

Edmund Burke's Ideas on Social Reform: An Alternative Means of Resolving the Issues Challenging Nigeria Especially Restructuring of Political and Constitutional Framework of the Country

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Abstract: The political theories of many philosophers had continued to be an inexhaustible fount of influence and inspirational ideas in the histo-political lives of various countries in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Edmund Burke's political principles have long history of contributing ideas to the boiling political controversies. In his conservative philosophy, Burke presented essential issues more clearly and resonantly than anybody in English political history. His literary genius was his major tool for transmitting political ideas because it has continued to live long after the occasion of its utterance and speaker has passed. Among his many principles, Burke denounced French revolution and pleaded for government that takes public affairs seriously. [1], expressed that Burke opted elements of good governance such as honesty, decency, fairness and required intelligence for the management of public concerns. Most importantly, Edmund Burke's political ideas were no doubt critical of the political situation in Nigeria. In his conservative stance, we can see yearning abysmal issues in the state of nation in Nigeria. Therefore, this essay highlights the social reforms of Edmund Burke's conservative philosophy in resolving the burning political issues challenging Nigeria as nation.

Key words: Politics • Theory • Philosopher • Genius and public affairs

INTRODUCTION

Edmund Burke: Who is known as a political theorist and traditional conservative philosopher was born on 12 January 1730 in Dublin Ireland. His mother Mary *née* Nagle (c. 1702-1770) was a Roman Catholic who hailed from a déclassé County Cork family (and a cousin of Nano Nagle), whereas his father, a successful solicitor, Richard (died 1761), was a member of the Church of Ireland [1-3]. It remains unclear whether this early life is the same Richard Burke who converted from Catholicism. The Burke dynasty descends from an Anglo- Norman knight surnamed de Burgh (Latinised as *de Burgo*) who arrived in Ireland in 1185 following Henry II of England's 1171 invasion of Ireland and is among the chief "Gall" (or "Old English") families that assimilated into Gaelic society, becoming "more Irish than the Irish themselves" [4, 5]. Burke adhered to his father's faith and remained a practicing Anglican throughout his life, unlike his sister Juliana who was brought up as and remained a Roman Catholic. Later, his political enemies repeatedly accused him of having been educated at the Jesuit

College of St. Omer, near Calais, France. He was always mocked for harbouring secret Catholic sympathies at a time when membership of the Catholic Church would disqualify him from public office [6]. He was an Anglo-Irish statesman as well as an author, orator, renowned politician who after moving to London in 1750 served as a member of parliament (MP) between 1766 and 1794 in the House of Commons with the Whig Party. In other words, Burke became active in British politics from 1759 and a member in the Parliament from 1765. Although never denying his Irishness, Burke often described himself as "an Englishman". According to the historian [8], this was in an age "before 'Celtic nationalism' sought to make Irishness and Englishness incompatible". As a child, he sometimes spent time away from the unhealthy air of Dublin with his mother's family in the Blackwater Valley in County Cork. He received his early education at a Quaker school in Ballitore, County Kildare which was a little farther from Dublin in the same way like his cousin Nano Nagle at a Hedge school. He remained in correspondence with his schoolmate from there, Mary Lead beater, the daughter of the school's owner,

throughout his life. In 1744, Burke started at Trinity College Dublin, a Protestant establishment, which up until 1793, did not permit Catholics to take degrees. In 1747, he set up a debating society, "Edmund Burke's Club", which, in 1770, merged with TCD's historical Club to form the College Historical Society [9, 10]. It is the oldest undergraduate society in the world. The minutes of the meetings of Burke's Club remain in the collection of the Historical Society. Burke graduated from Trinity in 1748. Burke's father wanted him to read Law and with this in mind he went to London in 1750, where he entered the Middle Temple, before soon giving up legal study to travel in Continental Europe. After eschewing the Law, he pursued a livelihood through writing [11-13].

