LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND AGITATION: THE OKE-OGUN EXPERIENCE

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.64633/wissj.v10i5.14

Keywords

Leadership, Governance, Political restructuring, State creation, National unity.

Abstract

This paper explores the interpaly between leadership and governance in the agitation for the creation of Oke-Ogun state from the existing Oyo state in Nigeria. It contends that enduring concerns over political exclusion, ineffective leadership, inadequate representation, and uneven socio-economic development withn the Oke-Ogun region have strengthened demands for political restrucutringand administrative autonomy. Such governance deficits have contributed to declining public confidence in state institutions and limited citizens' incolvement across the region. Consequently, political actors, community leaders, and advocacy groups, in Oke-Ogun have inensified campaigns for state creation as a pathway towards inclusive governance, fair resource allocation and equitable regional development. Relying on Conflict transformation theory, the paper interprets the agitation as a peaceful and legitimate reaction to structural inequalities and governance deficiencies inherent in Nigeria's federal arrangement. The paper also emphasizes the significance of proactive leadership in advancing the agitation through constitutional approach and engagement in national restructuring debates. Using a qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirteen purposively selected participants from the ten local government areas of Oke-Ogun. Findings indicate that leadership and governance dynamics play a decisive role in state creation processes, as political outcomes are often shaped by elite interests and ethnic considerations rather than developmental priorities. The study concludes that responsive leadership, participatory governance, and inclusive development policies remain essential for addressing regional agitations and fostering national unity in Nigeria.

Introduction

The main problem addressed in this study is the persistent perception of political marginalisation, uneven development and inadequate governance in the Oke-Ogun region, which has intensified agitations for the creation of Oke-Ogun state form the present Oyo state in Nigeria. Nigeria operates a federal system that constitutionally distributes powers among the federal, state and local government levels with the objective of promoting decentralisation,

encouraging participation and ensuring balanced development across the country's diverse ethnic and regional groups. Ideally, federalism is expected to guarantee inclusive governance and equitable allocation of resources by granting a degree of autonomy to sub-national units. Nevertheless, Nigeria's federal structure has frequently been criticised for fostering inequalities in fiscal distribution thereby stimulating recurring demands for restructuring and establishment of additional states and local governments.

Since independence, Nigeria has undergone several exercises of state creation under successive militatry regimes in 1967, 1976, 1987, 1991 and 1996. These reforms were introduced to bring governance closer to the people, reduce fears of ethnic domination and improve adminitrative effectiveness. Although the exercises increased number of states, they simultaneously generated fresh agitations among groups that continued to experience political exclusion and socio-economic disadvantage. Consequently, state creation has become a mechanism for governance reform within Nigeria's federal arragement.

Within Oyo state, demands for political autonomy have intensified across the Oyo North, Oyo Central and Oyo South Senatorial Districts, leading to demands for entities such as Ibadan state, New Oyo state, and Oke-Ogun state. Among these, the Oke-Ogun agitation remains one of the most sustained and politically significant. The grievances of the region are associated with limited political representation, exclusion from strategic governance positions and insufficient state investment in sectors such as higher education and industrial growth. As a result, the region remains largely dependent on agriculture and informal economic activities with relatively socio-economic transformation. In response, political elites, traditional leaders, and civil society organisations have consistently mobilised support for the creation of Oke-Ogun state as a strategy for promoting inclusive governance and balanced regional development in Nigeria.

The study therefore interrogates how leadership dynamics, governance practices and constitutional procedures shape the agitation for Oke-Ogun state, while also examining the extent to which the demand reflects broader concerns about federal imbalance, political inclusion and democratic participation in the country. By doing so, the paper contributes to debates on restructuring and federal governance in contemporary Nigeria.

Reseach Questions

i. How can leadership and governance-driven restructuring address persistent agitations for the demand for an Oke-Ogun state?

ii. To what extent can leadership contribute to addressing perceived governance imbalances and strengthening inclusive governance in Oyo state?

iii. How effective have successive political leadership demonstrated governance responsiveness in addressing demands for the creation of Oke-Ogun stte within Nigeria's broader restructring agenda?

Research Objectives

i. To examine how successive phases of political restructuring have influenced sustained agitations for additional state creation within Oyo state.

ii. To analyse leadership strategies and institutional mechanisms employed by stakeholders in Oke-Ogun region in advancing quest for political autonomy.

iii. To assess the degree of strategic coordination among stakeholders in Oke-Ogun in influencing governmental responses to demands for state creation.

Conceptual Clarifications

Leadership

Leadership refers to the capacity of indivduals or groups to influence, direct and mobilise people toward the attainment of collective political and developmental objectives. It also involves decision making, policy direction, conflict management and representation of public interests. Leadership plays a significant role in managing competing interests, and promoting peaceful constitutional mechanisms for addressing political grievances and regional demands.

