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Rotational Presidency and Ethnic Sentiments in Nigeria: An Analysis of President Obasanjo and Yar'Adua's Regimes, 1999- 2010

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Abstract:

This article examines whether rotational Presidency has contributed towards reducing ethnic sentiments during the regimes of President Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 to 2007 and President Umoru Musa Yar'Adua from 2007 to 2010. The article notes that ethnic sentiments were not reduced by rotational Presidency. The article also notes that the Nigerian state adopted rotational Presidency all in the bid to ease ethnic tensions, unfortunately, the situation remained the same. The regimes of President Obasanjo and Yar'Adua's between 1999 and 2010 did not help matters. There was an increase in ethnic sentiment during these regimes. The article contends that without putting an end to ethnic sentiments in Nigeria, the country has little chance of achieving good governance.

Keywords: *Rotational Presidency, Ethnicity, Ethnic Sentiment, Ethnic Sentiment in Nigeria, President Obasanjo and President Yar'Adua*

1. Introduction

The issue of equitable power sharing has been very contentious in Nigeria, especially since independence. The country is saddled with the onerous task of finding a solution to an age-long problem which has not only defied all past attempts at a permanent solution but that also has a tendency for evoking high emotions on the part of all concerned each time it is brought forth for discussion or analysis (Ogbobe, 2010). The first issue to be resolved was therefore that of finding a suitable definition of power that would be acceptable to all. This gave birth to the adoption of power sharing so as to solve the problem of Nigeria's peculiar post-independence history of long years of Northern domination, marginalisation and injustice. This was to regulate the relationship among the groups as well as reflect the identifiable divergences within the framework of national unity, it was on this premise that power sharing came since it has been the cause of tensions, conflicts, stress, emotions and political dust in Nigeria. To address the restiveness, rotational presidency was adopted. Haruna (2010) argued that one of the problems or reasons that gave birth to the demand for rotational presidency was that since independence, the northern region has produced more heads of state (military or civilian), while the Southern part has produced an insignificant number of heads of state.

Leadership, Thursday, August 16 (2012) summarized the statistics depicting the lopsidedness of the occupation of the seat of the President of Nigeria from independence in 2010:

North Central	18 years
South West	13 years
North West	12 years
North East	5 years, 6months
South East	6 months
South-South	0

From the above statistics and deductions, three zones: the North Central, the North West and the South West have got a fair share of the occupancy of the seat of Government of Nigeria in about 50 years of Nationhood. The other three: the South East, the South-South and the North East in that order are the most deprived. Of the three, the case of the South East and the South-South are very pathetic. A quick look at Nigeria's history would reveal that minorities and Southerners with the exception of Olusegun Obasanjo's 2nd coming have only ruled Nigeria by accident. General Aguiyi Ironsi from the East became the first to emerge through such a system after the assassination of the then prime minister Tafawa Balewa in the January 1966 coup. General Yakubu Gowon a Northern minority from the middle belt became the 2nd beneficiary after the assassination of General Aguiyi Ironsi in the July 1966 counter-coup. General Olusegun Obasanjo from the West also became a military head of state after the

assassination of General Murtala Muhammed in 1976 and lastly, President Goodluck Jonathan who ascended the throne in 2010 after Yar'adua's death.

Indeed, it is also noteworthy that Olusegun Obasanjo's 2nd coming in 1999 as a civilian president, which is the only exception was nonetheless facilitated by the accident of General Sanni Abacha's sudden death. Nigeria's chequered history thus lends credence to the fact that political power has overwhelmingly concentrated in the Muslim North and only moved to minorities or non-Northerners by accident.

Another critical factor that lay credence to this assertion was the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election won by late M.K.O Abiola. Ogbonda (2010) posited that the crisis of 1993 presidential election and the perceived imbalance in the polity against the background of June 12 1993 presidential election that was annulled was seen as the Northern unwillingness to handover power to a non-Northerner. The nation was shaken by protests as sectionalism which would have been buried by the very election was re-ignited at a higher scale. The protest could not stop throughout the five-year rule of late General Sani Abacha till the periods of President Olusegun Obasanjo and President Yar'adua that were characterized by fear of ethnic domination of the presidency by the different ethnic groups.

