable exactitude. Thus, the science in the



political is no longer a subject of conjecture. The impact of non-political scientists also indicates that even before it became a vogue in academia, political science had seen the imperative of a multidisciplinary approach to intellectual inquiry, and has since embraced it, and the discipline is the better for it. At any rate, these contributions elevate, rather than diminish, the profundity of political science.

At its most elementary understanding, political science studies the political behaviour of human beings, the institutions and the processes under which humans are governed (Olaniyan and Osegboun, 2023). It is a field of inquiry that seeks the “examination of political processes in a manner that offers information without denying complexity and nuance” (Grigsby, 2012:8). Thus, the task of the political scientist is to subject political phenomenon to intellectual inquiry towards understanding it. The knowledge is then passed to the society for the purpose of shaping governance process.

The subfields of political science include comparative politics (which examines politics within and across political systems); international relations (which studies politics among nations including international conflicts, diplomacy, international law and organizations); political theory (which focuses on political philosophy and thoughts of major socio-political thinkers); public administration (which studies how bureaucracies work and how they can be improved); public policy (which studies the interface of politics and economics with an eye to developing effective programmes) (Roskin, et al, 2010). Therefore, those who have separated public administration and international relations, for examples, from political science have done something like separating a child from his/her mother.

A lot of people do conflate political scientists with politicians. A wide gulf exists between the two. By simple definition, a politician is a person who is active in party politics, holding or seeking to hold political office either through appointment or election. One does not need to read political science to be a politician. As a matter of fact, one may not even earn a degree to be a politician. Even the Nigerian constitution only prescribes attendance of a secondary school as the basic requirement to aspire to be the president of the country. An apt distinction between the two has been made as follow:

<b>Politicians</b>	<b>Political Scientists</b>
Love power	Sceptical of power
Seek popularity	Seek accuracy
Think practically	Think abstractly
Hold firm views	Reach tentative conclusions
See short-term pay off	See long-term consequences
Plan for next election	Plan for next publication
Respond to groups	Seek the good of the whole
Seek name recognition	Seek professional prestige

*Source: Roskin, Cord, Medeiros & Jones (2010)*

Despite the differences, the two are not mutually exclusive. Both politicians and political scientists are important in any society. A knowledge of political science is good for a political career. It is expected that a politician who studied political science would have known the rudiments of government and thus should exhibit some level of competence in handling governmental affairs. Nonetheless, a wide range of opportunities are available for graduates of political science in the public and private sectors of the economy.

Fundamentally, political science is not a study of how to be a politician, but a study of how politics is played. Political scientists are, more than anything else, politicists, that is, they are perennial students of political phenomenon and are committed to analysis. In short, they are interested in making intellectual inquiries into various issues and institutions in the society, the chief of which is the state and the forces arrayed against it.

### **The State in Perspective**

Mr. Vice Chancellor, it is important to give a perspective on the state, and situate the place of Africa and Nigeria in it. The state, as we have it today, has emerged as one of the most important institutions in human existence, emerging as the most pervasive entity, even “seeking dominance and centrality and intruding into every facet of social formation” (Agbaje, 1993:455). It is so central to human existence that the legendary Aristotle noted with finality that whoever refuses to live in the state is either a beast (below humanity) or demigod (above humanity). As a result of its strategic importance, it is one of the central objects of discourse in political science. Interestingly, the state is also of interest to virtually all the disciplines in social sciences and humanities. Consequent on the concerted interest across disciplines, a plethora of conceptualizations has emerged on the origin and essence of the state.

But all the conceptualizations have ended in two finalities: the state as an “end in itself” and the state as a “means to an end” (Olaniyan, 1998, Olaniyan, 2006). The German philosopher, Georg William Friedrich Hegel, as the prime mover of the first line of argument, offered what could be regarded as the spiritual dimension by submitting that the state was God’s plan enacted on earth. Therefore, as God’s Will, the people are mandated to dedicate themselves to it as a matter of deference (Baradat, 1979:251). Most other theorists, however, see the state as a

“means to an end”. Within this perspective are the scholars of social contract, utilitarian and force persuasions. For instance, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jacques J. Rousseau of the social contract tradition, conceived the state as one geared towards security, justice, and welfare of the citizens (Ajayi, 1997). Jeremy Bentham and JS Mill of the utilitarian school see the state as means to promoting happiness among the citizenry. The force theory sees the state as conceived to ensure protection of citizens (Olaniyan, 1998, Olaniyan, 2006, Omotola, 2016).

All the perspectives place citizens at the centre of the existence of the state. In essence, the state exists primarily for the people. The differences among the perspectives are in terms of usually varied positions of the people in the event of inadequacies of the state. While Hegelian position seems to foreclose rebellion, other perspectives prescribe citizen’s right of reaction. The extent and tempo of such reaction, however, varies.

Furthermore, scholars have introduced juridical and empirical dimensions to the understanding of the state. Such issues as population, territory, government, and sovereignty constitute the juridical dimension; while the empirical values include ability to have total dominion over a territory, enforce commands, laws, and regulations over citizens, provide welfare, and generally be seen to be caring by the citizens (Azarya, 1998, Omotola, 2016,). The juridical dimension can be regarded as the ‘state in being’, while the empirical stands for the ‘state in practice’. In political science discourse, the empirical dimension constitutes what makes a state a state. It is not enough to exist, there must be a purpose for the existence. Therefore, a proper definition of the state would go beyond the juridical to include the empirical dimension, as argued by scholars like Claude Ake, Samir Amir, Peter Ekeh, etc. It is on this scale that states have been categorized as strong, weak/soft, failing, or failed. A strong state is the

one that meets the juridical and empirical conditions; the weak state satisfies more of the juridical but falls short of the empirical; the failing states struggles to meet the juridical condition, while the failed state is already gone.

Applied to Africa, we discover that several states in the continent have fallen short of the empirical consideration, and do not, in the real sense, qualified to be called states. This explains why most states in Africa oscillate between the weak and failing, while few have failed outright as evidenced by Somalia.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, in the above categorization, where do we locate Nigeria? In political science discourse, the place of Nigeria is still a matter of debate. Some people would place it in the weak or soft category while some project failing status, and in the extreme, a failed one. My position is that just as there is a difference between dying and dead, also there is a difference between failing and failed. Perhaps we are all sitting here today because Nigeria has not totally failed. Of course, Nigeria is out of the strong state club. It is in the league of the weak or soft with its feet dangling dangerously at the precipice of a free fall.

### **State and Separatism**

The state has existed both in medieval and modern terms. While there are diverging views on the origin of the medieval state, the same cannot be said of its modern variant. The modern state, as we have it, came into being through the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. That means, the modern nation-state system is 375 years old, this year. That is quite recent, given the long existence of humanity on earth! The emergence of the modern state is not a mere happenstance. It was a deliberate creation that owed its strategic provenance to important historical developments in Europe. It came into existence as a product of

the interplay of forces standing at opposing ends – one acting as forces of convergence (centripetal) and the other as forces of divergence (centrifugal) (Olaniyan, 2014).

The Treaty of Westphalia was a product of events of cataclysmic proportions. It was preceded by thirty years' war, which led to the forceful dissolution of Europe's empires and kingdoms; fragmentations and emergence of warlords with military and economic powers (Spruyt, 2002). These forces later coalesced into the emergence of the state as we have it today. Therefore, the battle was between the forces of convergence and that of divergence, and the triumph of the former over the latter represents, in a real sense, a major factor in the emergence of the state in Europe (Poggi, 1978). Except in isolated pockets, this was replicated all over the world (Olaniyan, 2014).

The foregoing suggests that the creation of the modern state in Europe, as well as its replication in other climes, has been a product of wars, forceful occupation, annexation, conquest, and subjugations (Shively, 1997:25). If there was any negotiation or bargaining, they were of little essence and significance. For a very long time after their creation, the states in Europe were in ferment as the two forces were locked in a battle of supremacy. Peace was elusive until the forces of convergence eventually and finally prevailed. The triumph of centripetal over centrifugal forces marked the consolidation of the nation-state in Europe (Olaniyan, 2014).

Mr. Vice Chancellor, from the foregoing, four major facts about the state have come to bold relief. One, states, except for a few cases, are products of force. Two, they are an agglomeration of different groups. Three, these disparate groups were forcefully cobbled together by superior forces and maintained by such. Four, implanted within the nation-state system are the two forces of convergence and divergence. In other words, all states

possess, in varying measures, unifying, and separating tendencies. This means, right from inception, the nation-state system has been under the constant threats of centripetal and centrifugal forces (Olaniyan, 2014).

