



**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**

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**INYUVESI  
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**An Assessment of Rotational Presidency as a Mechanism  
for Political Stability in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

**A Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Social Science in Political Science at the School of Social Sciences,  
College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal**

**By**

**Olayemi Emmanuel Oladele  
(216076811)**

**Supervisor  
Dr Dorcas Ettang**

**2018**

## DECLARATION

I, Olayemi Emmanuel Oladele hereby declare that this dissertation is original, and it is my work. Sources used have been acknowledged and accurately reported. No academic qualification has been obtained previously in its entirety with this document at any university.

-----  
Olayemi Emmanuel Oladele

-----  
Date

## DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR

I hereby declare that I acted as a supervisor for this student:

Student Name: Olayemi Emmanuel Oladele

Student Number: 216076811

**Title of Thesis:** An Assessment of Rotational Presidency as a mechanism for Political Stability in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

.....  
Dr Dorcas Ettang

.....  
Date

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to all members of the Oladele Family including my parents Mr and Mrs Oladele; you two have been a motivating factor throughout my postgraduate studies. My friend and my adviser Mr Azeez Shittu Kolawole, I appreciate you. My friend and my sister from another mother Barrister Mrs Esther Edward Evbuomwan for your moral support and a big thanks to all members of the House of Memory Media for your financial support.

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All Glory be to God Almighty, from whom all knowledge comes, for His care, protection, provision, and love over me all through my study. My supervisor Dr Dorcas Ettang, I am highly indebted to you, for your substantive contribution, patience, guidance, and directions towards the success of this study. God bless you. I am deeply grateful to Dr Oye Akinola, Miss Dupe Akinola, Pst Dr Omololu, Dr Shola Ogunnubi, Mr Shittu Azeez, Mr Muyiwa and Mr Tope Ojo, Mr Samuel for their assistance and encouragement towards the success of this work. May God reward you abundantly according to His riches in Glory. To my Friends and Family, I appreciate you – particularly, Barrister Mrs Esther Edward Evbuomwan, Olamide Oladele, Olakunle Oladele, and Olaronke Oladele. I thank you all for your intellectual, emotional and material contribution. May God bless you and may you be highly rewarded!

## **ABSTRACT**

The study examined the rationale for the introduction of power rotation principle in Nigeria's Fourth Republic and its operational modalities within the ambit of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution. It also examined the relationship between power rotation and the stability of Nigeria's political system, the challenges militating against the use of power rotation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic as well as the relationship between power rotation and democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. These were to contribute to the discourse on power rotation and its effect on political stability and democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

The study adopted both descriptive and exploratory methods. Descriptive method, which is a form of qualitative research, was used to describe the phenomenon that leads to the agitation for power rotation formula. The exploratory method was used as a historical method in tracing the genesis of ethnic rivalries and domination of the presidential position that culminates in the agitation for power rotation formula in Nigeria. The study also used secondary sources that relied extensively on the use of relevant textbooks, scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, and internet materials. The data retrieved in this study were analysed using a content analysis of the secondary data.

The study found that power rotation was introduced to address the problems of hegemonies, marginalisation, and domination of one region over others to reduce instability in the Nigerian polity. The study also revealed that the operational modalities of presidential power rotation became pronounced during the 1994/95 National Constitutional Conference (NCC) established by Decree No. (3) 1994. Despite this, the study found that power rotation was never incorporated in the present 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The study shows that the idea of power rotation is a winner takes all system because it gives power in totality to a group for a particular or planned period. The Winner takes all system involves entire control of power by a group and these limits electoral choice which is detrimental to democracy and harmful to a developing nation like Nigeria. While the researcher is not outrightly rejecting the idea of power rotation, the study is sceptical about the intention behind the strategy because the political elites in the country see it as a mechanism to hijack political power and hold tenaciously to it. For this reason, the demand for power rotation tends to breed more conflict than resolve it. The study concluded that though the idea of power rotation formula serves as a suitable mechanism for

accommodating diverse ethnic groups in presidential office and has the potential for stabilising the polity; it is also dangerous for developing democracy in Nigeria because of the greed and immaturity of the political elites.

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## ACRONYMS

ACN	Action Congress of Nigeria
AD	Alliance for Democracy
AG	Action Group
ANPP	All Nigeria Peoples Party
APC	All Peoples Congress
APP	All Peoples Party
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CBN	Catholic Bishop Conference
CPC	Congress for Political Change
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
FCC	Federal Character Commission
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FRN	Federal Republic of Nigeria
GNPP	Great Nigeria Peoples Party
HIG	Head of Interim Government
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
IPOB	Indigenous People of Biafra
JAM	Jamiyar Mutanen Arewa
JNI	Jama'atu Nasril Islam
MASSOB	Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra
MEND	Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
NCAA	National Civil Aviation Authority
NCC	National Constitutional Conference
NCNC	National Congress of Nigerian Citizens
NCNC	National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon
NDA	Niger Delta Avengers
NEC	National Economic Council
NNDP	Nigerian National Democratic Party

NPC	Northern People's Congress
NPN	National Party of Nigeria
NPC	National Population Commission
NPP	Nigeria People's Party
NRC	National Republican Convention
NYM	Nigeria Youth Movement
OPC	Oodua People's Congress
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
PDP	People's Democratic Party
PRP	Peoples Redemption Party
PPA	People's Progressive Alliance
RD	Relative Deprivation
SDP	Social Democratic Party
TI	Transparency International
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPN	Unity Party of Nigeria

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the Study

Federalism typifies a structure whereby different levels of government share power. It is an arrangement that requires a share in governmental functions, from the centre, with one or more levels of government in a coordinate system of power configuration. In all federations, there are several reasons accounted for the adoption of the federal system of government. Typical among these are historical trends, economic purpose, fear of domination by smaller groups, and geographical proximity, among many others (Watts, 1999). Furthermore, in the contemporary global system, it is believed that federalism is capable of deepening democracy. One way of measuring the viability of democratic systems and indeed federal systems of government is through the extent to which various ethnic groups within the federation work harmoniously to ensure peaceful coexistence for the stability of the political system (Elaigwu, 2014 and Iwara, 2009).