His Works: The late Lord Bolingbroke's *Letters on the Study and Use of History* was published in 1752 and his collected works appeared in 1754. This provoked Burke into writing his first published work, *A Vindication of Natural Society: A View of the Miseries and Evils Arising to Mankind*. Burke was a proponent of underpinning virtues with manners in society and of the importance of religion in moral life [14, 15]. These views were expressed in his *A Vindication of Natural Society*. Burke criticized British treatment of the American colonies, including through its taxation policies. He also supported the rights of the colonists to resist metropolitan authority, though he opposed the attempt to achieve independence. Burke is remembered for his support for Catholic emancipation, the impeachment of Warren Hastings from the East India Company and for his staunch opposition to the French Revolution. Another work by Edmund Burke is his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, where Burke asserted that the revolution was destroying the fabric of good society, traditional institutions of state and society and condemned the persecution of the Catholic Church that resulted from it [16]. This led to his becoming the leading figure within the conservative faction of the Whig Party, which he dubbed the "Old Whigs", as opposed to the pro-French Revolution "New Whigs" led by Charles James Fox. Burke died in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, on 9 July 1797 and was buried there alongside his son.

The Conservative Philosophy of Edmund Burke: Traditionalist conservatism, also known as classical conservatism and traditional conservatism, is a political philosophy emphasizing the need for the principles of a transcendent moral order, manifested through certain natural laws to which society ought to conform in a

prudent manner. Traditionalist conservatism is a variant of conservatism based on the political philosophies of Aristotle and Edmund Burke. Edmund Burke is often regarded as the father of modern conservatism [17]. Burke in his theories on Traditionalist conservatism emphasizes the bonds of social order and the defense of ancestral institutions over hyper-individualism. This theory places a strong emphasis on the notions of custom, convention and tradition. Theoretical reason is ridiculed over and is well thought-out against practical reason. The state is also seen as a communal project with spiritual and organic qualities. Edmund Burke believes that change, if it does happen perhaps, is not the result of intentional reasoned thought and it flows naturally out of the traditions of the community. Leadership, authority and hierarchy are seen as natural products. The conservative philosophy of Edmund Burke influenced the development throughout 18th-century in Europe, principally as a response to the turmoil of the English Civil War and the radicalism of the French Revolution. There are key principles of conservative philosophy of Edmund Burke as enumerated in his reflection on French revolution [18].

Major Principles of Conservative Philosophy

Tradition and Custom: As the name suggests, traditionalists believe that tradition and custom guide man and his worldview. Each generation inherits the experience and culture of its ancestors and through convention and precedence man is able to pass it down to his descendants.

Religion: The theories of conservative philosophy embrace high church Christianity as a vehicle of social progress and religion in general as a strong driving principle. The principles of faith are key foundation that builds a well ordered society. In order to confirm the place of religion, Burke said [19].

"We fear God; we look up with awe to kings; with affection to parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; and with respect to nobility. Why? Because when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be so affected".

He linked the conservation of a state (established) religion with the preservation of citizens' constitutional liberties and highlighted Christianity's benefit not only to the believer's soul, but also to political arrangements.

Hierarchy and Organic Unity: The conservative philosophical theories believe that human society is essentially hierarchical which means that it always involves various interdependent inequalities degrees and classes hence, the political structures that recognize this fact prove the most just, thriving and normally valuable. Hierarchy allows for the preservation of the whole community all together, instead of protecting one part at the expense of the others.

Principle of Agrarianism: The countryside and the values of rural life are highly valued. Sometimes it is even romanticized as in pastoral poetry. The principle of agrarianism means preserving the small family farm, open land, conservation of natural resource and stewardship of the land. This theory is central to Edmund Burke's understanding of rural life.

Classicism and High Culture: Edmund Burke and other traditionalists defend classical Western civilization and value an education informed by the texts of the Hebraic, Greek, Roman and Medieval eras. In the same way, traditionalists are classicists who respect high culture in all of its expressions such as literature, music, architecture, art and theater.

Patriotism, Localism and Regionalism: Unlike nationalists who have high regard for the role of the state or nation over the local or regional community, traditionalists hold up patriotism as a key principle. Burke in his conservative theories thinks that loyalty to a locality or region is more central than any commitment to a larger political entity. This principle upholds also the value of subsidiarity and the intimacy of one's community, preferring the civil society of Burke's "little platoons" over the extended state. Alternately, nationalism leads to jingoism and views the state as abstract from the local community and family structure rather than as an outgrowth of these local realities [19].