Governance

Governance refers to the processes, institutions, and structures through which political authority is exercised and public affiars are managed within a state. Governance determines how effectively state institutions respond to societal needs and develeopmental challenges. Thus, good governance is associated with transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation and equitable allocation of resources.

Political Restructuring

Political restructuring refers to the adjustment of political institutions and governance arrangements within a polity to promote equity, efficieny and stability. It involved demands for devolution of powers, fiscal federalism and greater regional autonomy. Political restructuring seeks to address governance imbaances and stimulate democratic participation by creating more inclusive political arrangements.

Review of related literature

Political rstructuring and the creation of new states constitute enduring features of federal systems, particularly in plural societies where uneven development and identity-based grievances often generate sustained demands for autonomy and enhanced representation. In such situation, state creation is frequently frmaed within broader debates on governance responsiveness and equitable resource distribution.

Suberu (2001) conceived political restructuring as the deliberate reconfiguration of a state's institutional architecture in response to perceived imbalances within a federal arrangement. In Nigeria, such restructuring debates are deeply embedded in long-standing grievances relating to marginalisation and unequal access to political power and federal resources (Adebanwi & Obadare, 2010). Thus, state creation has often been advanced as a corrective mechanism aimed at addressing historical injustices and strengthening federal legitimacy.

Theoretical contributions to federalism further illuminate the dynamics underlying such restructuring demands. Riker (1964) conceptualises federalism as a bargaining outcome among political elites designed to distribute power across multiple levels of government. This implies that federal arrangements are inherently negotiable andsubject to periodic adjustment. Similarly, Watts (2008) argues that sustainability of federal systems in diverse societies depends on institutional flexibility and responsiveness to changing socio-political realities. Within this framework, state creation emerges as a

governance adaptation strategy, intended to accommodate diversity while maintaining national cohesion.

Importantly, demands for new states are shaped by a combination of grassroots mobilisation and elite-driven political negotiation aimed at improving access to state resources and developmental opportunities (Ejobowah, 2000). In Nigeria, successive state creation exercises (from 12 states in 1967 to 36 states by 1996) reflect the centrality of territorial restructuring as both political instrument and developmental intervention (Suberu, 2001). While these reforms were designed to deepen decentralisation and promote development at the grassroots, they have also reinforced new cycles of agitation as previuosly marginalised groups continue to seek further recognition.

However, critical perspectives caution against over-reliance on state creation as a governance solution. Osaghae (1998) argues that while it may temporarily address political grievances, it can alos intensify ethno-regional fragmentation and administrative duplication without necessarily resolving underlying structural inequalities. Similarly, Egwu (2007) warns that unchecked proliferation of states may foster fiscal strain and encourages politics of entitlement, thereby undermining efficiency and sustainability of the federal system.

The Oke-Ogun agitation provides an empirical illustration of these theoretical and policy debates. The region's persistent demand for state creation is rooted in perceived political exclusion and limited access to strategic governance posititons within the state. These grievances align with Horowitz's (1985) theory of ethnic conflict, which posits that perceived structural disadvantage and relative deprivation can generate collective mobilisation for institutional change. In the case of Oke-Ogun, such perceptions have translated into sustained advocacy for state creation as a mechanism for achieving political inclusion and regional empowerment.

At this juncture, leadership and governance dynanics play a critical role in shaping both intensity and direction of restructuring demnads. Responsive and inclusive leadership has the capacity to mange diversity and mitigate grievances. Thus, the Oke-Ogun agitation reflects structural nequaities in Nigeria's ferealism and quality of political leadership cum responsiveness of governance institutions.

From the foregoing, political restructuring and state creation remain vital instruments for managing diversity and enhancing federal responsiveness in heterogenous societies. In Nigeria, and particuarly in Oke-Ogun region, these processes are viewed as legitimate pathways for addressing historical marginalisation and promoting inclusive govenance. Nonetheless, their effectiveness depends on the quality of leadership and commitment to equitable development within the federal system.

Theoretical framework

This study adopts Conflict transformation theory as its analytical framework to explain how regional agitations for state creation can evolve from expressions of political dissatisfaction into constructive processes of institutional reform and democratic engagement. While previuos studies on state creation in Nigeria have largely focused on issues of ethnicity, resource allocation, and minority rights, this paper applies the theory differently by emphasising the transformative role of leadership and governance in mediating regional demands within Nigeria's federal structure. Rather than treating the Oke-Ogun agitation

merely as a struggle for political autonomy, the study conceptualises it as a response to long-standing governance deficits and structural inequalities.

