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## Nigeria And Resource Control: A Lockean Consideration

Igwe D.E. & Umoh G.G.

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### Abstract

*This paper critically assesses resource control in Nigeria vis-à-vis John Locke's political theory. Locke's theory constitutes one of the greatest and most influential models in social, political, ethical and legal discourses, ranging from natural rights, property rights, freedom, equality, social contract, limited and representative government, to civil disobedience. His theory, thus, has much to offer in Nigeria's resource control quagmire, particularly with regard to the people of the oil-bearing regions who have suffered much harm as a result of oil exploration and exploitation without commensurate compensation. The people of the region have suffered much injustice, alienation, exploitation, oppression, marginalization and dehumanization, yet, attempt to salvage this repulsive fade appears elusive. This has led to much agitation, conflict, acrimony, restiveness and the rise of numerous armed groups. Adopting the philosophical method of critical analysis, this paper argues that 'true federalism', upheld by the constitution, is a reliable solution to the resource control conundrum now experienced in the country. The derivation policy of pre-oil boom is proposed in the conviction that if the federating units (states) control greater part of the revenues generated from their states, their speedy development is guaranteed; exploitation, conflict, marginalization, dehumanization, injustice and the overbearing powers of the federal government will significantly reduce. Ultimately, the nation will experience the desired 'unity and faith, peace and progress' that is its motto.*

**Keywords:** Nigeria, Resource Control, John Locke, Natural Rights, True Federalism.

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**Igwe D.E.**  
Department of Philosophy,  
University of Uyo

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**Umoh G.G.**  
Department of Philosophy,  
University of Uyo

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## Introduction

Nigeria is a country blessed with abundant natural and human resources. With its cultural, economic, social, and political splendour, one would expect Nigeria to be a force to be reckoned with in global matters; a nation of superlative development; a place of peaceful coexistence and unity among its citizens. Regrettably, this is not the case. The level of injustice, exploitation, marginalization, nepotism, corruption, political and ethnic conflicts, lawlessness, judicial inconsistencies, kidnappings and killings makes it appear as though Nigeria was in the mind of Hobbes when he theorized about the 'state of war' in his political philosophy. The trajectory of agitations and problems in Nigeria is an apparent caveat that the nation is speedily degenerating into a failed state.

Among the major agitations and conflicts in Nigeria today is that of 'resource control' which has created much animosity, hatred, bitterness and division in Nigeria and has led to the emergence of armed groups such as the Niger Delta militants, Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force, Niger Delta Avengers, etc. The agitations are premised on the conviction of the agitators that the resources found in their territories rightfully belong to them, and, consequently, that they are entitled to the proceeds or at least, adequate compensation.

John Locke is one thinker who has expressed compelling and influential philosophical views regarding the state and its citizens. His thought has had enormous influence on social and political as well as moral thinkers throughout the globe. His political philosophy constitutes the foundation for democratic principles of which the rule of law, protection of rights, lives and property, equality, freedom, justice and separation of powers are paramount. His ideas inspired the 'American Revolution' and had enormous influence on the 'French Revolution' and the 'Glorious Revolution' that established parliamentary government in England a century before the American Revolution. It is, thus, germane to consider his ideas in relation to the problem of resource control in Nigeria which borders on natural rights, property rights, justice, fairness and equity, among other ideals, with the hope that some meaningful suggestions would be offered which would help in tackling the resource control quagmire in Nigeria today.

## **Nigeria and Resource Control**

Nigeria as a country was unified by the British colonial government. Since her independence in 1960, Nigeria has experienced numerous crises and conflicts. It appears to lack a contract of unity and peaceful coexistence among its citizens. Nigeria's existence is a product of the forceful amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914 by Lord Fredrick Lugard. Since Nigeria was founded in 1914, both the democratic and military regimes have saddled the citizens with oppressive conditions that violate fundamental human rights and have at different moments failed to guarantee peace, security and unity. The failure of government to fulfill their mandate signalled a breakdown of law and order, peace and security in the country. Corruption, injustice, marginalization, oppression, nepotism, religious bigotry, and other vices have persisted till date, thereby, threatening the unity, peace and progress of the country. Sadly, these vices have given rise to various agitations, conflicts as well as armed groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force, Niger Delta Avengers, Niger Delta Red Squad; Niger Delta Vigilante; Niger Delta Liberation Front, Adaka Boro Marine Commandos, Movement for the Emancipation of the Sovereign State of Biafra, Biafra Avengers, Indigenous People of Biafra, Eastern Security Network, Boko Haram, Islamic State West Africa, Red Egbesu Water Lions, Joint Niger Delta Liberation Force, The Red Scorpion; The Ultimate Warriors of the Niger Delta, Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate, Agatu Warriors (Benue State), and the Western Nigeria Security Network, codenamed 'Operation Amotekun'.

