

Sustainable Democracy and Political Domination: A Rotational Presidency among Nigerian Ethnic Groups

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Abstract

This work discusses rotational presidency and its challenges to sustainable democracy in Nigeria. It focuses on its workability in a highly ethnically pluralised and heterogeneous society like Nigeria that is characterised by competition for national resources either in terms of technocratic or political offices. It contends that the cliché is born out of elite struggle for share of national cake via capturing power at the centre where primitive accumulation takes place. Rotational presidency hence lacks democratic correlates. It argues that Nigeria Federal system allows for too much concentration of power and resources at the centre thereby making political competition intense at that level. Methodologically, the paper is based on review of published work, unpublished literature, comments of national commentators as well as observation as students of Nigeria government and politics. The work concludes with a strong recommendation that Nigerians need to jettison a federal arrangement that concentrate power and resources at the centre – the system that allows for hot contestation of presidency among various national ethnic elites to a more workable federal system that would decongest the centre for power tussle and or a different approach based on a different philosophy that will guarantee groups' rights by recognising the heterogeneity of the country's polity.

Keywords: Governance, democracy, power, ethnic diversity, rotational presidency, political domination.

Introduction

The term rotational presidency has become a very important political concept and cliché which has crept into Nigeria's political lexicon. This is particularly apparent in Nigeria's fourth republic because Nigeria is a deeply divided society with several lines of social divisions on the bases of group identification (Sentences too long). These lines of division, as noted by Orji (2008:10), in his work "*Power Sharing the Element of Continuity in Nigerian Politics*", reflects on the number of ethnic and regional groups that make up the country. It was commonly assumed that Nigeria is segmented into about 250 ethnic groups until when a Nigerian social anthropologist revealed that there are 374 ethnic groups in Nigeria (Orji, 2008; Ojo, 2002; Oladesu, 2002). The three largest ethnic groups (Yoruba, Hausa and Ibo) constitute more than half of Nigeria's entire population, Nnoli, (in Orji, 2008:10). This population disparity coupled with the differences in the political influence of the ethnic groups broadly divides the groups into two - the majority and minority ethnic groups. The majority ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani (28% of the

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population), the Yoruba (18% of the population) and Igbo (16% of the population). All the other ethnic groups fit in to the minority category, with varying degrees of political status, depending on their numerical size and political influence (Orji, 2008; Danjibo, 2009).

The snag is that if not all the ethnic groups, at least, the three major ethnic groups have raised suspicion among themselves of socio-economic and political domination. Each ethnic group clamours to have a share of national cake, since political power determines the direction of economy of the state.

As argued, Haruna (2013), advances the most popular reason(s) given for the demand of rotational zones in Nigeria, that “since Nigeria attained independence, the Northern region has produced nine out of the fourteen Heads of State be it military or civilian while, the southern part has produced only five”. This has been perceived as the perpetual domination of the Southern region by the North. Another critical factor that lay credence to this assertion was the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election which was alleged to have been won by late MKO Abiola, a Southerner Yoruba Muslim under the ticket of the defunct Social Democratic Party (SDP) by a northerner, military president, General Ibrahim Babangida. This confirms the fears of Southerners especially the South Western Nigerians that the Northern leaders do not want to relinquish or share political power with other parts of the country (Haruna, 2013). Indeed, there were observations and allegations that Northern leaders behave as if they were ordained or born to rule other Nigerians. This hegemonic trait is rationalised on various grounds by some northern personalities. To buttress the foregoing points, Sani Kontogora, speaking on behalf of the north was of the view that:

The South is not content with monopolising the economic Power and dominance of the federal civil service but has been thirsting for the choicest slice of the nation’s politics – the presidency (cited in Ojo: 2002:23).

Kontogora further said, “Nigeria’s presidency, Not for the South” He laid claim to North’s numerical strength, arguing that democracy is a game of number. If the Southerners want to take the presidency, they can come and kill the people in the North so as to reduce their population” (Ojo, 2002: 23-24)

Also justifying northern hegemony as a deliberate ploy, Alhaji Maitama Sule, a northern politician and member of the core elite puts it clear when he said:

...Everyone has a gift from God. The Northerners are endowed by God with leadership qualities. The Yoruba man knows how to earn a living and has diplomatic qualities. The Igbo is gifted in commerce, trade and technological innovation. God so created us individually for a purpose and with different gifts (cited in Ojo, 2002:24).