Many federations, however, still have challenges in ensuring equitable distribution of political power among the various factions that constitute the federation. In Nigeria, one of the issues prevalent in its federal system, like other federal systems, is how power is to be shared and rotated among the various ethnic components that make up the political entity. This issue has generated controversies among various ethnic groups and remains a threat to the stability of the political system. Another prominent challenge is the recurrent struggle for ascendance to the presidential seat among the dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria. This unhealthy competition for the presidential position among the various ethnic groups has been generating tension and political instability within the polity over the years. To adequately address this particular challenge, various strategies proposed by the various successive regimes, include the federal character principle and geopolitical zones system. Despite the introduction of this arrangement, the agitation for power sharing among the dominant ethnic groups continues to linger. On this note, the term, zoning and power rotation formula, was introduced. The formula was devised as a strategy for ensuring the equitable distribution of presidential power among the dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria. In the context of this study, the terms, zoning and power rotation, are used interchangeably.

Scholars hold varying views on the idea of presidential power rotation, as some believe that a power rotation formula could bring about stability in the political system, and others argue the contrary. For example, Aaron (2015) orated that, not using power rotation formula could lead to instability in the political system in Nigeria; if one ethnic group occupies and holds presidential position and power, other groups might feel marginalised and as such could orchestrate ethnic tension and rivalry within the political system. Aaron (2015) illustrated further that the formation of various groups<sup>1</sup> and the rising incidence of violence they have orchestrated in Nigeria are occasioned by the fact that the person occupying the presidential seat is not from their region. With this mindset, they feel a sense of deprivation and marginalisation of their region thereby causing various forms of violence, which eventually leads to the instability of the political system.

In another contribution to the debate on presidential power rotation principle, Osaghae and Suberu (2005) argued that, rather than bringing stability to the political system, power rotation is seen by the political elites from different ethnic groups as a continuous struggle to achieve their political ambition. Furthermore, the best way to achieve this is the mobilisation of their identity or ethnic loyalties to create a feeling of marginalisation or deprivation thereby leading to a political crisis which is detrimental to the stability of the political system in Nigeria.

In line with the previous view, Nwozor (2014) contends that the idea of presidential power rotation can undermine the existing geopolitical system and encourage the nation's North/South dichotomy, which may further polarise the polity. In their opinion, Awopeju, Adelus, and Ajinde (2012) concentrating on the benefit embedded in the practice of the power rotation principle assert that if adopted, it is capable of bringing harmonious relationship among various ethnic groups within the polity as well as the promotion of peace and stability. This idea is pertinent in the sense that various ethnic groups who hitherto felt marginalised would now feel accommodated with the power rotation formula and equal distribution of presidential political power.

The study becomes imperative to explore and contribute to the on-going debate on presidential power rotation principle and determine if it can bring about political stability in

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<sup>1</sup> These groups include the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND); Odua People's Congress (OPC); Niger Delta Avengers (NDA); Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)



Nigeria, considering the array of opinions and counter-arguments about zoning and rotation of the the presidency.

## 1.2. Brief History of Nigeria

The history that led to the emergence of the Nigerian state is far too complex to give an account of, but for this study, the geographical location, as well as the socio-political events, which have contributed to the present fragility regarding ethnic relationships in the country, will be examined.

Geographically, the location of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is on the Gulf of Guinea in Western Africa. It covers an area of 923,768 sq. Km on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea. To its North is the Niger Republic; to its West is Benin Republic; Chad to the Northeast; and Cameroon to the East and Southeast. Nigeria has a population of about 150 million people, as at its last national population census (National Population Commission, 2006) but it is believed to be over 180 million now. The country is divided into 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in Abuja. (See figure 1)

**Figure 1: Map of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**



The birth of Nigeria is traceable to the British imperialism during the 19th century when the Southern and Northern Protectorate were amalgamated in 1914 and laid the foundation of a nation now called Nigeria (Adegbami & Charles, 2015). Before the amalgamation, Nigeria was known as a heterogeneous nation, comprising of over 250 ethnic groups and over 100 languages. The different ethnic groups include Yoruba, Edo, Ibibio, Ijaw, Kanuri, Hausa, Fulani, Efik, Igala, Tiv, Jukun, and Nupe among others. The dominant ones are the Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba groups found mainly in the North, East, and West of Nigeria, respectively (Mustapha, 2007). These ethnic groups are unique by their region, culture, and language; and found across the various regions of the country.

As a result of the colonial policy of 1914 amalgamation, these various ethnic groups were merged for some political and economic reasons. For instance, the colonial masters could not cope with the administrative cost of running the affairs of Northern and Southern part separately. Also, the resources generated in the North was not sufficient enough to cater to the needs of the region while the Southern region was producing more than enough. Hence, the merger became imperative (Olaiya, 2004). On this note, Fakanbi and Raji (2013) observed that this policy was seen to unite people with different ethnic, political, religious, and regional affiliations while neglecting the longstanding differences and grievances between them. Thus, at independence, Umezina (2012) notes, the historical memory of these people was limited only to the shared experience of a single colonial ruler and their collective struggle for independence. This policy of colonial state formation in Nigeria was to make the establishment of harmonious citizenry extremely difficult in the post-independence years. The amalgamation met with reactions from different people who felt they had lost their identity when forced to live together without taking into consideration their differences in culture, languages, belief and tradition.