In connection with Edmund Burke's political philosophy his common theme is the detestation of injustice and abuse of power. Burke's conservatism is intrinsically modest. It constrains rampant individualism and the tyranny of the majority. He maintained the lost language of politics. A language of honour, loyalty, duty and wisdom, More so, viewed colonialism as bad, radicalism as dangerous and democracy as a threat to social stability. Although Burke conceded to human equality in the eyes of God, he felt no such compunction for equality on earth. He strongly recommended

respect for higher power was essential to his philosophy. He opined that what religion, church and state were inseparable but in spiritual not mechanical sense, both were derived from God. Burke maintained that individual conscience was meant to be directed by prescription, presumption and prejudice. By prejudice he meant a sense of innate judgment and not in any way bigotry. In his principles, he upheld the idea of freedom and asserted that it was enough to be free. Life had to have meaning as well and meaning can be found in tradition, folklore and myth. History was the unfolding of a design wrought by Heaven of which today consumerism would be antithetical. Government finds its authority not in a social contract but on virtuous principles. Burke's conservative philosophy holds that there is a collective intellect seeped in ancient wisdom, that people inherit and culture safeguards and transmits. We learn about principles through the understanding of nature and history [20].

The above views are contrary to modern sensibility which teaches acceptance and cherish of democracy. It was not same with United States democracy which seems to thrive but the distrust of masses gave rise to Republican form of government which is somewhat democratic but not a true democracy [21]. While admitting that theoretically, in some cases it might be desirable, he insisted a democratic government in Britain in his day would not only be inept, but also oppressive. It seemed that Burke was prophesying about countries like Nigeria when he condemned democracy. He opposed democracy for three critical reasons [22]. First, government required a degree of intelligence and breadth of knowledge of the sort that occurred rarely among the common people. Second, he thought that if they had the vote, common people had dangerous and angry passions that could be aroused easily by demagogues; he feared that the authoritarian impulses that could be empowered by these passions would undermine cherished traditions and established religion, leading to violence and confiscation of property. Third, Burke warned that democracy would create a tyranny over unpopular minorities, who needed the protection of the upper classes [23]. Some of the fears alleged by Burke are evident in Nigeria as we shall see below.

State of the Nigeria Nation: The state of nation is an explanation of the conditions of the country, nation's most serious problems and proposal for legislation to resolve the situation. The Nigeria state is passing through very tough and challenging times and we really need to admit this if we must even have a chance of proffering

solutions. The state is tottering towards the edge of abyss. The disfunctionality of Nigeria as a state is obviously realistic. The Nigerian project is fast eroding away and failing in all ramifications.

All through 58 years and counting, the Nigerian project has shown tremendous signs of backwardness since independence in 1960. In 1999, Nigeria welcomed a significant rehabilitation of its foundation with a dose of democratic restructuring. Unfortunately, with the arrival of democratic government, it does not seem to have brought any respite from encroaching sense of doom. Let us enumerate the elements that have continued to water down this Nigerian project [24].

The Cost of Governances: Since 1999, Nigeria democracy has become too costly to maintain. We have failed to adapt and domesticate the presidential process to our peculiar native national practice and situation. Perhaps, it has been domesticated to negative national practice of ethnicity and greedy tendencies. It has degenerated to a spoilt system that multiplies appointments and offices as a means for compensating party loyalists and cronies. Again the electoral process and the cost of maintaining party offices in all states of the federation had added to the woes of the system. It has constantly remained obvious that the cost of governance is a tragedy because the federation account has always been drained by the budgetary allocations [25].

The past Administration: The previous administration and leadership from Obasanjo, Yar'dua to Jonathan had disappointed all expectations. Although they convened national conference but it seemed that the Nigeria landscape has conveniently swallowed the genuine recommendation from these conferences. Then came President Buhari's administration mounting on the toga of integrity that Nigerians held on to in 2015 elections. With all the pop and pageantry that Buhari, Mr. Integrity must have a role to play in the corrupt political firmament of Nigeria and hope for better political figure and rejuvenation, all faded away before the populace in few months of piloting the affairs of the country [26].

The Present Administration: [4] in an interview with Vanguard Newspaper affirmed that Buhari's administration has failed woefully and unfortunately he doesn't believe in Nigerian project. The administrative proceeding since three years has shown that he has failed. Nigerians are slaughtered daily by the herdsmen and Boko Haram insurgents under his watch. These facts are staggering, waiting to be disputed and the presidency

