

## RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF REBRANDING NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The study on the demands of rural infrastructure and the rebranding process was undertaken to find out the extent to which interest groups agitations and demands affects the rebranding needs in Nigeria. The City of Calabar was used as the study area. A two item survey questionnaire was administered on a sample size of one hundred people culled from five parastatals in Cross River State. A four point Likert-like rating scale was secured as the instrument for data collection and the questionnaire was face vetted and validated for data collection. The respondents indicated the extent of their agreement to the items based on the scale points; strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The responses were weighted against the options and the mean score is derived by summing the weighted scores and dividing by total number of responses. The results revealed that the respondents disagree with the fact that gross injustice and inequity is being perpetuated in the polity of Nigeria as demands and agitations of all interest groups were not being considered but rather agree that as a rebranding element, a national conference needs to be convened to look into agitations and demands of all interest groups, sections and geopolitical zones in the country with a view of ensuring justice and fairness. The study recommends that this country requires serious rethinking, rebranding and reorganization. The structure is always encouraging corruption, which is the reason we have to do something about political corruption, judicial corruption and value system so that when the resources are given, they can be properly utilized for the benefit of Nigerians. The government should aim at getting the national conference to reach a consensus on devolving from the center to the six federating units responsibility for such areas of governance internal security including the police, infrastructure, education, health and economic development.*

**Keywords:** *demands, geopolitical zone, agitation, agree, disagree, rebranding, interest groups, rural roads.*

### INTRODUCTION

Since Nigeria got her independent in 1960, the nation has been struggling with bad label which makes it difficult for who dare the shore of Nigeria to believe that there is anything good in the country.

There most popular such label is corruption and Bad /lack of infrastructural development. Certainly, this can be very true about Nigeria's image. Anyone who hold tenaciously to this view would likely be committing fallacy of hasty generalization.

It is therefore pertinent that Nigeria needs image rebranding to help change the negative perception of outsiders and even some Nigerians both at home and diaspora. In this vein, president Buhari, admonished Nigerians to be good ambassadors to the country, if they desire foreigners to think positively about Nigeria. I think that Nigerians have to change if we don't love this country and if we don't promote it, nobody will do it for us (Mohammad Buhari, the nation, July 21, 2021).

Nigeria is a nation well endow with both humans and natural resources. Both, one of the issues slowing down Nigeria development is bad image associated with the country and her people.

Countries like Colombia, Rwanda and Croatia has successfully carry out the rebranding of their nations to admirable height. According to James Nicol (2020) twenty –five years ago, Colombia, Rwanda and Croatia where all viewed as dangerous, war –torn countries only suitable for journalist and the most hardened of veteran travelers.

However, in a few decades, Rwanda and others has undergone prementous change. For instance, Rwanda now boast one of the fastest growing economic in African.

The problem of image building and restoration of rebranding of a country like Nigeria’s very archons and herculean task. The heterogeneous nature of the Nigeria society with over 500 ethnic group struggling for political power and resources control further complicate the rebranding process

The twin issues of derivation formula and resource control stand out and constitute the greatest test of the political will of the constitution reviewed process to affect the desired restructuring of the Nigerian federation so that justice is done to all stakeholders in the Nigerian Nation, this verdict was passed by report of the President Committee on the Review of the 1999 constitution, inaugurated on October 19, 1999. Vanguard Features, March21, 2012[1]. Thirteen years since that observation was made, the issue of having a more acceptable revenue generation and distribution formula has remained contentious, as availability of funds hampes on a decay infrastructure, especially as it affects rural roads network in the country.

Even though there had been uneasy silence about how the nation’s wealth is being shared among all tiers of government before now, the latest outcry appears to have polarized Nigeria along regional lines. In fact, to say that the polity is not being overheated by the war of words over this matter that has pitched various geo-political zones against one another, is an understatement.

Instructively, the latest controversy was reportedly provoked by the former Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, governor, Lamido Sanusi, who in an interview with Financial Times of London, kicked off the argument that Boko Haram, poverty and the general unrest in the Northern part of the country is a result of the lower sums they receive from the federation account comparison lower allocation north/oil producing states.

The consequence of this situation is that it has generated a lot of debates on who benefit more from the revenue derived from the oil, especially in the face of Nigerian composition of the six geo-political zones. Part of the debate is that the oil industry was built with revenue from other parts of the country, beyond the oil bearing states, but the people in the oil producing states immediately counter it with their argument that it is their region that was fetching huge foreign revenue to the counter from palm oil, timber, rubber and exploitation of other economic produced used from the region before the first oil rig was drilled at Oloibiri in present Bayelsa State in 1953(Vanguard Features 2012).

