



## Intergovernmental Conflict in Nigeria: A Federalism Framework for Understanding Causes, Consequences, and Solutions

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**ABSTRACT:** The Nigerian intergovernmental relations system is central to the effective working of governance because it involves cooperation among federal, state, and local governments. Intergovernmental conflicts have a tendency of undermining this system, thereby its effectiveness in ensuring public services and fostering national integration minimal. Descriptive analysis is applied in this book to analyze the causes, effects, and potential solutions of intergovernmental conflict in Nigeria. The study identifies some of the key drivers that are responsible for the incidence of such conflicts, which are uncertainties in the constitution that result in conflicting mandates and disagreements, unequal resource allocation that results in competition among governments, and party politics-influenced competition for political power. Inefficient administration and entrenched corruption also sustain such tensions, given that they turn good governance and public service delivery into a fantasy. The consequences of these struggles are far-reaching, ranging from delay and below-standard services to loss of public confidence in government institutions and hindrance of socio-economic development. Furthermore, intergovernmental strife gives rise to regional disintegration, promoting challenges of national disintegration. Considering these challenges, the paper establishes several conflict management measures. These would entail constitutional amendments that would spell out the roles and responsibilities of every level of government, ensure better distribution of resources, and improve communication and coordination among the federal, state, and local governments. Of prime concern also is building the capability of government employees through training and instituting mechanisms for accountability. Lastly, the application of an impartial body to settle disputes would provide the nation with a third-party mechanism for dispute settlement where grievances would be settled. In embracing such processes, the Nigerian IGR can be simplified, resulting in improved governance, guaranteed socio-economic progress, and enhanced national unity and therefore resulting in long-term development and stability of the nation.

**Keywords:** Intergovernmental Relations (IGR), Conflicts, Governance, Resource Allocation, Constitutional Amendment



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## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria operates a federal system of government with three levels: federal, state, and local governments. Good governance and service delivery demand that the levels work together effectively—intergovernmental relations (IGR). Although Nigeria's IGR system evolved since the colonial era, there are still significant challenges in achieving harmonious working relationships between the levels of government.

Since adopting federalism during independence in 1960, Nigeria has outsourced some functions to each tier of government. Defense and foreign affairs are handled by the federal government, while such matters as education and health are handled at the state levels, and grassroots development at the local level ([Adesola, 2021](#)). The 1999 Constitution provides for handling these undertakings and revenue sharing, especially of oil and gas—a critical national revenue source.

But ongoing IGR tensions mirror deep-seated structural and political problems. These include confusion in constitutional functions with respect to revenue sharing and control of resources issues, party politics-influenced power struggles. Hydrocarbon-producing states, particularly in the Niger Delta, have perennially sought increased control over their resources due to fiscal allocation disparities to the federal state ([Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2020](#)). Federal intrusiveness and marginalization are typically lamented by state and local governments.

Apart from fiscal challenges, corruption, bureaucratic inefficacy, and poor institutional framework, the foregoing have also pushed intergovernmental relations further to the breaking point, resulting in delayed services and truncated development schemes. Programs like the National Council on Intergovernmental [Relations \(2021\)](#) and stabilizing mechanisms like the Excess Crude Account, aimed at ensuring cooperation, remain in vain ([Omotosho, 2022; Ogunlesi, 2022](#)).

This study bridges the milestone gap in studying the complex process of intergovernmental conflict in Nigeria, its causes, impacts, and potential for resolution in terms of the vision of federalism. Through the study of some conflict episodes and examination of existing legal and institutional arrangements, the study attempts to offer concrete recommendations towards further stabilizing IGR and state-building. Based on the problem stated earlier it is crucial to ask the following questions:

- i. What are the underlying causes of conflicts in Nigeria's intergovernmental relations, including historical, political, economic, and social factors?
- ii. What are the effects of these conflicts on governance, public policy, socioeconomic development, and national security?
- iii. What specific instances of conflict between different levels of government in Nigeria?
- iv. What is the effectiveness of the existing legal and institutional framework in managing intergovernmental relations and mitigating conflicts?
- v. What are the recommendations for improving intergovernmental relations and reducing the incidence of conflicts, focusing on policy reforms and collaborative mechanisms?