### **1.3. Brief Overview of Presidency since Independence**

In 1960, Nigeria got her independence from Britain. Before that time, a general election was conducted in 1959, and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, who hails from the North-eastern part of the country, became the pioneer Prime Minister of Nigeria. Tafawa Balewa ruled from October 1<sup>st</sup> 1960 to January 15<sup>th</sup> 1966, before the military struck in January 1966. Similarly, Dr Nnamdi Azikwe, from the South Eastern part of the country, was the pioneer Executive President of the

Federal Republic of Nigeria from October 1<sup>st</sup> 1960 to September 30<sup>th</sup> 1963 and October 1<sup>st</sup> 1963 to January 14<sup>th</sup> 1966, respectively. The military was in power from 1966 to 1979. The 1979 general election ushered in the Second Republic with Alhaji Shehu Shagari from the Northern part of Nigeria, emerging as president. The military also truncated the Second Republic in 1983, which brought General Muhammadu Buhari and Babatunde Idiagbon into power. The year 1985 witnessed another insurgent, ushering in General Ibrahim Babangida as the military head of state. In the abortive third republic, M.K.O Abiola emerged as elected president after the 1993 general election, which was annulled by General Ibrahim Babangida. After much outcry by the Nigerians, General Ibrahim Babangida left unceremoniously and brought in Chief Ernest Shonekan (a Southerner) who stayed in power as the Head of Interim Government for three months (from August to November 1993), after which General Sani Abacha took over and ruled between 1993-1998.

Before Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, General Abdulsalami Abubakar was the Head of State from 1998 to 1999. After which Chief Olusegun Obasanjo became the democratically elected President and ruled from 1999 to 2007. Another election was conducted bringing in Umaru Musa Yar'Adua from 2007 to 2010; he died before completing his tenure, automatically raising the status of the vice president (Goodluck Ebele Jonathan) to the president to complete the tenure. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan later contested in 2011, won, and governed from 2011 to 2015. The general election of 2015 brought in current President Muhammadu Buhari into power (Akinboye and Anifowose, 2008).

To this end, the various head of states, their geopolitical zones, the period in power, as well as the duration in power since the attainment of independent in 1960 is shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Nigeria's Heads of State since Independence**

	<b>President/Head of State</b>	<b>Geographic Zone of Origin</b>	<b>Period in Power</b>	<b>Duration in Power</b>
1	Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (Prime Minister)	North East	1 Oct 1960-15 Jan 1966	5 years + 3.5months
2	Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe (Governor- General, then President)	South East	1 Oct 1960-30 Sept 1963 1 Oct 1963-14 Jan 1966	3 years 2 years +3.5 months
3	Gen. Aguyi Ironsi	South East	15 Jan, 1966-28July, 1966	6.5 months
4	Gen. Yakubu Gowon	North Central	29 July, 1966-28July, 1975	9 years
5	Gen. Murtala Mohammed	North West	29 July 1975 – 13Feb., 1976	6.5 months
6	Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo	South West	13 Feb. 1976-1 Oct. 1979	3 years+6.5 months
7	Alhaji Shehu Shagari	North West	1 Oct. 1979-31 Dec. 1983	4 years + 3months
8	Gen. Muhammadu Buhari	North West	31 Dec. 1983-27Aug. 1985	1 year + 8 months
9	Gen. Ibrahim Babangida	North Central	27 Aug. 1985-26 Aug. 1993	8 years
10	Chief Ernest Shonekan	South West	26 Aug. 1993-17 Nov. 1993	3 months
11	Gen. Sani Abacha	North West	17 Nov. 1993-8 June 1998	4 years + 7 months
12	Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar	North Central	9 June 1998-29 May 1999	1 year
13	Olusegun Obasanjo	South West	29 May 1999-29 May 2007	8 years
14	Alhaji Musa Yar'Adua	North West	29 May 2007 – 5 May 2010	2 years + 11 months
15	Dr Goodluck Jonathan	South	6 May 2010- May 2015	5 years
16	Muhammadu Buhari	North West	29 May 2015 to date	

(Source: [www.waado.org](http://www.waado.org), retrieved on October 4, 2017, and Updated October 5, 2017, by the Author)

#### **1.4 An Overview of Political Parties Formation in Nigeria.**

The emergence of political parties in Nigeria is traceable to 1923 when the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) was launched, and electoral opportunities for Nigerians to participate were provided through the establishment of the Nigerian Legislative Council with a charter in Lagos and Calabar. This Legislative council gave opportunities for Nigerians' involvement in politics, governance participation and policy-making for the growth and development of the Nation (Liebowitz & Ibrahim, 2013). The Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) was initiated in 1938, followed by the establishment of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) in 1944, under the leadership of Herbert Macaulay. These two political parties served as the strong impetus for Nigerians' participation in politics as well as the springboard for the formation of other political parties in Nigeria (Liebowitz & Ibrahim, 2013).

In 1948, the Action Group (AG) was established, while the formation of Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) was in 1951. These parties instituted themselves as political lexes of ethnic-regional associations. This is seen through the Action Group in the West, sprouting from a Yoruba cultural association known as Egbe Omo Oduduwa; the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), evolving from the northern cultural association called Jamiyar Mutanen Arewa (JMA) and the National Congress of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC). It started as a national party but later lessened its social base to a cultural group referred to as the Igbo State Union of the South East (Liebowitz & Ibrahim, 2013). These represent the genesis of ethnic-regional competition caused by elite blocs struggling against each other for the control of politics in the First Republic. The collapse of the First Republic was as a result of massive electoral fraud in 1964 and 1965 elections. These triggered a political crisis that led the military into Nigerian politics in 1966 (Liebowitz & Ibrahim, 2013).

In 1978, five dominant political parties were recognised; this was during the run-up to the Second Republic. These political parties are as follows: Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), People's Redemption Party (PRP), and Great Nigeria People's Party (GNPP). The 1979 Constitution banned independent candidates from contesting elections, and outlawed regional, ethnic, religious and extremist parties (Liebowitz & Ibrahim, 2013).

In the aborted Third Republic (1993), General Ibrahim Babangida established two political parties: the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and the National Republican Convention (NRC). When elections were held in 1993, and M. K. O. Abiola of the SDP won, Babangida annulled the election, thus, precipitating the collapse of the Third Republic.

