

**THE PLACE OF THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES IN REFORMING THE
SOCIETY: THE NIGERIAN RESTRUCTURING QUESTION**

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Abstract

The role of the arts and humanities in reforming the society is enormous. The writings and activities of the great thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Lock, and Jean Jacques Rousseau etc were what freed Europe from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy, with strong emphasis on human rights. The ancient Greek city states bequeathed an enduring civilization to mankind due to their philosophical thinking and engagements. During the period of Plato, the Athenian Greek city was in serious decline both in learning and moral ethics. Young Plato, who had wanted to participate in public affairs, became disillusioned with politics and engaged himself more in influencing political affairs through political education. Thus, so many societies were transformed through his teachings and postulations in the humanities. Similarly, Africa was saved from the shackles of colonialism through the activities of great African leaders who were exposed to liberal arts and the reforming spirit of humanities. However, in recent times, there seems to be a decline in the importance and role of the arts and humanities in reshaping the society. The Nigerian nation is in serious decline both in governance and in the role arts and humanities scholars play. There are serious agitations and separatist movements against the Nigerian government which makes the call for restructuring the polity more appealing. Yet, the voices of humanities scholars are low and their writings non-existing. The aim of this study is to investigate and evaluate the role the arts and humanities scholars are supposed to play in reforming our society. The study used Plato's "*The Republic*" as a framework in reminding the humanities scholars of their major role in reshaping the society through their teachings and advocacy. The findings of the study reveal that most arts and humanities scholars are no longer interested in being

social critics either in advocacy or writing. The study, thus, concludes by recommending, among other things, that humanities scholars should forcefully engage themselves in urgent national dialogue such as the restructuring question.

Key words: Arts, Humanities, Reforming, Society, Restructuring, Nigeria

Introduction

Studies in arts and humanities have practical values to nations and societies that value their contributions. Teachings in literature, history, languages, anthropology, philosophy, religion, etc. equip us with critical and analytical thinking while at the same time stimulating imagination and promoting ethical values. To deny the place of arts and humanities in our society is equivalent to denying the contributions of painters, composers, writers, film makers, sculptors, orchestras, museums, libraries, concert halls, opera houses. All these humanistic professions contribute indispensably to the pride and glory of nations. Humanistic studies help and contribute to debates on national issues like restructuring. With this emphasized importance of arts and humanities, many people still view humanistic studies as a worthless venture and a waste of time. This problem is, however, not peculiar to Nigeria alone neither is it modern. For instance, in the first century CE, the Roman satirist, Juvenal, according to Kelly (2015) complained of the disrespect and poverty of poets, historians, actors, rhetoricians, musicians and teachers and affirmed thus:

If you have any idea of waiting for some other fellow to come to your aid ... and any such hope keeps you filling foolscap, ream upon ream, you would be better off if you ordered plenty of kindlingwood, and presented your product to Vulcan or put the volumes away in a cupboard, a feast for the bookworms. Break your pens, poor wretch; destroy those epics of battles costing you sleepless nights, the loft hymns of garret, the hope of the scraggy bust and the stringy garland of ivy. That is the best you can hope for, no more. Our rich men are misers, willing to give three cheers, like boys admiring a peacock (this doesn't cost them a cent) for the eloquent verse of the poets. Meanwhile your prime of life, your hardihood, your endurance wherewith you might have been a soldier or sailor or farmer goes to its ebb, and the spirit lags, and a worn-out old age, eloquent, but in rags, hates itself and its arts.

Similarly, Plato of Athens (427 to 347) lamented bitterly that the city of his birth, Athens, was on the decline because studies in humanities were no longer encouraged, thus, morals and justice had degenerated and needed be revived through more devotion to acquiring knowledge. As it were, the Athens of Plato's youth was a city that had seen better days

before the decline. The decline and loss of interest in humanities studies was hastened by the city's defeat by Sparta in the Peloponnesian War. In the years following the end of this war, a group of about fifty tyrannical and pleasure-seeking men took over the government of Athens. During the reign of these tyrants, Okeke (2012) noted that the pursuit of learning and the morals of the city declined. Young Plato, who had wanted to participate in public affairs, became disillusioned with politics, and became more concerned in influencing political affairs through political education.