Research Objective

The objective of this study is to find out if rotational Presidency has contributed towards reducing ethnic sentiments in Nigeria.

2. Rotational Presidency in Nigeria

The term 'rotational presidency' as a principle of rotation of power is a philosophy of power sharing which is as old as man's existence on earth and is believed to be older than democracy itself. It is on record that the system was practiced in Athens and Sparta in particular by the Greeks. The Roman Empire used it with great profit and many other diverse nations and institutions around the world also practice variants derived from it (Okwenna, 2011). In Switzerland, the presidency rotates among the various ethnic groups and in the European Union; the presidency rotates among the member states. The rotational system is quite remarkable in Switzerland, where the German ethnic group with 65% of the population constituting an absolute majority capable of perpetual political dominance, but yet subscribed to the rotational system in order to accommodate the minority ethnic groups. Switzerland is consequently one of the world's most stable, democratic, harmonious and prosperous nations just as the European Union is one of the most functional and prosperous institutions in the world. Together, Switzerland and the European Union are notable examples in the successful application of the principle of rotation along ethnic and national lines, all designed to suit the peculiarities of their geopolitical realities (Agagu, 2004).

In Nigeria rotational presidency was a brain child of the National Constitutional Conference of 1995 during the truncated regime of erstwhile President, Late General Sani Abacha, under the auspices of the Provisional Ruling Council (PRC). The rotational principle was endorsed to be used at all levels of government. According to Njoku (2005) they agreed that it was to be entrenched in the then Draft Constitution with the splitting of the nation into six geopolitical zones. The National Political Offices to be filled by candidates on a rotational basis with a transitional provision of 30 years. The six geopolitical structures, which was one of the outcomes of the 1994-95 Constitutional Conference was introduced as the final antidote to the issues of domination and marginalisation. This arrangement expressly gave three zones to the majority ethnic groups and another three to the minority ethnic groups. All these sprang up from the effort to address some perceived imbalance in the Nigerian polity against the background of the annulment of June 12th 1993 presidential election result which was highly perceived as a Northern unwillingness to hand-over power to a non-northerner.

Rotational is characterized by rotation. Rotational presidency therefore, connotes that the office of the President in Nigeria ought to rotate evenly among the different geo-political zones of the nation (This day, Sunday, September 10, 2011). In 1999 general election, two South Westerners contested the presidential slot - President Olusegun Obasanjo contested under the auspices of the Peoples Democratic Party and Olu Falae vied for All Nigerian Peoples Party. At the expiration of President Olusegun Obasanjo's four years term, he exercised his power of incumbency and initiated plans to actualize his dream of a second term in office. A controversy erupted whether the presidency was to be thrown open for all and sundry to contest by the Peoples Democratic Party or the presidency be retained by the South for another term of four years. Subsequently, power will then rotate to the North for eight years. The North agitated that power was going to return to them while the Southerners insisted on retaining power for another four years and a meeting of the National Executive Committee of Peoples Democratic Party was held and votes cast and only two votes were in support of the North and power continued in the South with an understanding that after President Olusegun Obasanjo's tenure, power should return to the North for eight unbroken years (This day, Sunday, September 14, 2008). The expiration of President Olusegun Obasanjo's tenure of eight years saw power shifting to the North, North West to be precise with the emergence of Alahaji Umoru Musa Yaradua. The power was however truncated with the demise of Alahaji Umaru Musa Yar 'Adua in 2010.

3. Ethnic Sentiments in Nigeria Politics

Ethnicity consists of cultural characteristics (such as language, history, values, and customs) that are shared by and distinctive of a group of people. Ethnicity contrasts with the concept of race, which concerns shared physical characteristics. For example, many American citizens share certain cultural characteristics, such as celebrating Thanksgiving and valuing democracy, despite varying racial origins. Sociologists study ethnicity as part of a broader study of culture, as well as in relation to inequality. Historically, people have often expressed prejudice toward and discriminated against others on the basis of ethnicity. For example, in many parts of the world Jewish people have faced persecution because of their ethnicity. Some thinkers believe people should maintain their distinct ethnic identities even in culturally diverse societies; others advocate assimilation (Chegg Study, 2014).