Underlying the agitations of most of these groups, particularly in the Niger Delta, is the quest for resource control. This owes to the deep-rooted structural dysfunction evident in the unfair revenue sharing formula, environmental degradation, paltry compensation, and marginalization experienced by the oil-bearing regions. Nigeria as a country is blessed with numerous natural resources, yet, has been unable to harness them for the well-being of its citizens and the country's desired development. These natural resources, according to Aladeitan (2013), are 'gifts of nature and an endowment of comfort that makes the existence of mankind complete'. Since natural resources can be used to create and increase the wealth of a nation or country, its ownership and control has become a subject of moral, legal, political and

socio-cultural controversy because whoever controls them controls the environment. It is, thus, imperative, as some thinkers argue, that the wealth which is created through the ownership of these natural resources be distributed in a manner that guarantees a reasonable share for the locality from which the material resources are got.

In Nigeria, the ownership and control of natural resources popularly known as 'resource control' has remained a very sensitive and controversial issue that has significantly threatened the unity of the nation. The term is perceived differently by thinkers and politicians alike. As such, there is no generally accepted definition or meaning of the notion. Some consider it the total takeover or control of the resources located in a state by the people of the state, while others view it as the management of the greater portions of the resources found in a state by the stakeholders in that state (Roberts and Oladeji, 2005). According to Ifedayo (2010:14), resource control entails the access of communities and state governments to natural resources located within their boundaries and the freedom to develop and utilize these resources without reference to the Federal Government. Lawal (2001:21) views it as the practice of true federalism and natural law in which the federating units express their rights to privately control the natural resources within their borders and make agreed contributions toward the maintenance of common services of the sovereign nation-state to which they belong. Henryik (2009), on his part, defines it as the control and management of resources by States or Local Governments from whose jurisdiction the resources are extracted.

In spite of the various definitions given, the obvious fact is that the people of the state or community where the resources are located are affirmed to have much control of the resources found in their state. Unfortunately, this is not the case in Nigeria. The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria vests the control and management of the natural resources absolutely on the Federal Government:

... the entire property in and control of all minerals, mineral oils and natural gas in under or upon any land in Nigeria or in, under or upon the territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria shall vest in the Government of the Federation and shall be managed in such manner as may be

prescribed by the National Assembly.

(Section 44, Subsection 3)

In the country, ownership and control of the natural resources have generated crisis in the way and manner the financial proceeds are shared among the federating units of Nigeria in what is popularly called 'Revenue Allocation,' which is tied to ownership and control of the natural resources. In Nigeria, the legal rights to own and control natural resources is the Federal Government's, which exercises the maximum degree of formal control over mines and minerals, including oil fields, oil mining, natural gas and nuclear energy. Thus, ownership of natural resources in the Nigerian Constitution translates into "State ownership" with the State (Federal Government) granting leases of oil wells or oil fields to private companies for mining operations. This grant of mining leases to private companies gives them qualified ownership of the natural resources located within the area of the oil mining license.

The agitations of the oil-bearing states are largely owed to perceived injustice in the sharing formula, marginalization, alienation and environmental degradation they suffer without due compensation. The Niger Delta region of Nigeria, which is a part of the southern Nigeria ethnic minorities, demands more equitable share of the oil proceeds which is skewed in favour of the majority class spearheaded by the North. Oil explorations have induced horrible hardship and suffering for the people of the Niger Delta. Farmlands have been decimated; rivers and aquatic life have been destroyed; environmental pollution and poor standard of living are evident; infrastructural development and provision of social amenities in the region are nothing to write home about vis-à-vis what the region generates for the nation. Sadly, the non-producing regions, especially, for instance, the North, seem averse to the agitations of the people of the Niger Delta largely because the arrangement as presently constituted, favours them considerably. Many leaders of the North contend that the oil and gas found in the Niger Delta belong to all the thirty-six states of the federation, a view they do not express about the gold and other natural resources found in the North. Alhaji Abubakar Hashidu, a former Governor of Gombe State, for instance, is quoted to have said: "the territorial waters belong to the 36 states and the 774 local

government areas of the country. Without the country, there will be no water; and without the country, states will not be in existence” (Egugbo, 2016:197). This view mirrors the mindset of many northern leaders. Generally, there is apathy on the side of the non-oil producing States regarding resource control agitation of the people of the Niger Delta. This attitude does not go down well with the people of the Niger Delta. It is in this connection that Prof. ItseSagay lamented: “the attitude of the non-oil producing states toward the plight of the coastal states during the hearing of the resource control case was unsympathetic and horrible” (quoted in Egugbo, 2016:197).