The Fourth Republic was initiated through the 1999 Constitution, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) recognised only three political parties. These were the People's Democratic Party (PDP), All Peoples Party (APP) and the Action for Democracy (AD). Subsequently, Nigeria's political space witnessed an unprecedented opening with the emergence of 63 registered political parties by April 2011 (Liebowitz & Ibrahim, 2013). Prominent among the new parties were the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), the Congress for Political Change (CPC), and the People's Progressive Alliance (PPA). Also, many small parties took advantage of the liberalisation of the political space to register parties that have proven to be unviable, because they were unrecognised by most voters. Presently, only two political parties (Peoples Democratic Party and All Progressive Congress) are formidable, as they have seats in the National Assembly.

### **1.5 Statement of the Problem**

Although Federalism is recommended as a viable political arrangement for recognising different identities and maintaining unity among diverse groups in most deeply divided and pluralised societies like Nigeria, research has shown however that said federations still have challenges in ensuring the equitable distribution of political power among the various factions that make up the federation. A prominent challenge is an ongoing struggle for presidential power among the dominant ethnic groups in the country, all of which have contributed significantly to generating tensions, political unrest and instability for many years. The consequence of this ugly situation could be the breaking away of the Nigerian Federation thus undermining the nascent democratic stability in the country. In addressing this particular challenge, several options have been devised by the political elites in the country. One of these options being, the adoption of the power rotation formula. Power rotation was suggested among the political elites as a strategy to accommodate all regions of the federation into the presidential position. Despite this, the power rotation formula has not been incorporated into the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which has further contributed to the tensions and dissent among different groups in Nigeria.

This study intends to contribute to the on-going debate — exploring the possibilities of achieving the political stability needed for the deepening of democratic processes using the power rotation formula as a viable option in Nigeria. This research has contributed to the existing body of knowledge by examining ways to manage better agitations for power and to achieve democratic stability in Nigeria using power rotation. This study addresses the political leaders, the elite and ethnic leaders, and contributes to their advanced knowledge on potential ways or arrangements for allocating, sharing and rotating political positions (presidency) in Nigeria.

## **1.6 Research Objectives**

The primary research objectives of this study are:

- i. To examine the rationale for the introduction of power rotation principle in Nigeria's Fourth Republic;
- ii. To examine the historical process that led to the omission of the concept of power rotation within the 1999 Nigerian Constitution;
- iii. To examine the relationship between power rotation and the stability of Nigeria's political system.
- iv. To identify the challenges militating against the use of power rotation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.
- v. To examine the relationship between power rotation and democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

The research questions underpinning this study are presented below:

- i. What is the rationale for the introduction of power rotation principle in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?
- ii. What is the historical process that led to the omission of power rotation within the 1999 Nigerian Constitution?
- iii. Is there any relationship between power rotation and the stability of Nigeria's political system?
- iv. What are the challenges militating against the use of power rotation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?

- v. What is the relationship between power rotation and democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic?

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

From the preceding, it is clear that debates over power rotation have generated diverse opinions without any uniformity of opinion. To this end, this study becomes imperative, as it will serve as an additional discourse to the debate on power rotation formula drawing from a wide range of sources on the subject matter. Apart from this, another significant contribution to this proposed study is, to increase the knowledge of policymakers on the best way to manage aspirations for political office and allocation of political positions especially that of the president, in preventing ethnic hostilities and ethnic politics across the country. If implemented, the recommendations of this study will assist in quelling tensions and promoting political stability. Finally, this study will contribute to existing discourses on how to achieve the political stability needed for the deepening of democratic processes through the power rotation formula in Nigeria. In the same vein, this study will attempt at establishing how rotational presidency can stabilise or balance the political leadership of Nigeria. It is equally meant to contribute to existing scholarly work regarding power sharing in the political context. It also provides insight for researchers who will be interested in this area in the future. Finally, the implementation of power rotation formula could bring lasting peace among the various ethnic groups who feel marginalised in the current political arrangement. If this is achieved, it will go a long way in deepening democracy and the stability of the political system.

### **1.9 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The study is limited to Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999 to date) with a brief examination of the First, Second and aborted Third Republic. This is because the power rotation principle becomes dominant in political science lexicon in the Fourth Republic and its prototype, the federal character, has been practised before the Fourth Republic. This study will discuss the rationale for power rotation; modalities put in place for the operation of power rotation within the constitution; and the relationship between the rotational presidency and political stability in the Fourth Republic.



## **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on three theoretical frameworks, which include: relative deprivation theory, integration theory and liberal democratic theory. All the three theories were found useful in understanding the conflict that emanates because of the continuous struggle for power among the various ethnic groups that make up the federation. These theories were also significant in understanding the rationale for power rotation principles and its importance in achieving democratic consolidation and political stability. Relative deprivation theory as proposed by Gurr (1970) presupposes that all humans have basic needs, which they seek to fulfil. For Alozieuwa, (2012) the failure to meet these needs of people especially if caused (or even believed to be caused) by other individuals or groups could lead to conflict. This theory has been adduced as explanations for the conflict in Sri Lanka (Faleti, 2006) as well as Boko Haram in Nigeria, where there was a demand for presidential power shift to the North during the regime of President Goodluck Jonathan (a Southerner) (Crenshaw 2009). According to this framework, the emergence of conflict and political instability in the country is blamed on the perceived feeling that one dominant ethnic group, especially the Hausa-Fulani tribe (found predominantly in the North), is trying to dominate the presidency at the disadvantage of other groups. This has necessitated the violent reactions from the perceived disadvantaged groups (Crenshaw, 2009). The basis of this theory is that perceived deprived groups creates frustrations in people thereby propelling them towards violence against the perceived source of their problem.