The above are some of the reasons which brought to the fore front the issues of rotational power sharing as a formula which would resolve the crises of power sharing in the Nigeria Federation. Thus, the late Head of State, General Abacha adopted the principle of rotational power sharing and created six zones for its implementation. It is against the backdrop of these issues raised, that this paper sets to discuss the challenge of rotational presidency on sustainable democracy in Nigeria. With the above review of the problem of poly-ethnic state politics of Nigeria, the remaining part of the paper is organised into four dimensions. The first is the conceptual clarification of key terms. The second is the theoretical framework which is discussion of elite’s manipulation in a democratic setting using sentiments to advance their interests. The third segment

accounts for the arguments for rotational presidency. Views on national commentators and observers of Nigerian government and politics are acknowledged and critically discussed. The fourth major section appraises the challenge of rotational presidency on sustainable democracy in Nigeria. It is argued that rotational presidency is undemocratic, since it lacks democratic substantive structural arrangement. The work infers that Nigeria needs a true federal arrangement rather than “the present warped union where there is too much power and resources concentrated in the centre” (Osuntokun in Ojo 2002:4), which has made the centre a theatre of war among different ethnic elites.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Identification of the challenges of rotational presidency in Nigeria.

- i. To analyse the reasons for rotational presidency in Nigeria vis-a-vis its implication on sustainable democracy.
- ii. To critically examine the nexus between rotational presidency and sustainable democracy.

Research Methodology

The study uses qualitative method in examining the challenges of sustainable democracy in Nigeria. It is purely qualitative in approach as it depends highly on secondary materials such as journals, books and newspapers. With this use of comparative mode of analysis, the study borrows from scientific inquiry in order to have a validated generalization of the state of the art in Nigerian presidential seat and the implications for development of the country at large.

Literature Review

In this study, the concept of ‘zoning’ and ‘rotational presidency’ is used interchangeably. Akinola (1996), views zoning as an attempt that seeks to formalise a pattern whereby the geo-ethnic origin of the national leader alternates from one election to the other. It is an attempt to address the important question of unity and stability through consociation practices. Rotational power sharing in the Nigeria context refers to the sharing of key political offices as identified by the constitutional conference which includes the office of the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Senate leader and Speaker of House of Representatives by the six zones created. They are North- East, North West, Central Nigeria, South West, South East and Southern minority on a rotational basis. This is intended to ensure that all the zones have the opportunity to participate in government at all capacity (ies) (Haruna 2013:68). The other concept is sustainable democracy, which can be understood from the perspective of democracy and its tenants. Austin Ranney gave the most acceptable definition when he viewed democracy as a form of government organised in accordance with the principles of popular sovereignty, popular consultation, political and economic equality and majority rule). Some of its features include majority rule, guarantee of fundamental human rights, equality of opportunity and operation of rule of law and constitutionalism. Nigeria today is a democratic state, perhaps with fore mentioned features of democracy. The challenge is the sustainability of this democratic ethos amidst calls for rotational presidency. It is to be noted that the clamour for zoning in democratic Nigeria, with various ethnic linguistic and cultural diversities negates the fundamental principles of democracy and its sustenance. Hence, the

integration will hardly be achievable. Continuous calling for zoning depicts the extent of ethnic consciousness which is a negation to integration.

Theoretical Framework

This section discusses the rotational presidency and its implication on sustainable democracy in Nigeria, using the elite theory of democracy. The crux of the theory is that all societies are divided into two - the privileged few who govern and the masses who are governed. The elites have the political power which the masses have no direct access to. The elites are educated, engineer policy direction of the socio-economic and political affairs of the society. Elite consist of those successful persons who rise to top in every occupation and stratum of society. As such, there is elite of lawyers, elite of mechanics and even elite of thieves. In other words, elite consists of those few persons who are able to control the apathetic, indolent and slavish people who are susceptible to flattering and obsequious (sevilier obedient) in the presence of strength and the power holders of body politics (Agarwal, 2006:438). Hence, the elites are people with distinct characteristics, a position of high status, some degree of corporate group character as well as exclusive awareness of their prominent position as the consequence which they share by right recognition of their general superiority by the society, its influence on the people being that of a model acceptable and recommended worth following.