### **Locke's Political Theory**

John Locke's political philosophy is an attempt to establish the theoretical base for the establishment of an ideal civil society and government which would promote security, liberty and well-being of the people that form the society and government. In his *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke theorizes how to establish an effective social contract in the society; how to determine when the social contract is violated; how to protect the social contract and the best way to deal with abuses of social contract by the government. He establishes a foundation for a liberal mandate that includes representative and limited government that guarantees basic civil liberties. Locke refuted the theory of the “divine right of kings” – a political doctrine in defence of monarchical absolutism – the political doctrine and practice of unlimited centralized authority and absolute sovereignty as vested in a monarch or dictator believed to derive their authority from God and, therefore, not accountable to his fellow man. But Locke argued against the doctrine and held that all persons are endowed with natural rights to life, liberty, and property and that rulers who failed to protect those rights may be removed by the people by force if necessary (Dunn, 1969).

Locke proposes his theory of property right in his *Second Treatise of Government*. The theory is premised on the laws of nature which permit individuals to appropriately exercise control over natural and material resources. Locke had a deep-seated conception of political theory construed from the principle of self-ownership and the corollary rights to own property which is based on his view that a man earns ownership over a resource when he mixes his labour with it (1823:116). Locke claims that the civil society was created for the protection of property. Accordingly, he states, “The chief end of

men uniting into commonwealth and putting themselves under government is the preservation of property” (1952:11). In saying this, Locke relies on the etymological root of 'property', *proprius* (Latin) meaning that which is one's own, including oneself. Thus, by 'property', he means life, liberty and estate. Locke, thus, justifies the ownership and acquisition of private property which according to him is a natural right. The right to private property constitutes the foundation of Locke's political philosophy, summarizing how each man relates to God and to other men.

Locke believes in a prohibition on harming others, and this stems from his more basic belief that “each individual has a property in his own person” (1823:116). In other words, individuals are self-owning. This notion or principle of “self-ownership principle” constitutes the foundation of libertarian conception of justice. Locke believed that determining the proper role of government would allow humans to flourish as individuals and societies, both materially and spiritually, because God gave man the ability to reason. The freedom that a properly executed government provides for humanity amounts to the fulfilment of the divine purpose for humanity. Thus, according to John Locke, the moral order of natural law is permanent and self-perpetuating. Governments are only factors contributing to that moral order.

Locke argued that political power is the natural power of each man cooperatively given up into the hands of a designated body. Thus, a community surrenders some degree of its natural rights to the government which is better able to protect those rights than any man could alone. Because government exists, specifically, for the welfare of the community, any government, therefore, that fails in this responsibility can be substituted. The community, therefore, has a moral obligation to revolt against or replace any government that fails to fulfil its mandate.

Locke, in his political theory, also made an analysis of the state of nature – a state of peace in which individuals enjoy perfect freedom and equality under the protection of the law of nature. Locke views it as the state of total freedom where men are lords to themselves, however, governed by reason. Locke's state of nature ensures not only a life in peace and order regulated by law of nature, but also encourages individuals to work and acquire property. Locke's description of the state of nature was not a miserable



and pessimistic condition as seen in Hobbes. Locke considered man a rational and social creature, capable of identifying and living in a moral order. Locke developed the idea of equality of human beings in the state of nature and their natural rights to life, liberty and property. Following this description of the individual, he develops notions of the community and the civil society. Locke states that government is based on the consent of the people and that legitimate government is limited, constituted by separation of powers. According to him, any government that fails in its fundamental duties and responsibilities can be replaced.

In Locke's view, men have equal natural rights to life, liberty and property. These rights are unchangeable and inviolable for they are derived from the law of nature established by God. Everyone is, therefore, bound by reason not only to preserve oneself but also to preserve all mankind insofar as his own preservation does not come in conflict with it. Men are free and equal and there is no commonly acknowledged superior whose orders they are obliged to obey. Everyone is the judge of his own actions. Although the natural condition is a state of liberty, it is not a state of licence. Nobody has the right to destroy himself or destroy the life of any other person. Since there is no common judge to punish the violator of natural law in the state of nature, every individual is his own judge and has executive power of punishing the violators of the law of nature. The state of nature for Locke is a moral state in which natural law dictates peace and preservation. It is a moral condition with a natural law that commands peace, enjoining that no one should harm another person in his life, liberty or possessions.

Locke posits that right to property is intimately connected with right to life and liberty as its necessary consequence. He held that in the state of nature, individuals are conscious of these natural rights because they are subject to reason. Man, according to him, originally exists in a state of nature in which he needs to answer only to the laws of nature. In this state of nature, men are free to do as they please so long as they preserve peace. Because, they have a right to self-preservation, it follows that they have the right to those things that will help them to survive and make them happy. God has provided man with all the materials and man needs to pursue those ends, but these natural resources are useless until men apply their efforts to them.