Just like Plato, many Nigerian scholars who witnessed better days in the early 1960s became disillusioned after the Nigerian-Biafran War of 1967-70 when pleasure-seeking military officers that took over the reins of government refused to return power to political leaders. Majority of Nigerian arts scholars refused to get involved in the process of changing the society to its ideal norms, or influence the nation through their artistic writings. Few academics like Chinue Achebe and Wole Soyinka did much through their numerous publications which sometimes bring them into collusion with the Nigerian authorities. Nigerian academics failed to listen or imbibed the advice of David Easton; the former President of American Political Science Association (APSA) who declared in one of his papers that:

The political scientists (arts and humanities scholars), being intellectuals have major tasks to perform in society. If the intellectuals understood the social problems and felt themselves in them they could not keep themselves away from action. To know is to bear responsibility for acting and to act is to engage in reshaping society (Easton, 1969).

This inability of Nigerian scholars to adhere to the admonitions of Easton by getting involved in the political process or by influencing the system of government the way Plato did in his Athenian city-state has led to the institution of injustice, perpetration of impunity and destruction of the federal tenets in which the founding fathers laid the foundation of the country. We earlier observed that Plato was disillusioned by the decline in Athens in the period of his youth. He reasoned that things had come to this sorry state because the system of government in Athens and other places were bad. Hence, he concluded that the solution to cultural decline and injustice was the adoption of a good or ideal system of government. Nigerian scholars of arts and humanities had also observed that the military takeover of Nigeria destroyed the true federalism Nigeria had in the first republic which gave relative autonomy to the regions both in fiscal responsibility and development, yet they failed to articulate or project the way forward. It is pathetic to observe that the recent call for restructuring of the political system of Nigeria did not emanate from the arts and humanities scholars. It came from the pan-sectional groups like Southern and Middle Belt Leaders

Forum, Ohaneze Ndigbo, Afenifere, Movement for National Reformation, The Patriots, Civil Society Organizations and other professional interest groups such as the Nigerian Bar Association, etc. It should be noted that separatist and agitationist movements such as Indigenous People of Biafra, Niger Delta Avengers, Odua Peoples Congress, etc. are also calling for the restructuring of the system. Surprisingly, no association amongst the arts and humanities scholars has articulated any programme of action on how best Nigeria should be restructured.

Drawing from the above narratives, the aim of this paper is to reassert the role of arts and humanities as instruments of reforming the society through their activities either by writing or through the social advocacy of arts scholars. To achieve this aim, the paper is structured into sections. With this introductory overview, the paper proceeds into discussing the writings and postulations of Plato in section two with a view to establishing how Plato, through his artistic engagement and teachings, affected and influenced his society. Section three examines the theoretical perspectives of the word “restructuring”. It is argued that restructuring means many things to different people, thus the conceptual explanations in this section reduced the conceptual ambiguity associated with the word. Section four evaluates the role of humanities scholars in shaping our society and influencing the decisions of the government positively, while section five concludes with policy recommendations.

Plato, His Philosophies and the Nigerian State

Plato was born into an aristocratic family in Athens in 427 BCE. His father, Ariston, died when he was a child; and his mother, Perictione, married Pyrilampes, an associate of the statesman, Pericles. His privileged background enabled him to get the best education available in the 5th century BCE Athens. However, the Athens of his youth was a city that had seen better days and was in decline. Plato was highly dissatisfied with the prevailing degenerating conditions in Athens. Athenian democracy was on the verge of ruin. This was responsible for Socrates’s (his master’s) death. Plato saw in justice the only remedy of saving Athens from decay and ruin, for nothing agitated him in contemporary affairs more than amateurishness, meddlesomeness and political selfishness which were rampant in the Athens of his day in particular and in the entire Greek world in general.

In addition, Sophistic teaching of the ethics of self-satisfaction resulted in the excessive individualism which induced the citizens to capture the office of the state for their own selfish purpose and eventually divided Athens into two hostile camps of rich and poor, oppressor and oppressed. Young Plato, who had wanted to participate in public affairs, became disillusioned with politics, and became more concerned in influencing political affairs through political education. Evidently, these two factors - amateur meddlesomeness

and excessive individualism became main targets of Plato's attack. The attack came in the form of the construction of an ideal society in which "Justice" reigned supreme, since Plato found in justice the remedy for curing these evils.