has not been doing anything about it. In fact, if he claims to be working tirelessly to address the issues, it is all pretence and pretentiousness. The administration cannot allege to love the country if he parades the degree of nepotism, the like that never been seen in Nigerian history which is the worst form of corruption. This government parades corruption, insensitivity, impunity and shows unconcern about the sufferings of Nigerians. Definitely, it cannot claim to be working in the interest of the citizens. There has been a strong condemnation and serious misgivings over the president's incurable nepotistic tendencies, of his arrogant insularity and inscrutable silence as well as his alleged relishing of a circle of self seeking cronies. And the driving force that fuels the nepotism and the kinds are multi ethno linguistic and multi religious configuration. In addition, the circus of shadow chasing in Economic and Financial Crimes Commission carried out by Buhari's ineffective anti-corruption machinery are signs of witch hunt of the opposition group and dishonest system. Even with the consistent benevolent prodding from the media to save the president from the possession of the spirit of error has not been effective. The vocal spokesperson of the administration has always treated the admonition of well meaning informed Nigerians with magisterial vehemence. The administration has failed and president Buhari has no business seeking for re-election in 2019, considering the insecurity that had enveloped the country in the last two years [21].

Electoral Body and the Issue of Vote Buying: The Nigeria nation has degenerated into a situation where politicians and their parties want to win and takeover everything while the electorate also want immediate remuneration which is why vote buying is on the increase. Independent National Electoral Commission [INEC] has been standing aloof without tackling the issue of vote buying happening under their nose. The Ekiti State case remains a case study. The self acclaimed government of Integrity perfected more heinous atrocity in the Osun election which has left the international body dumb founded because of high level of impunity perpetrated in the election.

The Party Democracy: Internal party politics by politicians do not allow free and fair contest. The failure to obey general laws and lack of internal democracy in the respective parties has robbed Nigeria of good leadership. The party primary election which ought to have been an open chance for everyone is a stark opposite. Parties are the gate-keepers of the Nigerian politics and until there is

transparent and efficient internal democracy in our parties and every facets of our lives, Nigeria may not make progress [11].

All Progressive Congress and Peoples Democratic Party in Accusation and Counter Accusation Saga: The two major gladiators in the political scene of Nigeria have continuously engaged themselves for a while in accusing and counter accusation. The APC ruling party and PDP in Opposition has accused each other in issues such as performance in governance, corruption and embezzlement, national development, election rigging and so on. This allegation has heated up the national polity as the 2019 general election approaches in few months. It has also led to high rate of propaganda from both parties. It has ignited a gale of defection of members from one party to another. And Nigerian citizens have been turned spectators instead of subjects.

Power Tussle Between the Three Arms of Government: In recent times, the friction between the executive, legislative and judiciary arms of government has been in the public domain. Initially, the executive attacked the judiciary, alleging corruption and bribery. Later the executive had altercation with the legislature through some of its members. This affected the passage of the bills and national budget and perhaps, obstructed some of their proceedings. Unfortunately, it has resulted to massive defection of the members of national assembly from the ruling party into the parties in opposition. Ahead of 2019, Nigerians are waiting to be served more dishes from the outcome of the power tussle [19].

Economic Challenges and National Development: The presidency through the minister of information and culture, Lai Mohammed has continued to lay claims that the economy is thriving and buoyant and the national development has improved tremendously under President Buhari. The Nigerian citizens are aware that poverty is on the increase. Hence, there is no substantial evidence of national development in the roads and infrastructures around the country. There is a recorded high percentage of unemployment. This situation constitutes a major part in the current state of the Nigeria nation.

Agitations in the Country: Many people have continued to say that Nigeria has never been such divided as it is obvious in this present administration. Agitations of Boko Hara insurgents in the North east, sectarian violence in the north central, tensions in the north-west in relation to

the sectarian activities of the Shiite Islamic sect, the increasing perception by the southern intelligentsia of sectarian bias by the government of president Muhammadu Buhari, signs of resumption of violent agitation by militants in south-south and Pro-Biafra movement in south -east has demonstrated the deepened division in the country. This confrontation has arisen as a result of mistrust and mutual suspicion amongst ethnic groups, nepotism in government appointments, marginalization and insecurity. It has shown the woeful failure of the Nigeria project and the incumbent administration [15].

This situation in the country has generated so much anguish that Nigerians seek consolation in clannish protection. It has also hyped the clarion call for restructuring of the Nigerian state into federating units. Let us consider whether restructuring is a way forward in the topsy-turvy state of the nation.