Basically, the two divisions in the elite's class take a pyramidal form. There are those at the top who exercise power in the different sectors of the society, while some take important decisions on different issues. As such, Heywood, (2002:79) has reinforced that democracy was no more than a foolish delusion, because political power is always exercised by a privileged minority – elite.

The features of the elite theory are as follow: it is a corporate organised minority obeying a single impulse which becomes irresistible against the masses. But the elites may not necessarily be exploiters or oppressors of the masses. On the contrary, they may be concerned with the welfare of the masses. At times membership of the elites is restricted to all, except top corporate financial individuals – the military, civilians and government leaders. Occasionally, ambitious and talented individuals from the masses are admitted or co-opted. They play a fundamental role in the society, monopolize power and enjoy its benefits because of their control over the vital resources like power, wealth, education, prestige, status and skills.

The elite opinion about fundamental norms underlying the social system, the stability and even its survival depends in their consensus. This does not mean the elites members do not disagree or compete with each other. But it takes place within a narrow range and they must agree on matters than disagree. They do not prevent the lower class from rising to the top. Social mobility of the non - elite is accepted as essential for their system. By this strategy, they prevent a revolution change.

Finally, the elite assume that the masses are generally passive, apathetic and ill-informed, thus, mass sentiments are manipulated by them while the masses influence value. The elite use their manipulating skills, including oratory, persuasion and playing upon sentiment of the people in order to perpetuate themselves in power (Gaub, 2003:259). The elite factor is being analysed here because it was among the important instruments in Nigeria political class (elites). The elite factor is used in introducing the idea of rotational presidency in Nigeria. The manifestation of the elite and the manipulation of the masses could best be explained in this context. Manipulation essentially implies controlling the action of a person or a group of person without their knowledge of the goals and purpose and this explains the relevance of this theory to the study.

Reasons for Rotational Presidency

Scholars, commentators and the general public who are observers of Nigerian government and politics have held divergent views on the phenomenon of rotational presidency. Akinola, for example, argues in support of the cliché that Nigeria is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious state with each of the major ethnic groups being territorially exclusive and larger than many countries of the world, attempts to base its democracy on foreign political system that have always failed giving way to military dominance of the political process. This has led to some separatist agitations and civil wars which was fought between 1967 and 1970. His position is that only a rotation of the presidency, faithfully implemented, will douse the tension which has always surrounded the coveted office (Akinola 1996). Some have argued that if power is allowed to systematically rotate between the various zones, the political space will not only widen, the process will definitely throw out some capable leaders who can transform the country and bring it to greater heights. The rotation principle on basis of zones would also strengthen loyalty to the nation because it would guarantee access to the highest offices of the land to all sections of the polity (Okwenna, 2011). Those who support rotational presidency gave one main reason for doing so. They argue that the power struggle in Nigeria will become an issue of the past if power is rotated between the South and the North or among six geo-political zones. Supporters of rotational presidency claim that it offers the only possibility for peaceful existence in Nigeria.

This position held by supporters of zoning presidency suffered great attack. As argued by Odunze (2012), the reason for the repulsive and unwholesome struggle for power in Nigeria is the perceived benefit of being powerful. This is a standard characteristic of underdevelopment countries. When a society suffers the kind of underdevelopment, opportunities exist for citizens to succeed in individual endeavours except in the government. The destiny of citizens becomes directly tied to the role they play in the government. Hence, Nigerians do whatever it takes to obtain powers. The people see government as an avenue for acquiring personal wealth, and this will make the power struggle to persist and rotational presidency will only scratch the surface of the problem.

It has been observed that in developed countries like the United States (US) and Britain, citizens strive independently from the government as much as possible and their potential has comparatively remained the same regardless of who occupies the presidency. Hence, citizens of developed countries make political decision based on principles and ideologies and not based on perceived personal gains (Odunze 2012).