It has to be noted that Plato wrote *The Republic* around 380 BCE (almost 3000 years ago) and it is his philosophical conversations in the book that will constitute the bulk of our analysis in this section. To be sure, *The Republic* is unarguably the most popular and most widely taught of Plato's writings. It is Plato's intent in this dialogue to establish, philosophically, the *ideal state*, a state that would stand as a model for all emerging or existing societies currently functioning during Plato's time and extending into our own times. And, we are to infer that any proposed change in the policy of effecting justice in any state would have to meet the criteria of the ideal state: The Republic.

Plato's ideas have had a profound impact on many facets of modern life, including political and social theories. He was one of the earliest thinkers to put forth the idea that the best and most effective governance is based on a balanced integration of people and power, one which allows all of its various components to thrive, although not at the expense of others. Were Plato alive today, however, he would be nothing less than thunderstruck by the Nigerian leadership, which has become - plainly and simply - an oligarchical state, a small group that govern for their own purposes.

Plato's theory of the ideal state derives in part from his Theory of Forms. In his view, according to Okeke (2012), every being, everything and every phenomenon in the world has an ideal form or prototype. What we see every day in the physical world are mere imperfections of the ideal form. As long as man depends on the senses, he cannot see beyond the imperfect forms that exist in the universe. However, through philosophical enquiry – by reasoning – it is possible to see beyond what the senses can perceive and, in doing so, determine the nature of the prototype. Extending this idea to politics, Plato asserted that all existing political systems were imperfect forms of the ideal forms, and that man could determine the ideal political system through reasoning. Therefore, it seems that Nigerian political class had determined the ideal political system best suited for them or that worked for them in the distant past, thus this current cry for political restructuring by all the interest groups that make up the polity. We shall now turn to the debates on the different perspectives on the political restructuring of the Nigerian political system.

Nigerian Restructuring Question: The Conceptual Explanations

The word “restructuring” connotes different things to different people, and many Nigerians of different backgrounds tend to ascribe different meanings to it. It was this difficulty

associated with the precise meaning of restructuring that made El-Rufai (2017) to lament that some Nigerians prefer to use other words such as true federalism, devolution of power, resource control, regionalism, self-determination, etc. instead of the word “restructuring”. Historically, it must be emphasized that this is not the first time that words with prefixes such as “Re” have found their ways into national consciousness and reckoning. According to Yaqub (2016), after the bitter civil war which lasted between 1967 and 1970, the Gowon administration coined three “Re’s” namely, “Re-conciliation”, “Re-construction”, and “Re-habilitation”, to depict the determination of the regime in coming up with programmes that would, at least, be used to blunt the rough edges of the traumatic years of the civil war on the erstwhile war-torn Eastern Region.

Etymologically speaking, the word “restructuring” is from its verb form “to restructure” which, in turn, could be traced to the root word: “to structure”, from which the prefix “re” was added to become “restructure”. It is necessary to stress how the permutation of the word is arrived at because there is no dictionary worthy of its name and in our possession that has the word “restructure” among the words it has had to define. This finding compels us to embark on conceptual clarification very meticulously by leaving no stone unturned. On the basis of this clarification, we would like to proceed by defining structure first. To structure something, one of the dictionaries defines the process as follows: “to form into an organized structure; build. As a noun form, the word “structure” is also defined as “that which is constructed; a combination of related parts, as a building or machine”. Structure has its biological, geological, chemical, social (societal) connotations, according to the same dictionary (Yaqub, 2016).

Having defined the word “restructure”, what then is the meaning of “restructuring”? Restructuring, according to Unya (2011), means to change, alter, or restore the structure of something. It can also mean to effect a fundamental change in an organization or system. Oyim (2013) sees restructuring as changing the way in which something such as government, business, or system is organized.

In other words, restructuring can lead to increased efficiency and cost effectiveness. So, when Nigerians talk about restructuring, what then do they exactly mean? Before we answer the question, we shall take a historical look at the formation of Nigeria, the system the founding fathers established, how it worked in the past and how it is working now. From our historical antecedents, we can now appreciate the different perspectives, views and meanings Nigerians have on the issue of restructuring.