In his social contract theory, Locke avowed that men in the state of nature entered into a contract due to challenges such as absence of common law making, law-enforcing and law interpreting agency capable of protecting natural rights. According to Locke, contract was an agreement of each with all, but a surrender of the personal right of an individual to fulfill the commands of the laws of Nature in return for the guarantee that his rights as nature ordains them, life, liberty and property should be well-maintained. Each individual makes a contract with one another to unite and constitute a community. The end for which this contract is made is the protection and preservation of property against the dangers both from within and outside the community.

### **Evaluation**

The situation in Nigeria with regard to property right and resource control has been horrid, and has remained problematic. Much agitation on the subject comes from the southern region of Nigeria, particularly, those from the oil-bearing regions. And this is owed to the need for a more equitable and justifiable distribution of revenue derived from the nation's natural resources of which the Niger Delta is the main economic hub of the nation. The constant strife for resource control has generated controversies between the different parts of the country. The demand of the southerners is for a fair share in revenue allocation, considered achievable only where some autonomy in resource control is enshrined in the constitution. For instance, the Niger Delta people remained aggrieved and have maintained that the land and natural resources that are found within the Ijaw territory belong to the Ijaw communities and are the basis of their survival (Okonkwo, 2017).

The South-South agitation for resource control demands the abolition of the Petroleum and Land Use Acts and a review of the Nigerian Constitution to reflect true fiscal federalism. But for many in the North, the constant clamour for resource control is an invitation to the disintegration of the country. The Northerners prefer a stronger central government that would be more responsive to promoting development in all parts of the country. The problem of resource control, thus, persists to the detriment of the nation. There is lack of trust, peace and unity. The question then, is how do we fix the problem in order to live in peace and make the desired progress? The answer, we think, lies in true federalism of which resource control is a formidable part. By true federalism, we mean genuine and sincere political system in which the federating units, regions or states as the case may be, designate certain powers

to the federal or central government while retaining a limited degree of self-determination.

It is worthy of note that before 1970, the era of Nigeria's oil boom, the derivation principle was used by the federal government to allocate revenues to the regions of the federation. Basically, the formula used was 50% to the producing region, 35% to other regions and 15% to the federal government. The Northern region of Nigeria, for instance, that was rich in groundnut, cotton, tin ore, etc., had 50% of the revenues allocated to them. Similarly, the Western region that was rich in cocoa had 50% of the revenue. The Eastern region that was rich in coal and palm oil had 50% of the revenue allocated to them. Other regions of the federating unit had 35% while 15% went to the federal government (Mbeke-Ekanem, 2000).

Unfortunately, by 1970 when there was oil boom in the Eastern region of Nigeria, the derivation was changed by the Federal Government and Onshore-Offshore dichotomy instituted. In this unfortunate arrangement, the Federal Government has absolute ownership of the oil produced offshore, "while that produced onshore would attract a paltry 1–2 percent royalty to the producing states" (Mbeke-Ekanem, 2000:17). Again, the federal government included population size and state equality in the allocation of resources. This additional arrangement ensured that the region with more population would have more states, thereby having more share of the oil revenues than the others. These developments did not go down well with the oil producing regions. As a result, there was much clamour for fair distribution of oil revenues in favour of the oil producing regions. In response, the Federal Government, in 1978, under the leadership of General Olusegun Obasanjo, enacted the Land Use Decree which gave the Federal Government absolute ownership of all lands in Nigeria. "This also meant that all natural resources that came with the land belonged to the Federal Government, controlled by the Hausa and Yoruba (Mbeke-Ekanem, 2000:19).

The agitations of the oil producing regions and the Federal Government's demeanor make Locke's view of property right significant and relevant in tackling Nigeria's resource control imbroglio. Locke, as already noted, held that civil society was established for the protection of property of which land and natural resources are part. Thus, before the establishment of civil society, traditional societies existed. The implication of this is that the

lands including the natural resources found in them were already owned by the original owners before the emergence of any nation or state. In the case of Nigeria whose amalgamation was in 1914, the lands rightfully belonged to the various communities in which they were found before the amalgamation. After the amalgamation, the British laid claim to and controlled the natural resources found in Nigeria through the Mineral Oil Ordinance enacted in 1914 by Lord Lugard to secure easy administration over mining and oil rights, thus making it a wholly British concern. This 1914 Mineral Oil Ordinance provides that:

No lease or license shall be granted except to a British subject or to a British company registered in Great Britain or in a British colony and having its principal place of business within her majesty's dominion, the chairman, managing director and the majority of the directors of which are British subjects. (Okonnah, 1997).