In drawing a comparison between Nigeria and the US, the later is equally heterogeneous. There are difference in ethnic nationalities and races. Yet, cleavages have not taken centre-stage in the US politics. For instance, it has been observed that Obama's aunt Zeituni, whom he (Obama) referred to on his memoir dreams from his father, lives in the same public housing estate in Boston that she occupied prior to Obama's tenure as president of the United States. Aunt Zeituni's life has not changed even when Obama became the president of the US. Just like many black people did, Aunt Zeituni supported Obama in his campaign by donating \$265. She did so in the belief that Obama is good for America - not because she will receive a major part of the national cake if Obama wins the election (Odunze, 2012). It is clear that what drives the power struggle in Nigeria is greed. When El Rufai was made the minister for Federal Capital Territory, he immediately revoked many plots allocated to individuals and re-allocated it to his relatives, and when he was asked to explain his actions on a panel set-up, probing his activities, he rudely replied that if they have the same opportunity they should allocate plots to their enemies. This reveals that the government and politics in Nigeria is all about family and friends affairs. Rotational presidency

only creates ethnic heroes who will take pride in taking the larger part of the national loot back to their regions. Usman and Abba are right when they argued that:

In a democracy nobody can represent his kinsmen, simply because they are his kinsmen, his kinsmen freely associate with or, refuse to associate with him, and associate with a complete stranger, elects him, or refuse to elect him, and elect a complete stranger (in Ramalan, 2010: 221).

Rotational presidency is not fruitful to Nigeria democracy because it will breed mediocrity. It appears that every region has capable hands that can lead Nigeria, but the argument here is based on government appointments – each president will be biased towards specific ethnic groups in giving key appointment. Nigeria politics is characterised by “winner takes-all” approach. In a society with such a mentality, the risk of breeding mediocrity is increased.

Some supporters of rotational presidency have also cited instance of Switzerland. Odunze (2012) argued that there are basic structures that make rotational presidency thrive in Switzerland. These are checks and balances and rule of law which is hardly implemented in Nigeria. Nigeria’s prevalent idea that government offers an opportunity to a mass wealth is not a commonly held in Switzerland. The prevalent political stability as a result of workability of their systems has even made it possible for Nigerians to save their stolen wealth in Switzerland.

Comparatively, in Nigeria rotational presidency or zoning among geo-political zones is a Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) affairs. Even though it is contained in the Nigeria constitution, the challenge is the workable structures and the attitude of Nigerians. On the argument that, rotational presidency would allow for speedy development of regions, rotational presidency is about equity, justice and fairness, that can transform the country and move to greater heights. All these are not tenable. The call for rotational presidency has taken regional dimension, it is the northern elites that are crying for zoning to be respected as agreed upon in PDP. The slogans or clichés of equity, justice, fairness and transformation are not ended in themselves as preached by the apologists of rotational presidency but translating them in to concrete realities. The northern region claims for shift today, held power for 36 years out of 53 years of self rule. The statistics in Table 1 reveals the summary of occupation of the seat of the president / Head of State of Nigeria.

Table 1:
Rotational Occupation of Presidential Seat of Nigeria

| No | Geo-Political Zones | No of Year/Month Occupying the Head-Seat |
|----|---------------------|--|
| 1 | North Central | 18years |
| 2 | North West | 14years |
| 3 | South West | 12 years |
| 4 | North East | 5 years |
| 5 | South-South | 5 years |
| 6 | South East | 6 months |

One may ask, whether for this period of 36 years the North in power has transformed the lives of its people vis-a-vis poverty reduction, employment opportunity and better social services. On the score sheet of this assessment, North region earned *zero*. Instead, it harbours more destitute, beggars, unemployed youths and reservoir of criminals and infrastructural decay. A well thought elderly Hausa man lamented recently in Samaru, Zaria that “*in ka gan bara bahaushene*”. Meaning; whenever you see a beggar is a Hausa man, of course, you do not need complicated methodology before you study this. They have even proliferated down to Southern part of the country because

their home region is already bloated with a number of them including young and old, men and women. A short walk on any Northern town street would reveal this assertion.

Strengthening this further, Letswa (2010) gave the statistical breakdown of poor Nigerian's along the six geo-political zones as in Table 2:

Table 2:
Statistical Breakdown of the Poor

| No | | Percentage |
|----|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | North – East | 72.2 % |
| 2 | South - East | 26.7 % |
| 3 | South - South | 31.5 % |
| 4 | South - West | 43.1 % |
| 5 | North - Central | 67.0 % |
| 6 | North - West | 71.2 % |

Source: Letswa (2010:14)

The fact stands crystal clear that the clamour for rotational presidency is a tragic-flawed and deceit by unpatriotic elites across regions and climes to wood wink the teaming, marginalized and impoverish majority to further make them vulnerable for perpetual political manipulation in other to attain their class interest. If thirty six (36) years of leadership of northern Nigerian for example cannot improve the wellbeing of the poor northerners, then who stands to benefit from rotational presidency? After all, it suggests that all round development would be concentrated wherever the presidency is zone to.