Nigeria became a united British colony by the amalgamation of its Northern and Southern Protectorates in 1914. In 1960, it attained independence, fashioned a federal constitution, which had three and, subsequently, four regions as its federating units. Each of these regions had a written constitution, emblem and an official representation in London. They had significant powers and were authorized to raise the revenues needed to fund themselves and contribute to the central government. El-Rufai (2017) asserts that the political giants that led the old regions competed to do their best for their respective peoples. The Western Region launched the first public television service in Africa, a few years after adopting a free education policy that consolidated its head start in western education by extending universal access to the masses. Each of the three original regions founded its own university, built industrial estates, and developed hospitality businesses; and they tried to build the physical infrastructure needed for modern economy.

Some of the most enduring institutions in Nigeria were built by these regional governments, hence the understandable nostalgia in some quarters for the current dysfunctional federal structure of Nigeria to revert to the regions of old. However, when the military took over in 1966, a unitarist tendency gained influence in General Aguiyi Ironsi's government, and a unification decree was enacted in May 1966, unifying the public service across the country. Thus, there was too much opposition, especially from the Northern Region. Although a counter-coup in July 1966 sounded the death knell for the unification decree, the remnants of unitarism remained, enabled without doubt by the centralized structure of the military which inexorably further distorted our post-independence federalism. The counter-coup was followed by the creation of 12 states out of the four defunct regions, threats of secession by the Eastern Region led to the civil war (El-Rufai, 2017).

To raise the resources for prosecuting the civil war which started in 1967, the taxation powers of the former regions were changed in favor of the federal government, further strengthening the center at the expense of the twelve states. The military sat tight for 13 years in their first coming. They ensured that the Federal Republic of Nigeria, headed by a Supreme Commander, and ruled by the Federal Military Government, became a strangely named, mainly unitary state. The four years of civilian democratic rule between 1979 and 1983 saw some resurgence and reassertion of the federal spirit. The second coming of the military lasted until 1999. In those sixteen years, the unitarist takeover was completed. A new generation of citizens grew up knowing only the command-and-control system of the soldiers.

A psychological distortion made political deformation even worse. More powers had been concentrated at the center, the federal bureaucracy had ballooned and there were now many

states (from 12 to 36) whose evident limitations proved insufficient to discourage the demand for yet more states. As states became many, smaller and less fiscally-independent, a powerful center, manifested in a federal government that assumed ever more powers and responsibilities, took the biggest chunk of national revenues (now about 53%) but did very little well. This is a brief summary of our national journey to dysfunction (El-Rufai, 2017).

To be sure, this historical excursion we took is the background to the plethora of voices shouting that Nigeria needs to be restructured and that is the main reason why restructuring agitations have defied any form of pacification by the federal government. We shall consider the views of Nigerians on what they feel are the meanings of restructuring. Drawing from the historical precedent above, Osuntokun (2017) explained that restructuring is simply a call for the restoration of federalism – the foundational constitution structure to which all Nigerians subscribed as encapsulated in the independence constitution of 1960. The 1960 constitution, according to Osuntokun, was violated in 1966 and the violation set in motion a chain of events that has culminated in the present abnegation of a 36 states structure against the four regional structures that emanated from the independence constitution. All the ills presently plaguing the country are directly or indirectly a consequence of the wrong anti-federalist diversion Nigeria took in 1966. Similarly, Yaqub (2016) sees restructuring as a process that requires Nigerian citizens to take a closer look at the national edifice or, better still, the state of the nation with regard to how to address structural deformities, if any.

The imprecise nature of the word “restructuring” has arguably divided Nigeria into two opposing camps – the southern protagonists who are strongly in favour of restructuring and the northern antagonists who are apparently in opposition to restructuring. For instance, Ikokwu (2017), in his argument in support of restructuring, averred that the military command, after the civil war, unitarized the country and diminished the percentage of the formula of derivation. Ikokwu goes ahead to say that in 1946, the derivation formula for the regions which controlled their resources was 100 percent, while in 1951 the British recommended 50 percent derivation, whereas in 1953 the Western Region actually disbursed a 100 percent of resources they controlled. The 50 percent derivation continued from 1960 at independence up to 1970 when Gen. Yakubu Gowon reduced the derivation formula to 45 percent and, by 1975, it was reduced to 25 percent. Nigerians, according to Ikokwu, should know that in the first coming of General Buhari it had crashed to 1.5 percent and General Babangida then raised it to 3 percent and, thereafter, it moved to 13 percent.