The above Ordinance failed to recognize the interest of Nigerians; thus, it reflects the colonial and oppressive minds of the British imperialists who were only interested in protecting their own selfish interests without considering the interest of the citizens of Nigeria.

The Constitution of Nigeria (1999) also failed to correct the injustice in the control and sharing of the proceeds of the natural resources. The Constitution establishes “the federation account” wherein all revenues collected by the Federal Government shall be paid (Section 162, Subsection 1). It further provides (Subsection 2) that proposals for revenue allocation from the Federation Account shall be tabled before the National Assembly by the President upon the receipt of advice from the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission. In determining the formula:

the National Assembly shall take into account, the allocation principles especially those of population, equality of States, internal revenue generation, land mass, terrain as well as population density:

Provided that the principle of derivation shall be constantly reflected in any approved formula as being not less than thirteen percent of the revenue accruing to the Federation

Account directly from any natural resources.

The above shows clearly that contrary to the derivation principle of pre-1970, population of states, land mass, terrain and equality of states have been inserted in favour of the larger ethnic groups. Again, 13% constitutes the benchmark as opposed to the era of 50% to the producing region. The implication of the 13% benchmark is that it may not increase insofar as the law did not go beyond the stipulated percentage and the oil-bearing regions cannot successfully challenge it without the amendment of the Constitution. The government thus, may decide to remain at the 13% point of reference in spite of the prevailing harsh economic realities. There is, therefore, a need for constitutional amendment to raise the benchmark to a reasonable percent, at least 50% as obtained in the nation before the oil boom. This should also apply to all natural/mineral resources in all states of the Federation, including the gold mined in some Northern States of the Federation which other states are not benefitting from. This way, the nation will make a meaningful development and the problem of injustice, marginalization, discrimination, and other vices will be reduced to the barest minimum.

From Locke's theory, some views are deducible which are germane and have some implications for Nigeria's resource control quagmire. The first is what we consider the 'property right' principle predicated on the laws of nature which allows individuals to exercise control over natural resources in their domain; resources which they have mixed their labour with. As earlier noted, communities have existed in Nigeria before the forceful amalgamation of 1914. The people of these communities have been actively involved in activities such as farming, fishing and hunting in their lands, seas and forests, respectively. Thus, they have been mixing their labour with their endowed natural resources before the coming of the colonial masters. The land, seas, and forests, thus, rightfully belong to them as their property in accordance with Locke's stipulation. Unfortunately, the amalgamation, which took place without the consent of the people, and the 1999 Constitution forcefully took the resources away from the rightful owners. Locke had theorized that the main aim of entering into a civil contract and establishing a government is the protection and preservation of property. Sadly, the oil-rich states had their property forcefully taken away, thereby, justifying the sophists' aphorism that 'might is right'. Be that as it may, it is proper, in accordance with natural justice that the oil-endowed states be reasonably or adequately compensated having

forcefully lost their natural endowments.

The second deducible idea from Locke's theory is the 'harm principle' in which individuals in the civil society ought not to be harmed. Regrettably, the people of the oil producing regions have suffered much harm ranging from depletion and destruction of the ecosystem, environmental pollution and degradation, poisoning of the waters, lands and the atmosphere, leading to numerous diseases such as cancer, stroke, asthma, emphysema, typhoid, hookworm, giardiasis, ascariasis, hepatitis, dysentery, cholera, diarrhea, polio, and acute lower respiratory infections in children. The harm the oil producing regions have suffered is grave and irreparable. It is, therefore, imperative that a reasonable compensation cherished by them be made, at least, to ease the continued harm.

The 'Consent Principle' is another idea deducible from Locke. Locke averred that a civil society is democratic by nature. The consent of the people is a sine qua non in the formation of a civil society and establishment of government. Accordingly, Locke writes:

Men being, as has been said, by nature all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this state and subjected to the political power of another without consent. The only way whereby anyone can divest himself of his natural liberty and put on the bounds of civil society is by agreeing with other men to join and unite into a community for their comfortable, safe and peaceful living, one amongst another, in a secure enjoyment of their properties and a great security against any that are not of it. (1823:146)

Locke denounces authoritarianism which he argued is a pervasion of government. Free consent of the people cannot be compromised. The case of the oil-bearing regions is really abysmal. Their consent is treated flippantly. The disappointing acclaimed compensations to these regions are either done without their free consent or with the consent of a few selfish and self-serving stakeholders from the regions that are puppets to the government. The 13% derivation formula was instituted without their consent; the onshore-offshore dichotomy was established against their wish; the Mineral Oil Ordinance was imposed contrary to their wish; the 1999 constitution which gave all lands and

territorial waters to the Federal Government was imposed against their desire. The government's authoritarian posture runs contrary to the democratic postulates of Locke. The outcome being conflict, hatred, dissention, injustice, restiveness, and violence experienced in the regions. With these in place, the country will hardly experience peace and meaningful progress.