Integration theory is another theory found useful in these study. Integration theory according to Weiner (1971) is concerned with making a whole out of the components (which include different ethnic nationalities that make up a nation-state) and integrating different ethnic groups regardless of their natural resources towards national values. According to this theory, integration is the process whereby political actors with several distinct nationalities are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations, and political activities towards a new centre. The institutions within such a centre hold jurisdiction over the pre-existing national state. In other words, integration is a process that links a given nation-state to others. Integration helps to catalyse the process of interaction between and among states in the nation-state. The two theories, which will be elaborated in a subsequent chapter, will be used to complement each other in providing a holistic approach to the understanding of rotational presidency and political stability in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Another dominant theoretical framework adopted in this study in analysing power rotation and democratic consolidation is the liberal theory of democracy. The liberal democratic theory is common among capitalist countries such as the United States of America and its allies such as Nigeria. The principal exponents of this theory are John Locke, J.J. Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, and Baron De Montesquieu. The major tenets of this theory include the acceptance of capitalism, competitive party system as opposed to one party system, the rule of law, pressure groups, separation of powers, and checks and balances. The theory also emphasises on civil liberties or individual rights such as freedom of speech, assembly, press and religion, and free, fair and periodic elections based on a universal franchise (Mohammed, 2013: Kwasau, 2013).

### **1.11 Methodology**

The study uses the descriptive and exploratory approach. Descriptive research is a form of research that describes the events, circumstances, and phenomenon without attempting to alter the situation. It is a form of qualitative research that provides answers to questions under investigations. Anderson (1994) states that descriptive research is suitable for gathering information on people's attitude, behaviour, and record of events the way they are without altering the situation; this can be used to analyse, interpret and measure the type of relationship between variables. The exploratory method is tantamount to a historical method of gathering information about the past events, development and genesis of the current circumstances. This is considered suitable for this research because an attempt has been made in this study to trace the genesis and development of Nigeria as a country as well as past presidents since 1960 to date.

Similarly, the issue of ethnic rivalries did not just begin in Nigeria; it has been deeply rooted since the colonial days. With these two methods, this research will provide a holistic approach in gathering relevant chronicles into the rotational presidency and political stability in the Fourth Republic. On a final note, as desktop research, the study relied entirely on secondary data, comprising scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, relevant books and magazines, internet materials, and newspapers publications. The secondary data targets explicitly the already published journals who must have used primary sources in gathering information. This study will, therefore, embark on a thorough review of the journal articles on power rotation and political stability. The analysis of the data will be based on the content analysis of the secondary data.

## **1.12 Structure of Dissertation**

The study is structured into five chapters. Chapter One consists of the introductory part which encompasses the background to the study; a brief history of Nigeria as a country and a brief history of the presidency since independence. The Chapter also includes an overview of the problem, significant research questions and objectives, the significance of the study, its scope and limitations as well as brief explanations on the theoretical framework, and methodology adopted for the study.

Chapter Two is dedicated to reviewing the existing literature on the various concepts used in the study, such as federalism, presidential power rotation, power rotation principle, global views on democratic consolidation, as well as the nexus between power rotation, and democratic consolidation.

Chapter Three shall be dedicated to the theoretical framework underpinning this study, namely: relative deprivation, integration theory and liberal theory, examining case studies and presenting its limits and critiques.

Chapter Four examines presidential power rotation and democratic consolidation in the Fourth Republic. This chapter also covers the rationale for the introduction of power rotation; operational modalities put in place for power rotation in Nigeria's 1999 constitution, nexus or relationship between power rotation and stability of Nigeria political system; and the challenges confronting the use of power rotation in Nigeria. Also, the consolidation of presidential power rotation and democracy in the Fourth Republic shall be examined in this chapter.

The final chapter (Chapter Five) will synthesise and summarise the critical discussions and findings from previous chapters, proffer recommendations and suggestions for further research, and deduce meaningful conclusions.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Introduction

Different scholars (Aaron, 2015; Awa, 1976; Burgess, 2006; Obiyan, 2013; Ojo, 2009; Ostrom, 1991; Smith, 1995; and Watts, 1999) have undertaken studies in the area of power rotation within the context of Nigerian federalism. This chapter thus seeks to appraise previous studies and knowledge on the subject matter. The essence of this appraisal is to justify this present study. Therefore, concepts such as federalism, presidential power rotation, power rotation principle, democratic consolidation as well as the nexus between power rotation, political stability, and democratic consolidation will be reviewed.

### 2.2. Federalism

#### 2.2.1 Definitions

Federalism like every other concept in social science discipline does not subject itself to a single definition. As such, this made Buraimo (2016) note that various scholars have explored, analysed and compared the term “federalism” in the quest for meaning (Awa, 1976; Burgess, 2006; Obiyan, 2013; Ojo, 2009; Ostrom, 1991; Smith, 1995; Watts, 1999). Appadorai (1975), Obiyan (2013) and Watts (1999) have noted that federalism has been used to describe such political arrangements like Greek City-States, the United States of America (both the Article of 1777 and the 1787 constitution), the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the German Empire of 1871-1918 and even the association of League of Nations (Elazar, 1994). As such, the scholars averred that it had been incoherently and inconsistently used to describe an association of states that form a new one. In the quest for meaning, Awa (cited in Ugwu, 1998) noted that early writers had used federalism interchangeably alongside confederacy and federation. As such, Baron de Montesquieu (cited in Kolawole, 2010:2) posits a “federal republic” as “a society of societies”.

The origin of the concept, federalism, is derived from the Latin word *foedus*, meaning covenant, league, agreement, treaty, compact, trust and bind (Elazar, 1994). Before the 1946 publication of Kenneth Wheare’s *Federal Government*, scholars like Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, James Madison, Clinton Rossiter, Alexis de Tocqueville, Henry Sidgwick, to mention a few, have contributed to the intellectual debate on federalism, thus forming the background of the current discussion on the subject.