For Nnoli (1978:5):

Ethnicity is a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups. Ethnic groups are social formations distinguished by the communal character of their boundaries. The relevant communal factor may be language, culture or both.

Continuing, Nnoli (1978) confirmed that in Africa, language has clearly been the most crucial variable. As social formations, however ethnic groups are not necessarily homogeneous entities even linguistically and culturally. From the definition above by Nnoli (1978), Ayatse and Iorhen, (2013) deduced that ethnicity exists where the communal groups comprise either of: language, culture, race, religion or common history. If we go by Nnoli's position, tribalism which has to do with a tribe is only an element that could constitute ethnicity hence ethnicity in this case is wider in context than tribalism. Ethnicity in the words of Nnoli above shows that it does not yet exist until a demand is made by one group to seek for advantage and benefits for its group relative to what another group is seemingly enjoying (Ayatse and Iorhen, 2013).

The ethnicity of Nigeria is so varied that there is no definition of a Nigerian beyond that of someone who lives within the borders of the country. The boundaries of the formerly English colony were drawn to serve commercial interests, largely without regard for the territorial claims of the indigenous peoples. As a result, about three hundred ethnic groups comprise the population of Nigeria, and the country's unity has been consistently under siege: eight attempts at secession threatened national unity between 1914 and 1977. The Biafran War was the last of the secessionist movements within this period (Rakov, 2014).

The count of three hundred ethnic groups cited above overwhelmingly enumerates ethnic minority groups, those which do not comprise a majority in the region in which they live. These groups usually do not have a political voice, nor do they have access to resources or the technology needed to develop and modernize economically. They therefore often consider themselves discriminated against, neglected, or oppressed. There are only three ethnic groups which have attained "ethnic majority" status in their respective regions: the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Ibo in the southeast, and the Yoruba (Soyinka's group) in the southwest (Rakov, 2014).

These three groups comprise only fifty-seven percent of the population of Nigeria. The remainder of the people are members of the ethnic minority groups, which include such peoples as the Kanuri, the Nupe, and the Tiv in the north, the Efik/Ibibio, the Ijaw, and the Ekoi in the east, and the Edo and Urhobo/Isoko to the west, along with hundreds of other groups that differ widely in language, culture and even physique. The specific groups mentioned above are distinct in that they were found, in the 1953 census, to have over one hundred thousand members. As the population of Nigeria has doubled to over seventy-eight million people in 1982 from approximately thirty-one million in 1953, it is safe to assume that these groups are now much larger (Rakov, 2014). With the above one may agree with Rakov, (2014) when he identified that there will be difficulties of successfully governing such an incredible variety of people. Nigeria is an area the size of the state of Texas in which over three hundred different languages are spoken, and in which the same number of separate cultures desperately try to retain their identity. You can only imagine the ensuing chaos.

4. Origin and Development of Ethnic Politics in Nigeria

Ethnicity could be said to be a strong factor in the political life of Nigeria. Ayatse and Iorhen, (2013) stated that ethnicity was a colonial heritage bequeathed to Nigeria at independence by the colonial masters. In effect, whatever damage ethnicity has generated in the process of governing Nigeria could be traced to colonial arrangement. In line with the above, Nnoli (2011:66) stated that:

... the British colonialist introduced various policies that emasculated the revolutionary potential of the working class and the trade unions some of these policies were part of the overall colonial strategy and tactical of subjugating the colonized people as a whole. Others were design specifically to counteract working class consciousness. In the specific case of the working class in Nigeria, the imperialists used ethnicity to destroy working class collective action...

It was the colonial masters who gradually gather these ethnic entities in provinces, protectorates, regions and finally brought these different ethnics together into one geopolitical entity to be governed by one person using a common treasury. By 1951, Nigeria was already clearly structured into three major regions: the Northern Region (Hausa/Fulani); the Western Region (Yoruba) and the Eastern Region (Igbo). These major ethnic regional entities became the basis for many political administrative and economic policies in Nigeria. These groups became conscious of their groups and insisted on wooing favors from the central government to the regions which they belongs to (Ayatse and Iorhen, 2013).