With the increase of states from 12 to 36 by the military class, and the accumulation of the legislative list to the central government, the Nigerian states today have become so pauperized as appendages that they cannot even pay the salaries of their workers let alone

their gratuities and pensions. Therefore, the Nigerian unitary system of administration which we have now is not only an illegal constitutional contraption; it is an unworkable political system and a harbinger of perverse, chaotic, political and economic conundrum.

On the side of the antagonists are people who believe that restructuring is anti-north and should not be debated. For instance, Yakasai (2016) argued persuasively that the people agitating for restructuring are unpatriotic. He goes ahead to say that those who are calling for restructuring in Nigeria today are doing so with some kind of hate in their minds. The thing that is working in their minds is to find a way of denying states from the north from getting the kind of shares they are getting from the federation account. Some of the factors that the government is using to distribute the revenue are God-made. For instance, when they talk of population, the Nigerian people were not created by the Nigerian government. It is God who created the Nigerian people and concentrated some of them in a particular area, which is the north and which always has more than 55 percent of the total population of Nigeria. Now, if you go with the other factor, that is landmass, the north has two third of the total landmass of Nigeria. You cannot deny a northerner those advantages given to him by God simply because he gets some revenue based on those creations. Those talking about restructuring are actually hiding their real intent under the slogan. They are yet to explain what this restructuring means. They are only shouting and fighting for restructuring because of the share of the revenue the north is getting.

Similarly, Unongo (2017) followed the same route Yakasai took when asked in an interview what he understands by the word “restructuring”. According to him, restructuring is nothing but secession. According to him:

A young man by name Kanu wants to secede and resurrect Biafra and the Nigerian press, international press, as well as other people are giving him much attention as if he is doing something new. Some people also said it is all about fiscal federalism, so that they can control resources in their states. Yet others want presidential system of government to be abandoned so that we can go back to regionalism just like parliamentary system of government when the premiers such as the late Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Ahmadu Bello held sway. There are others who don't even like the old regional system but want autonomous regional powers for the six geopolitical zones. Restructuring, to me, means nothing. It's just politics. When Nigerians want to talk, they talk and talk. We have been restructuring, we had a three regional government and we have had a parliamentary system. When the military intervened, they pretended that the system didn't work because they wanted to change governance.... So, what do you mean by restructuring? Do we need reforms? Yes. Are reforms being made?

Yes. Do we need all the noise being made? No. Do we need all the people of Nigeria to be gathered and we truncate constitutionalism and ask the people to rewrite the constitution? I have never seen a country that has written so many constitutions as Nigeria. I would have sympathy for an argument that thinks the constitution handed to Nigerians by the military through a fiat does not truly represent what we want. If the people also do not want the leadership in place now, then the way forward would be for the country's president to organize a sovereign national conference.

What may perhaps be considered moderating viewpoints from Northern Nigeria are the opinions of Atiku Abubakar, a former Vice President, and Ibrahim Babangida, a former Nigerian Military Head of State. According to Atiku, "there is no doubt that many of our states are not viable, and were not viable from the start once you take away the federal allocations from Abuja. We have to find creative ways to make them viable in a changed federal system. We can constitute a body of non-partisan experts to suggest other ideas. But in all, we must devolve more powers and resources from the federal government and de-emphasize federal allocations, the source of sustenance for the states. We need to start producing again and collecting taxes to run our governments in more sustainable way with greater transparency and accountability".

Similarly, General Ibrahim Babangida advocated for "devolution of powers to the extent that more responsibilities be given to the states while the federal government is vested with the responsibility of overseeing our foreign policy, defence, and economy. Even the idea of having federal roads in towns and cities has become outdated and urgently needs revisiting. That means we need to tinker with our constitution to accommodate new thoughts that will strengthen our nationality".

Having discussed some of the views of the southern protagonists, northern antagonists and moderate perspectives on restructuring, we have to also observe that restructuring is not all about political restructuring which involves creation of more states or merging of states and local government areas, resource control, regional autonomy, power devolution, etc. According to Bello (2017), there are many dimensions to restructuring, some of which include political restructuring, economic restructuring, educational restructuring, social restructuring, accounting restructuring, administrative restructuring, restructuring of security agencies, etc. Consequently, since there are many dimensions to restructuring, anybody agitating for it should tell Nigerians the exact type or types of restructuring s/he wants. To end our discussions on restructuring, we shall examine some of the benefits a restructured Nigeria will generate.