Political and Constitutional Restructuring of Nigeria: In the Nigerian situation, restructuring is the process of putting in place the basic minimal structures required for the claims to the practice of federalism which includes political system and constitutional amendment. Restructuring of the Nigerian nation is the process of power sharing under the constitution with the government consisting of at least two orders of a central or federal government and the government at the federating or constituent units. Generally, a federation is born by the coming together of otherwise independent states to form a central government to whom certain powers are given, while the states retain most of their powers. This is the expected best global practices in federal states or countries. Since 1954, Nigeria has been a federal state but has not been able to attain some of the basic requirements of federalism. It is observed that there are a lot of concerns in the practice of federalism in Nigeria. The agitation for restructuring is the demand to change the political structure and to engage in a constructive constitutional amendment. It will help to tackle the challenges that bedevil the Nigerian project. I stand with the many citizens who believe that restructuring is the answer because true federalism provides a sound governmental structure for the resolution of the citizens' problems [8].

Political Restructuring: The technique for division of power is that of enumerated powers and residual powers. For a meaningful division, certain powers must be specified and reserved for the respective levels or tiers of government. [5] argue that

The enumeration may be made under one list of matters exclusive to either the national or regional governments, or there may be two or even three lists, one for the central government exclusively, one exclusive to the regional governments and another concurrent to both; in addition certain specific matters may be assigned to either one or the other or to both concurrently in other provisions of the Constitution (that is the ones outside the legislative lists).

According to [6] “Political restructuring seems to be informed by the poor praxis of an admittedly formal federal system. In other words, the claim for restructuring is more stringent in countries with a federal form of government and perhaps also a federal constitution but with a unitary practice”. The essence of political restructuring is for governability. [7] for instance considers restructuring as fallout of the desires of “how to create effective political institutions that can both accommodate diverse interests and provide effective government”. The aim therefore, is to serve as a navigation instrument to properly give focus and locus to attempts at collective identity and distributive politics. In addition, political restructuring is intended to lay formal foundation for an impartial and an equitable sharing of political space by the numerous ethnic nationalities that inhabit the federal state.

Constitutional Restructuring: Constitution is an act by which a state or government is constituted. One of the fundamental features of a federal arrangement is the need for a supreme constitution which binds all persons, government and authorities. In any federal state, the constitution being the source of life and powers of both the central authority and the federating units must be supreme. The superiority of the constitution is explicitly provided for in the Nigerian 1999 Constitution thus “This Constitution is supreme and its provisions shall have binding force on all authorities and persons throughout the Federal Republic of Nigeria”. “The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall not be governed, nor shall any person or group of persons take control of the government of Nigeria or any part thereof except in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution; 4 “If any other law is inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution this Constitution shall prevail and that other law shall to the extent of the inconsistency be void” [8]. For a proper functioning of the Nigerian federalism, there is need for a proper restructuring of the federal structure in Nigeria starting from a constitutional amendment that will inculcate the basic requirements of federalism.

There should be a proper balance in the sharing of governmental powers, functions and allocation of resources between the federal government and the governments of the federating units to ensure that each of the government of the 36 states of Nigeria is equipped with every paraphernalia of government to be able to stand as an independent sovereign entity as is required for the practice of federalism. It is recommended that the federating units should have separate constitution adapted while continuing to exist and function as regional government with their old constitutions modified as may be necessary. Another option is a federalism upon the divided and independence of the constitutions of the federal government [13]. Presently, Nigeria uses one single constitution to establish and organize the federal and state government, thereby departing from the principles of true federalism. This is different from other federations such as USA, Canada and Australia. Nigeria may also have to borrow a leaf from the practices operational in countries acclaimed as practicing true federalism, such as having separate constitutions for the federal government and the governments of the various 36 states of the federation, maintaining the provision for the supremacy of constitution in governmental practices, observing the federal character principle as enshrined in section 14 (3) of the 1999 Constitution in making federal appointments to guarantee that the different states of the federation have the same representation in the government at the federal level so as to shun the domination of any state or some states in the affairs of government. It is hoped that the present government of Nigeria will proceed with the constitutional amendment process initiated by the out gone government of President Goodluck Jonathan and through that correct some of the anomalies in the Nigerian federal structure [10].