Mr Vice Chancellor, Sir, centrifugal forces remain the albatross of the nation-state and have resulted in the failure, collapse, and re-arrangement of several states (Olaniyan, 2014). In 1814, the Kalmar Union (also called the Nordic empire) which had existed since 1397, got dissolved, and Norway emerged as a separate state. In 1830 Belgium separated from the Northern Netherlands. In 1905, Sweden parted ways with Norway. In 1922, Ireland separated from the United Kingdom and became the Irish Free State, now the Republic of Ireland. In 1944, Iceland split from Denmark. In 1947, the British India Dominion was partitioned into India and Pakistan; and 1971, Bangladesh left Pakistan. In 1965, the Parliament of Malaysia voted 126-0 to expel Singapore from the Malaysian federation. In 1991, the great Soviet Union split into 15 states. In 1992-93, Czechoslovakia split into Czech Republic and Slovakia. In 2002, East Timor left Indonesia. In 1993, Eritrea separated from Ethiopia and in 2011, South Sudan left Sudan. Except in few cases, most of the instances cited above, were not velvet divorce.

States that have not outrightly broken up also face the onslaught of centrifugal forces at various levels. Examples are legion: The United States of America, despite its towering stature in the world, has faced threats of secession or arguments justifying such from its inception as a state (Kperogi, 2023). At a point in its history, it had to fight a bitter civil war to keep centrifugal forces at bay. Since 1982, the Movement for the Democratic Forces of Casamance (MDFC) has launched a violent separatist movement against the Senegalese state. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) waged a 50-year deadly war against

the Colombian state. The Tamil Tigers fought long years of brutal and brutish war of separation in Sri Lanka before it was defeated. Spain, for long, has been battling with the separatist forces of Catalonia, Basque and ETA. In fact, the country had to enter into an agreement with the Basque region to prevent that part of the country from going away (Dowsett, 2017). The Nagal separatist army has, for over fifty years, engaged the Indian state in a bid for separation (Olaniyan, 2017). The French-speaking Quebec has been persistent in craving for a separate identity from the larger English-speaking Canada. The English-speaking people of Cameroun have been up in arms against the state in seeking the creation of Ambazonia state. The Middle East is not spared of the forces of separation as we have seen in Yemen and Syria. The Palestinians, since 1948, have sought for the emergence of their state, away from the iron grip of the Israeli state.

What the foregoing tells us is that separatism or secession threats are neither race-bound nor region-specific. It is a global phenomenon. Even with the growing powers of the state in terms of accumulation of powers of coercion, the spirit of separatism never dies. Thus, as the state gets more entrenched, so also is the power arrayed against it (Olaniyan, 2010). So, separatism spirit is alive in virtually every state of the world.

Based on the powers of the interplay of the centripetal and centrifugal forces within the state system, I have come up with three basic configurations as follow:

1. When centrifugal forces outweigh the centripetal ones, the state will collapse. In recent times we have witnessed the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia, when a quasi-federal system failed to withstand the forces of division. In



other words, the domination of forces of centrifugal over centripetal will result in the dismemberment of the state.

2. When centripetal forces overwhelmingly dominate the centrifugal forces in an entity, such a society will experience relative stability and cohesion. Some states and state systems, such as USA, European states, and the EU, exemplify this.
3. When there is a seeming balance between the two contending forces, the state will experience precarious stability characterized by serious frictions. It will be a case of a hen perching on the rope. It is neither easy for the rope, nor for the hen! (Olaniyan, 2014)

The third scenario, to some extent, captures the Nigerian situation, and is thus adopted for this presentation. The demonstration will come out clearly as I go into the full discourse.

### **Nigeria and the Spirit of Separatism**

As we all know, Nigeria came into being in 1914. It can be conveniently argued that the story of the beginning of Nigeria is one of acquisitions and merger (Olaniyan, 2014). It began with the annexation of Lagos in 1861, followed by spates of seizures and sackings of the various societies, kingdoms, and empires in the hinterland until they were all brought under British suzerainty. By early 1900, a picture of three units with varied historical origins had emerged: the Colony of Lagos acquired following the Treaty of Cession of Lagos of 1861; the Northern Protectorate; and the Southern Protectorate (Onabamiro, 1993, Ayoade, 1998). These variegated colonies were later subjected to two waves of amalgamation. The first was in 1906 when the Colony of Lagos was merged with the Southern Protectorate under one administration and the second (albeit the grander) was in 1914 when the Northern and Southern Protectorates were conjoined to form Nigeria (Olaniyan, 2014).

Based on the foregoing, and as abundantly represented in the literature, the Nigerian state is mainly a creation of European imperial powers with the boundary, composition and nomenclature shaped by three personalities: Otto Von Bismarck, the German Chancellor, who presided over the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 that partitioned Africa for the European powers to possess; Sir Frederick John Dealtry Lugard, who superintended the conjoining of the erstwhile two separate halves into one (Ballard, 1970:333, Tamuno, 1989:4); and lastly, Lady Flora Shaw, the then mistress (what this generation would call a 'side chick') of Lord Lugard who, in what could be interpreted as an 'imperial pillow talk', succeeded in influencing the imposition of the word "Nigeria" on the amalgamated entities (Olaniyan, 2006, Olaniyan, 2014). Flora Shaw had earlier written an article on January 8, 1897 where she used the word Nigeria to describe the area of the northern region, which Lugard, her boyfriend, was administering (Shaw, 1897, Kperogi, 2019). After amalgamation, the word that was hitherto coined exclusively for the northern part, was imposed on the new country that came out of the amalgamated entities. However, evidence later showed that the word "Nigeria", meaning "Niger-area", has been used as far back as 1550s by European explorers (Kperogi, 2019).

Thus, the Nigerian state was formed largely without a shred of inputs from its inhabitants. This was the pattern in several of the colonial states all over the continent of Africa. This was to set in motion a series of agitations in several parts of the continent after the exit of the colonial powers. In the case of Nigeria, Professor Tekena Tamuno, in one of his 1970 scholarly works, argued that separatist agitations started right from the year of amalgamation in 1914. Some of these are listed below:

## Pre-independence Separatist Agitations

1. During the constitutional conference in Ibadan in 1950, the Emir of Zaria threatened secession of the North if 50% of seats in the central assembly was not given to the Northern region. In the words of the Emir, “unless the Northern Region was allotted 50 per cent of the seats in the Central Legislature, it would ask for separation from the rest of Nigeria on the arrangements existing before 1914” (Tamuno, 1970:568). Apparently for peace to reign, the colonial government obliged the request by allocating 68 seats to the Northern Region, 34 to the Western Region, and 34 to the Eastern Region. (Ugorji, 2022).
2. In 1953, the northern region attempted to declare secession, following the humiliation of its delegates in Lagos during the debate for independence (Tamuno, 1970).
3. In 1953, the Yoruba threatened to secede from Nigeria over the status of Lagos. The debate was on whether to administer Lagos as a neutral entity or part of the Western Region. The delegates from Eastern Region regarded Lagos as a “no-man’s land” to the annoyance of Chief Awolowo’s Action Group who regarded Lagos as a Yoruba town. In the heat of the debate, Obafemi Awolowo sent a strongly-worded cable message to the then Secretary of State that the Western Region was “to decide whether or not they will remain in the proposed Nigerian Federation” (Tamuno, 1970:570). He was reprimanded by the Secretary of State.
4. At the constitutional conference in 1954 in Lagos, Action Group wanted the right of secession to be inserted into the constitution. It was however defeated (Tamuno, 1970).

## Post-colonial

1. In the run-up to the 1964 general elections, Michael Okpara, the then Premier of Eastern Region, threatened that the Eastern Region would “secede from the federation” as a response to allegations of intimidation and election rigging (Tamuno, 1970:574).
2. On January 15, 1966, Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu, in a claim of patriotism, led a coup that resulted in the death of several political and military figures. Following this coup, the shout of “Araba” (divide Nigeria), became the slogan of separatism in northern Nigeria. This was to set in motion chains of events in the polity, such as the counter-coup of July, 1966, pogrom, and civil war. Interestingly, on 29 July, 1967, just over a year after the coup, Nzeogwu was killed fighting on the side of Biafra, to divide Nigeria.
3. On February 23, 1966, Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro, led his Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) to the first open insurrection in Nigeria. It declared a Republic of Niger Delta (Boro, 1982). The 12-day revolution was later quelled by federal troops, and the separatists clamped into jail. Adaka Boro was sentenced to death, but was later released. Interestingly, Boro died in the Civil War while fighting on the federal side, to keep Nigeria one (Isamah, 2013).
4. The counter-coup of July 1966, led by northern officers, was staged partly to avenge the killings of northern compatriots in the January 1966 coup; to stop what was feared as the Igbo domination; and ultimately secede from Nigeria. It was the British High Commissioner in Lagos, Sir Francis Cummings-Bruce, who dissuaded them from doing so, pointing out that

“they were now back in power, so why secede into a landlocked North” (Ogunbadejo, 1979:94).