Conflict transformation theory differs from conventional conflict management approaches because it prioritises enduring structural change instead of temporary control of disputes. Existing studies on regional agitations in Nigeria often interpret state creation demands through the lenses of ethnic competition, political bargaining or distributive politics. In contrast, this paper shifts attention toward the deeper governance conditions (unequal political representation, limited infrastructural development and perceived exclusion from strategic leadership positons) that sustain agitation. By doing so, the study extends the application of the theory beyond conflict resolution to the broader question of insttutional responsiveness.

Another distinctive contribution of this paper lies in its emphasis on transformative leadership as an important mechanism for converting grievances into peaceful constitutional engagement. Previous related works have mainly examined legal and political dimensions of state creation without sufficiently analysing how leadership practices shape mobilisation, negotiation and policy advocacy. This study therefore demonstrates how political leaders, traditional rulers, civil society actors and community stakeholders in Oke-Ogun utilise dialogue, advocacy campaigns and participation in restructuring debates to pursue their demands through non-violent means.. in this sense, leadership is treated asa transformative process capable of rebuilding trust and promoting democratic inclusion.

Furthermore, the paper applies Conflict transformation theory to examine the relationship between state creation and incusive governance within Nigeria's federal sytem. Unlike earlier studies that often present state creation as an end in itself, this research interprets it as a potential mechanism for restructuring governance institutions and promoting equitable development. This theory therefore provides analytical basis for understanding how responsive leadership, participatory governance and consitutiona reforms can transform regional agitations into opportunities for democratic consolidation and balanced development in Nigeria.

Leadership and Governance in Oke-Ogun

The evolution of state creation in Nigeria demonstrates complex interaction between leadership, governance and federal restructuring in managing ehnic diversity, regional tensions and national integration. Political leaders have repeatedly initiated restructuring exercises through the establishment of new states to promote political inclusion and administrative efficiency within the federation. Although these reforms have largely operated within a centralised fiscal structure. Beginning with the creation of 12 states under the administration of General Yakubu Gowon in 1967, Nigeria has experienced successive phases of state creation aimed at reducing fears of domination and strengthening national unity.

Despite these efforts, the reforms have produced new grievances, as emerging political units often generate further perceptions of marginalisation and exclusion. Consequently, the expansion of the federation from 12 to 36 states has not ended demands for additional states but has intead entrenched state creation as a persistent feature of Nigeria's political landscape. Contemporary agitations, including

the demand for Oke-Ogun state in Oyo state, therefore reflect briader concerns about equitable development and political representation in Nigeria.

Table 1: State Creation Exercises in Nigeria

Year	Head of State	No. of States Created	States	Total States
1967	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	12	North-Western, North-Eastern, Kano, North-Central, Benue-Plateau, Kwara, Western, Lagos, Mid-Western, East-Central, Rivers, South-Eastern	12
1976	Gen. Murtala Muhammed	7	Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Imo, Niger, Ogun, Ondo (and FCT)	19
1987	Gen. Ibrahim Babangida	2	Akwa Ibom, Katsina	21
1991	Gen. Ibrahim Babangida	9	Abia, Delta, Edo, Jigawa, Kebbi, Kogi, Osun, Taraba, Yobe	30
1996	Gen. Sani Abacha	6	Bayelsa, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Gombe, Nassarawa, Zamfara	36

Compiled from national dailies

From Table 1, Nigeria's successive political restructuring under military regimes reveals that state creation extend beyond mere addition of new states to include significant administrative and territorial adjustments. In many cases, existing states were renamed, split or had their boundaries redefined to accommodate emerging ethno-regional identities and shifting governance priorities. This pattern highlighs the influence of dynamic leadership in configuring Nigeria's federal structure where state creation functioned as a deliberate instrument for managing diveristy and addressing identity-based claims. However, it also exposes fluid nature of territorial governance as such restructuring exercise often generated new identity formations and further demands for additional administrative recognition in the country.

Table 2: Nigerian States by Geopolitical Zones

Geopolitical Zone	**States**
North-West	Zamfara, Jigawa, Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Kaduna
North-East	Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe, Borno, Taraba, Adamawa
North-Central	Niger, Plateau, Benue, Kwara, Kogi, Nasarawa
South-West	Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun
South-East	Imo, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu
South-South	Edo, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa, Cross River