The way forward to address the degenerating state of Nigerian nation is to restructure as expressed by Professor Wole Soyinka when he said, “it was wrong to say that the country’s structure should be left the way it is. A step in this direction was when Nigeria government conducted a National Conference in 2014. Unlike previous National dialogues, the 2014 CONFAB had ‘no-go areas’, which means that there were no restrictions on matters that could be discussed. The 2014 CONFAB gave Nigeria the opportunity to dialogue the age-long challenges that are confronting the polity in a non-partisan forum where ethnic, religious, political, economic and professional considerations were not given opportunity. The over 600 Resolutions of the CONFAB which were reached by the 492 Delegates through consensus touched most, if not all the, critical problems that had been listed as hindrances to

Nigeria's speedy development and attainment of nationhood. Among several other things, the Resolutions included: the practice of true federalism; devolution of powers; creation of additional states; adoption of modified presidential system of government that join together the parliamentary and presidential systems; creation of State and Community Police; the introduction of independent candidates for election and in the economic domain; solid minerals that had been the exclusive preserve of the federal government since independence, was recommended to be moved to the concurrent list. The resolutions hold promises for the building of a more inclusive national consensus on the structure and guiding principles of state that can guarantee the unity, progress and prosperity of Nigeria. Frankly, these resolutions of the 2014 CONFAB if attained are the political and constitutional restructuring that holds the key solution to boiling problems in Nigeria [16].

Key Resolutions at a glimpse

Federalism: That Nigeria shall retain a Federal system of Government; that the core elements of the Federation shall be as follows: i. A Federal (Central) Government with States as the federating units; and ii. Without prejudice to States constituting the federating units, States that wish to merge may do so in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (when amended). That (i) The States shall be the federating units; and (ii) Any group of States may create a self-funding Zonal Commission to promote economic development, good governance, equity, peace and security in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (when amended). The number, structure, form and administration of Local Governments shall be determined by the States and that the List of the Local Governments Areas contained in the First Schedule of the 1999 Constitution be removed and transferred to the States to be covered by a law of the State Houses of Assembly [8].

Creation of 18 New States: The conference recommended the creation of 18 new states-three per geo-political zone. They include Apa, Edu, Kainji, Katagum, Savannah, Amana, Gurara, Ghari, Etiti (South East zone), Aba, Adada, Njaba-Anim, Anioma, Orashi, Ogoja, Ijebu and New Oyo.

Resource Control/Derivation Principle: The conference held that assigning percentage for the increase in derivation principle and setting up Special Intervention Funds to address issues of reconstruction and

rehabilitation of areas ravaged by insurgency and internal conflicts as well as solid minerals development, require some technical details and consideration.

Public Finance/Revenue Allocation: The conference noted that the sharing of the funds to the Federation Account among the three tiers of government should be done in the following manner: Federal Government-42.5%, State Governments-35% and Local Governments 22.5%.

Forms of Government: The conference recommended the Modified Presidential System, a home-made model of government that effectively combines the presidential and parliamentary systems of government. The president shall pick the vice president from the Legislature and should select not more than 18 ministers from the six geo-political zones and not more than 30% of his ministers from outside the Legislature [14].

Legislature: The conference proposed a Bi-cameral legislature, but noted that members should serve on part-time basis.

Power Sharing/Rotation: The conference recommended that the presidential power should rotate between the North and the South and among the six geopolitical zones while the governorship will rotate among the three senatorial districts in a state.

Local Government: Local Governments, the conference recommended, will no longer be the third tier of government. The federal and states are now to be the only tiers of government. States can now create as many local governments they want. The Joint State or Local Government Account be scrapped and in its place the establishment of a State Revenue Mobilization Allocation Fiscal Commission [RMAFC] with representatives of LG and a Chairman nominated by the Governor.

Immunity Clause: One of the critical issues discussed is the immunity clause and it was agreed that it should be removed if the offences attract criminal charges to encourage accountability by those managing the economy.

Independent Candidacy: In order to open up the political space, the conference recommended that every Nigerian who meets the specified condition in the Electoral Act should be free to contest elections as an independent candidate.

Governance: The creation of the office of the Accountant General (Director-General) of the Federation as a distinct and separate office from the Office of the Accountant General of the Federal Government was recommended. The Office of the Accountant General of the Federation shall oversee the accruals of revenue into and disbursement from the Federation Account as and when due; and shall administer these funds as required by the Constitution, while the office of the Accountant General of the Federal Government shall oversee the accounts of the Federal Government [12].

Anti-Corruption: The conference projected Special Courts to handle corruption cases in the light of undue prolongation in the trials and prosecution of corruption cases in the regular courts.

Land Tenure Act: The Land Tenure Act, according to the conference, should remain in the Constitution but be amended to take care of certain concerns, particularly on compensation in Section 29 (4) of the Act to read “land owners should determine the price and value of their land based on open market value”.

Religion: The Conference recommended that there would no longer be any government sponsorship of pilgrimages for Christians, Muslims and other religion to the holy lands. It also resolved that Churches and mosques should begin to pay tax to government.