5. In 1967, the Igbo ethnic group declared a Republic of Biafra, a secession bid that took three years of serious war to quell. By the time the Biafra soldiers surrendered in 1970, millions of lives had been wasted on both sides.
6. In a brazen demonstration of the roving spirit of separatism, on 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1990, Major Gideon Orkar, in a broadcast to announce his coup, which was staged, according to him, on behalf of “marginalised, oppressed and enslaved peoples of the Middle Belt and the south”, excised five states from the federation. These states were Sokoto (today’s Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara), Kano (today’s Kano and Jigawa states), Katsina, Bauchi (today’s Bauchi and Gombe states) and Borno (today’s Borno and Yobe states). In today’s calculation, that is 10 states. The citizens of these states living in other states were ordered to return to their states. He gave some conditions to be met before the re-admission of the excised into the federation would be approved. Facts emerged later that the Orkar coup was a Niger Delta coup. The planning, funding and execution were done by officers from the Niger Delta, and Gideon Orkar was co-opted to the conspiracy as a cover, and as a result of his own rabid anti-establishment orientations in the army (Siollun, 2013).
7. Following the annulment of the June 12, 1993, election, the Oodua Peoples’ Congress was formed by Dr Frederick Fasehun, but later hijacked by Gani Adams. The group was formed to countervail the annulment of the famous June 12, 1993, election, but a central part of its objective was seeking the secession of the Yoruba people from

Nigeria (Fasehun, 2002, Olaniyan, 2002; Olaniyan, 2007; Olaniyan, 2008; Olaniyan, 2021).

## **The Fourth Republic**

The Fourth Republic that began in 1999 has been bedevilled by groups with separatist agenda.

1. The republic was ushered in by agitations for separation, as championed by the Gani Adams-led Oodua Peoples' Congress (OPC). The agitation was, however, silenced by the ruthlessness of President Obasanjo, who clamped the leader into detention. By the time the leader was released, the movement had lost steam (Olaniyan, 2021).
2. Ralph Uwazuruike formed the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). The group clamoured for the restoration of the defunct and defeated Biafra state. He too was clamped into detention, and the agitation lost traction (Olaniyan, 2021).
3. In the Niger Delta, shades of separatism have been couched in the rhetoric of resource control, and have been violently pursued through large-scale vandalism, kidnaping, arson, robbery, and general unrest. Their activities became so intense that it led to destruction of vital oil pipelines, leading to disruption of oil production activities and further destruction of the environment. Nigerian state lost huge amount of revenue to the agitation. Amnesty had to be declared before some semblance of peace could be achieved in the region (Olaniyan, 2015b, Olaniyan, 2018, Olaniyan, 2021).

4. Boko Haram insurgents, at the beginning of the fourth republic, emerged as an innocuous group seeking some imaginary religious puritanism. It later transformed into a ferocious terror group by factors bothering on indoctrination and official conspiracy. Eventually, Boko Haram carved out a large swathe of land as big as the size of Belgium (Campbell, 2014). Boko Haram presented the most frontal attack on the Nigerian state as a corporate entity, second only to the Civil War of 1967-70. In addition to widening the existing cleavages in the land, its violent activities resulted in countless deaths. It also led to the destruction of the environment, of cultural heritage, and of peaceful coexistence among previously harmonious neighbours (Olaniyan, 2015a, Olaniyan, 2015b, Olaniyan, 2015d, Olaniyan, 2018a, Olaniyan, 2018b Olaniyan, 2018c, Olaniyan, 2021, Olaniyan and Bello, 2022).
5. During the Constitutional Conference (tagged confab) organized by President Goodluck Jonathan in 2013, the Lamido Adamawa, His Royal Highness, Muhammadu Barkindo Mustapha, threatened to relocate to Cameroon if Nigeria broke up. During the debate, he was captured as saying, “if anything happens and the country disintegrates, God forbid, many of us who are shouting their heads off may not have anywhere to go. My people and the people of Adamawa have got somewhere to go. I am the Lamido Adamawa and my kingdom extends to Cameroun. The larger part of my kingdom is in Cameroun. Part of that kingdom is today called Adamawa State in Cameroun. You see, if I run to that place, I will easily assimilate” (Godwin, 2014).
6. In 2015, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) came to the fore as a group possessed by the spirit of separatism. The group had been formed in 2012 by Nnamdi Kanu but it was practically

unknown to most Nigerians. It is currently the largest, most renowned, and most active Biafran secessionist movement that boasts of numerous sympathizers amongst the Igbo diaspora from virtually every part of the globe. It was facilitated by long distance Igbo nationalism. The group has the declaration of Biafra Republic as its ultimate agenda. In fact, the central belief of IPOB is that “it is impossible to achieve independence without war and violence” (Uborji, 2022:2). In the task of achieving this, the group employed violence, harassments, treats, hate speech and scaremongering as methods of propaganda (Johnson and Olaniyan, 2018, Olaniyan, 2021).

7. In June 2017, sixteen northern youth groups, after a meeting in Kaduna, issued a three-month quit notice to all Igbo people residing in northern Nigeria to vacate the region. The group further sought global observers to witness the dissolution of Nigeria (Akhaine, Alabi, Njoku, Olumide, 2017). The “Igbo Must Go” notice was handed down as a response to the violent activities of IPOB, which had stepped up attacks on people of northern extraction living in the southeast. Curiously, the eviction notice was supported by notable northern figures, one of whom was Professor Ango Abdullahi, a former Vice Chancellor of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (Odunsi, 2017). This is like using madness to cure madness, which could have ended in a multiplicity of madness.
8. In 2017, a group, known as Mboho Mkparawa Ibibio, proposed the creation of Atlantic Republic, to show their disagreement with the inclusion of South-South region under IPOB’s Biafra. The proposed republic will encompass the South-South states of



Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers, with Port Harcourt as the capital city (*The Herald*, 2017).

9. In 2021, a group called Oodua Nation emerged from the southwest. It was headed by Banji Akintoye, a professor of history and a former senator of the Federal Republic. And soon, one Sunday Igboho, a person with great exploits in political violence in the southwest, emerged as the poster boy of the group. Professor Akintoye declared the Oodua Republic in 2021, but we are still waiting to see the new republic take off. Under pressure from the state, Igboho later escaped to Benin Republic with a bid to escape to Europe. He was arrested at the Cotonou airport on accusation of forgery and put under house arrest in Benin Republic (Olaniyan, 2021). But the group is still kicking. On May 28, 2023, a handful of them invaded a radio station in Ibadan, over the station's inability to broadcast their activities (Kaffi, 2023).

With these, we can see that the spirit of separatism is in every part of Nigeria, pursued, mouthed, and acted on by different classes of people, both during colonial and post-colonial times. The spirit of separatism has always been alive in Nigeria.

### **Why Separatism Spirit Lives**

Various reasons account for the resilience of the spirit of separatism in Nigeria. As noted earlier, Professor Tekena Tamuno in a 1970 piece, argued that separatist agitations started from the year of amalgamation in 1914, and they are buoyed by six powerful factors: (1) Heterogeneous ethnic composition; (2) cultural diversity; (3) vast size; (4) varied administrative practices; (5) controversial political and constitutional arrangements; and (6) absence of a strong ideological magnet. With these

factors still in operation, it could mean the spirit of separatism still has a long time to operate in the country. It gives a feeling of hopelessness.

Other factors include the following:

### **Bargaining Strategy**

The idea of separatist agitation as part of the bargaining process in Nigeria was advanced by Professor Ayoade. In his 1974 piece, he argued that separatist agitations are nothing but redressive mechanisms in Nigeria. He submitted that when people invoke separatist threats, they do so to gain concession from the Nigerian state either to themselves or their groups. The separatist champions before Ojukwu's declaration of secession in the east, did not necessarily mean it in their hearts. Within this context, he sees Ojukwu's declaration of Biafran independence as a poor reading of the Nigerian situation.

### **Strange Bed-fellows Notion**

The ready-made answer in the mouth of most people for the undying desire for separation is that Nigerians are strange bed fellows (Olaniyan, 2009) and that the colonial powers lumped people of differing nationalities with differentials in cultures and histories into what Adebayo Williams (2000) called a "colonial cage". This perspective had been given impetus by utterances from the three foremost nationalists often called the founding fathers. Ahmadu Bello refers to the amalgamation as "the mistake of 1914". In his autobiography, Ahmadu Bello goes further to say:

Lord Lugard and his Amalgamation were far from popular amongst us at that time. There were agitations in favour of secession; we should set up on our own; we should cease to have

anything more to do with the Southern people, we should take our own way (Bello, 1962:133).

In 1947, Chief Obafemi Awolowo in a speech said:

Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no “Nigerians” in the same sense as there is ‘English’, ‘Welsh’, or ‘French.’ The word “Nigeria” is a mere distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria and those who do not (cited in Oshuntokun, 1998:77).

In an address in 1948, Tafawa Balewa also said:

Since 1914 the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their backgrounds, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any signs of willingness to unite. Nigerian unity is only a British invention (cited in Coleman, 1958:320).

In the run-up to the 1964 general elections, Nnamdi Azikwe, in an address as the President of the country, warned of the possibility of a separation when he averred that

I make this suggestion because it is better for us and for our admirers abroad that we should disintegrate in peace and not in pieces. Should the politicians fail to heed this warning, then I will venture the prediction that the experience of

the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be child's play if it ever comes to our turn to play such a tragic role. (Daily Times, January 13, 1965, as cited in Tamuno, 1970:574, Ugorji, 2022:72-73).