Benefits of Restructuring

Those asking for restructuring are of the opinion that it will make the nation more stable politically and also bring more economic progress by encouraging hard work and competition among federating units hence allowing each unit to develop at its own pace. However, political stability is not a function of ethnic homogeneity or religious purity. Somalia is a nation in which over 90 per cent of the population speaks the same language. Also, Somalia is 99 per cent Muslim by religion, yet it is one of the most unstable countries in the world. On the other hand, Switzerland consists of three major languages (German, French and Italian). It has no single gram of mineral resource; yet, it is one of the most stable and one of the richest countries in the world. It can, therefore, be concluded that the mindset of the citizens of a country is the major determinant of political stability and economic progress (Bello, 2017).

Nwodo (2017) sees restructuring as the only way to salvage Nigeria's fledgling economy. According to him, the world is no longer driven by fossil fuel but the proliferation of a knowledge-based economy. For instance, Netherlands is the 18th largest economy in the world. It has over \$100 billion from agricultural exports annually, contributed mainly by vegetables and dairy. Nigeria's oil revenue has never in any one year reached \$100 billion. Northern Nigeria is the most endowed agriculturally in Nigeria. Its tomatoes, carrots, cabbages, cucumbers, tubers, grains, livestock and dairy feed the majority of Nigerians in spite of its huge reserve of unexploited export potentials. In a restructured Nigeria, Northern Nigeria with the right agricultural policies will be the richest part of Nigeria.

Odumakin (2017) identified the following as the reasons why Nigeria must restructure for economic progress, social equity and sustainable development:

1. A Nigeria earnestly restructured, is a Nigeria positively restored: a country restored to a previously-travelled path of developmental progress, rapid educational advancement, robust and committed public service, which genuinely and competently served the Nigerian public – both at federal and regional levels. Restructuring will bring back THE CONDITIONS for a return to that golden era of public service and effective governance, regionally and at the centre.
2. A Nigeria restructured is a Nigeria with enhanced leadership-building culture, where a truly-federal system allows each region to locally identify leadership for public governance, nurture and closely monitor such leaders for hard work and the spirit of public service, focused on the development of each region, at a pace and rate that reflect the quantum of each region's effort and efficient use of local resources. Indeed, the rivalry-for-regional-success, resulting from a truly-federating

Nigeria, will boost sustainable development across all zones of the country. Because more public appointments and elected offices may likely be needed within the federating regions, with relatively less at the centre, a Nigeria re-structured will be one where the process of recruitment into public leadership could be better subjected to closer local scrutiny for reputation, character and track record, as against the current practice where persons with dubious reputations and questionable bona fides among their own people are chosen into high national offices as leaders – presumably on behalf of their regions or localities – by a distant central government, which often knows relatively little (or, sometimes cares little) about the poor and low-character reputation of such appointees among their own people.

3. A Nigeria restructured is a Nigeria where the central government, along with its lower-level federating constituents will and, must, be strong!! We seek a Nigeria where every level of government is strong. BUT each level must be strong for the right reasons, and in the right areas of responsibility. We all need a central government to be strong in the defence of our nation, in immigration and global diplomacy, and in other areas where a strong and competent central government is in our collective national interest. But a restructured Nigeria does not need, for example, a Federal Fire Service!! Fire incidents occur at a very local level – on streets, in the neighbourhood and at community levels. Still on the Fire Service example, a restructured Nigeria will ensure that appropriate state and local governance units are capable and strong enough to respond adequately and promptly to fire incidents wherever they occur.
4. A Nigeria restructured is a Nigeria enhanced by the removal of the current PERVERSE-INCENTIVES SYSTEM, where many people seek elected and appointive government positions, not to develop the God-given resources of their local areas and local lands, or add to the wealth of their communities, but instead feed on and loot the un-earned monthly allocations from the centre. A restructured Nigeria will reduce the current mentality and room-for-maneuvre by elected and appointed leaders to treat the Abuja monthly allocations as part of Nigeria's current 'Awoof-Economy of un-earned monthly allocations'. To quote the common-parlance reference by a distinguished Yoruba development scientist and thinker, Emeritus Professor Akin Mabogunje, a restructured Nigeria will be a Nigeria in which the central government will no longer be able to automatically pool funds unevenly from different parts of Nigeria, while redistributing the same funds unfairly and inequitably (at the expense of the larger contributors) among the various states and local governments, regardless of the quality of policy choices and good-governance efforts by states and local government leaders.