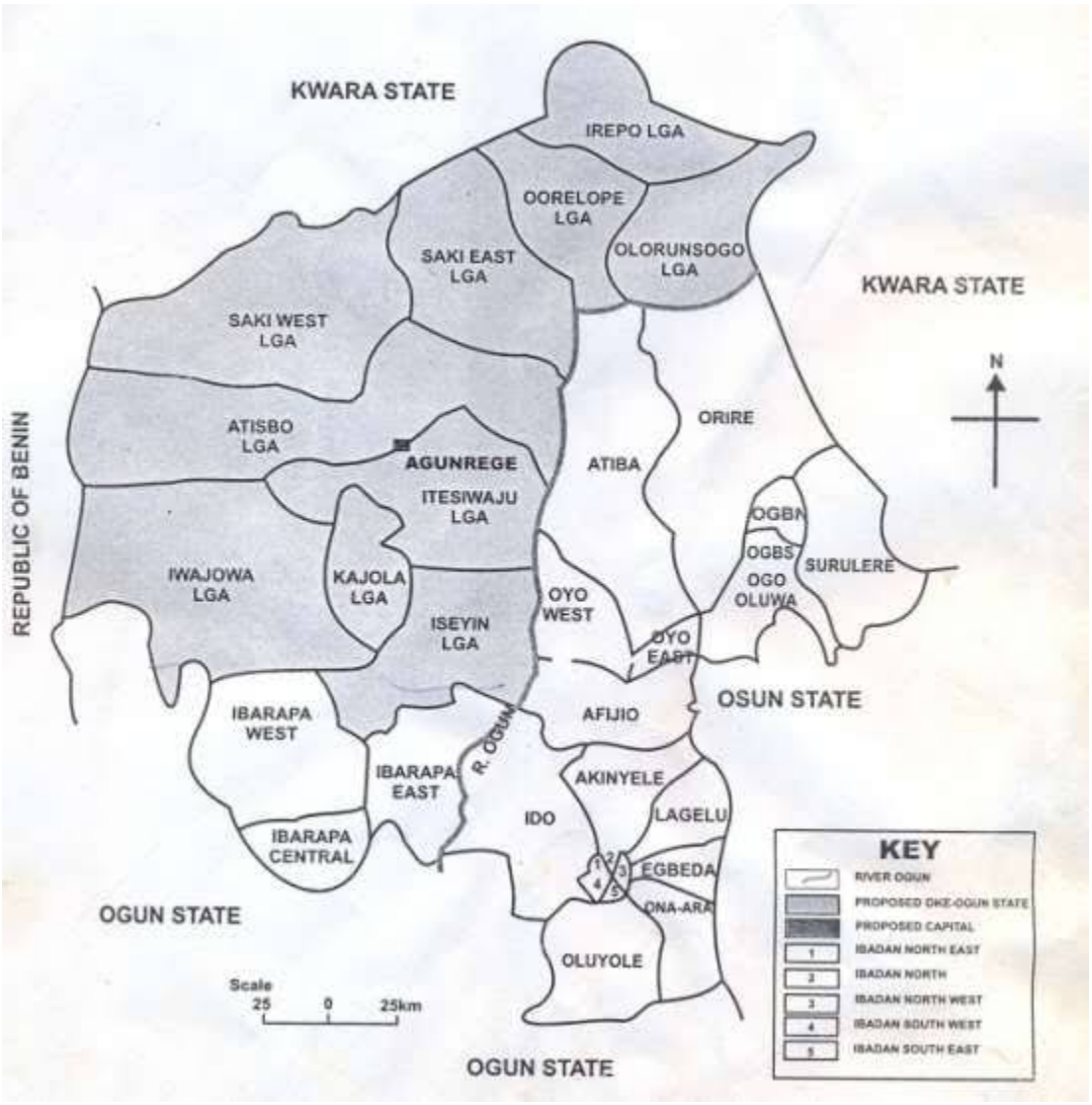
Compiled from national dailies

Table 2 presents the distribution of state creation demends across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, revealing the persistent nature of agitations for additional states among groups seeking enhaced political inclusion and formal administrative recognition within the federal sysytem. These recurring demands underscore enduring concerns over uneven resource allocation and perceived marginalisation.

Hence, the Oke-Ogun axis stands out as a significant centre of sustained advocacy for the creation of Oke-Ogun state. This agitation is rooted in perceptions of structural inequality and weak representation in key political decision-making structures within Oyo state. The grievances are intensified by claims of centralised governance and resource distribution patterns perceived as disproportionately unfavourable to rural areas. As a result, the demand for Oke-Ogun state has evolved beyond a terrtorial claim into a braoder discourse on justice and equity.

From the standpoint of leadership and governance, the Oke-Ogun agitation ilustrates how sub-national actors respond to apparent governance deficies through organised mobilisation and institutional engagement. Political elites, civil society groups, youth movements and traditional institutions in the region consistently adopt peaceful strategies to achieve their goals.

Figure 1: Map showing proposed Oke-Ogun state



Source: Owolabi, J. A. (2017): Geo-historical backgrounds and religious traditions of Oke-Ogun people. *Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society, 9 (1),* 1-29

These governance reforms in the Oke-Ogun area indicate leadership and governance, where regional actors actively engage institutional and political processes to advance developmental aspirations. Such efforts have typically involved advocating for constitutional amendments, coordinating political mobilisation among party stakeholders and local leaders within the zone. Besides, collaboration between political actors, scholars and policy experts shapes regional agenda which translate grassroots agitation into structured policy proposals initiatives.