I have presented these quotes to show the spirits of separation inherent in the minds of the first drivers of the Nigerian state since the amalgamation.

### **The 1966 Military Coup**

In 1966, some young military officers staged a bloody coup where prominent political figures and military brass hats from the north, mid-west, and southwest regions were brutally eliminated. By their action, they literally put a dagger to the jugular vein of Nigeria and killed the spirit of unity. Their action contributed to the mess Nigerian has come to be. To solve what they perceived as a problem, they created more problems. The inclusion of top military officers and their pregnant spouses in the list of the eliminated cast aspersions on the altruism of their mission. The coup eventually resulted in the nullification of the federal system as practiced in the First Republic, the Civil War of 1967-70, and the aggravation of ethnic suspicions in the land. Curiously, Nzeogwu, the mastermind of the coup, was found fighting on the Biafran side during the Civil War, which provides evidence of his own non-commitment to Nigerian unity in the first instance, the basis for which he murdered several political leaders in the January 1966 coup.

### **Nigerian Federalism**

In discussing separatist agitations in Nigeria, discourses often centre around its federal practice. The argument is that the nature of the federal system gives impetus to agitation for separation. It is often said that the

federal system is over-bearing, and over-centralized and therefore unworkable. One major characteristic of Nigeria's federalism is that it exists basically as a 'holding-together' – in contradistinction to a 'coming-together' – federation. Its emergence was neither a product of grassroots agitations nor of mass mobilization. Rather, it had federalism thrust upon it via a combination of external influence and local elite compromise (Olaniyan, 2006, Olaniyan, 2019, Olaniyan, 2021).

Significantly, the famous compromise had been based on five major realities: (1) the sheer size of the country which made a unitary system right out of the question; (2) the fact that Nigeria is an agglutination of variegated nationalities; (3) fears of domination by the minorities; (4) the uneven level of development between the North and the South; and (5) the desire of the political gladiators of the time to retain their political relevance within the cocoon of their ethnic groups (Olaniyan, 2006:115, Olaniyan, 2019).

At independence, the immediate successors of the British colonialists maintained the inherited federal system in its pristine form, until the coup entrepreneurs of 1966 put a dagger into it and shredded it to pieces. The coming of the military saw the complete erosion of federal practice. What came out was a unitarized federal system, fashioned in the military tradition of centralization. The country was subsequently carved into states by the military, and the whole federal system exists practically on paper. What we have now is a pseudo federal system. This is part of what is fuelling the spirit of separatism in the country.

### **Ungoverned Spaces**

In 2017, I streamlined the forest space into discourses on insecurity and insurgencies in Nigeria. I argued that the Nigerian forest space has become an ungoverned area, and therefore one of the enablers of Boko

Haram insurgents, in their march to banishing the Nigerian state. I argued that Boko Haram elements have taken the opportunity of the abandonment of the forests in the north-east to wreak havoc on hapless citizens and the Nigerian state. The same goes for kidnappers and other violent elements. The neglect of the forest space has emboldened violent non-state actors to launch attacks. Apart from Boko Haram, we also saw the usage of the forest space by IPOB and Niger Delta militants (Olaniyan, 2017, Olaniyan and Johnson, 2017, Olaniyan, 2018, Olaniyan, 2021, Olaniyan and Okeke-Uzodike, 2021).

### **State Fragility and Growing Insecurity**

That Nigerian state is fragile and irresponsible is already a stated fact in the literature. The fragility is evident in its inability to exert total dominion over its territory. There are several spaces that have been occupied by non-state actors where mayhem is being unleashed on the people in forms of banditry, cattle rustling, insurgency, kidnapping, ritual killings, and armed robbery (Olaniyan, 2015, Olaniyan and Yahaya, 2016, Olaniyan and Omotola, 2016, Olaniyan, 2018, Olaniyan and Okeke-Uzodike, 2021). In recent times, herdsman have been identified as major players in the nefarious business of kidnapping and farmland destruction in West Africa (Olaniyan, 2015a, Olaniyan & Okeke-Uzodike, 2015, Olaniyan, Francis & Okeke-Uzodike, 2015, Olaniyan and Akinyemi, 2017). The interpretation of the activities has followed the fault lines in the country thereby fuelling feelings of domination and government complicity. In this instance, the Fulani ethnic group has increasingly come under profiling in various parts of West Africa. The spectre of violence and the free reign of violent actors all over the country gave a fillip to the argument that Nigerian sovereignty is daily being contested and that its claim to monopoly of violence is increasingly being eroded.

Overall, Nigeria has been unable to provide welfare and support to the citizens. It has failed to secure its citizen, which is the primary essence of the state. It has failed to deliver services to the people. It has failed to elicit patriotism. It has been found wanting in meeting the empirical condition of statehood. This has become the basis for some people dreaming of exiting the Nigerian state, to form their own, which they believe will provide succour (Osaghae, 1999). You cannot blame the people for thinking this way. The state gave them the basis to think so. You cannot beat a baby and prevent him/her from crying.

### **Democratic Window**

The space provided by democracy is another aspect that has allowed the Nigerian people, particularly the youth, to ventilate their grievances in a way that could not have been allowed under military rule. This has been captured vividly by Wale Adebani when he averred that:

The constriction of the democratic, public spheres for several years, under the military, prevented various interest groups and social and political formations from advancing their interests and expressing their grievances through democratic means. When democratic rule was achieved, these interests and grievances burst forth or, indeed, gushed forth – like an overflowing dam whose boundary walls have been brought down on a still-limited democratic space, producing the conflagrations which we are witnessing (Adebani, 2004:328).

The meaning of the foregoing is that democracy provided opportunity for people to ventilate their grievances, which they could not do under

the military. This does not in any way imply superiority of military rule. Rather, it shows the beauty of democracy. That people resort to violent protests cannot be blamed on democracy. We must put the blame on the managers of the democratic order. It is their inability to put in place necessary means that would have forged the nationhood among the disparate nationalities that led to ventilation of pent-up grievances, and further fuel the spirit of separatism (Olaniyan and Bello, 2020).

### **Lost Opportunity**

The failure to utilize the opportunity provided by the Civil War of 1967-70 is a major factor in the refusal of the spirit of separatism to die. In his contribution to the debate on the COVID-19 outbreak, Rahm Emanuel, the chief of staff to President Barack Obama, said: "Never allow a good crisis go to waste. It's an opportunity to do the things you once thought was impossible" (Emmanuel, 2020). Nations rise after experiencing great disaster such as civil wars. It provided the opportunity to fashion out fundamental solutions to the problem of disunity. Rwanda was able to use the sad incident of the genocide to fashion out a Rwandan citizen, through legislative provision. The policy of "No Victor, No Vanquished" and the three Rs - Re-integration, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation - though good, did not address the fundamental problem of citizen patriotism and nationalism. It amounted to scratching the problems on the surface. Nigerians identify themselves first as representing their ethnic groups before being Nigerians. Primordial attachment to ethnicity should be channelled to building a collective Nigerian identity. This is best done through a legal provision. The Civil War provided the best opportunity to achieve this, but it was wasted.



## **Resource Control**

Resource control has been a major factor as manifested in the Niger Delta where various militant groups have waged “war” on Nigerian armed forces, pillaged Nigerian asset and unleashed destruction on the environment. They were responsible for dwindling economic resources for the country. Resources was what fired the first Adaka Boro insurrection in 1966. Also, the oil in the Niger Delta, which was part of the eastern region by then, was part of what gave Ojukwu the confidence to declare Biafra Republic in 1967.

## **Leadership Failure**

Leadership is about the most critical element in the forging of a nation out of a state. Unfortunately, the Nigerian state has largely not experienced great leaders at the national level. Many a time, leadership performance is intertwined with preparedness. It is often argued that Nigerian leaders at the national level are more of the accidental type, and hence their poor performance. This is a plausible argument; but it suffers the problem of reductionism. History is replete with personalities who assumed office accidentally but rose to become great leaders. As a fact, leaders are made during moments of serious socio-political and economic crises. America was in the middle of a Civil War when its charismatic president, Abraham Lincoln, fell to the assassins’ bullets. But Andrew Johnson, the vice president, rose to the task and not only prosecuted the war to a logical conclusion; but also strengthened the American confederacy. On 12 April 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt suddenly collapsed and died. It was at the crucial time in the prosecution of the Second World War. Harry Truman suddenly had power thrust on him. But Truman rose to the occasion and in a short time, brought the Second World War to an end by taking some hard decisions. He left indelible marks on the sands of history in the formation of the United

Nations Organisation (UNO) and the Marshall Plan (Cohen, 2019). The issue has to do with capacity and character. A personality with capacity and strong character will make a difference, even if emerged as an accidental leader.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, based on this position, let me offer my opinion on Nigerian leaders. Tafawa Balewa was an accidental leader. He became the Prime Minister because his boss, Ahmadu Bello, preferred to remain at the regional level. In fairness to him, he rose to the occasion. He saw himself as the father of the nation and tried to act it. He was a pacifist with a towering figure in the continent and played a decisive role during the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 (Olaniyan, 2023). He was nicknamed the 'golden voice of Africa' by virtue of his outstanding command of the English Language. However, the fraud of the 1964 census and elections, the handling of the crisis in the Western Region, and his seeming indirect support for the persecution of Obafemi Awolowo created a fertile ground for the 1966 coup plotters to launch murderous attacks on his person and the nascent republic he headed.