Wheare (1963) offered a landmark perspective to scholarly ideas on federalism. His definition enriched the debate on the concept of federalism; as such, he is regarded as the doyen of federalism (Ojo, 2009). His views on the subject matter have therefore attracted the contributions of subsequent scholars such as Akume (2014) and Gerston (2007). Wheare defines federalism as a “method of dividing powers so that the general and regional governments are each, within a sphere, coordinate (that is, equally important) and independent” (1963:39). Also, in the same legal school of thought, Nwabueze (1982) (cited in Ozoigbo, 2009:72) defines federalism as an arrangement whereby:

powers of government within a country are shared between a national, country-wide government and a number of regionalized (that is, territorially localized) governments in such a way that each exists as a government separately and independently from the others, operating directly on persons and property within its territorial area, with a will of its own and its own apparatus for the conduct of its affairs, and with an authority in some matters exclusive of all the others.

Akume (2014) opines that federalism symbolises a political philosophy of promoting diversity-in-unity and decentralisation which serves as its standing pillar. Akume (2014) notes that decentralisation allows for the transfer of power to subnational units and the opportunity for compromise of different groups in ensuring effective policy making and allocation of fiscal resources. Also, Gerston (2007) refers to federalism as multifaceted political power relationships between governments within the same geographical setting. Federalism, to Akindede and Olaopa (2002), is a system in which power to govern is shared between the national and state governments. Federalism denotes the practice of a multi-tiered government combining elements of shared-rule and regional self-rule (Watts, 2003). According to the Business Council of Australia (2011:3).

[Federalism] provides a technique of constitutional organisation that permits action by a shared government for certain common purposes, together with autonomous action by constituent units of government for purposes that relate to maintaining their distinctiveness, with each level directly responsible to its own electorates.

Arising from the perspectives of the various scholars on federalism, it is clear that federalism has the capability and the propensity of harmonising multiple interests into a minimal level for the peace and progress of a heterogeneous society like Nigeria. This system mainly brings political stability to the political system, thus deepening democracy.

### **2.2.2 Functions and Features of Federalism**

From the above definitions by scholars, specific functions and features can be ascribed to federalism. Bryce (2001) (cited in Burgess, 2006) notes that the federation supplied the best means of developing a new and vast country. Expansion becomes natural under federalism because every component unit has the innate ability to establish its laws, methods of administration, and adaptation to these laws, something which may not have been impossible under unitary arrangements. Burgess (2006) further affirms that the federation prevents the rise of a despotic central government. It encourages self-government that stimulates the interests of the people in the affairs of their neighbourhood, sustains local political life, educates the citizen in his civic duty, and teaches that the sacrifice of their time and labour are the price that must be paid for individual liberty and collective prosperity (Afegbua, 2010). Also, self-government in federalism secures the excellent administration of local affairs by giving the inhabitants of each locality due means of overseeing the conduct of their business. Federation enables the people to try experiments in legislation and administration which could not be safely tried in large centralised countries, and when such legislation succeeds, the central government for general benefit can replicate it (Afegbua, 2010).

From the above analysis of what federalism entails and intends to achieve, Buraimo (2016) identifies the followings as functions of federalism:

- a. Federalism offers a natural and practical arrangement for organising large states;
- b. It provides checks and balances on a territorial basis, keeps some government functions closer to the people and allows for the representation of ethnic differences;
- c. Federalism reduces overload in the national executive, preventing the over-centralised character of some unitary states such as Britain and France;
- d. The existence of multiple subnational units in a federation facilitates healthy competition and opportunities for growth and development. This, however, allows citizens and firms to have the luxury of choices: if they dislike governance in one state, they can always move to another, and when a policy is thriving in a state it can be replicated in another or at the national level.
- e. Above all, federalism reconciles two new imperatives: it secures the economic and military advantages of scale while retaining, indeed encouraging, cultural diversity. For such reasons, forming a federation can undoubtedly be considered a realistic and tested option for diverse and often divided human societies; and

- f. Federalism distributes power by territory when the key conflicts in society are social (e.g. race) as such; it caters to both the national majority and the minorities.

From the features listed above, one can deduce that federalism remains an option for mutual coexistence and engendering rapid development in a divided society like Nigeria. The need for stability in the polity becomes unavoidable since federalism allows for even distribution of political power.

### **2.2.3 Federalism: A Global Review**

From the global point of view, federalism differs regarding operations, structures, and power distribution despite the constitutional arrangement that gives power to all federating units. Watts (2002:2) captures power distribution in a federal context. In practical terms, the author appraised political systems across the world, submitting that:

Canada, the United States and Mexico in North America; Brazil, Venezuela and Argentina in South America; Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Belgium and Spain in Europe; Russia in Europe; Australia, India, Pakistan and Malaysia in Asia, and Nigeria, Ethiopia, and South Africa in Africa [qualify as federal systems]

Furthermore, the political system of the United States of America is a federal government. It is the world's oldest, continuing modern federal democracy. It is made up of fifty (50) states, a federal district that is the capital, eleven (11) island territories and some six hundred (600) recognised Native American tribes that have the status of "domestic dependent nations" (Elaza, 1991). The national constitution of the United States of America was termed as federal at its creation because the constituent units were seen as independent and sovereign. The union formed a national (federal) government to which every citizen belonged to (not just the state or political bodies) and a quasi-independent regional (state) government (Elaza, 1991). The states wanted to continue safeguarding their power in a stronger union; to bolster their independence and sovereignty, Rhode Island, a state in the USA today did not send any delegate to the convention of 1787 because it did not see the benefit of being part of the union.

From the analysis of the context in its origin and foundation, one can establish that every federating unit must understand specific benefits such as the economic benefits, defence purpose, and international trade as the necessary conditions that were in place that have enabled the continued success of federalism. In essence, some 40 per cent of the world's population today live in countries that can be considered or claim to be federal, and many of these federations are multicultural or even multinational in their composition (Ojo, 2009). This composition, according to Ojo, breed conflicts, misunderstanding rivalry among different ethnic's groups that make up the federation. Considering this view, Oyovbaire (cited in Ojo, 2009) conceives federalism as the interactions between conflicts, consensus and resources. Conflict is inevitable in a society comprised of many ethnic and interest groups competing over scarce resources. Agreement to this end becomes necessary to maintain stability in the political system. Ojo (2009) went further to state, like other sociological scholars, that once the societal forces had called federalism to existence, the arena of interaction itself becomes a factor of the political process. This view indicates that federalism is needed to bring about unity among diverse groups for economic prosperity, military strength, and the political system itself becomes interactive for progress and development.