Methodology

This study adopts qualitative methodology to examine leadership and governance in the

agitation for the creation of Oke-Ogun state from present Oyo state. The qualitative approach enables in-depth understanding of historical grievances and governance structures shaping regional demands in Nigeria. Data were generated through in-depth interviews, documentary analysis and participant observation allowing triangulation and enhancing credibility of findings on political restructuring and regional advocacy.

A case study design was employed with Oyo state serving as a microcosm of broader governance challenges and restructuring demands in Nigeria. This design facilitates contextual analysis of how leadership practices and governance responses influence persistent demands for state creation, and enables examination of roles of stakeholders in addressing structural inequalities and regional discontent.

The Oke-Ogun zone comprises ten local government area namely, Atisbo, Iseyin, Irepo, Iwajowa, Itesiwaju, Kajola, Oorelope, Olorunsogo, Saki-West and Saki-East. Despite its size and significance, the region expresses concerns regarding marginalisation and limited participation in governance, sustaining advocacy for creation of Oke-Ogun to enhance representation.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants across the ten local government areas selected for involvement advocacy, political participation and leadership. Data analysis employed Atlas.ti 24 for systematic coding, thematic interpretation and rigorous evaluation of governance dynamics.

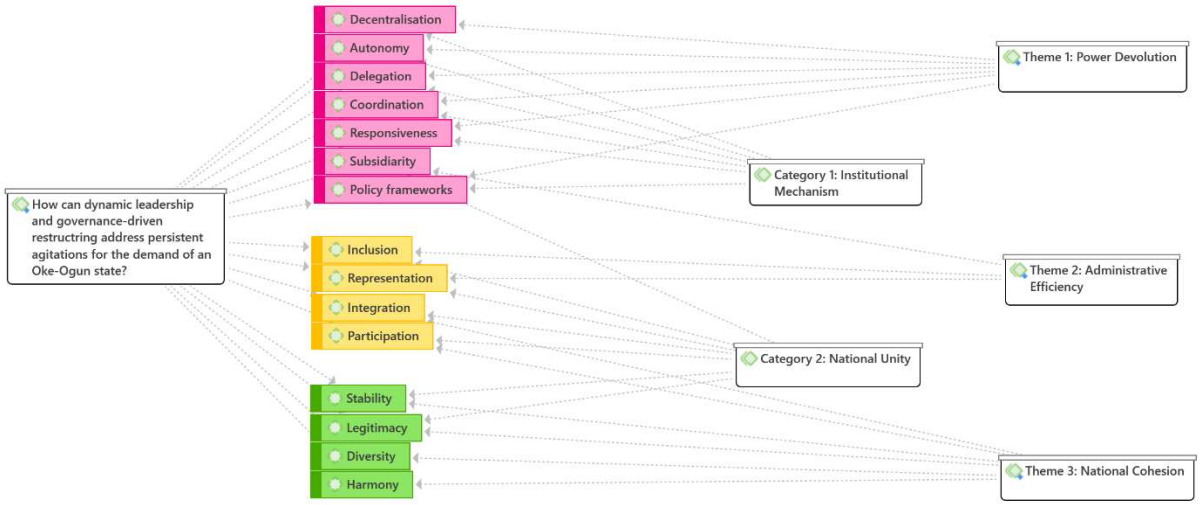
Table 3: Background of Key Informants

S/N	Participant's ID	Designation	Age
1	KI #1	Atisbo	64years
2	KI #2	Irepo	59 years
3	KI #3	Iseyin	68 years
4	KI #4	Itesiwaju	65 years
5	KI #5	Iwajowa	69 years
6	KI #6	Kajola	67 years
7	KI #7	Olorunsogo	71 years
8	KI #8	Oorelope	63 years
9	KI #9	Saki-East	61 years
10	KI #10	Saki-West	58 years
11	KI #11	Political Scientist, Irepo	69 years
12	KI #12	Legal Practitioner, Iseyin	68 years
13	KI #13	Member, National Assembly, Atisbo	66 years

Discussion of Findings

This section presents thematic analysis drawn from responses of the key informants that participated in this study. Figure 2 analysed data in response to RQ1 which states: How can leadership and governance-driven restructuring address persistent agitations for the demand for an Oke-Ogun state?