In the recent argument, some newly recruited elites have argued fervently on pages of news papers laying claim to owing the seat of presidency by 2015. Governor Aliyu Babangida who came to limelight on his election in 2007 in Niger State is at fore-front of this argument. Little was known about him before 2007. He is a product of elite social mobility because of his loquaciousness. On the recent tour of Good Governance Team, Niger State was rated low with number 34 position out of 36 States in Nigeria. One could think whether if he has moral justification to argue for zoning presidency to North (see: Daily Trust February 28, 2013). We believe that the Governor is only a spokesman of the elites who stands to benefit from the zoning.

For the period of 36 years of Northern domination of presidency, the Northern region did not turn into a paradise. The benefactors are the few business associates and traditional rulers that romanced with the President. Majority of the northerners are characterized by high level of poverty and degradation; malnutrition, diseases and squalor. Indeed, their living standard is below the national average accepted as an international standard. The same condition could also be said for the southern poor that have no high connection in government or not in the Bourgeois class to enable them benefit from the largesse sharing government. Viewing it from the same perspective, Bishop Mathew Kukah, observed that,

“I don't think if the Igbo get the presidency tomorrow, they will actually change the living conditions of the Igbo beyond the psychological feeling that their ethnic group is in power” (Kukah, 2012:33).

Similarly, a respected constitutionalist, Ben Nwabueze, in arguing the case of rotational presidency, contended that it was for psychological reasons that groups want the *presidency for themselves. It is not because of their roads that need to be repaired, or hospitals that needs to be built. It is about their emotions, sentiments and feelings* (www.Dailytrust.com.ng).

The problem is therefore, not in the ethnic or regional origin of the president, but in the inter-class conflict among the bourgeois for control of state power and the spoils therein. As argued by Haruna (2013), this could be seen in the fact that those calling for rotational power sharing are the elites class that has fallen apart with the government or those that have not been co-opted to share in primitive accumulation. The call is not from the majority of Nigerians - either from the South or North. Marginalised people from the North or South have the same plight. The only time they need marginalised people are during elections to legitimise bourgeois rule. The elite class that is marginalised either by act of commission or omission is busy manipulating ethnic or regional sentiments for their own selfish interest, as there is no guarantee that rotational power sharing could automatically redistribute the wealth of this nation to benefit every Nigeria.

Buttressing the fact that only class of elite who fell jettisoned or not co-opted in sharing of national cake, is the case of Alhaji Ahmad Gulak, a northerner, and special adviser to the president on political matters who denied the existence of any pact and challenged Governor Aliyu Muazu Babangida. One would expect that Governor Aliyu will not be challenged by Gulak since the duos are from the North. Perhaps, it could be extrapolated that Governor Aliyu represented a class of elites who fell sidelined and foresaw their future political interest in Jeopardy. While, Gulak feels his interest and his class must be protected. Bamanga Tukur, the national chairman PDP, equally a northerner avers that “*Jonathan can contest in 2015*” (see Daily Trust 28, 2013:1). This situation reveals that north is not having one house. It seems that the polarised elite’s classes are speaking for their individual pockets. On the whole, no referendum was conducted to seek for Nigerians’ opinion on rotational presidency. In other word it is viewed as an undemocratic and a challenge to sustainable democracy.

Rotational Presidency and the Challenge of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria

It has been argued in the preceding segment that the idea of rotational presidency is not a democratic product, since it is orchestrated by elites without the principles of popular sovereignty and popular consultation which are the hall mark of democracy. For the fact that it lacks this solid foundation of democratic correlates, sustainable democracy can hardly be nurtured.

Dumoye (2010:2), in his work, *Nexus of Democratic Consolidation and Development Imperative in Africa*, noted that sustainable democracy involves the wide spread acceptance of rules to guarantee political participation and political representation. Democracy is a universally recognised ideal on the basis of values common to people everywhere, irrespective of cultural, social, or economic differences. It is political system that permits people to freely choose an effective, honest, transparent and accountable government.