'Welfare Principle' is another idea evident in Locke's theory. Locke held that government exists for the welfare of the people. He believes that the policies of government should ensure that people flourish as individuals and societies. Government must promote the well-being, liberty, and security of the people in line with natural rights and the laws of nature. People, therefore, must be happy and fulfilled. Any government that fails in its responsibility to ensure the above desired and desirable goods is liable to be removed, according to Locke. The people also have the right to civil disobedience as well as revolt against such government. The condition of the people of the oil 'producing' regions shows that their welfare is not well taken care of. This calls for serious worry and attitudinal change towards their well-being. Many of them still live in poverty and squalor. Some of the communities lack good roads. Some still travel by boat; yet, a small percentage of the resources generated from the region can build good bridges to alleviate their sufferings. Many are still unemployed or underemployed. Many farmers have lost their means of livelihood owing to the depletion and destruction of their farmlands emanating from oil exploration. Some children are not in school due to poverty. Many of those who have managed to graduate are still roaming the streets in search of jobs. No wonder there are much agitations and resentments against the government as well as the rise of armed groups. The condition of the people of the oil 'producing' regions is, indeed, disheartening. It calls for urgent attention and strong improvement of the policies of the government regarding the regions.

Adequate inclusion of the people of the region at the top echelon of the oil sector can help improve their condition. The oil sector is dominated by people from the non-oil producing regions and foreigners who lack good knowledge of the condition and plight of the people of the oil 'producing' regions. More so, the headquarters of the oil companies are not in the oil 'producing' regions. Thus, they are far from the people and would hardly understand their predicament. A look at the newly inaugurated Board of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), for instance, shows that

majority of the members are from the non-oil producing regions. The board was inaugurated by President Muhammadu Buhari on January 7, 2022. The following are the members: Senator Margery C. Okadigbo, Chairman (South East), Mele Kolo Kyari, Chief Executive Officer (North East), Umar I. Ajiya, Chief Financial Officer (North Central), Mrs. Hadiza Coomasi, Company Secretary (North), Dr. Tajudeen Umar (North East), Mrs. Lami O. Ahmed (North Central), Mallam Mohammed Lawal (North West), Engr. Henry Ikem-Obih (South East), Barrister Constance Harry Marshal (South South), Chief Pius Akinyeture (South West), Dr. Nasir Gwarzo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum (North), Aliyu Ahmed, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning (North) (Premium Times, Premiumtimesng.com). It could be seen that only a few persons are from the oil 'producing' regions. In fact, only one person is from the core oil-bearing states. What then would convince one that the interests and needs of the people of the oil 'producing' regions would be favourably and adequately catered for?

Our proposal of 'true federalism' coheres partly with Locke's stipulation that the people surrender some degree of their natural rights to the government who must guarantee the protection of the people's property including their lives, liberty, estate and welfare. Our proposal of true federalism not only entails the designation of certain powers to the federal government by the federating units while retaining some degree of self-determination, but also involves sincerity or genuineness by honestly or truthfully implementing the agreements reached. The import of this is that, as a policy, an agreement might be reached on resource control as strongly agitated but not honestly or sincerely implemented by the government. ASUU's agreements with the Federal Government are a case in hand.

Truly, Nigeria is blessed with rich natural/mineral resources which are not harnessed owing to overdependence on oil and gas. And this has impeded the economic growth of the nation which by extension has adversely affected every other sector. All the States of the Federation are endowed with rich mineral resources which can sustain and develop the people of the respective states. It might be important to remind us or bring to our knowledge that during the colonial era, the various regions developed based on the natural resources controlled by them. The Northern region, for instance, which was, and is, rich in groundnut and other agricultural products, exported groundnut which was used to develop the region. The regional government, led by Sir Ahmadu



Bello, from the proceeds of the groundnut export, was able to build the Bank of the North, the Ahmadu Bello University, etc., (Nnoli, 1978) which aided the development of the region. The Western region led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo, from the proceeds of cocoa export, funded a free primary education policy as well as established the first television network in the country. The Eastern region led by Dr. Michael Okpara, from the proceeds of palm oil, made possible the establishment of the African Continental Bank and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

No State in Nigeria, today, is without natural resources which can sustain and adequately develop it. Below is a list of Nigerian states (including the FCT) and their natural resources:

S/NO	State	Mineral Resource
1.	Abia	Gold, Lead/Zinc, Limestone, Oil/Gas & Salt
2.	Abuja	Cassiterite, Clay, Dolomite, Gold, Lead/Zinc, Marble & Tantalite
3.	Adamawa	Bentonite, Gypsum, Kaolin & Magnesite
4.	Akwa Ibom	Clay, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Oil/Gas, Salt & Uranium
5.	Anambra	Clay, Glass -Sand, Gypsum, Iron -ore, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Phosphate & Salt
6.	Bauchi	Gold, Cassiterite (tine ore), Columbite, Gypsum, Wolfram, Coal, Limestone, Lignite, Iron-ore & Clay
7	Bayelsa	Glau, Gypsum, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Manganese, Oil/Gas & Uranium
8	Benue	Barite, Clay, Coal, Gemstone, Gypsum, Iron -Ore, Lead/Zinc, Limestone, Marble & Salt
9.	Borno	Bentonite, Clay, Diatomite, Gypsum, Hydro -carbon, Kaolin & Limestone
10.	Cross River	Barite, Lead & Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Manganese, Oil/Gas, Salt & Uranium ***Take to serial no.10 in alphabetical order.
11.	Delta	Clay, Glass-sand, Gypsum, Iron-ore, Kaolin, Lignite, Marble & Oil/Gas

12.	Ebonyi	Gold, Lead/Zinc, Salt, Limestone, Ball clay, Gypsum, Granite, Iron ore, Refractory clay
13	Edo	Bitumen, Clay Dolomite, Phosphate, Glass -sand, Gold, Gypsum, Iron-ore, Lignite, Limestone, Marble and Oil/Gas
14	Ekiti	Clay, Feldspar, Granite, Kaolin, Syenite & Tantalum, Bauxite, Columbite, Quartz, Limestone, Cassiterite
15.	Enugu	Coal, Lead/Zinc, Limestone, Crude oil, Lateritic clay, Kaolinitic clay, Ball clay, Iron ore, Glass sand, Gypsum, Silica sand, Ceramic clay
16.	Gombe	Gemstone, Gypsum, Graphite, Kaolin, Limestone, Silica sand, Uranium, Coal, Clay
17.	Imo	Gypsum, Lead/Zinc, Lignite, Limestone, Marcasite, Oil/Gas, Phosphate & Salt
18.	Jigawa	Butylene, Amethyst, Aqua Marine, Asbestos, Clay, Fluorite, Gemstone, Gold, Graphite, Kaolin, Hyacinth, Mica, Rock Crystal
19.	Kaduna	Ruby, Sapphire, Stibnite, Superstibite, Tantalite, Topaz & Tourmaline
20.	Kano	Cassiterite, Copper, Gemstone, Glass -sand, Lead/Zinc, Pyrochlore & Tantalite
21.	Katsina	Kaolin, Marble & Salt
22.	Kebbi	Gold, Salt, Iron Ore, Feldspar, Limestone, Quartz, Bauxite, Clay, Manganese, Kaolin, Mica
23.	Kogi	Cole, Dolomite, Feldspar, Gypsum, Iron -ore, Kaolin, Marble, Talc & Tantalite, Cassiterite, Columbite, Feldspar, Gold, Iron -ore, Marble, Mica
24.	Kwara	Clay, Kaolin, Silica sand, Quartz, Dolomite, Marble, Feldspar, Gold, Tantalite, Cassiterite, Granite, and Limestone
25.	Lagos	Bitumen, Clay, Silica sand, Sharp sand, Gravel, Petroleum, Laterite, Columbite, Coal, Dolomite/Marble, Amethyst (Topaz Garnet), Baryte, Barite, Cassiterite, Chalcopyrite
26	Nassarawa	Feldspar, Galena, Iron -ore, Limestone, Mica, Salt, Sapphire, Talc, Tantalite, Quartz, Tourmaline, Zircon
27.	Niger	Gold, Lead/Zinc, Talc, Ball clay, Kaolin, Limestone, Granite, Glass sand, Iron ore, Red clay, Feldspar, Graphite, Cyanite, Silica sand, Quartz, Marble, Gemstone
28	Ogun	Bitumen, Clay, Feldspar, Gemstone, Kaolin, Limestone & Phosphate, Bitumen, Clay, Coal, Dimension Stones, Feldspar, Gemstone, Glass - Sand, Granite, Gypsum, Tar Limestone, Quartz