Figure 2: Data Analysis of RQ1



Theme 1: Power Devolution

The demand for the creation of Oke-Ogun state is linked to the principle of power devolution in Nigeria's federal arrangement. Federalism distributes political authorities, fiscal responsibilities and administrative functions across different levels of government to promote accountability and efficiency (Yimenu, 2024). In Nigeria, this structure is defined through the Exclusive, Concurrent and Residual legislative lists in the 1999 Constitution (FRN, 1999). As one key informant observed: *The creation of Oke-Ogun state is essential for promoting decentralization and strengthening intergovernmental relations. By stimulating healthy competition and minimizing the influence of patronage politics, statehood would create opportunities for more transparent, accountable and responsive governance. Within a smaller political unit, underperformance can be more easily identified, enabling prompt corrective action [KI #9].*

This perspective reflects the notion that smaller administrative units can foster more dynamic, performance-driven leadership, where governance outcomes are more visible and leadership responsive more measurable.

However, Jinadu (2002) was of the opinion that Nigeria's repeated state creation exercise have often produced administrative proliferation without corresponding improvements in effective power distribution. He argues that strengthening existing states may provide a more sustainable pathway to federal stability than continual fragmentation. This critique underscores the tension between structural devolution and institutional quality.

Theme 2: Administrative efficiency

The agitation for the creation of Oke-Ogun is largely influenced by the idea that administrative efficiency and responsive governance are better achieved through decentralised institutional structures. Advocates argue that a new state would bring government closer to the people and strengthen service deliverythereby sustaining long-standing agitation for excision from present Oyo state. It is important that perception of existing arrangement imposed bureaucratic

constraints on residents. Many citizens travel long distances to Ibadan to access essential services and engage in policy-related processes incurring financial cost, time wastage and security risks such as robbery and kidnapping. Thus, people of the zone argue that excessive centralisation undermines governance efficiency and human security in Oke-Ogun region. A key informant captured the situation thus:*Despite comprising ten local government areas, administrative inefficiency characterizes state-local relations as the region had to wait on directives from the state capital before tangible policy programme is executed. The strategic siting of the proposed state capital at Agunrege in Atisbo Local Government Area, would enhance accessibility and administrative efficiency across the region [KI #4]*.

Advocates of Oke-Ogun state argue that administrative restructuring would strengthen coordination among local governments. They also contend that reducing dependence on Ibadan for administrative processes would minimize delays and enable civil servants and political administrators to focus more effectively on governance responsibilities. Not only that, they maintained that a locally based administrative structure would improve fiscal discipline and reduce delays in revenue allocation, thereby enabling local governments to address infrastructure deficits more efficiently. These concerns align with Majekodunmi's (2012) argument that administrative and fiscal constraints weaken sub-national governance in Nigeria. Through town hall meetings and stakeholder consultations, prominent Oke-Ogun indigenes have mobilised support for state creation through legislative channels. Bills proposing Oke-Ogun state have been presented at the National Assembly.

Theme 3: National Cohesion

The patterns of state creation in Nigeria indicate political restructuring has often been shaped by ethnic balancing and patronage considerations. Several exercises in state creation have reflected political bargaining and elite consolidation of power among dominant actors. In many northern states, restructuring reinforced aristocratic influence and entrenched political godfatherism, while numerous sub-political units remained heavily dependent on federal allocations, with limited internally generated revenue. This reality underlines a persistenttension between state creation as a mechanism for governance reform and its utilisation as an instrument of elite accumulation.

Hence, the demand for Oke-Ogun reveals a complex interaction of leadership aspirations. Advocates maintain that previous constitutional restructuring exercises particularly the 1991 and 1996 state creation processes failed to accommodate the aspirations of the Oke-Ogun region despite sustained advocacy. According to KI #9, the establishment of a separate state would enhance policy continuity and stimulate indigenous participation in governance. Similarly, KI #5 argues that state creation in Nigeria has historically favoured politically connected regions, thereby marginalising areas such as Oke-Ogun with limited access to elite bargaining structures.