Thus, the objectives of this paper are:

- i. To analyze the underlying causes of conflicts in Nigeria's intergovernmental relations, including historical, political, economic and social factors
- ii. To assess the effects of these conflicts on governance, public policy, socioeconomic development, and national security
- iii. To investigate the specific instances of conflict between different levels of government in Nigeria, highlighting key events and their implications
- iv. To evaluate the effectiveness of existing legal and institutional frameworks in managing intergovernmental relations and mitigating conflicts
- v. To develop recommendations for improving intergovernmental relations and reducing the incidence of conflicts, focusing on policy reforms and collaborative mechanisms.

## Concept of Intergovernmental Relations

Intergovernmental relations (IGR) are defined as the interactions, institutions, and processes which describe the connection between governments across different levels of a federal or decentralized system. [Wright \(2019\)](#) defines IGR as "the complex web of interactions, relationships, and processes among different levels of government, including power distribution, responsibilities, and resource management." Similarly, [Anderson \(2020\)](#) emphasizes the "dynamic and multifaceted relationships" that characterize IGR, which involve both formal and informal interactions that influence policy making and implementation. On the other hand, [Bakvis and Tevis \(2021\)](#) highlight IGR as "an elaborate web of formal and informal channels, institutions, and processes by which government levels coordinate their interdependent responsibilities and roles." Although all these definitions have a common thread of unifying IGR as a system of interdependence, they vary in their focus. Wright focuses on the structural aspects of IGR, i.e., power and resource distribution. Anderson focuses on bargaining and political processes characteristic of such relationships. Bakvis and Teles focus on more institutionalized mechanisms and coping with intergovernmental relations. For the purposes of this study, IGR is used to describe how federal, state, and local governments interact, cooperate, and sometimes clash, with specific mention of how such interactions affect governance outcomes in Nigeria.

## Theoretical Framework

The study employs the Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations Theory in understanding conflict within Nigeria's system of government. Developed through scholars like Johannes Althusius, Montesquieu, and William Riker, the theory has an understanding of power, responsibility, and allocation of resources within federal systems ([Elazar, 1987; Watts, 1999](#)). Federal systems, under this theory, are characterized by the presence of cooperation and competition among governments and levels of government, and by conflict when sharing of power is indeterminate or unequal. In applying this theory to Nigeria, it can be seen that Nigeria's federalism is apt to be characterized by jurisdictional dispute and struggle over resources between the federal, state, and local governments. The tensions are also fueled by the internal political and economic conditions in Nigeria, such as centralization of petroleum revenue, lopsided development, and ethnic and political competition. The theory explains how the unclear line of

function in the Nigerian Constitution is to blame for the recurring tensions, particularly on fiscal federalism, resource control, and power sharing between regions.

### **The Relevance of Theory to the Study**

Theoretical frameworks are crucial to understanding complex governance systems, and the Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations Theory plays a vital role in this study. This theory provides a clear structure for analyzing how power and responsibilities are shared among federal, state, and local governments, which is essential for understanding the dynamics of intergovernmental relations in Nigeria. Highlighting both the cooperative and competitive aspects of these relationships, the framework helps to explain the root causes of conflicts, such as disagreements over constitutional roles, resource allocation, and overlapping responsibilities. Recent studies, such as [Akindele and Olaopa \(2021\)](#), emphasize the importance of using theories like this to address the structural issues within federal systems and propose practical solutions for improving governance. The Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations Theory ensures that the study is not only descriptive but also analytical, offering insights into the systemic issues driving conflicts in Nigeria's federal structure. Moreover, this framework is essential for examining the effects of these conflicts on governance and identifying strategies for improvement. For example, it provides a foundation for understanding how competition over resources or jurisdictional disputes undermines trust between government levels and reduces the effectiveness of service delivery. Recent research by [Suberu \(2021\)](#) supports the idea that theoretical frameworks help to explore the socio-political and economic implications of conflicts, such as weakened public trust and diminished national cohesion. Using this theory, the study can also draw comparisons with other federal systems worldwide, identifying best practices that can be adapted to Nigeria's unique context. In doing so, the framework not only enhances the depth of the analysis but also strengthens the recommendations for reforms aimed at fostering more effective and harmonious intergovernmental relations.