29.	Ondo	Marble, Oil/Gas, Gold, Gemstone, Clay, Diorite, Lignite
30.	Osun	Columbite, Gold, Granite, Talc, Tantalite & Tourmaline, Quartz
31.	Oyo	Aqua Marine, Cassiterite, Clay, Dolomite, Gemstone, Gold, Kaolin, Marble, Silimonite, Talc & Tantalite
32.	Plateau	Barite, Bauxite, Betonite, Bismuth, Cassiterite, Clay, Coal, Emerald, Fluoride, Gemstone, Granite, Iron ore, Kaolin, Lead/Zinc, Marble, Molybdenite, Phrochlore, Salt, Tantalite/Columbite, Tin & Wolfram
33.	Rivers	Oil/Gas, Clay, Glass-Sand, Lignite, Marble, Silica sand
34.	Sokoto	Clay, Flakes, Gold, Granite, Gypsum, Kaolin, Laterite, Limestone, Phosphate, Potash, Silica Sand & Salt
35	Taraba	Lead/Zinc, Fluorspar, Gamet, Tourmaline, Sapphire, Zircon, Tantalite, Columbite, Cassiterite, Barite, Galena, Gypsum, Limestone, Laterite, Bauxite, Pyrite, Magnetite
36.	Yobe	Soda Ash, Tintomite, Clay, Gypsum, Kaolin, Silica sand, Uranium, Limestone, Iron ore, Epsomite, Trona, Shale, Granite, Bentonitic clay
37.	Zamfara	Gold, Coal, Cotton, Granite, Chromite

(Source: <https://nigerianembassythehague.nl/about-nigeria/natural-resources/>,

Raw Materials Research and Development Council, Abuja)

From the above, it could be seen that all states of the federation are endowed with natural/mineral resources capable of sustaining and developing them, thus, making Nigeria a force to be reckoned with in global matters. Unfortunately, the constitution of Nigeria does not allow the states to harness the resources they are endowed with. The constitution vests the ownership and control of natural resources on the Federal Government. The Federal Government of Nigeria, thus, owns and controls the natural resources found and extracted from all soils and oceans in Nigeria. This, indeed, is an abhorrent impediment to Nigeria's development. For Nigeria to make the desired progress and development there is a need to amend the constitution to enable the states to control the resources in their various states while making an agreed contribution to the centre. This way, the states of the federation will experience speedy development. Again, the problems of marginalization, fear, hatred, tribalism, etc., will reduce drastically, thereby paving way for an enviable development of the nation.

An ideal system should entail a mutual cooperation between the

federal and other tiers of government for the holistic and meaningful development of the nation in line with Lockean social contract theory. It is important for the Federal government to put in place measures that will encourage the economic productivity of every region of the Federation. In a sense, the agitation for resource control has not recorded or yielded much meaningful success. However, the amendment of the constitution and some laws regarding ownership and control of the natural resources may avail the regions as well as the local communities the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the decision making process regarding their land and natural resources which would favourably improve their condition, thereby quelling the relentless agitations and conflicts. The Nigerian government should provide policies that would ensure peace and unity in line with fairness, justice, and equity in the distribution and management of the country's natural and human resources. It should widely consult and adequately seek the opinion of the people in the formulation and implementation of policies.

## **Conclusion**

Humans are endowed with natural resources and rights which must be respected by the government in line with Locke's stipulation for a peaceful coexistence, unity and meaningful development. Resource control in Nigeria which has remained a contentious subject can be successfully handled and managed by the Federal Government if it is sincere in upholding the principles of justice, fairness and equity. The plight of the people of the oil 'producing' regions is quite dispiriting. Their condition is a clear case of injustice, alienation, exploitation, oppression, marginalization and dehumanization. There is, therefore, a need for attitudinal change on the part of both the Federal Government and the non-oil producing states. Undoubtedly, if the non-oil producing states were the oil producing ones, the attitude would have been different. In this regard, the ethical golden rule becomes imperative: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Guided by this, justice, equity and fairness will not be far-fetched.

The oil 'producing' regions have economically sustained this nation for decades with their God-given natural resources. It is, therefore, imperative that they be duly compensated contrary to what presently obtains. This due compensation should be enjoyed by all states of the federation in conformity

with their economic contributions to the national economy. It is in this light that this paper calls for constitutional amendment for a 'true federalism' which should be true in all ramifications beyond theoretical stipulations. In this arrangement, the federating units (states) are to retain 50% of the revenue accruing from their natural/mineral resources while the federal government and other states will share 15% and 35%, respectively as obtained in the country prior to the oil boom. This will obviously make all states of the federation develop at a great speed and also reduce the overbearing powers of the Federal Government. It will further reduce considerably, conflict, acrimony, dissension, alienation, exploitation, oppression, marginalization, dehumanisation, injustice, and other vices as presently experienced in the nation and ultimately promote 'unity and faith, peace and progress'.

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