Nnoli, (1978) stated that by 1953, the major political parties in the country, the National Council for Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC), Action Group (AG) and Northern Progressive Congress (NPC), had become associated with the three major ethnic groups, Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa, and the three regions the country, East, West and North respectively. Furthermore, the effect of ethnic politics on party formation was experienced in the Second Republic. Out of the five political parties that contested elections in 1979, three of them were highly northern in orientation and outlook. These parties were National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP), besides all the leaders of these three political parties Shehu Shagari-NPN, Aminu Kanu-PRP and Waziri Ibrahim-GNPP were of the Hausa/Fulani ethnic group. Closely related, Dr. Azikiwe headed the Eastern Regional party in the Second Republic (Nigeria Peoples Party-NPP). The same thing applied to the Western Region, its major political party in the Second Republic was the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) headed by the Western Region Chieftain Obafemi Awolowo (Ayatse and Iorhen, 2013). Ayatse and Iorhen, (2013) also affirmed that ethnic background

of political parties went on, up to the Third Republic whereby the Social Democratic Party (SDP) was deemed more tilted to the Southern Regional states while the National Republican Convention (NRC) was more inclined to the northern states. Ethnic consideration in Nigeria today is more important than who can deliver. A clear example is what is going on in our current Fourth Republic. On the demise of Umaru Musa Yar'adua, the Nigerian former president from the north and the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan a southerner, who was his deputy from the same party succeeded him by completing their tenure and subsequently winning the Presidency in 2011, ever since then, the northern ethnic group feels that they have been robbed of the post of the presidency. Most of the insecurity problems inherent in the country today are kind of agitations for the transfer of the highest political position of the country to the south. This situation has necessitated the amalgamation of other political parties to form the All Progressive Congress (APC) being controlled by the northern political giants with few intruders from the south, and they want to wrestle power at all cost back to the north. This is the damage ethnicity has caused the Nigerian nation.

5. Rotational Presidency and Ethnic Sentiments in Nigeria 1999 - 2010

The study revealed that ethnic domination was not reduced by rotational Presidency during the regimes of Obasanjo and Yar'adua. Jubrin (2001) explained that the fear of ethnic domination showed its ugly face again, when President Olusegun Obasanjo took over power in 1999. The core Yoruba political elite felt that President Obasanjo although a Yoruba, was a Northern candidate who might be subservient to the Northern political machine. The Yoruba's therefore voted en masse for the other Yoruba candidate Olu Falae who lost the election. Ethnic mobilization and chauvinism intensified and the other ethnic groups living in Yoruba land were attacked by the Yoruba militia group known as the Odua People's Congress (OPC). The beginning of President Obasanjo's era was incongruous as the main challenge and fear came from his own ethno-regional base. However, the challenge eased when the Yoruba associates split the Yoruba composition to the government and galvanized significant support for President Obasanjo.

Ukiwo (2003) explained further that crisis came between the Hausas and the Yorubas because the mainstream Yoruba leaders and the mass public resented the paternalism reflected in the choice of President Obasanjo, of all the Yorubas that contested. The Hausa/Fulani leadership felt peeved that President Obasanjo was favoring his kinsmen who rejected him at the polls. Muhammadu Buhari, Abubakar Rimi, Wada Nas and others became a major opposition force against President Olusegun Obasanjo.

Ukiwo (2003) explained that the tenure of President Obasanjo raised fear about a reversal from Muslim to a Christian dominance of the security forces and state structures. President Obasanjo's government was reported to have removed most of the Muslim commanders in the armed forces and replaced with Christian officers. A chapel was constructed in the state house, Aso Rock. Previously, there were three mosques and no church in the complex. Ukiwo further argued that the elevation of the presidential worship to a regular National TV event and the prominent involvement of the president in over 3 billion naira fund raiser for the Abuja Ecumenical Centre and President Obasanjo's widely publicized Born Again Christian status anointed by God as Nigeria's messiah, all pointed to Christian ascendancy in the Presidency. In addition, the Hausa/Fulanis felt the Yorubas had taken the birthright of the Hausa Fulanis. The building of the Presidential Library in the South-West named Olusegun Obasanjo's library caused controversies. These factors conjugated in the minds of Muslim activists fear about a Christian hidden agenda. Isumonah (2011) posited that the fear of the northerners could not reduce because their aim of holding on to political power was to use it to ameliorate their economic disadvantage. Thus the North's de facto claim to power assumed a de jure claim even in the context of democratization. The aspiration to presidential power by all southern groups put together was correspondingly reduced by half. Accordingly, the Yoruba, the Igbo and all other minority groups have been reduced to one unit since they conceded power to the South through the Yoruba ethnic group in 1999 under the presidency of Olusegun Obasanjo.