Usang 2014 traced The agitation which late Isaac Adaka Boro led some decades back, followed by the struggles of late Ken Saro Wiwa and lately, the long fighting period between government forces and militants group in Niger Delta region in the last decade is a fall out of the dissatisfaction of the people of the region over the perceived mismanagement of the oil revenue by allocation of large sums of it to other regions of the country, while the land of the oil continue to wallow in abject poverty. However, just few years after peace was restored between the federal government and the Niger Delta people and Nigeria seem to be returning to the part of progress, there are fresh outbursts emerging on the issue of derivation again. This time, the worry is about the demand by the governance of the Northern states of Nigeria, for their states allocation to be increased. Niger Delta region, see such demand as outrageous and that the Northern governors have no reason whatsoever to demand for more money. Vanguard Features, 2012 [1].

The question that has remained unanswered by those agitating for the disbursement of more funds and those demanding that it should not be given is, what happened to all the money previously allocated to all the states in Nigeria, regardless of whether they are oil producing states or not. Experience has

shown that a large chunk of revenue from the federation account is re-directed to private pockets as soon as they are released at the end of the month after the meeting of the Federation Account Allocation Committee, FAAC. It is a shame to observe that in a country as rich as Nigeria, a great number of its citizens, whether from the North or South, continue to live below a dollar per day and sleep on empty stomach, while those who are charged with the mandate of alleviating the suffering of the masses continue to grow robust at their expense. Vanguard Features, 2012. [1]

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Purpose of the study**

Nigeria has been seen as a backward nation both at home and at the international level especially when you travel along the Nigerian roads, it indeed horrible to see the poor condition of our roads. This negative picture of Nigeria has so many deteriorating effects on the politics of the country; therefore, there is a need to reshape the image of the country in order to attract foreign investors with a change of attitude towards Nigeria.

### **Hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between interest groups agitation and demands for good rural roads networking of six geo-political zones in Nigeria.

### **The scope of the study**

The research was carried out on 5 selected public institutions in Calabar Metropolis of Cross River State. The parastatals are:

1. Calabar urban Development Agency (CUDA)
2. Cross River State water Board
3. Cross River State Internal Revenue Service
4. Rural roads Development Agency (RUDA)
5. Cross River State Road Maintenance Agency

The scope of the study was delimited to addressing Nigeria's interest group agitations and why the effort made by the government has not yielded positive results.

### **Theoretical frame work**

Several scholars have written extensively on the concept of nations rebranding including Simon Anholt (2005) [2] who wrote on the effect of a country origin and the impact it could have on the national economics. Mr. Anholt who is the world leading authority on the subject believes that part of the challenges the developing world is facing today besides poor governance and weak infrastructure is the issue of weak national brands and identities. In furtherance to the rebranding campaigns, Randall Frost (2004) [3] maintained that the image we have of another country says a lot about how we view it as a tourist destinations or a source of consumer of goods.

Wally, Olins (2002)[4] in his paper "Branding the nation" the historical perspectives warned countries of the risk of ignoring nation branding and predict that country branding will become normal practice in the future. According to him, the lack of interest and believes in a country branding by some is a mere semantics. Nilsson (2006) writes that "A brand is just a symbol with tremendous potentials, and that this symbol can be expressed in many different ways". Nworah (2005),[5] sees branding as the marketing and management process that gives a product or organization a unique identity and image such that it is easily and positively identifiable and distinct from other competitors. Branding therefore is about

highlighting one’s unique selling point (USP) in a way that it will be difficult to ignore by the prospective customer. In the case of a country branding such unique point must be enduring and must be supported by an enabling political, social and economic environment.

Mark Leonard (1997) [6] writes of the need for Britain to rebrand itself. According to him, “the main reason why this needs to be done is that a gulf has opened up between the reality of Britain as a high creative and diverse society and the perception around the world that Britain remains a backward looking island immersed in its heritage. In a related remark to that of Mark Leonard, Wally Olins (1999) opines that countries which have thought more about rebranding issues have been those with some kind of traditional positions, influence and reputation which they seek to change.

Olins (1999) further maintained “that despite the similarities between product and place brands, the idea of a nation as a brand is a very big mistake”. Olins is also emphasizing caution and care in the application of traditional branding principle and place branding.

Brymer (2003), [7] however suggested that although the principles of rebranding apply equally to countries as they do to products and services, the method may differ. According to him, “Creating a branding program for a country demand an integrated policy that most countries do not possess”

Chris Ngwodo(2006) submitted in his paper the task of rebranding Nigeria, that most of the changes have to be internal at first, entailing a shift in the culture and ethical reorientation of society. A new Nigeria will first of all have new ethics, philosophy and an attitude that will get us believing in ourselves once again.

According to the former Inspector General of Police (IGP) Mike Okiro (2010) “There is no way you can rebrand Nigeria effectively and successfully without rebranding sections that make up Nigeria, the various organizations, units, ministries, parastatals and the individuals beginning with the Nigeria police.

In a chat with Oluyewole, pioneer executive vice president of Certified Marketing Communication Institute of Nigeria (CMCIN) recorded that the media is the avenue through which the activities geared towards rebranding can be communicated to the people. To convey the integrated vehicles that will be adopted in the rebranding Nigeria exercise, a well articulated media has to evolve in conveying these messages, without which the awareness cannot be achieved.

**Research Design**

This explains the entire design of the research, the population, sample size, and sampling methods, instrumentation, validation of instruments, method of data collection and method of data analysis. Essentially this research used the survey method to as its design.

