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Regional Studies in Nigeria

1. REGIONALIZATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is a West African country bounded by Republic of Benin, Republic of Niger, Republic of Cameroon and Gulf of Guinea. It is the most populous country in Africa with current estimated population of 168 million and annual population growth rate of 2.8%. The country covers a total area of about 923,768 sq km of which 1.5% is water and the remaining 910,768 sq km is land.

The rate of urbanization is 3.5% per year with 50% urban population. The first merger of Nigeria was in 1914 when various ethnic, social, political and cultural groups were brought under the British colonial rule through amalgamation of Southern and Northern protectorates. The colonial government, in 1947, divided the country into Northern, Western and Eastern regions. In 1960, Nigeria became an independent state, with a federal system of government retaining the three regional structures. In 1963, following a referendum, the Mid-western region was created.

Positively, each region developed at its own pace using the resources within its domain (the North had groundnut, the East, palm produce and the West cocoa) and contributed to the central government based on the principle of derivation. These cash crops were the main stay of the country's economy. Largely, this explains why the regional governments supported the use of derivation principles in sharing federally collected revenues. The control of resources at the regional level is part of the reasons the political elites did not want more regions carved out of their respective regions. The struggle for political power at the regional level was extremely competitive and less at the center.

From 1967, various military regimes significantly altered the structure, nature and dynamics of Nigeria's federalism. The country was, at different times, divided into 12, 19, 21 and eventually 36 states. The current 36 states and the federal capital are the administrative entities with each state falling within one of the prevailing six geo-political regions in the country.

The series of structural adjustment under the military came with over centralization of power at the center, which is what is currently obtainable even in a democratic dispensation. The derivation dynamics of the country changed drastically. The military's intervention coincided with the changing fortunes of the country from agrarian economy to the one dominated by oil and the sharing of the revenue was skewed in favor of the center. These adjustments had tremendous effect on regional development as regions became very dependent on federally collected revenue for all their expenditures.

Although, the existing six regions were delineated based on social, cultural, political and geographical affinity, but the government of components states are in the process of exploring economic opportunities with a view to transforming their respective regions from dependent to independent economic frontiers. This presents a vibrant platform to understanding regionalism from broader perspective in the future rather than the prevailing interpretation of physical realignment as regionalization.

2. INSTITUTIONS FOR REGIONAL STUDIES IN NIGERIA

Regional studies in Nigeria have continued to emerge in the last five decades as platforms to understand the dynamics and operations of cities and regions. But it is yet to gain considerable political acceptability as major tool in resolving the inadequacies of Nigerian governance and economic structure. Theoretical

provisions are often in contrast to regional development outcomes while academics, policy makers and practitioners are rooted in the perspective that regionalism is all about rural and urban migration.

In each of the six geo-political regions in Nigeria, there are institutions where regionalization is part of courses on offer both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Outlined below are some of the institutions from each region (one per region).

S/N	Geo-Political Region	Name of Institution	Department	Contact Details
1	South West	University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State	Department of Urban and Regional Planning	Dr. (Mrs.) T. Lawanson tolawanson@gmail.com http://www.unilag.edu.ng/
2	South East	University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State	Department of Urban and Regional Planning	Prof. Donald C. Okeke dcokeke2000@yahoo.co.uk http://unn.edu.ng/
3	South-South	Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Rivers State	Department of Urban and Regional Planning	Dr. Opuenebo Binya Owei http://www.ust.edu.ng/
4	North Central	Federal University of Technology, Minna, Niger State	Department of Urban and Regional Planning	Dr. Musa Dalil http://www.futminna.edu.ng/
5	North West	Uthman Dan Fodio University, Sokoto State	Department of Geography	Dr. A. M. Junaid http://www.udusok.edu.ng
6	North East	Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, Bauchi State	Department of Urban and Regional Planning	http://www.atbu.edu.ng