There was also increased fear and anger in other parts of the nation. The Southern ethnic minorities in the South-South zone were also afraid and unhappy with President Obasanjo taking over power. The nation's national revenue, almost exclusively coming from petroleum exploitation, is obtained from South-South's. They therefore found President Obasanjo's vehement opposition to their demands for resource control very offensive. Economically and strategically on the basis of sacrifice and services to the nation's democracy, South-South continues to make enormous contributions to the national efforts. Economically from the ministry of finance for April 2005, South-South's proceed from oil and gas was £4288 billion when compared with revenue from all other sources, it amounted to £426 billion for the same period showing a clear indication that Niger-Delta has contributed so much. For rotational principle to give power to the South-West was an injustice to the other ethnic groups or zones that have not tested it (Nigeria Tribune, Friday, June 23, 2003).

In the same vein, President Yar'adua's regime saw some ethnic upheavals especially in Jos, Plateau State. Where the most serious of these violent attacks took place, more than 800 people were killed in inter-communal and sectarian clashes between 2008 and 2010. In November 2008 at-least 200 people were killed during clashes between Christians and Muslims in the Central Nigerian town of Jos. In January 2010, at-least 149 people were also killed during 2 days of violence between Christians and Muslims gangs in Jos. Again in July 2010, 120 people were also killed in a similar clash. The violence of Boko Haram Islamist Movement began in July 2009 during the regime of President Yar'adua, when members of the group clashed with security forces over five days in Northeastern States of Borno, Bauchi, Kano, and Yobe States, in a bid to have Sharia Law imposed on the entire country. More than 800 people died in those clashes, including at least 30 police officers. Security forces stormed Boko Haram's stronghold and killed the movement's leader (Agbokoba, 2010).

The Igbo's in the South-East saw the regimes of Obasanjo and Yar'adua as manifestations of the political marginalization they have been suffering since the beginning of Nigeria civil war in 1966. The Igbo's of South-East were shortchanged in the number of states assigned to their zone. South-East zone has five states while other zones have six, seven states etc. Ohanaeze Ndigbo

(2002) argued in support that the zoning of ministerial offices as approved by the National Executive Committee of Peoples Democratic Party at its meeting of 18th May 1999, was to follow thus:

	Group A		Group B		Group C		Group D
1	Petroleum	7	Internal Affairs	13	Education	19	Science / tech
2	Finance	8	External Affairs	14	Health	20	Information
3	Defense	9	Communication	15	Water Resources	21	Aviation
4	Transport	10	Industries	16	Solid Minerals	22	Youth / sports
5	Works	11	Agriculture	17	Commerce	23	Urban Affairs
6	FCT	12	Power/Steel	18	Justice	24	Labour

Table 1: Ministerial Appointment As Approved By National Executive Committee Of Pdp.

Source: Ohanaeze Ndigbo (2002:47) *The Violation of the Human Rights of Ndigbo in the Federation of Nigeria 1966-1999*.

	N-W	N-C	N-E	S-W	S-S	S~E
1	Agric/ Rural	Commerce	Defense	Education	Justice	Culture/Tourism
2	Communication	Industries	Environment	Information	Labour/Prod	Health
3	Foreign Affairs	Police Affairs	FCT	Internal Affairs	Sc/Tech	Transport
4	Solid Minerals	Sports/social Dev.	Finance	Power/Steel	Works/Housing	Aviation
5	Water Resources					
6	Women/ Youths					

Table 2: Ministerial Appointments As Approved By National Executive Committee Of Pdp.

Source: Ohanaeze Ndigbo {2002:47} *The Violation of the Human Rights of Ndigbo in the Federation of Nigeria 1966-1999*.