Thomas Aguiyi Ironsi had power placed on his laps by the lacuna created by the misadventure of the January 1966 coup plotters. He was still trying to figure out what the national leadership task was all about when his regime was brought to a tragic end via the smoking guns of his rebellious junior officers. Technically, therefore, his regime did not take off before it ended, and the unification decree he enacted, which he had received much knocks, was never implemented by him.

Yakubu Gowon was also a circumstantial leader who was brought into power by the northern mutineers of July 1966. He came as a young dashing bachelor who knew next to nothing about administering a

complex country like Nigeria. After initial wobbling and fumbling, he rose to the task. He did learn on the job and prosecuted the Nigerian Civil War to a logical conclusion. He declared the policy of “no victor no vanquished” as a good peacebuilding strategy. He also established the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as a force of unity. Eventually, he was eased out of power when the allures of office entrapped him to renege on his promise to return Nigeria to democratic order.

Murtala Muhammed was a beneficiary of the coup that was staged by some young officers. He was a northern irredentist that assumed a national leadership. He came like a hurricane and his regime was like a flash in the pan. He cut the image of a charismatic leader with a social axe to grind. He sought to bring sanity to the land. His speech at the Addis Ababa meeting of African Head of States meeting that “Africa has come of age” remains an indelible mark of leadership at the continental stage. He saw a clear problem, but effort to sanitize it led to more problems. He met a civil service that was lazy, ineffective, and corrupt. He tried to sanitize it through a purge. Unfortunately, the purge became the reason for the grand corruption that is happening afterwards, up till this moment. Death came early and prevented the nation from knowing him well.

Olusegun Obasanjo is a living example of someone who always has his coconut cracked for him by unseen hands. People had to die for him to shine. His first and second coming into powers were products of circumstances. In February 1976, Murtala Muhammed had to die for him to be Head of State. He was spirited out of his hiding place to lead. In 1999, he marched on the grave of MKO Abiola into power as a civilian president. On that occasion, after serving terms in Abacha’s Gulag, the powers that be had put him forward to lead. While he duly acknowledged

and honoured General Murtala Muhammed, the word MKO Abiola did not even feature in any of his words throughout his eight years stay at the presidential palace. Obasanjo cut the image of an intellectual, and has remained the only head of state with the highest number of books and academic engagements to his credit. Even though he was always helped into power, he has a reputation of being his own man. Obasanjo came to fulfil the promise of Murtala Muhammed to return Nigeria to a democratically elected government in 1979. He got an international recognition for doing that, even though he was not the first person to do so in Africa. By the time he did it in 1979, he was the third. In 1969, General Akwasi Afrifa voluntarily handed power to Dr Kofi Busia in Ghana; and on 29 September, 1979, Flight Lt. Jerry Rawling handed over to another civilian, Dr Hilla Limann (David-West, 2019). On his second coming, Obasanjo read the problems correctly, but personal vendetta prevented him from taking the high route. He refused to acknowledge the huge sacrifice of MKO Abiola in the famous June 12, 1993 presidential election. By this, he did not heal a wound. Though he made some good economic reforms and tried to repair the global image of Nigeria, his government could not be absolved of corruption. The problem of those who have their coconuts perennially cracked for them by unseen hands is feeling of self-importance and infallibility. He pushed his luck too far by attempting to change the constitution to remove presidential term limits for his own benefit. For this, he got his hands burnt, and his democratic credentials was seriously damaged. He deployed a scorched-earth policy to quell separatist agitations and set state institutions against his real and perceived enemies. At the end, though, he has a pan-Nigerian outlook in his approach, he failed to become the father of the nation by his “me alone” mentality. He demonstrated capacity, but deficient in character.

The ambition of Shehu Shagari was to be a senator before he was catapulted to the presidency by the powers that be. He was therefore not prepared for the presidency, and he did not learn on the job in four years. Though he had a pedigree of being one of the political actors in the pre-independence political activities and held high office as a minister in the First Republic, he proved to be an ineffective leader. Though not accused of corruption personally, he allowed his party men to have a free access to the national till, and they helped themselves to the patrimony at the expense of the masses who wallowed in poverty. He left the country worse than he met it. This is a case of lack of capacity.

Ibrahim Babangida is the kingmaker that became the king. He was nicknamed Maradona, after the Argentine footballer famous for dribbling. He schemed himself into power, and to remain in office in perpetuity, he dribbled everyone until there was nobody left to dribble except himself. His style was to court and settle his critics before bringing them to ruins. He courted power, he got it but it turned out that he never had a good plan for the country. He was the grand master of the art of deception and a scam artiste that took the country on an expensive transition that ended nowhere. General Babangida was the man who signed the death warrant of his best man, and treated himself to a live watch of the execution. He annulled the June 12 election and threw the country into a crisis. Separatism was at its peak when he left. North-south dichotomy became sharper, and the possibility of break up was real. At the end, the smiling General left Nigerians wailing and gnashing their teeth. But the smiling General undid himself. If he had allowed the results of the June 12 election to stand, his sins would have probably been forgiven, and would have been elevated to the global stage. But he became a parish-pump politician, ensconced in his hilltop mansion. The dribbler

eventually dribbled himself to a local corner. Babangida's case is more of character issue.

Ernest Shonekan was neither a bird nor a bat. His stay was inconsequential. It was like a snake that passed through the surface of the rock, leaving no mark. Shonekan's tenure was one of Babangida's act of consummate deception designed to make his annulment of the Abiola's mandate a *fait accompli*.

Sani Abacha became the head of state by seeming design. He was the Nigerian version of Jean Bedel Bokassa of Central African Republic (the Butcher of Bangui) and Idi Amin of Uganda (the kleptocrat of Kampala). He was the face of oppression and brutality. Unlike Babangida, Abacha made no pretence to any niceties. His style was to shoot first before asking questions. He would rather send his critics to the great beyond rather than listen or court them. Only the lucky ones escaped to exile. Before a 'natural or biological coup' gave him and his regime a short shrift, General Abacha was already on the verge of shedding his khaki for a kaftan, by transmuting from a military to a civilian ruler. The five parties that he decreed into existence, which Bola Ige described as five fingers of a leprous hand, had all picked him as their candidate (Agbaje, Akande & Ojo, 2009:81). He succeeded not only in cornering the national patrimony into his personal foreign accounts, but also widened the already existing cleavages in Nigeria. His regime revved up the feelings of separatism. He lacked both capacity and character.

General Abdusalami Abubakar's stay was brief. He only came to return Nigeria to democratic order. This has remained his legacy. But the sudden death of MKO Abiola under his watch remains a blight in his regime.

Umaru Yar'Adua was going to retire from being governor of Katsina to his home when he was frog-marched to the presidency. He was a sick man that was propped up to take a gruelling assignment. He was quite a personable man, but he seemed too provincial. His international experience was too limited to the extent that on his first ever visit to the American seat of power, the White House, he said "I feel highly honoured and privileged to be here...this is a moment that I will never forget in my life" (*The White House*, 2007). He appeared to have been mesmerized by the sublimity of the White House. It was not a good statement to have come from the leader of a country like Nigeria. Nonetheless, he applied practical approach to solving the problem of violence and separatism in the Niger Delta by instituting an amnesty programme (Olaniyan, 2020). But Boko Haram got transformed to a ferocious terror group under his watch. Death came early to cut short his presidency, and thus prevented us from knowing how his administration would have ended.

Goodluck Jonathan became the president by providence. He is the most certificated Nigerian to be president. But he appeared too timid and inexperienced to rule over a complex country like Nigeria. He was seemingly overwhelmed. The image of Jonathan dancing in Kano when scores of young girls in Chibok were being hauled into servitude by some savages was a mark of insensitivity by a leader. Boko Haram was running riot in north-eastern Nigeria and he seemed not to have answers to it. He dithered while the country burned. His attempt to answer the national question led him to set up a Confab, with a promise to implement the recommendations in his second term. Eventually, he lost the election. Though he conceded election that he lost and has received praises for it, the fact remains that he left the country terribly divided and almost in economic ruins. His is a case of low capacity.