### **Empirical Studies**

This paper's theoretical foundation is supported in large part by existing literature relating to Nigeria's intergovernmental relations. Both [Olufemi and Adealae \(2017\)](#), as well as [Orji \(2011\)](#), identify constitutional ambiguities as primary instigators of Nigerian intergovernmental conflicts. The ambiguities and, in particular, those on fiscal federalism have created intergovernmental contestations between states and the federal government, including most prominently within oil-producing regions like the Niger Delta ([Suberu, 2001](#)). Local authorities, often excluded from making key decisions, are economically marginalized, and therefore their contribution to development becomes harder ([Anozie, 2016](#)). Literature also indicates that revenue sharing is another source of major conflict. Centralization of oil revenue under the control of the federal government has contributed to tension with oil-producing states, which are discontented that they are not receiving a fair share of the wealth generated from their resources ([Akindele, Olaopa, & Obiyan, 2002](#)). In the same way, the budget federalism issues have resulted in systemic inadequacies in the flow of funds, such that federal spending results in deficits for the state and local governments to sustain development requirements ([Ekpo, 2004; Oriakhi & Ahuru, 2014](#)).

Instances such as the 1990s Lagos State resistance against federal government interference and the current difference over security management and financial support for local government demonstrate the conflict between cross-cutting political and financial interests ([Suberu, 2009](#); [Omotoso, 2013](#)). They help in revealing the inadequacy of Nigeria's federal system to promote an effective synergy between cross-cutting interests and lead to inefficiency and poor administration.

### **Instances of Conflict between Different Levels of Government in Nigeria**

Nigeria's federal system has frequently experienced conflicts between the federal, state, and local governments due to constitutional ambiguities, revenue allocation disputes, and political rivalries ([Anyim, 2016](#)). Historically, Nigeria's federalism was meant to balance power between these levels of government, but crises such as the 1966 political breakdown and military rule disrupted this balance ([Osabiya, 2015](#); [Ojo, 2019](#)). One major area of conflict is revenue sharing. The "derivation principle," intended to benefit resource-rich states, particularly in the Niger Delta, has led to tensions between oil-producing and non-oil-producing states ([Agwu, 2020](#)). Similarly, disputes arose in the 1990s when Lagos State resisted the federal government's suppression of pro-democracy movements, demonstrating state governments' power as checks on federal overreach ([Uche, 2015](#)). In the Fourth Republic, issues such as withholding local government funds under President Obasanjo and disagreements over security management during President Buhari's tenure worsened intergovernmental relations ([Suberu, 2009](#); [Omotoso, 2013](#)). Electoral disputes, such as the 2019 Rivers State governorship election, have also fueled tensions ([Yagboyaju, 2019](#); [Odukoya, 2020](#)).

### **Effectiveness of Legal and Institutional Frameworks**

Legal and institutional framework that directs intergovernmental relations in Nigeria, such as the National Council on Intergovernmental Relations (NCIR), is institutionally defective. Although the 1999 Constitution provides for the responsibilities and functions of the different levels of government, its vagueness on some issues—more precisely fiscal issues—results in perpetual conflicts ([Ojo & Onwubiko, 2020](#)). Institutions that are supposed to mediate these conflicts, like the NCIR, are devoid of powers of enforcement, making their ability to resolve conflicts insufficient ([Eze & Okoli, 2019](#); [Adigun & Adewale, 2021](#); [Bello, 2022](#)). Furthermore, exclusion of the local governments from key decision-making bodies and minimal funding also enhance tensions, limiting their involvement in productive governance ([Olayiwola & Akintola, 2020](#); [Yusuf & Idris, 2021](#)).

### **Recommendations for Improvement**

To improve intergovernmental relations, scholars recommend constitutional reforms to clarify the roles of each level of government ([Ogundare & Fashola, 2023](#); [Nwobashi & Itumo, 2018](#)). A fairer revenue-sharing formula that accounts for population size and development needs is also needed ([Adebayo & Omololu, 2021](#)). Strengthening collaborative institutions such as intergovernmental summits and task forces can enhance coordination and trust ([Okeke & Onyekachi, 2021](#); [Adegbite,](#)



[2022](#)). Additionally, empowering the NCIR with legal authority and adequate funding would improve conflict resolution mechanisms ([Oluwaseun & Anike, 2022](#); [Adeniyi & Obiora, 2023](#)). Stronger judicial enforcement is necessary to ensure compliance with legal rulings on intergovernmental disputes ([Ajayi & Olanrewaju, 2021](#); [Ezechi, 2023](#)). Stakeholder inclusion, particularly integrating local governments into decision-making processes, would help address concerns about marginalization and promote national unity ([Amadi & Chukwuemeka, 2022](#); [Nwosu & Okoro, 2023](#)). By implementing these reforms, Nigeria can create a more cooperative and efficient federal system that enhances governance and development.