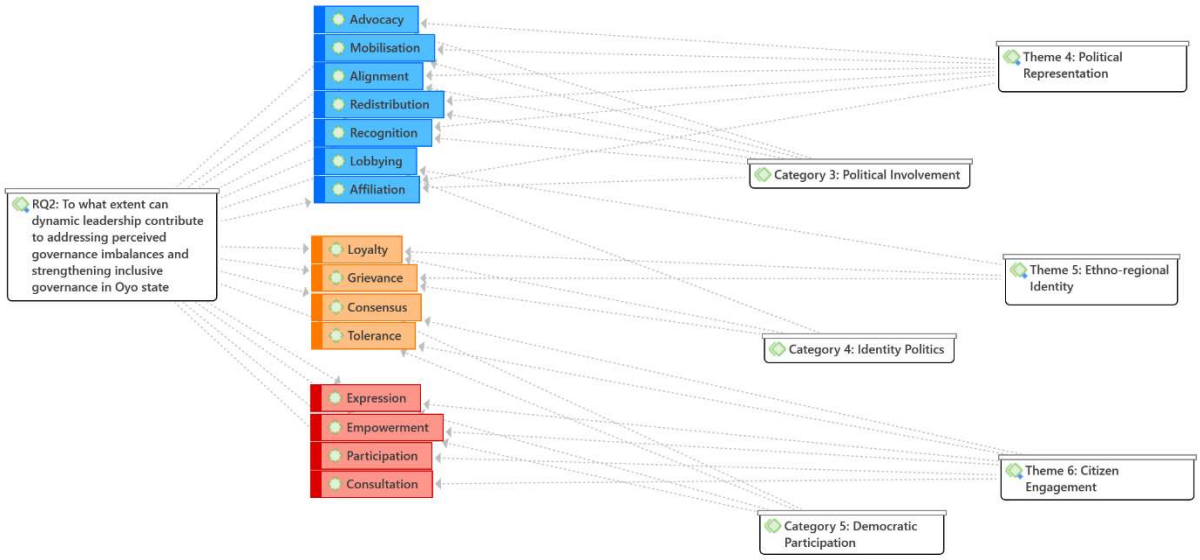
Following the creation of Osun state in 1991 from the old Oyo state, expectations emerged that Oke-Ogun would experience improved governmental attention and accelerated development. However, the region continues to face relative political marginalisation within Oyo state. It remains underrepresented in key decision-making institutions and has never produced a state governor, a condition perceived

to weaken its influence over resource allocation and policy direction. Furthermore, absence of strong executive-legislative political representation has constrained the translation of local demands into effective governance outcomes.

Although critics argue that state creation fragments Nigeria's federal system, military regies justified restructuring as promoting cohesion and managing ethno-regional tensions after the civil war. KI #1 highlights criteria of viability and balance. However, Alapiki (2005) argues grievances persist as the federation is viewed as being distributive rather than developmental.

Figure 3 analysed data in response to RQ2 which states: To what extent can leadership contribute to addressing perceived governance imbalances and strengthening inclusive governance in Oyo state?

Figure 3: Data Analysis of RQ2



Theme 4: Political representation

The agitation for the creation of Oke-Ogun state is premised on legitimate representation and decentralised governance. It demonstrates a leadership process involving community elites and civil society actors mobilising around a shared developmental vision. The movement is framed as governance reform addressing structural imbalances in resource allocation and administrative attention. Advocates emphasize that a separate state would enhance participation and policy responsiveness. KI #7 notes that recent hearings in Lagos and Abuja renewed advocacy among traditional rulers and stakeholders. The missed 1991 and 1996 state creation opportunities constrained infrastructure and investment inflows. Statehood would grant autonomy to local leadership and alignment with local needs. This supports Damarest's (2023) view that state creation as enhancing governance and participation. The demands therefore represent a broader governance discourse seeking equity and inclusive development within

Nigeria. It aims to strengthen democratic accountability and regional transformation.

Theme 5: Ethno-regional identity

The incessant calls for Oke-Ogun state is attributable to ethnic composition and governance stability. From leadership perspective, the demand centres on preventing ethno-regional pressures. For instance, Nigerian experiences, particularly in north-central and south-south regions, show disputes over state capitals, local government headquarters and infrastructural allocations escalate into prolonged conflicts. The Ijaw-Itshekiri crisis in Delta state illustrates how competition over identity and state resources can destabilise governance structures. Informant KI #13 notes that state creation remains a legacy of military administration as no new state was established since 1999 despite constitutional conferences on federal imbalance and autonomy. As a consequence, demands like Oke-Ogun points to deeper struggles for political voice and meaningful participation in governance beyond administrative expansion.