Reasons for Accepting Social Reform of Edmund Burke: In the middle of the 20th century, traditionalist conservatism started to organize itself in earnest as an intellectual and political force. The conservative philosophy of Edmund Burke influenced the development throughout 18th-century in Europe, principally as a response to the turmoil of the English Civil War and the radicalism of the French Revolution. The first major reason for accepting social reform of Edmund Burke’s political philosophy is because it proposed that social reform begins in a gradual and simple manner. According to Burke the best life starts in the Little Platoon’s of Family, Church and local community. They orient men toward virtues such as temperance and fortitude. It is in the local and particular that we are able to live justly. In seeing political life as best, conducted within an order of particular habits and presumptions in particular the order of the British, Burke resisted the attempts of some of his contemporaries to study man as if he could be viewed in isolation, apart from all the trappings of society

[6]. This type of political speculation which for Burke is most dubiously practiced by Rousseau postulates an original state of nature in which man is born free but is everywhere in chains. Burke avowed that civil society must provide men a sufficient restraint upon their passions’ in order that their liberties can be secured. He believed in preserving the social order and respecting old habits. He saw the well ordered society as a partnership of the dead, the living and yet to be born. Another reason is that social reform of Edmund Burke is the best alternative option to revolution. Norman in [9] defended Burke by emphasizing his fundamental moderation and support for reform as an alternative to revolution. Burke believed not in small government according to Norman but in Slow government rooted in modesty and humility about what politics can achieve. In a 1955 essay written during an earlier burst of enthusiasm for Burke, the late Arthur Schlesinger Jr praised Burke’s approach as inspired by a belief in the organic character of society where power implies responsibility and where all classes should be united in harmonious union by a sense of common trust and mutual obligation. More so, social reform proposes a government that finds its authority in virtuous principles and not in social contract. And Principles originate through the understanding of nature and history. Social reform is accepted because it deals with bond of social order and defense of ancestral institutions highlighted in custom, convention and tradition. Another simple reason is because social reform gives religion a decent appreciation. Finally, social reform is preferred because it executes change naturally from the tradition of the community.

Reasons for Rejecting Revolution as a Means of Resolving the Challenges in Nigeria State: Burke supported the war against revolutionary France, seeing Britain as fighting on the side of the royalists and *émigres* in a civil war, rather than fighting against the whole nation of France. He rejected revolution and I agree with the reasons mentioned. Edmund Burke enumerated the following as what revolution will deny the people when it is accepted as option for a better government;

- Revolutions are likely to harm us by tearing away ‘the decent drapery of life in doing so deny the presumptive excellence of ruling gentlemen.
- It will contradict the implicit contract among the present, past and future.
- It will rebuff a proper place for the exceptional prudence of men such as Burke himself
- It will disallow the decent appreciation of religion.

Burke's first public condemnation of the Revolution occurred on the debate in Parliament on the army estimates on 9 February 1790, provoked by praise of the Revolution by Pitt and Fox, [10] quoted Burke,

Since the House had been prorogued in the summer much work was done in France. The French had shewn themselves the ablest architects of ruin that had hitherto existed in the world. In that very short space of time they had completely pulled down to the ground, their monarchy; their church; their nobility; their law; their revenue; their army; their navy; their commerce; their arts; and their manufactures... [there was a danger of] an imitation of the excesses of an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody and tyrannical democracy... [in religion] the danger of their example is no longer from intolerance, but from Atheism; a foul, unnatural vice, foe to all the dignity and consolation of mankind; which seems in France, for a long time, to have been embodied into a faction, accredited and almost avowed.

Therefore, reform should always proceed carefully. Burke proposed that revolution is the worst option for a community to choose because it ruins everything, such as efficient individuals, ancestral institutions, religion and so on. Therefore, revolution should be rejected and not given a chance.

Critique of Edmund Burke's Conservative Philosophy:

Some scholars are of the opinion that Edmund Burke's conservative Philosophy has positively influenced many philosophers as well as modern and contemporary period of political systems. No doubt Burke's political philosophy has retained a prominent position in terms of theories and arguments. It has maintained its pristine position and dominance because it remained a point of reference. Here, I want to raise some criticisms for and against the conservative philosophy.