## Gaps in Literature

The existing literature on the causes and effects of conflicts in Nigeria's intergovernmental relations reveals several gaps that warrant further investigation. While numerous studies have explored issues such as resource control, fiscal federalism, and political rivalries, these analyses often focus on surface-level explanations without adequately addressing the systemic and institutional factors perpetuating these conflicts. For example, although fiscal imbalances and resource allocation disputes are widely discussed, the specific mechanisms by which these issues exacerbate tensions at the grassroots level remain underexplored, particularly in the context of local governments' roles and challenges.

Studies have also largely overlooked the socio-economic and cultural dimensions of these conflicts, such as the impact of ethnic and regional loyalties on resource-sharing debates and policy implementation. Another critical gap lies in the examination of informal governance practices, including patronage networks and corruption, which often undermine formal intergovernmental frameworks. The role of civil society and grassroots movements in mitigating these conflicts, while acknowledged, has not been sufficiently assessed in terms of their long-term impact on fostering transparency, accountability, and cooperation among government tiers. Lastly, while many studies emphasize the consequences of intergovernmental conflicts for national unity and economic development, there is a limited understanding of how these conflicts influence citizen perceptions of governance and trust in public institutions.

## METHOD

This section explores the causes and consequences of conflicts in the relationships among Nigeria's federal, state, and local governments. It also examines how these conflicts impact governance and national development. To achieve these objectives, a qualitative research approach was adopted, focusing on case studies and descriptive analysis. This section typically has the following subsections: sampling (a description of the target population, the research context, and units of analysis; the sampling itself; and the respondents' profiles); data collection; and measures (or measurements).

The study employed a qualitative research design that is highly appropriate to explore the intricate nature of social and political conflicts. For [Creswell \(2014\)](#), qualitative research holds the promise

of exploring social phenomena through the examination of participants' experiences or existing data, providing in-depth contextual data. In the context of this research, it sought to explore the underlying causes and consequences of intergovernmental disputes through in-depth analysis of particular case studies. By placing maximum emphasis on qualitative methodology, the research was able to investigate intangible relationships, forces and power dynamics, and history that can be hidden beneath quantitative methodologies. This study utilized descriptive analysis for the purpose of determining trends, relationship, and wider implications of Nigeria's intergovernmental system conflicts. Utilization of the case study method helps in analyzing specific conflicts, including revenue allocation conflicts, control of local government finances, and administration of resources, providing a detailed description of causative factors and implications of the conflicts.

Given the research design, the sample was drawn from secondary sources of data, such as historical case studies and government reports. Units of analysis were exemplary conflicts that epitomized the typical problems in Nigeria's federal system. The cases were selected because they were significant in demonstrating systemic problems and their impact on governance and national development. The respondents' profiles were not clearly provided in this research as it was primarily based on secondary sources. Despite that, the sources of data included scholarly articles written by experts in Nigerian federalism, government reports, and judicial reports. The case studies focused on specific conflicts like revenue allocation (more so between oil-producing states and the federal authority), mismanagement of funds in local governments, and conflict over managing resources in sectors such as agriculture and mining.

For data collection, the study relied solely on secondary sources. Case studies included conflicts over revenue allocation, where oil-producing states and the federal government disputed resource sharing ([Osaghae & Suberu, 2005](#)); local government fund control, where state governments allegedly mismanaged funds meant for local governments ([Suberu, 2001](#)); and resource management conflicts, such as mining and agricultural disputes. Document analysis was also conducted, including academic books and journals ([e.g., Akinyele, 1999](#)), government reports ([e.g., RMAFC reports on fiscal policies](#)), and legal records, such as the 1999 Nigerian Constitution and court cases, which helped identify gaps in governance structures.

The sources of data included scholarly works like [Suberu \(2001\)](#) and [Osaghae & Suberu \(2005\)](#), which provided historical insights into Nigeria's federalism. Government documents, including RMAFC and Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reports, helped analyze fiscal policies, while legal records, such as the 1999 Constitution, revealed structural issues in governance.

For data analysis, a qualitative descriptive approach was used to organize, categorize, and interpret the data. The findings were grouped into causes of intergovernmental conflicts, effects on governance, and legal framework effectiveness. The study linked oil revenue disputes to developmental delays in oil-rich states like Rivers and Bayelsa ([Amadi & Abdullah, 2012](#)).