Table 2 shows that N-W took six ministerial appointments out of which three were from group B. N-C, S-W got one each from group B. N-E got three from group A. And non from group B was given to S-E and S-S which made them felt shortchanged in the scheme of things because the President did not follow approved pattern by the National Executive Committee of PDP. This deepened ethnic sentiment. Omoruyi (2010) confirmed that in July 2007, President Yar'Adua swore in a cabinet of 39 Ministers that many commentators labeled lackluster. Each State of the federation, except Lagos was represented. Some States like Kano had two Ministers. Yar'Adua also appointed a disproportionate number of Northerners to virtually all the important ministries, departments and agencies. This has drawn the ire of other parts of the country, particularly the South-West and the Niger Delta. Yar'Adua has therefore failed to show he can be a universalist and comes across as sectional, or even worse, clannish.

S/N	Names	Title	Period	Ethn .icity	Ethnic Tenure	Zone	Region
1	Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	President	1/10/60-15/1/66	Igbo	6yrs	S-E	East
2	Alhaji Abubarkar Tafawa Balewa	Prime minister	1/10/60-15/1/66	Jarawa	6yrs	N-E	North
3	Major General Jtu Aguiyi Irons	Head of state	16/1/66 - 29/7/66	Igbo	6mths 14dys	S-E	East
4	General Yakubu Go won	Head of state	29/7/66-29/7/75	Angas	9yrs	N-C	North
5	General Murtala Mohammed	Head of State	29/7/75-13/2/76	Hausa	7mths	N-W	North
6	General Olusegun Obasanjo	Head of state	13/2/76-30/9/79	Yoruba	3yrs 7mth Idy	S-W	West
7	Alhaji Shehu Shagari	President	1/10/79-31/12/83	Fulani	4yrs 3mths	N-W	North
8	Major General Muhammadu Buhari	Head of state	31/12/83-27/8/85	Fulani	2yrs	N-W	North
9	General Ibrahim Babangida	President	27/8/85-26/6/93	Gwari	8yrs	N-C	North

10	Chief Ernest Shonekan	Head of State	26/8/93-17/11/93	Yorub A	3mths	S-W	West
11	General Sani Abacha	Head of State	17/11/93-8/6/98	Kanuri	5yrs	N-W	North
12	.General Abdulsalami Abubakar	Head of state	8/6/98 - 29/5/99	Gwari	Lyr	N-C	North
13	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	Executive President	29/5/99-29/5/2007	Yorub a	8yrs	S-W	West
14	President Umaru Yar'adua	Executive President	29/5/2007-5/5/2010	Fulani	3yrs	N-W	North

Table 3: Nigeria's Heads Of State/Government (Ethnic, Tenure And Geopolitical Spread) October 1st 1960-May 5TM 2010
Source: Okeke (2011: 68) *Igbo History in Perspective*.

Table 3, indicates that the North-Central has been in power more than other zones followed by North-West, South-West, North-East, South-East and South-South respectively. Power should have started from the highly marginalized. This has been a major problem as each zone cried of being marginalized by the other zones which made rotational principle a means to further ethnic sentiment.

Okwume (2011) substantiated this by explaining that out of all the presidents or heads of government produced by Nigeria from independence till 2010 (a period of about 50 years) the North-West zone would have produced five heads of government ruling for a total period of about thirteen and a half years (13 1/2 yrs) (Murtala Muhammed, Shehu Shagari, Mohammadu Buhari, late Sani Abacha and late Yar'adua). The North-Central would have produced three heads of government ruling for a total period of about eighteen years (18yrs) (Gowon, Ibrahim Babangida, Abdulsalami Abubakar) while the North-East zone would have produced one head of government ruling for six years (6yrs) (Tafawa Balewa). In the South, the South-West zone have ruled for about (12yrs 4 months) twelve years four months by producing two heads of government (Olusegun Obasanjo and Ernest Shonekan). The South-East produced one head of government ruling for about six months (Aguiyi Ironsi). N:B Late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of S-E was just a ceremonial president and the South-South could not produce any head of government at all.

This shows that for about 50 years the North would have had grip of presidential power for about thirty-seven and a half years (37 1/2 yrs). The South-West has been on it for about twelve and half years (12 1/2yrs). These points are the basic weakness of rotational principle on North and South basis. This did not make for equity, justice, and fair play, rather rotational principle was suspicious since the Northerners could not hide their impatience as they recaptured power in 2007, under President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, which deepened ethnic sentiments.