Muhammadu Buhari's first and second coming was a study in contradictions. In 1983, as a military man, he was called upon to lead, but in 2015, he sought power and gave the impression that he was prepared to lead. But his entire second coming proved that he never had the capacity to be an effective leader. The second outing was a dispensation heralded by high expectations, but at the end of the tenure, he left several of his supporters, and indeed Nigerians, high and dry. His first coming in the last day of 1983 was brief, but in the brevity, he left an impression of anti-corruption and anti-indiscipline. He was assisted by Tunde Idiagbon, a no-nonsense military officer. He read the problems of the country correctly, but attempts to effect corrections were considered too harsh. Differential treatments of the political actors of the *ancien régime* he overthrew made him liable to be accused of pandering to regional and ethnic sentiments. By the time he was removed from office, Nigerians went up in jubilation. But thirty years after, the same Nigerians brought him back as an elected president of the Federal Republic. Nigerians in search of heroes and strong leaders reminisced his earlier 20-months rule and thought they needed the strongman in his mould. He was elected based on this hope. But President Buhari turned out to be totally different from General Buhari. He fiddled while Nigeria burned. He was famous for keeping quite when he needed to talk. Most Nigerians will remember him for the unnecessary sufferings he inflicted upon them during his poorly-implemented currency redesign policy at the twilight of his administration. President Buhari displayed so much disdain for academia. Nigerian academic community will not forget him in a hurry for the pains he inflicted on them through first, amputating their salary through IPPIS, second outright refusal to pay seven months' salary, and third, unleashing a character like Chris Ngige, his Minister of Labour and Employment, on them when they demanded for a better working



condition. Also, under his watch, kidnappers had a field day, and insecurity reached a fever pitch. Though he made some strides in the area of infrastructure and rolled back the murderous rampage of Boko Haram renegades, when it comes to uniting and securing the country, his performance was dismal.

The countdown to 2023 general elections was marred with regional, religious, and ethnic rhetoric that led to serious divisions in the polity. Nigeria of 2023 is deeply divided, more than the experience after the 2015 elections. It is left to be seen how President Tinubu's tenure will turn out to be. He will be assessed after his tenure. For now, the search for great and transformational national leader continues.

### **Exorcising the Spirit of Separatism**

As I have demonstrated in the preceding pages, the spirits of separatism hovers around Nigeria. There is much division in the land, and the love of the country has taken a dip, in comparison with what obtains at the early years of independence. Problems are meant to be solved. The best way to address a problem is to know the genesis. Having identified some of the problems, we can now discuss some of the ways out.

### **On Strange Bed-fellows**

To me, the most popular excuse for separatist feelings, the strange-bedfellows perspective, is the weakest. I quite agree that colonialism wreaked havoc on coexistence because different nationalities were forcefully lumped together. But every state is a creation of force, as I have shown with examples from Europe. They are artificial. They are multinational. Organic states are very few. At any rate, homogeneity is not a guarantee of longevity or survival. Somalia is a classic example here. As argued elsewhere, and represented in different studies, Nigerians are not entirely strange bedfellows to one another. Dudley (1982) and

Olusanya (1982) had in their works punctured the notion of strange bedfellows in the making of Nigerian state. They have argued that there were series of interactions already in motion before the coming of the colonialists (Olusanya, 1970, 1980: 545; Dudley, 1982). The fact of pre-colonial interactions cannot be disputed. In my contribution to this debate, I have argued that:

Long before its incorporation into the nation-state system, the different ethnic groups making up the Nigerian state were far from being immured islands entirely to themselves. There is evidence of interactions in trade, culture and even linguistics between the people from the north and the south, people in the riverside areas and those in the hinterlands. The vestiges of linguistic interactions, for example, are found in extant languages across the land (Olaniyan, 2009a:521).

I also argued that besides linguistic, there is evidence of long cohabitation amongst the various ethnic groups. For examples, there is long pre-amalgamation presence of Yoruba in Kano, (Olaniyi, 2005), Hausa in Ibadan (Albert, 1993), Hausa in Lagos and Abeokuta (Adamu, 1978) among others. We were told that Sango, the legendary Alaafin of Oyo, who later became one of the deities in Yoruba traditional realm, was born by a Nupe woman. Even Professor Siyan Oyeweso demonstrated in his inaugural lecture how some great Nigerians migrated from different places, long before colonial penetration. There are several instances of pre-amalgamation interactions to nullify the notion of strange bedfellows. While the pre-amalgamation interaction is not enough for

people to live together, my argument is that the people are not strange to themselves and should not be a basis for seeking dismemberment of the country. Knowing this is very important for reducing the incidence of separatism from the psyche of the Nigerian people. This should be factored into the school curriculum.

### **Restructuring**

Now let me make a comment on the most popular word around: restructuring. This is a topical issue on the lips of many people in the country. The constitution gives too much powers to the central government. Some items in the exclusive list of the constitution should be removed and placed in the concurrent section. For example, states should be allowed to explore mineral resources in their areas of jurisdiction. There should be some flexibilities on resource control. I also believe state police should be allowed. What I do not support is a return to regionalism. I think we have moved beyond that for good. I cannot imagine asking everybody in the southwest to go back to Ibadan as the capital of Western Region. Constitution is made by human beings for human beings. They are not cast in granite. They must be looked at from time and time, and be adjusted to suit the current moment. But constitution is also not what you change like a wrapper. That is why its review is always cumbersome. It is cheering that some of the President Buhari's parting assent to certain bills are in order and capable of undermining and discouraging the urge for secession.

### **State Responsiveness**

As narrated above, the state was created for the purpose of meeting the security and welfare needs of the people. Scholars of social contract perspectives, have also explained that in case of failure of the state to meet these ends, the people reserve the right to revolt against it. It is obvious

that the Nigerian state is found wanting in the discharge of these all-important duties. This is responsible for the desire for separation. You cannot beat a child and prevent him from crying. So long the state is unresponsive, the people will continue to seek separation. The solution is for the state to rise to expectation. No amount of re-orientation will work if the state is found wanting.

### **Inclusion, Equity and Justice**

One of the best ways to address separatism is to remove the basis for it. One of the bases for separatist idea is domination or marginalization. Therefore, inclusion, equity and justice in the treatment of constituent units of a polity goes a long way in uniting the people.

### **Leadership Recruitment**

The problem with Nigeria has been laid at the footsteps of leadership. This is true, absolutely. Leadership, of a father figure stature, holds the key to uniting people of disparate nationalities in an entity like Nigeria. Several scholars have voiced this. Just like Chinua Achebe (2000) observed, nothing is wrong with Nigerian climate and weather. The country is blessed with prodigious human and material resources. God spared us of natural disasters such as earthquake, typhoons, hurricanes, tsunami, etc. People have argued that leadership is our own natural disaster. However, in one of my works in 2016, I argue that leaders

hip cannot be discussed in isolation of followers. Leaders do not fall from outer space. They emerged among the people. If the system continually throws up the worst set of the people as leaders, then something is also wrong with the followers (Olaniyan, 2009b, Olaniyan, 2016).

And that brings me to the clamour for God-fearing leaders in our polity. In this society, we look forward, even pray, to have leaders with the fear

of God. It is good to have leaders with the fear of God. Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. But relying on God for leadership choice is not in tandem with the tenets of democracy. Democracy is a human design that is built on the fear of the people, and not necessarily on the fear of God. In a democratic setting, people don't look for leaders with the fear of God. Rather, they select leaders that will fear them in running their affairs. The way of God is different from the way of man. He can forgive even whom we have condemned as the worst of sinners. At any rate, God's punishment for sins may not be immediate. It could be reserved for the day of judgment, which nobody knows when it will come. In a democratic setting, when leaders err, they are promptly punished with recall, rejection and even jail terms. Societies that witness progress are the ones in which leaders fear the followers. Nigerians must cultivate themselves in such a way for their leaders to fear them.

### **Conclusion: Centrifugal, Centripetal Forces and the Hen on the Rope**

Mr. Vice Chancellor, Sir, let me conclude this lecture by connecting with my theoretical configuration mentioned earlier: the two forces of centrifugal and centripetal are almost at equilibrium in Nigeria. This explains the presence of tension in the land. It also explains why separation is a big task to accomplish. Let me explain. The forces that are pushing Nigeria apart and those that seek to pull it together are almost of equal capacity. Such factors as ethnicity, regionalism, state incapacity, long military rule constitute the centrifugal forces. These are what trigger counter-coups, the civil war, inter-religious conflagrations, brazen annulment of national elections and exclusion, which in turn fuel the spirit of separatism. However, these are being counterpoised by history and long social interactions among the Nigerian people and vigilance imposed on one another, particularly by the "big three" – Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo ethnic groups.

Mr. Vice Chancellor, neither of the two forces – centripetal and centrifugal - has been able to overwhelm the other. The day one succeeds, we will either have a collapse of the state or enjoy an enduring peace. As it is, Nigeria hangs in the balance. It is neither falling nor standing well. Based on my reading and engagement with the study of the Nigerian state, the political elite seem to benefit more from the balancing of these two forces than allowing either of them to prevail: a collapsed Nigerian state is useless to them while a strong one will be difficult or almost impossible to plunder. So, it is in their best interest for it to remain on this shaky rope, neither fallen nor standing. And if the status quo remains, peace, development, and stability will be difficult to achieve. This is the Nigerian dilemma.

So far Nigeria is still standing. Mother luck has been on the side of Nigeria. The country has suffered self-inflicted injuries countless times and still endures. The country has been taken to the precipice several times, but refused to take the plunge. But for how long will the scale hold for Nigeria? Should there not be a limit to pushing one's luck? That is the million-dollar question at the heart of this talk.