The causes of conflicts identified include unclear legal provisions, as the 1999 Constitution does not clearly define roles between federal, state, and local governments ([Suberu, 2001](#)); resource allocation disputes, particularly in oil revenue sharing ([Osaghae, 2005](#)); political rivalries, where

different political parties in power at different levels create tensions; and corruption, where funds are mismanaged, leading to further mistrust ([Akinyele, 1999](#)).

The effects of intergovernmental conflicts include delays in policy implementation, slowing governance; disruptions in public services, affecting health, education, and infrastructure; and social unrest, especially in resource-rich regions like the Niger Delta (Amadi & Abdullah, 2012). The study also examined the effectiveness of legal frameworks, revealing that legal ambiguity in the 1999 Constitution often leads to disputes, while weak enforcement mechanisms limit the ability of agencies like RMAFC to ensure compliance ([Osaghae, 2005](#)).

In order to give a guarantee of validity and reliability of the data gathered, the research used credible established secondary sources like peer-reviewed scholarly journals, official government reports, and court documents. To determine the credibility of the sources, different books by various authors were cross-checked ([e.g., Osaghae & Suberu, 2005; Amadi & Abdullah, 2012](#)). In addition, through the use of basic legal texts like the 1999 Constitution and official documents, the study sought to withstand prejudice due to use of political or ideological factors alone.

While secondary data does not require any direct input from the respondents, the use of various data sources from different perspectives (scholarly, government, law) makes the findings more reliable. Biased case selection was prevented by holding that selected disputes were symptomatic of broader issues with Nigeria's system of government and federal system.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Causes of Conflicts in Nigerian Intergovernmental Relations**

One of the root causes of the intergovernmental tensions in Nigeria is the control of resources, particularly the Niger Delta, whose resources produce oil. Rivers, Delta, and Bayelsa states have over the years wailed for a greater control over the resources exploited within their geographical locations, arguing that the existing federal setup advantageously favors the federal government against the producing communities that are yet to be developed. For instance, despite generating over 80% of Nigeria's revenue from oil export, the Niger Delta is still beset with endemic poverty and environmental degradation ([Omotosho, 2022](#)). This has earned it the breeding of militancy groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). Environmental degradation as a result of oil exploration also contributes to tensions. Land degradation, gas flaring, and oil spills have ruined the livelihood of the local community, with the federal government and oil companies accused of negligence ([Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2020](#)). Lack of coordinated response mechanisms by federal, state, and local governments has in most cases worsened such conflicts, each blaming the other for inaction.

Revenue sharing is also a major point of contention. The current vertical formula of revenue sharing, which allocates 52.68% to the federal government, 26.72% to states, and 20.60% to local governments, has been found to be weakening fiscal federalism ([Adesola, 2021](#)). The state and



local governments argue that the formula is not responsive to their different development requirements as well as their contributions towards national revenue. The illustrations using case studies present how fiscal centralization is central to the question of federal relations. A good example is the court hearings between the federal government and Lagos State on the levying of Value Added Tax (VAT).

Jurisdictional conflicts and political rivalry are also to be expected. The Nigerian Constitution, as extensive as it provides a general outline of separation of powers, has a tendency to create the areas of uncertainty that allow federal encroachment into state and local governments ([Obasanjo, 2022](#)). During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic is such an instance, where state lockdowns were in contradiction with federal dictates, producing legal and administrative dissonance.

Nigerian religious and ethnic diversity also complicates intergovernmental relations. Middle Belt and Southeast ethnic groups have bemoaned marginalization by the federal government in political allocation and infrastructure growth ([Akinola, 2019](#)). These perceptions of marginalization are generally exploited by political elites, which further heightens divisions and depletes confidence between levels of government.

### **Effects of Conflicts in Nigerian Intergovernmental Relations**

Conflicts between the federal, state, and local governments have contributed to political instability in Nigeria. Disputes over power, revenue sharing, and resource control have made it difficult to maintain a stable government system ([Obasanjo, 2022](#)). Political instability results in frequent leadership changes, governance disruptions, and shifts in policy priorities, making it hard to implement long-term development plans. Intergovernmental conflicts have negatively affected Nigeria's economic growth. Resource control disputes, especially in the oil-rich Niger Delta, discourage foreign and domestic investments due to the uncertainty surrounding government policies ([Omotosho, 2022](#)). Investors fear economic instability, and this limits capital inflows needed for economic diversification and sustainable development.