Viewing from the above it can be deduced that the phenomenon of rotational presidency which is an elite affair is capable of backsliding Nigeria democratic journey so far made. The origin of the cliché lacks democratic nexus. The correlates which are the observable and reinforcing phenomenon in democratic sustainability can be comprehend as put by Dunmoye:

Sustaining democracy means nurturing and reinforcing a democratic Culture through popular participation, respect for rule of law, and Constitutionalism, vibrant civil society, consolidation of Democratic institutions like political parties, accessible, free, independent and unbiased mass media, and periodic free and fair election under theaegis of an impartial election management body (Dunmoye, 2010:3).

By contrast, it could be argued that the rotational presidency arrangement is undemocratic as it denies some people equal chance and opportunity at all time. Besides, free choice of voters which is fundamental to any democratic order is being restricted as the presidency would be restricted to a particular zone at a time because of rotation.

Ramalan (2010:273), cited some threats to sustainable democracy. One of such threat is that it encourages ineptitude or mediocrity in terms of deliverance or competence and accountability, which are fundamental elements of democracy. President Jonathan administration is a case in view. His emergence as a president was largely because of South-South agitation that the region has never produced a president since 1960 when Nigeria became independent. And for that reason, the region was seen as cash cow of Nigeria (country's resource base), that the region be allowed to produce the number one citizen to give the region a full sense of belonging as oppose to competency. Jonathan was the vice president when the late Musa Umar Yara'aduwa was the president. Jonathan position of vice president gave him age to ascent to president with the demise of the former. Jonathan was grossly incompetent in the discharge of his constitutional responsibility. He could not enforce compliance., The noble Laurate Professor Wole Soyinka lamented Jonathan was not in charge and that the some five women he refered to as five super stars women were in charge of his administration. He was even accused of not delivering dividend of democracy at home.. Jonathan administration reached a crescendo that elicited critical comments to the extent that the president himself was quoted to have said that he was the most criticised president in the world. In another occasion, when Nigerians diplomatic relations with Morocco failed and the latter withdrew its Ambassador from Nigeria, President Jonathan never knew of that withdrawal. Perhaps, this could be the reason why Soyinka concluded that Jonathan was not in charge. Some Nigerians started staging demonstrations / procession in support and against the presidency of President Jonathan, when he stood for president in 2011. And in 2015, as made clear on one of the Daily Trust editions, by Governor Aliyu Muazu of Niger state - *I stand by my words*. This situation indicates real danger when political touts will be well organised and well funded and of course be well armed for the politicking. The many ignorant and uneducated northerners may be cajoled to believe that he is saying something scientific and rationale. This evil of elites breeds thugs and militancy as the case of boko haram in the North and youth militancy in the South-South, thereby frustrating effort towards sustainable democracy. Beside, the zoning of rotational presidency arrangement encourages racketeering of resources knowing that the control of power is shackled by zoning and rotation, thus they leave this "leaders" with a psychological urge of amassing wealth from the societal coffers before their time of office expires. Another thing related to this is laxity or reluctance to see other people from other area or tribe different from that of the political office holder as integral part of his constituency that must be given services that are essential of life like education, medicare, roads and food among others. Zoning and rotation of presidency harp on need to accommodate differences of religion, tribe, and region. It fan embers of hatred amongst different geo-political areas and exacerbate disunity. It is aggravating our difference. If Nigerians really want to accommodate the differences, they should allow leaders to emerge from anywhere in the country on merit. The call for rotational presidency has only made us to observe a situation where Igbos speak for East, Yorubas speak for West and Hausas and Fulanis speak for North and nobody speaks for Nigeria. The emphasis is regional and sectional consciousness and not national consciousness. Rotational presidency places a ruling party above the law as it is always said in the case of the ruling people's Democratic party because the Nigeria constitution stipulates that a leader can come from anywhere in the country so far as the meets the requirement enshrined in the constitution.

What Nigerians are looking for is democratic, consistent and knowledgeable leadership, whose attitude is sound. Ondunze (2012) supported these facts saying that, in Igbo there is a dictum

that *I could not care less whom my mother's boyfriend is, all I want is what belongs to me*. Even in countries like Lebanon, South Africa, Canada, Belgium and Yugoslavia that have some similarities in one way or the other with Nigeria and have clamoured for rational presidency or zoning are yet to achieve the desired objectives of integration, nation building and sustainable democracy.