“If gold can rust, what would the iron do?” asked Geoffrey Chaucer, in his prologue to *Canterbury Tales*. So, if a powerful country like the Soviet Union can split-up, what then do we think cannot happen to a country that cannot even handle some ragtag insurgents with dispatch? Examples from other climes cited in this lecture shows clearly that nothing is cast in granite. It may not be possible to exorcise the spirit of separatism from the state, because it is part of the nature of the state; yet the basis for it can be neutralized and its negative manifestation greatly curtailed by some of the suggestions highlighted in this lecture. These include

inclusivity, equity and justice, welfare, state responsiveness, constitutional engineering, purposeful leadership, good and critical followership.

Going forward, Mr. Vice Chancellor, I will continue to engage the Nigerian state as a matter of professional duty. I will continue to pontificate on peace and conflict resolution. In the recent time, I have developed interest in political ecology, which is an analysis of the socio-political and economic consequences of environmental issues and changes. I have also recently taken keen interest in heritage studies within the context of conflict studies. In the years ahead, God willing, I will continue to explore these lines of research.

## Appreciation

The first entity to thank is Almighty Allah for the gift of life, knowledge, and opportunity to have come this far in life. My parents, Pa Mohammed and Princess Fayomade Olaniyan, never had the opportunity of receiving western education, but were determined to give me a good one. After a long stay in Ghana where they had made a home with lots of investment, they were suddenly sent packing in the infamous Quit Notice policy of the President Busia administration in the last days of December, 1969. The Quit Notice policy was inhumanly intentioned and wickedly pursued. The ‘aliens’ were given less than two weeks to leave Ghana and order was given not to buy their property. The Yoruba were specifically targeted. Those who desired to remain were giving two conditions: their children must not go to school; and they must be predominantly farmers and labourers and not traders<sup>1</sup>. To an average Yoruba person, that was suicidal. So, they left, abandoning their property. Therefore, before “Ghana must Go”, there was “Nigeria Must Go”. My parents had to start afresh at home. It was not a nice experience. Papa returned to his creator the year I entered the university. Mama was the quintessential dotting mother whose love for her children cannot be captured in words. As her last born, I must confess that I received a disproportionate amount of the love. I was the apple of her eye. I was pampered, though not spoiled. Unfortunately for me, the Grim Reaper came when I was just starting my own pampering on a grand scale. Twenty years, I am still in shock! Mothers love is difficult to describe. May God bless all responsible mothers of this world. An apple does not fall far from the tree; thus, I inherited the virtues of contentment, humility, dignity of labour,

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<sup>1</sup> For a more insight into the ordeal of the era, see Rasheed Olaniyi, The 1969 Ghana exodus: Memory and reminiscent of Yoruba migrants, <https://www.migrationinstitute.org/files/events/olaniyi.pdf>



optimism, and prayers from my parents. May Allah grant them *Aljanat fridaus*.

After the birth of my elder brother, Mama had decided to ‘hang the boots’. It was Madam Grace Olanrewaju (aka Eye Gebu) that convinced her to have one more child. If not for her, probably I would not have come this way at all. I thank Mama Grace for convincing her elder sister to play the ‘game’ one more time, the result of which brought me to this terrestrial space.

I thank my siblings for spending their time and resources to see me through school. Late Mrs. Sifau Bodunrin, Mrs Rekia Adunni Oyebode, the late Mrs. Sidikat Bola Adetuyi and Abdurauf Olaniyan. It was a collective effort. To my agony again, Auntie Sidi succumbed to the agonizing pangs of death in May, 2021. May her soul rest in peace. My brothers – Idowu, Bashir, Ganiyu, Lateef and Razaq Olaniyan and my nephews and nieces - Florence, Segun, Kola, Toyin, Dolapo, Biodun, Yetunde, Dayo, Mohammed, Zakirat, Toyin, Nike, Tope, Ige, Adesayo, together with Auntie Hafsat Ayelabola and Mariam Babalola are well appreciated. I greet all the descendants of High Chief Sulaiman Olaniyan, the late Saba of Iba Quarters, Ogotun Ekiti. In the same vein, I appreciate the descendants of Aladelusi, Adeleye families; and Ogbenuote and Ojopekun ruling houses, my paternal and maternal lineages.

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Abayomi Sunday Fasina, deserves my appreciation. He appointed me the Director of Advancement Centre in charge of alumni relations shortly after his assumption of office as the VC. I thank you, sir, for the confidence in me and your support. I appreciate all other members of the management team: Professors Olubunmi Shittu and Tajudeen Opoola, the DVC Academics and DVC

Administration respectively; Mr Mufutau Ibrahim, the Registrar; Mrs Adebolanle Debo-Ajagunna, the Bursar and Dr Isaac Busayo, the University Librarian. I thank the entire FUYOYE community, both teaching and non-teaching for their presence here this afternoon.

Alhaji Mufutau Lawal and Alhaja Olayinka Lawal are in-laws of substance. Sadly, Baba Lawal was recalled home shortly after giving me her daughter. May his soul rest in peace. Muslimah Folashade Abdulganiyu, Moshood Lawal (aka Mr. White), Zainab Olasumbo Alade, Dr Islamiyah Ajibola Shangonuga, Saheed Lawal, Amina Oladipo and Mr Isiaq Abdurraheem are worthy in-laws to have. I call on bachelors in this hall to hasten to Ikirun, Osun state. There lies the best of in-laws you can ever get. My fellow brothers-in-law: Barrister Mojeed Bayo Ganiyu; Idowu Alade; Qozeem Shangonuga; and Abdurasheed Oladipo are my witnesses.

Everybody has got his own destiny helpers. I have them aplenty: Principal Olufemi Alfred Oyeboode (now retired) employed me as an accounts clerk after my secondary school, from where I saved the funds for my tuition at the Polytechnic, Ibadan. Late Dr Niyi Isijola encouraged me to do a graduate program after introducing me to his uncle that gave me a job immediately after the youth service. Dr Gboyega Isijola gave me a job immediately after my youth service, seconded me to his office as his personal assistant, and allowed me to pursue my master's degree while still on the job. Professor Kunle Ajayi was the one that ensured my appointment at the then University of Ado Ekiti, guided me aright as a mentor and ensured I do this inaugural. Professor Kayode Soremekun, the immediate past VC, was the man who headhunted me from my EKSU base. For me to resume immediately, he paid, from his pocket, the three months' salary I needed to pay in lieu of notice. This is too big

a favour to forget. The whole process was facilitated by my good friend, Prof Shola Omotola. I thank you all.

I am blessed with the presence of royal majesties. I appreciate the presence and support of my King, His Royal Majesty, Oba Michael Adebayo Adesanmi Alademeso, Atewogboye II, the Ologotun of Ogotun Ekiti. Long before he ascended the throne of our forefathers, Kabiesi has been a friend and supporter. I appreciate the presence of our royal host, His Royal Majesty, Oba Michael Ademolaju, the Oloye of Oye Ekiti. I thank His Royal Majesty, Oba Sulaiman Olaleye, Alawo of Awo Ekiti and His Royal Majesty, Oba Tajudeen Bamidele, the Olosan of Osan Ekiti. May your reigns be peaceful, eventful, and impactful. I thank all the High Chiefs from Ogotun Ekiti here present.

To the good people of Ogotun Ekiti, home and abroad, from the bottom of my heart, I say a big thank you. I appreciate ODU, Ado Ekiti branch. I recognize members of my age grade in the community: Egbe Ifelodun, Holy Star Club, Egbe Ifedore, Egbe Mafowurosere; and all the *Egbons* and *Aburos* here present. I am ever grateful for the love you have for me.

I thank the entire members of staff of the Faculty of Social Sciences for putting me forward as the Dean. I salute my predecessors in office: Professors Abayomi Adebayo, Bunmi Omolayo, Shola Omotola, Chika Asogwa and Babatunde Omotoso. I thank Dr Abiodun Lawal, the Deputy Dean, Mr Kevin Okpo, the Faculty Officer, and the staff in the Dean's staff.

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I appreciate members of EKSU Political Science; EKSU Faculty of Social Sciences and indeed members of EKSU community, including the Vice Chancellor, Prof Edward Olanipekun. Before FUOYE, there was EKSU! I appreciate your huge presence here.

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Akeem Bello is the good student who became a good friend and a confidant. To you and your good wife, Fatima, I say thank you. Honorable Sunday Adunmo (aka Galaxy) has proven to be a friend in need. I cannot but thank Lola Olofindare Ikwazom for being a good friend and a great supporter over the years. We have come a long way. May God bless your work and family. Oluwanife Ogunbodede, is like as a sister from another mother. I appreciate you and I pray for your success in the academic journey too. At one of the moments of need in the journey, Sunday Ojo Oludayo, Abiodun Yusuf and Ganiyat Ijiola came to my assistance. I cannot thank you enough. I thank Sheriff Kehinde Oyedele of the Nigeria High Commission in Pakistan, Dr Ibraheem Muheeb, Dr Ibrahim Azeez, Barrister Moshood Lassise-Phillip, Yahaya

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I have enjoyed uncommon love from my all my students, present and former, in the Department of Political Science at EKSU, FUYOYE and the Institute of Peace, Security and Governance, (now Department of Peace and Security Studies at EKSU). Your huge presence here says it all. Time and space will not allow me to mention your names. But do know I appreciate you all.