Conflicts over resource allocation delay the release of funds to state and local governments, affecting essential services like healthcare, education, and infrastructure ([Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2020](#)). Additionally, power struggles lead to inefficiencies, duplicated efforts, and mismanagement of resources, further weakening governance. Conflicts have created an environment of mistrust among different levels of government. Instead of working together, governments operate in isolation, making it harder to coordinate efforts in governance and service delivery ([Akinola, 2019](#)). The absence of mutual trust limits cooperation on national development projects.

Resource allocation conflicts have deepened economic and social inequalities in Nigeria. Some states and regions receive more resources while others remain underdeveloped, fueling resentment among marginalized communities ([Adesola, 2021](#)). This worsens poverty levels and restricts access to essential services. Intergovernmental conflicts have contributed to insecurity in Nigeria. Militancy in the Niger Delta, terrorism in the North, and ethnic clashes are linked to disputes over

resource control and governance structures (Omotosho, 2022). The failure to address these issues has led to violent protests, destruction of property, and threats to national security.

### **Mechanisms for Salvaging the System**

To resolve conflicts, Nigeria needs constitutional amendments that clearly define the powers and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments (Omotosho, 2022). This will help prevent disputes over revenue allocation and resource control. The establishment of bodies like the National Council on Intergovernmental Relations (NCIR) has been a step toward conflict resolution (Ogunlesi, 2022). However, more alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation and arbitration, should be implemented to quickly address intergovernmental disputes.

Nigeria's revenue allocation formula should be reviewed to ensure fairness in resource distribution. Revenue sharing should consider population size, development needs, and each state's contribution to national revenue (Adesola, 2021). This will promote equity and reduce disputes over resource control. Regular meetings, joint committees, and intergovernmental task forces should be established to foster dialogue and collaboration among different levels of government (Akinola, 2019). This will ensure smoother governance and reduce tensions over policy implementation.

Agencies like the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) should be made more transparent and independent to prevent political interference in resource distribution (Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2020). Proper monitoring mechanisms should also be put in place to ensure accountability. Intergovernmental relations can be improved by involving civil society organizations, traditional rulers, and community leaders in decision-making processes (Akinola, 2019). Public participation will create a sense of belonging and reduce conflicts related to marginalization.

### **CONCLUSION**

The controversies in Nigerian intergovernmental relations originate from several basic issues. At the top of these are differences over resource control and revenue sharing of natural resources such as oil and gas among the federal, state, and local governments. Controversies over the exercise of powers over constitutional functions and jurisdictional boundaries also agitate tensions. These are compounded by ethnic, religious, and regional divisions, which have instilled feelings of marginalization and exclusion from political representation and equitable access to resources. Their resolution is central to promoting national unity and good governance. The effects of such intergovernmental conflicts have been severely debilitating. The conflicts have undermined political stability, stunted economic development, interfered with the provision of public services, and punctured institutional trust and coordination across levels of government. The conflicts have also intensified social cleavages and security challenges, putting Nigeria's development trajectory on the halt.

From a theoretical perspective, this study focuses on institutional clarity, balanced federalism, and broad government in multiethnic, resource-rich federal systems. Practically, the findings suggest

that unless reforms are well managed, Nigeria's federal structure will remain riddled with systemic inefficiencies and conflicts.

However, the study also has its limitations. It is dealing primarily with general conflict patterns and issues of governance, and not extensively with case studies at the regional level or non-state actors' activities in intergovernmental relations. Furthermore, data limitations can limit generalization of some conclusions. Future research needs to explore these under-researched spaces, such as comparative research on other federal systems grappling with similar issues, the role of civil society in resolving conflict, and roles of subnational governments in developing federal-state relations.

Based on this research's findings, the following are recommendations:

1. Nigeria should make its mechanisms for dealing with conflicts stronger by making its frameworks clearer and more effective for resolving conflicts between federal and state governments.
2. Federal appointment and decision-making must be merit-driven to reduce political patronage and ensure maximum institutional purity.
3. Judicial investment is essential to facilitate the courts in resolving jurisdictional and authority contestations better and impartially.
4. Equitable resource allocation and transparent revenue-sharing agreements must be introduced to reduce tension regarding resource control.
5. There must be organized and regular communication between the state and federal governments. This can be facilitated through intergovernmental forums or committees with the purpose of pre-emptively resolving disputes as well as strengthening cooperation.

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