In the process of mapping, the general conditions for a federation such as Nigeria, Smith (1995) defines federalism as an ideology which holds that human society is comprised of many diverse groups competing for resources. Furthermore, the ideal way of organising human affairs is to recognise the uniqueness of every ethnic group and at the same time maintain the unity of the federation (Smith 1995). Therefore, federalism can be said to be a political formula for promoting unity among diverse groups. Hence, multi-ethnic societies have been identified as one of the conditions of federalism. The communities coexist within the country but are also committed to safeguarding their various identities and controlling and regulating matters within their respective territories (Ojo, 2009).

Similarly, Elaigwu (2000, 2013), Obiyan (2013), Omotoso (2010) see federalism as a device, institutionalised for managing plural societies with the primary aim of engendering unity in diversity. Tamuno (1995) defines it as a form of government where the component units of a political organisation participate in cooperatively sharing powers and functions. It can then be argued that both ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity, among others, tend to pull their people apart. About diversities and its relationship to federal systems, Kolawole (2010:2) notes,



“federalism does not attempt to paper over diversities but strives to identify, accommodate and manage them”. Federalism is therefore geared towards translating such diversities into unity, buttressing Wheare’s idea of federalism as “unity in diversity” (Kolawole, 2010:2). It is the contention of the author, therefore, that Nigeria is operating on a political spectrum of federalism and is now aspiring to get to that destination. That is the destination of harmonising different ethnics groups into a single entity without them losing their identity.

Building on the preceding discussions, this study clarifies the concept, ‘federalism’, by comparing it with other structures of government like unitary systems and confederalism. This is with the view of making a clear-cut delineation of what federalism entails. This is imperative because it has been observed that elements of federalism exist in both unitary and confederal political structures. For instance, Jinadu (1979) and Appadorai (1975) note that a unitary state like the United Kingdom is bicameral, whereas a bi-cameral legislature is an essential feature of federalism in Wheare’s (1963) perspective. This provided grounds for Jinadu (1979) to assert that a major defect of Wheare’s formulation is not extreme legalism but excessive reliance on the United States federalism in formulating his principles.

#### **2.2.4 Arguments for Federalism**

Scholars differ in their opinion on the rationale for independent states to form a federal union, being that factors that propelled one federation might be different from others. Wheare notes that the main driving force behind the formation of a federation is the willingness or desire of communities “to be united, but not to be unitary” (Wheare, 1963:36). This implies in Wheare’s view that it is the desire to want to come together under a single political umbrella that is essential to the formation of a federal union. He further suggested that as a compromise, the minority nation should be willing to be part of the union, but also that the majority nation should be prepared to tolerate the existence of the minority nation. However, in the case of Nigeria, many ethnic groups that make up the federation were forcefully amalgamated under colonial administration for ease in administration and benefits of the colonial masters. This, therefore, accounts for the reasons why Nigeria’s federalism is always problematic and contentious.

However, Wheare’s definition has been criticised by numerous scholars such as Obiyan (2013); Elazar (1991); Eme and Onyishi (2014); and Ojo (2009) for being too legalistic, formal, rigid, eurocentric and idealistic. For instance, Eme and Onyishi (2014) have noted that Wheare’s

conception is a paradigm of the United States federal system; as such, one cannot universalise his definitional framework. Wheare's formulation has continued to serve as the springboard for subsequent analysis on federalism (Eme and Onyishi, 2014).

Other schools of thought on federalism shared by Livingston (1952), Friedrich (1963), Riker (1964), Elazar (1994), and Watts (1999) among others argue that federalism is a process rather than a design. To them, federalism is a function of societal features like political actors, economic, social, and culture. This implies that the adoption of federalism is a unanimous agreement from the political actors that make up the federation, having realised the urgent need for them to unite but not for amending the legal framework under which the federation rests. Friedrich (1963) therefore defines federalism as a process by which some separate political organisations, being states or any association enter into agreements for working out solutions, adopting joint policies and making decisions on mutual problems. The perspectives of Livingston (1952); Friedrich (1963); Ugo, 2010; Ugoh, Ukpere, and Ashiwhobel (2012); Taiwo and Fajingbesi (2004) can account for the differences and peculiarities of federal states in the world over.

According to Elazar (1994), federalism is a way to peace. Ugo, (2010) noted while tracing the history of federalism that ethnic groups, villages, towns, colonies or states have jointly formed voluntary unions to defend themselves. Elazar (1994) also argues that the adoption of federal ideas will reduce conflicts among nations of the world, emphasising the meaning of federalism from the Latin word *foedus* meaning covenant, which if entered into by countries will help in promoting peace and unity amongst them. Burgess, (2006) therefore, encouraged right attitudes and institutions in the accomplishment of the terms of the covenant which must be in a written constitution. The constitution must, however, decentralise and divide powers, and maintain an element of unionism, federal principles and a judicial body to regulate relations.

On his part, Riker (1964) sees military and territorial expansion as a reason for bargaining by the units to form a federation. The agreement focuses on the terms and conditions on which the federation shall operate to avoid constant conflicts. Corroborating Riker, May (1969) opines that negotiation is a necessity because, in federal-states, the units or components part of the federation can affect the federal government, like that of Rhode Island in the United States of America and other components units. Whereas the federal principle does not allow one level to dictate to another, they do persuade, influence, and negotiate to reduce and manage conflicts of interest. May

(1969) highlights the constitution, federal party system, and personalities or groups as the tools of federal bargaining. Thus, it is essential from the foregoing that negotiation is inevitable in a federal-state. Through negotiations, divergent views and conflicts can be addressed amicably. For instance, in a federal system like Nigeria, agreements were used to resolve issues over agitation for resource control and territorial disputes among others. Examples include the 1999 Niger Delta Crisis where the states were agitating for control of their resources and the Bakassi Peninsular dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria which was amicably resolved by World Court in 2002. In the same line, Etzioni (2000) (cited in Ugoh, Ukpere and Ashiwhobel, 2012) has noted that federalism evolved as an attempt to cope with the problems of power relations. On this premise, conflict is endemic to the unification process, and such sociological variables as ethnicity and religion will feature prominently in the conflict. The author stresses the role of political actors and policymakers in the unification process as cogent in ensuring a successful federation.