Leo Strauss in his book, 'Natural Right and History' criticized Burke for his definitive separation between happiness and virtue which seeks the foundation of government in conformity to our duties and not in the imagery rights of man. Strauss viewed Burke as believing that government should focus solely on the duties that a man should have in society as opposed to trying to address any additional needs or desires. Government is simply a practicality to Burke and not necessarily meant

to function as a tool to help individuals live their best lives. Strauss argues that Burke's theory could be seen as opposing the very idea of forming such philosophers. Burke rejected the use of logic and dismissed the view among theorists that reason should be the primary tool in the forming of a constitution or contract. Burke insisted in his principles that constitutions should be made based on natural processes as opposed to rational planning for the future. Strauss argued that criticizing rationality actually works against Burke's original stance of returning to traditional ways because some amount of human reason is inherent and therefore is in part grounded in tradition. More so, Russell Kirk an American social critic and historian wrote, 'the reflections of Burke burns with all the wrath and anguish of a prophet who saw the traditions of Christendom and fabric of civil society dissolving before his eyes'. Kirk affirms his rejection of revolution as an option for social reform. Coleridge in some of his writing such as '[11, 12] and Aids to Reflection [1825] defended the principles of Burke. He justified traditional conservative positions on hierarchy and organic society. According to Coleridge, those transcendent values that found support in institutions as the church, family and state are the basic foundations of a society. He criticized materialism and merchant class and the need for "inner growth" that is rooted in a traditional and religious culture. Thomas Carlyle, a writer, historian and essayist who was an early traditionalist thinker defended medieval notions such as aristocracy, hierarchy, organic society and class unity over socialism and the 'cash nexus' of Laissez-faire capitalism. According to Carlyle, the cash nexus was when social relationship was merely the order. In addition, Mathew Arnold and John Ruskin were prominent defenders of tradition in culture and arts among British traditionalist conservatives. John Ruskin who was a cultural and artistic critic who called himself Christian Socialist upheld the theory of standards in culture, arts and society. He asserted that industrial revolution had fomented dislocation, rootlessness and the mass urbanization of the poor. Ruskin in his work, 'The Stone of Venice' [1851-1853] and 'The Seven Lamps of Architecture and unto This Last' [1860] took on classical tradition while defending Gothic art and architecture. Edmund Burke's philosophical theories have proponents and opponents. Therefore, his principles still maintain brave influence among scholars and political theorists.

Recommendation: Edmund Burke in his political theory emphasized custom, convention and tradition.

He proposes a traditional conservatism which highlighted the principles of transcendent moral order manifested through natural laws to which society ought to conform in a humble manner. It means that most modern societies like Nigeria experiencing political crisis should reconsider it's the option for traditional foundation. More so, the meaning of life can be found in tradition, folklore and myth.

In his principles, Burke viewed colonialism as bad, revolution as dangerous and democracy as a threat to social stability contrary to modern sensibility which teaches acceptance and cherish of democracy. Although he opted for Aristocracy but he condemns detestation of justice and abuse of power.

He condemned democracy because it promotes governance of common people who does not have the required degree of intelligence and breadth of knowledge for governance. Again the dangerous passions of the common people are aroused in quest for votes which could lead to violence and confiscation of property. Democracy breeds tyranny over unpopular minorities. And the primary duty of any government is welfare of the people and protection of lives and properties. These situations are seen playing out in the democratic system practiced in Nigeria. Perhaps, the Nigerian system of governance contributes seriously to the evident political quagmire. Hence, there is urgent need for social reform in Nigeria polity.

A political society is never a thing instituted by conquest, contrast or single act of will, human or divine. Rather it is formed through long process of social evolution. The case of amalgamation of Nigeria by Lord Lugard had remained a hunting shadow for the Nigerian people. The position of Edmund Burke about social evolution is a strong point recommended to be considered by the Nigerian nation.

CONCLUSION

It is quite obvious Edmund Burke has made substantial contribution to political thought. He had passion for orderly constitutional government, wisely and liberally administered. It means that the political principles of some philosophers had given answers to the challenging political issues but not all of them. Burke in his theories insisted that all elements of good government including liberty and authority have their foundation in the constitution which is a long accumulated law and custom of the land. He suggested for countries like

Nigeria to embrace actual government and actual constitution which upholds the principle of checks and balance for real protection of life, liberty and property. This is because they establish rules of actions. He did not relent in indicating the defects of democratic society. Therefore, Burke favoured a government that takes public affairs seriously in the sense of honesty, decency, fairness and required intelligence and proper management. The Political life of Nigeria as nation must be quick to identify such elements of good governance as the Nigerian citizens elect their political leaders in 2019 general election.

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