President Umaru Yar'Adua's appointment in 2009, of the Managing Director of the First Bank Plc, Mr. Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, as Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, at the expiration of the tenure of the incumbent Governor, Prof. Charles Soludo was vehemently opposed by Southerners, especially the Afenifere Renewal Group (ARG) (Oyebode, 2009). The group said that the news of the appointment of Sanusi created ripples across the country, adding that it was important for the President to reconsider his decision. The group said it was opposed to Sanusi's choice on the ground that it amounted to a violation of the principle of the Federal Character and what it called Sanusi's "political views against the Yoruba and Igbo nationalities." Citing Section 14(3) of the 1999 Constitution, which stressed the principle of Federal Character, ARG said that it had observed that this principle had been breached by Yar'Adua, leading to a situation where the entire economic team were from two northern states of Kano and Kastina. The group listed Yar'Adua, who is from Kastina State, as head of the team, adding that other members including the Minister of National Planning, Dr. Shamsudeen Usman (Kano); Minister of Finance, Dr. Mansu Mukhtar, (Kano); Chief Economic Adviser to the President, Prof. Taminu Yakub (Kastina); were all from the North. It said, "To pick the CBN Governor from Kano means that the economic team would sit and take decisions for the whole country with perspectives from only two states." This is not healthy for the Federal Republic of Nigeria made of different peoples who have different views of how to tackle the economic problems in the country. Continuing, Oyebode, (2009), declared:

Only last week, the Northern Union came out to say that the cause of poverty in the North was Soludo's decision against proliferation of Bureau De Change operators. A narrow team from Kano and Kastina may take it that once

Bureau De Change operators are allowed free rein, poverty is resolved all over the country.

This was what motivated the authors of our constitution to insert the principle of Federal Character to have wider perspectives on national issues before decisions are made. "To go ahead with Mr. Sanusi's appointment would therefore further erode the confidence of other sections of the country in the Federal Government. Rotational presidency was not remembered by the Peoples Democratic Party in 2003 election because people from different zones took part in the election. The fear which beclouded Nigerians when rotational arrangement of the Peoples Democratic Party was jettisoned because the party had not attempted to adhere to it in its selection processes apart from the very first one that produced President Obasanjo. Whereas Obasanjo should have been the automatic presidential candidate in 2003 after his first tenure, Atiku Abubakar, his second in command from the North (Adamawa state) wanted the ticket in defiance of the zoning of the position to the South for eight years. Alhaji Abubakar Rimi from Kano state, Chief Barnabas Gemade from Benue state, General Mohammadu Buhari among others excluded by the rotational arrangement did not care about it either, and the party did nothing to stop their participation in the primary election. However, they eventually lost out to President Olusegun Obasanjo. In 2007 election, when the presidential position was supposed

to have gone to the North, an array of politicians from the South joined the race. Several presidential hopefuls from the South in PDP like Peter Odili, Victor Attah, and Donald Duke picked the ticket, but President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua won the election (Vanguard, Sunday, November 7, 2010). This increased the fear of ethnic domination.

6. Conclusion

Nnoli (2003) explained that the Nigerian state has adopted unitarism, regionalism, various formulas for revenue allocation, power sharing, applied all sorts of ethnic arithmetic for ethnic balancing, organized numerous constitutional conferences, applied federal character principles and lastly adopted rotational Presidency all in the bid to ease ethnic tensions, unfortunately, the situation remained the same. The regimes of President Obasanjo and Yar'Adua's between 1999 and 2010 did not help matters. There was an increase in ethnic sentiment during these regimes and a nation characterized with such vices cannot claim to be democratic, since it cannot attract investors and other things attributed to democracy. Thus, dividends of democracy were very low because the masses could not enjoy or benefit the much needed expectations from democracy and rotational Presidency.

To this end, all efforts should be geared towards bringing an end to ethnic crisis and any other form of sectional divide like the North- South differences, if we ever want to achieve good governance. This could be achieved through a linkage between the rulers and the ruled, no matter where you come from, for respect is reciprocal, because respect for the people any where is respect for the people everywhere. This respect will remove lack of civility in relations among politicians in the political process since politicians serve one people or another, each of them deserves respect.

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