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“Which of the favours of your Lord will ye deny? So asks Allah in Suratul Rahman (Qur’an Chapter 55). Honestly, for me, there is none. I have been specially favoured. He provides for me. He protects me. He supports me. He gives me good health and good family. Most important, He guided me to the Straight Path and has never let me down. The best way to show appreciation therefore is to repeat what He commands us to be saying all the times: Alhamdulillah (Thank you, God).

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## PROFILE OF PROFESSOR AZEEZ OLUSOLA OLANIYAN

Professor Azeez Olusola Olaniyan was born over five decades ago to the family of Pa Mohammed and Princess Fayomade Olaniyan at Olowatishi Compound, Iba Street, Ogotun Ekiti in Ekiti Southwest Local Government area of Ekiti State. He had his primary and secondary education at Ansar-Ud-Deen Primary School and Ogotun High School, Ogotun Ekiti, respectively. He worked for some time as an accounts clerk at Ojorube Grammar School, Ogotun Ekiti, before proceeding to the Polytechnic, Ibadan, for a National Diploma in Mass Communication. He emerged as the best graduating student, and won the Departmental Best Prize. In his quest for more knowledge, he enrolled at the University of Ibadan for a degree in Political Science, again emerging on top of the class. After his national service, he returned to his alma mater, UI, for an MSc in Political Science in 2002, and capped it with a PhD in the same discipline in 2007. He received a Certificate in Ethnic and Racial Studies from the Federal University of Bahia, Salvador, Brazil in August, 2008. He did his postdoctoral fellowship at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard Campus, Durban, South Africa in 2013.

After his youth service at Command Secondary School, Shadawanka Barracks, Bauchi, he was employed by the Ekiti State Primary Education Board (now State Universal Basic Education Board) as an Executive Officer and rose to the rank of a Senior Executive Officer before joining the University of Ado Ekiti (now Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti) as an Assistant Lecturer. Fifteen years later, in year 2020, he was headhunted by the then Vice Chancellor, Professor Kayode Soremekun, to join the Federal University Oye Ekiti as a professor of political science.

His research focuses largely on peace and conflict resolution, security studies, political ecology, governance, and international relations with

emphasis on Nigeria, West Africa, and Africa. He has attended over 50 conferences held locally and internationally. He has over eighty (80) publications to his credit, which include co-authored book, co-edited books, monograph, book reviews, policy papers, short essays, journals, and chapters in books.

Professor Olaniyan is a vibrant lecturer, researcher and a highly mobile scholar who has received various awards and recognitions from different reputable organizations and institutions across the world. He was a Laurette of the Centre for Afro-Asia Studies at the Federal University of Bahia, Salvador, Brazil (2008); Laureate of American Political Science Association African Workshop held in Gaborone, Botswana (2012); a Postdoctoral Scholar at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College, Durban (2013); a postdoctoral grantee of the African Humanities Program (AHP) and the American Council for Learned Societies (ACLS) (2014-2015); a Scholar-in-Residence at the International Institute for the Advanced Study (of Cultures, Institutions and Economic Enterprise) (IIAS), University of Ghana, Legon (October to December, 2014); a laureate of Political Psychology of Populism at the Central European University, Budapest (2016); a writing fellow/scholar at the Rachel Carson Centre for Environment and Society at Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, Germany (January - July, 2017); Individual Grant Researcher/Fellow of the African Peacebuilding Network, New York (July – December, 2017). In the same 2017, he was selected as one of the African Scholars for the African Studies Association (ASA) Conference that was held in Chicago, USA. In May, 2018, he was specially invited to Washington DC by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) to speak at its International Colloquium on *The Challenges of Governing North Africa and the Sahel*. In 2021, he was selected to lead the African Research Development Group

(ARDG) short course/training programme for emerging African Scholars at the American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting in Seattle, WA (USA). Shortly after the APSA meeting in Seattle, he was elected as the Vice Chair of the African Politics Conference Group (APCG). In 2022, he was a co-leader for the APSA Graduate Training on Violence at the APSA Meeting in Montreal, Canada.

Professor Olaniyan has travelled extensively through grants by various reputable organizations, universities, and bodies, to present papers in conferences, workshops and as resource persons in several countries, including: United States of America, Germany, Finland, Sweden, South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Ghana, Botswana, Uganda, Kenya, Brazil, Mali, Benin Republic, United Arab Emirate, and Hungary.

Professor Olaniyan served the state as the Chairman, Caretaker Committee of Ekiti Southwest Local Government in Ekiti State, Nigeria from November 2010 to February 2012. In addition to service to the state, he has contributed to academic and the university system within and outside the shores of Nigeria in various capacities as follow:

1. Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, FUYOYE, 2023- Date
2. Chairman, Faculty of Social Sciences investigative panel on unfair treatment of a student in the Department of Sociology, 2022.
3. Chairman, Faculty of Social Sciences Journal Committee, 2021-2023
4. Member, Committee on Pharmacy Education and Research Endowment, 2021-2022.
5. Director, Advancement and Alumni Relations, 2021-2023
6. Member, Faculty of Social Sciences Investigative Committee on report of plagiarism

7. Member of Senate, FUOYE, 2020-Date
8. Acting Dean, Students Affairs, Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti (EKSU), 2020-2020.
9. Deputy Director, Institute of Peace, Security and Governance, EKSU, 2019-2020.
10. Member of Senate, EKSU, 2016 – 2020.
11. Assistant Director, Institute of Peace, Security and Governance, EKSU, 2016-2018.
12. Faculty of Social Sciences Representative to the Faculty of Management Sciences, EKSU, 2016-2018.
13. Member, Faculty of Social Sciences Students Disciplinary Committee, 2013-2018.
14. Examination Officer, Department of Political Science, EKSU, 2014-2015.
15. Staff Adviser, National Association of Political Science Students (NAPSS), EKSU, 2014-2015.
16. Level Coordinator, Department of Political Science, EKSU, 2009-2010.
17. Level Coordinator, Part-Time Programme on Public Administration, EKSU, 2008-2010.

### **Service to other Universities**

1. External Examiner, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, 2023-Date
2. External Examiner, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, 2023-Date
3. External Examiner, Elizade University, Ilara Mokin, Ondo State, 2022-Date
4. External Examiner, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos, 2022-Date
5. External Examiner, Nigerian Defense Academy, Kaduna, Nigeria, 2021- Date

6. External Examiner, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, 2019-Date
7. External Examiner, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 2021-Date
8. External Examiner, Nile University, Abuja, Nigeria, 2020-2022
9. Member, Nigeria Universities Commission (NUC) ad hoc panel on accreditation to:
  - i. Joseph Sarwan Tarka University, Makurdi, December, 2021
  - ii. Baze University, Abuja, December, 2021
  - iii. Lead City University, Ibadan, March, 2021
  - iv. Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, March, 2021

### **International Services**

1. External Examiner, University of Malaya, Malaysia, 2023-Date.
2. Member, African Studies Review Association Dissertation Prize, 2023
3. Co-leader, Dissertation Workshop on Political Violence, a short course/training programme for advanced doctoral students at the American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting, Montreal (Virtual), Canada, 14 -17 September, 2022.
4. Co-leader, African Research Development Group, a short course/training programme for African-based doctoral students, organized by the APCG at the American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting, Seattle WA, USA, 28-29 September, 2021.
5. Vice Chair, African Politics Conference Group (APCG), an affiliate organization of the American Political Science Association (APSA), 2021-Date.
6. Member, African Politics Conference Group Distinguished Africanist Award Committee, 2020.
7. Reviewer for several peer-reviewed local and International Journals.
8. Reviewer for publishing houses such as Palgrave Macmillan.

## Membership of Professional Bodies

1. Nigeria Political Science Association (NPSA)
2. American Political Science Association (APSA)
3. African Politics Conference Group (APCG)
3. African Studies Association (ASA)
4. African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA)
5. African Peacebuilding Network (APN)
6. African Network for Environmental Humanities (ANEH)
7. International Society of Political Psychology (ISPP)

Professor Olaniyan has supervised to completion one (1) doctoral student, five (5) Masters students at Ekiti State University, Ado Ekiti, and seven (7) honours students at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The numbers of Long Essay supervisions at the undergraduate level are too numerous to count. In addition, he has examined ten (10) PhD candidates across universities in Nigeria. He has also been involved in professorial assessment of seven (7) colleagues in different universities across the country. The graduate program in Political Science at Federal University Oye Ekiti has just commenced, and he will play a major role in mentoring the incoming graduate students.

He enjoys reading, writing, travelling, gardening, and surfing the internet.

Professor Olaniyan is married to Alhaja Medinat Abiodun Olaniyan, a Nurse by profession, and the marriage is blessed with promising children.

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