In Lebanon for example, sectarian identity outweighs any national identity. Each ethnic group further split in many ways adding to the complex and confessional nature of the Lebanese politics and politicking. Party's activities are organised along sectarian lines (Ramalan 2010:198). And in Yugoslavia, quoting Glenny by saying:

The politics of nationalism and ethnic cleansing broke up the federation, living successor states blighted by economic crises, corruption and dependency on the international community (in Ramalan 2010:201)

The same goes for Belgium, which faces intractable problems emanating from linguistic and electoral prejudices leading to the eminent disintegration of the country. It is argued that socio-economic and political/constitutional crises combined and destroyed the nations in Lebanon, Belgium and Yugoslavia, are also playing pivotal in Nigerian's politics and politicking towards disintegration. In addition, it has been also noted by Egwemi (2012:305):

...that until Nigerians are able to do away with or at least moderate the notion of a North South divide, national integration effort will continue to be futile

Recommendation and Conclusion

Zoning is an informal arrangement devised by Nigerian elites in the course of their informal political exchanges (Orji, 2008). The reason for this, is intense elite struggles for power which is a striking feature of Nigerian politics. State is the only major source of primitive capital accumulation, thereby making its control highly competitive and bittered. Rotational presidency only emphasises the difference among Nigerians. It creates ethnic heroes who will take pride in taking the larger part of the national loot back to their regions. It will not stabilise Nigeria and therefore the often-talked sustainable democracy will be futile. What will stabilise Nigeria is what has always stabilised great nations: responsible and accountable government, a strong infrastructural base and good education for the citizenry. There is no guarantee that rotational presidency could automatically solve the problem of poverty, technological-backwardness, debt burden, mass illiteracy, diseases, injustice, fairness, political participation and many more that confronts all Nigerian ethnic groups. What is needed to propel this country toward sustainable democracy is beyond rotational presidency. It lies on good leadership that will take cognizance of rule of law, accountability, transparency and other elements or utilities of good governance. Rotational presidency adopted by PDP may not bring the peace and political stability that will guarantee sustainable democracy. It is part of a bourgeois solution to sustain them in peace and in a way attempting to deceive the masses.

All the major crises in the country have been occasioned by the conflicts of interest manifest in the quest for capital accumulation. The basic of life of the ruling bourgeois class, whose interest are decisive, has nothing to do with ethnic group (Haruna 2010) “ in Nigeria, post independence politics has actually been the politics of primitive accumulation” Eskor Toyo (in Haruna 2010). Thus, the kind of leadership Nigeria needs is a leadership that show a demonstrable patriotism,

transparency in their behaviour, and accountability in their actions. In other words, Nigerians need leaders who use their powers judiciously for the good of the society at large (Haruna, 2010).

The members of the civil society must live up to its responsibilities. They should not remain dormant, passive, docile and politically unconscious of their rights and not to be subjected to jejune political opinions by the proponent of rotational presidency. If the kind of leadership envisaged for Nigeria is to emerge and in order to create awareness in the members of the civil society, political education should be given highest priority; from primary to tertiary level (rephrase). The National Orientation Agency (NOA) should also be charged to design a workable plan to enlightening the civil society and the public. Political education would help in the selection of future leaders based on merit rather than on primordial considerations. It would reduce marginalization, alienation and apathy of the masses in decision making. Instead it will strengthen their level of participation and involvement in deciding matters that affect their lives.

This will enable them to hold the leadership responsible and accountable for all utterances and actions. Accountability is the institutional mechanism by which the governed makes the government both responsive and responsible. Without accountability, democracy loses its essence, for it is the only means by which those in government are held accountable for their political and economic deeds. Holding the leaders accountable for their deeds will consequently have the desired effect of producing a proposal leadership for the country (Haruna 2010). And without doubt Nigerian democracy would be sustained for all round development. This paper recommends that Nigerians should find a solution in fiscal federalism, and political restructuring. There are too much power and resources concentrated in the centre.

(This paper need to be reviewed again and the author needs to re-work on some points that are totally vague).

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