**Sample Size**

This study focused on Calabar the state capital where all the parastatals could be found and workers accessed easily. Five establishments were selected: random sampling was equally used to select twenty workers per parastatal, making a total of one hundred respondents.

**Table 1: Distribution of study population by parastatals/clusters and gender**

S/NO		Male	Female	Total	(%)
1.	Calabar Urban Development CUDA	146	116	262	31.23
2.	Industrial Training Fund (ITF)	16	17	33	3.93
3.	RUDA	144	56	200	3.84
4.	Rural roads maintenance agency	28	33	61	7.27
5.	CRS Water Board	246	37	283	33.73

<b>Total</b>	580(63.13)	259(30.87)	839	100.00
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**Procedure for data collection**

The researchers collected the data and organized them according to the research questions formulated for the study. The data was analyzed using the mean method after weights of 4,3,2 and1, have been assigned to the optionsas against strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. Items that has a mean score of 3 points and above is regarded as agreed or accepted, whereas any item having a mean score below 3.00 points is considered as disagreed or rejected.

The responses are weighed against the options and the mean score derived by summing the weighed scores and diving by total number of response.

$$\text{Mean score} = \frac{(R1 \times 4) + (R2 \times 3) + (R3 \times 2) + (R4 \times 1)}{\text{Total No of responses}}$$

**Hypothesis**

There is no relationship between interest group agitations and demands of rural roads in geopolitical zones in Nigeria and rebranding.

**Table 2: Respondents view on the extent to which interest groups agitations and demands for geopolitical zones affect rebranding in Nigeria**

S/ NO	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	Total	X	Remarks
1	Gross injustice and inequity is being perpetrated in the polity of Nigeria as demands and agitations of all interest groups are not being considered	28	10	39	23	100	2.4	Disagree
2	A national conference needs to be convened to look into agitations and demands of all interest groups, sections and geopolitical zones in the country with a view to ensuring justice and fairness	57	29	12	4	100	3.4	Agree

*Researcher’s field survey: 2014*

The first item in the Table 2 has the mean score of 2.4. This shows that the respondents disagree with the fact that gross injustice and inequity is being perpetuated in the polity of Nigeria as demands and agitations of all interest groups are not being considered but rather to agree that as a rebranding element, a national conference needs to be convened to look into agitations and demands of all interest groups, sections and geopolitical zones in the country with a view of ensuring justice and fairness.

**Derivation of Responses Mean Score**

**Item 1.** Mean score =  $\frac{(28 \times 4) + (10 \times 3) + (39 \times 2) + (23 \times 1)}{100}$

$$= \frac{112 + 30 + 78 + 23}{100} = \frac{243}{100} = 2.4$$

**Item 2:** Mean =  $\frac{(57 \times 4) + (27 \times 3) + (12 \times 2) + (4 \times 1)}{100}$

$$\begin{array}{r} =228+ 81 + 24 + 4 = \\ 337 = \\ 3.4 100 \quad 100 \end{array}$$

### **Discussion of finding**

This research hypothesis sought for respondents view on the extent to which interest groups agitations and demands for geopolitical zones affect rebranding in Nigeria. Based on the analysis of the study, we discovered that gross injustice and inequity is not being perpetrated in the polity of Nigeria as demands and agitations of some interest groups are not put into consideration. It also suggest that a national conference be convened to look into agitations and demands of all interest groups, sections and geopolitical zones in the country with a view to ensuring justice and fairness.

### **Summary of the study**

The research hypothesis revealed respondents view on the extent interest groups agitations and demands for geopolitical zones affect rebranding in Nigeria. Based on the analysis of the study, it was revealed that gross injustice and inequity is not being perpetrated. It also suggest that a national conference be convened to look into agitations and demands of all interest groups, sections and geopolitical zones in the country with a view to ensuring justice and fairness.

### **CONCLUSION**

According to Salihu Rufai Alkalis's view, Vanguard Features 2012,the time has come for affirmative action. The governors of the Northern States of Nigeria must realize that it is no longer wise to continue to swim in wealth acquired from the oil revenue, while their people continue to suffer. They should therefore try to use whatever revenue is disbursed and that generated within the state to develop their domain, rather than continue to request for more money that they may end up not using for the good of impoverished people of their states, who in the first instance elected them into office to manage their resources. The governors must provide their social responsibility to their people by ensuring that state commissioners and others government officials who fail in their duties by miss-using public funds are made to bear the full weight of the law.

### **Recommendation**

Rafsanjani, Vanguard Features (2012) recommends that this country requires serious rethinking, rebranding and reorganization. The structure is always encouraging the corrupt person that is why we have to do something about political corruption, judicial corruption and value system so that when the resources are given, they can be properly utilized for the benefit of Nigerians.

And, Anayoku,Vanguard Features (2012), also said that the government should aim at getting the national conference to reach a consensus on devolving from the center to the six federating units responsibility for such areas of governance internal security including the police, infrastructure, education, health and economic development.

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