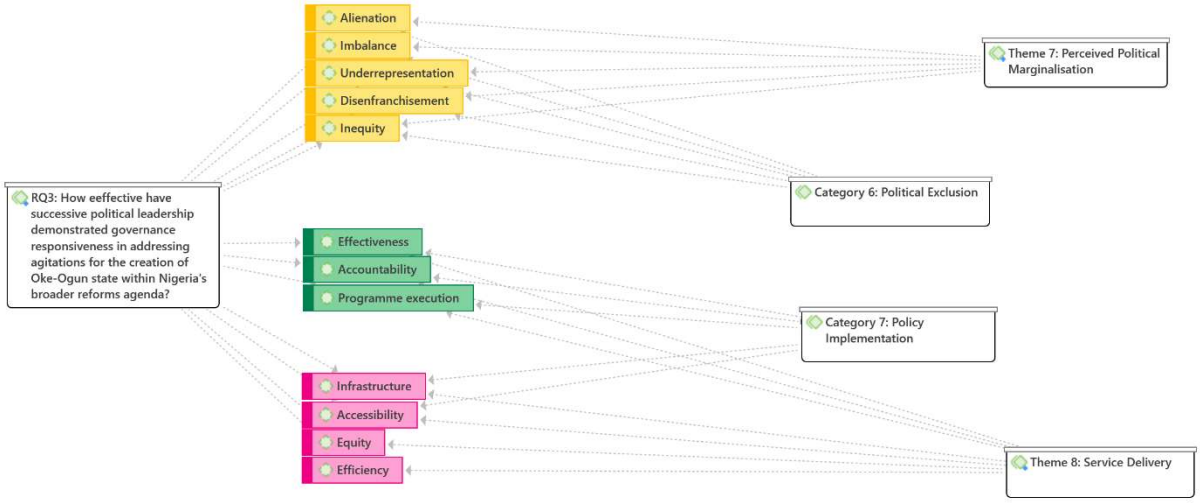
Nevertheless, such agitations are seen as avenues for ethnic competition where elites seek control of state structures for patronage. Isumonah (2009) and Brigevichand Emmah (2024) argue that state creation intensifies identity politics over resource allocation. Utin (2024) highlights enduring influence of colonial divide-and-rule legacies on contemporary restructuring debates. Thus, Oke-Ogun statehood movement should be framed as a governance and leadership project based on equity.

Theme 6: Citizen engagement

The desire for Oke Ogun state is situated within broader discourse on leadership and governance, responding to apparent neglect in Oyo state. Promoters of regional restructuring argue that state creation would deepen democratic participation, strengthen civic engagement and enhance grassroots involvement in governance by bringing political institutions closer to the people. Stakeholders from the region have demonstrated sustained leadership through participation in national conferences and submission of memoranda advocating restructuring. According to KI #3, the demand is reinforced by perceived inequities in Nigeria's federal system, where smaller states with fewer local government areas have attained statehood. The informant further argues that Oke-Ogun possesses significant agricultural and economic potential capable of sustaining autonomous development.

Figure4 analysed data in response to RQ3 which states: How effective have successive political leadership demonstrated governance responsiveness in addressing demands for the creation of Oke-Ogun state within Nigeria's restructuring agenda?

Figure 4: Data Analysis of RQ3



Theme 7: Perceived political marginalisation

The quest for the creation of Oke-Ogun state is rooted in persistent concerns over leadership deficits and governance challenges within Oyo state. Hitherto, the Oke-Ogun region has experienced limited political influence and inadequate access to developmental governance structures. Even when political actors from the zone occupy offices such as deputy governor, their influence is constrained by centralised executiveauthority, limiting meaningful participation in governance. These conditions have intensified demands for state creation as a mechanism for participatory governance.

As stated by KI #1, the agitation shows grievances over economic neglect and political exclusion. While Ibadan and surrounding areas attract major infrastructural and educational investments, Oke-Ogun remains underdeveloped despite its untapped mineral deposits. This perception is reinforced by delays in projects including roads, bridges and health facilities. KI #2 links this condition to governance inefficiency and weak accountability, while KI #6 opines that restructuring has failed to address developmental concerns. Such experiences support Nsoedo's (2019) argument that exclusion perception strengthen demands for state creation as developmental redress.

Theme 8: Service Delivery

Successive administrations in Nigeria have often justified state creation on constitutional grounds, especially as instruments for resource control and economic empowerment. However, these justifications have frequently produced short-term political adjustments without resolving deeper concerns of fairness and balanced sub-national development. Within the context of Oke-Ogun agitation, emphasis has therefore shifted from administrative restructuring to the pursuit of leadership capable of delivering effective governance.

A key informant noted that statehood for Oke-Ogun would offer an enduring channel to improved service delivery and socio-economic empowerment, creating conditions for attracting skilled and unskilled labour expanding employment opportunities. It would also strengthen policy implementation and reposition the region as a viable contributor to national development [KI #8]. This view is consistent

with Suberu (2005) which emphasizes that effective subnational governance depends on clear responsibilities and improved fiscal coordination. Thus, Oke-Ogun agitation underlines that state creation is meaningful only when grounded in merit-based criteria and supported by leadership structures that prioritize equitable governance over political considerations.

Conclusion

The Nigerian experience with political restructuring reveals both prospects and limitations of state creation in managing diversity and strengthening federal governance. The Oke-Ogun agitation indicates enduring perceptions of exclusion, marginalisation and uneven development that continue to drive demands for sub-national autonomy despite earlier restructuring efforts. This underscores the need for leadership capable of translating grievances into constructive governance reforms. While the agitation expresses legitimate aspirations for political inclusion and equitable development, it also exposes weaknesses in Nigeria's framework for addressing regional discontent. Effective leadership must promote inclusive reforms and national unity in Nigeria.

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