5. A Nigeria restructured is a Nigeria where every area, region or zone of the country will be able to devote more thinking time, conceptualization, research, exploration and analysis to its mineral and agricultural resources, with a view to developing an economic value-chain from them, which is the first serious step towards the development of a manufacturing capacity across the country. When governments and private investors in every part of the country are challenged to look for sources of wealth-creation PRIMARILY within their own regions, and to work with international investors to transform these natural endowments into real economic empowerment for millions of their people, then we know restructuring is at work.
6. A restructured Nigeria is one where we would no longer practise the current system of FORCED EQUALIZATION of 'ever-downwards' educational opportunities across the country, just to ensure federal character. A restructured governance structure will force or ensure investment of extra efforts and programmes to bring low-performing students in the northern parts of Nigeria up to the level of better-performing students elsewhere in the country. It's a cruel, future-damaging false help to northern Nigerian citizens for the central government to continuously lower pass-grades and qualification standards for children of the poor in that zone!! Nigeria has people of power everywhere, including in the north, where the elites repeatedly push achievements standards lower and lower for children of the poor. These elite policy makers and politicians DO NOT ask colleges and universities overseas to lower admission standards to enable their own children be enrolled. Instead, northern elites and politicians invest money on extra coaching, encouragement, monitoring and similar efforts to ensure that their own children meet and even surpass the academic-entry requirements into the best schools overseas.
7. In a truly-restructured Nigeria, the negative effects of lowering academic and examination standards will very quickly become obvious and untenable among the people in the states and regions practising this immorality, which offends the best of Islamic, Christian and indigenous ethics of justice, equality of opportunity and fairness. Restructuring will, therefore, bring EDUCATIONAL LIBERATION to the millions of poor children in the north—and everywhere—who are funded by the central government to wallow in under-achievement. In Yorubaland, even the poorest persons strive to provide extra teaching and learning support to improve their children's education. We advocate that a restructured Nigeria should aim for this type of effort to promote achievement among all of Nigeria's children, regardless of socio-economic status. Restructuring will, thus, bring healthy rivalry in educational achievement to ALL children of Nigeria and help us EQUALISE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS, instead of failure. Current access to easy central

funds, regardless of local or state leadership performance, only encourages policies and practices that artificially and irresponsibly impose a centrally-funded equalization of low-performance for the children of the poor. Fiscal Restructuring will end the current government-funded race to the bottom for all Nigerian children!!

The Role of Humanities in Shaping our Societies

While investigating the life and teachings of Plato, we discovered that Plato and his students influenced, reshaped and reformed their society through their philosophical engagement and writings. In this contemporary age, nations justifiably look to their universities for the education of future citizens and leaders, and for the transmission of the knowledge necessary for growth, security, and prosperity. A university's core mission is rooted in the humanities—in the study of culture, history, language, literature, anthropology, philosophy, religion, and the arts. They constitute our common heritage. The humanistic disciplines have clear practical values: they teach critical and analytical thinking while also stimulating imagination and promoting ethical values. Leaders need these skills to lead, to identify problems, and to conceive solutions (African Humanities Program, 2014).

Humanities scholars in the western world help to ground national dialogue on urgent issues. Their voices cannot be relegated to the bottom of any list of national goals by policymakers and even university officials. But in Nigeria, the voices of many humanities scholars are hardly heard, especially in national debates that involve critical analysis and decisions. The current restructuring question in Nigeria is a good example.

Conclusion

This study has examined and assessed the role of arts and humanities scholars in reforming the society through their activities either in writing or social advocacy. The study took off by analyzing the pioneer work of Plato which served as our theoretical framework. The concept of restructuring was analyzed, the different debates on restructuring discussed and the benefits examined. If the humanistic scholars in Nigeria are to take their rightful position in reforming the society, the study recommends that:

- i. Nigerian humanistic scholars should participate in national debates along with those in other disciplines.
- ii. Nigerian scholars should aggressively engage themselves in putting down their thoughts in writing, like Plato, Achebe, Soyinka, etc.
- iii. In order to be embedded more deeply, Nigerian humanistic scholars should partner with civil society organizations and other advocacy groups in lending their voices on the issue of restructuring.

- iv. Arts and humanities scholars can as well articulate their position as a group and present to the government as their position on any national debate.

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