### **2.2.5 Arguments against Federalism**

Considering the benefits attached to federalism as outlined above by Buraimo (2016), federalism is not without challenges. Federalism is criticised according to Buraimo (2016) on the following aspects:

- a. It may exacerbate intergovernmental conflicts, especially between the central and state governments.
- b. It allows for tension as members of the union may not be prepared to compromise and supplant their interest towards the group interest.
- c. It may not allow for the equal development of all the federating units, as each group will be developing at her own pace.
- d. It is an expensive system of government, as all governmental apparatus will be duplicated; this will be consuming the nation's resources.
- e. Administratively, federalism slows down the process of decision making because it may be challenging to reach a consensus among the component units on issues of national importance.

### **2.2.6 Federalism versus Unitary Government**

To understand federalism more precisely, it is pertinent to make a distinction between federalism and unitary systems of government. Regarding power relations, federalism derives the powers and functions of the components units, regions or cantons from the constitution while unitary arrangement concentrates all the control at the centre and devolves the power at the mercy of the centre. Federal systems are also distinguishable from unitary systems, in that, legislative powers rest with the central government in a unitary system unlike in a federal system where powers are divided and shared between different levels of government. Elaigwu (2014) asserts that unitary states concentrate power at the central or national level. The United Kingdom, France, China, and Japan are examples of unitary states. The division of powers in a federal system is generally guided by a constitution (Burgess, 2006). Also, Ugoh, Ukpere, & Ashiwhobel (2012) notes that in the case of a unitary constitution, the supreme legislative authority in the state is vested in one government.

In the case of a federal constitution, the supreme legislative authority is shared between the central government and sub-governments, all of which coordinate with, and are independent of, one another concerning the powers and functions expressly vested in them by the Constitution. Unitary systems are those in which sovereignty, decision-making authority, and revenue-raising powers are clearly and solely vested in a single central government (Downs, 2011). While subnational units may exist in unitary states, they enjoy only those powers expressly delegated or devolved to them by the central government. Those powers, however, can be revoked at the centre's discretion. These categorisations are aptly summarised in the words of Walter and Huebsch (1978:51), cited in Drummond (1999:8), that:

In a unitary system, the flow of power is unidirectional, from the central authority down, and the sub-units become administrative conveniences. In the federal system, the flow of authority is bi-directional, with a division of power, and the sub-units are meaningful political spaces for the population inhabiting them.

While this situation depicts close realities of what is observable in federal states such as in the United States and Nigeria, federalism is not an arrangement of government in which the central government is superior to the other governments and therefore distributes national resources to them at its whims and caprices. It symbolises decentralisation of power in which constituent governments operate within the prism of self-respect for one another; no government arrogates to

itself the status of or acts as, the leader. Smith (1995) succinctly puts that through foundational laws and institutional mechanisms, federalism provides for subnational units with greater political authority and autonomy in their respective jurisdictions. Federations generally encourage higher levels of political, fiscal, and administrative devolution than unitary states.

In confederal arrangements, like federal systems, central government coexists alongside subnational governments. The point of departure, however, is that the sub-national governments are stronger than the central government unlike what is obtained in federal structures. The central governments rely on the units for resources and the authority to act. Confederalism is a free association of independent nations where there is freedom of exit at any time unlike in a federal structure (Smith, 1995; Ugwu, 1998). Examples of confederation include the American Confederation in 1777 and the German Confederation in 1879.

The study, considering the above analysis, agrees with the conception that federalism is a political doctrine that promotes multi-tiered government, non-centralisation, and the value of achieving both unity and diversity by accommodating diversity within the framework of a union (Anderson 1960; Burgess and Gagnon 1993; Elaigwu, 2007, 2013; Obiyan, 2013; Ojo, 2009; 2006; Smith, 1995; Tamuno, 1995 and Watts, 1999). It is a system meant to integrate ethnically, culturally, geographically and even religiously diverse people in a society. It, therefore, becomes imperative that once a government is in place, it must endeavour to adequately and equitably distribute powers, functions and resources among these diverse groups (Elaigwu, 2013; Obiyan, 2013; Ojo, 2009).

From the analysis above then, this study agrees with the last submission that federalism ensures equitable power distributions regarding political, economic and social-cultural among the various ethnic groups that make up the federation.

### **2.2.7 Nigeria's Federal System at a Glance**

According to Suberu (1998), Nigeria is a federal structure of government. The 1999 Constitution outlines the existence of the federating units. The functions of the federal government and the state governments are listed in the exclusive and concurrent lists respectively, and in instances when clashes emerge, the exclusive functions of the federal government dominate. The Nigerian Constitution recognises three tiers of government: federal, state, and local. The

Constitution spells out the duties and areas of fiscal jurisdiction among the various units of the Nigerian federal system. Also, Section 4 (7a) assigns the so-called residual functions to state governments. These are functions not specified in either the Exclusive List or the Concurrent Legislative List. Section 7 (5) (Fourth Schedule) of the Constitution provides for the establishment of local government councils and set out their responsibilities. Table 2 below contains some of the concurrent and exclusive legislative lists.

**Table 2: The concurrent and exclusive legislative list**

	<b>Exclusive Legislative List (Federal)</b>	<b>Concurrent Legislative List (Federal and State)</b>
1.	Accounts of the Government of the Federation	Allocation of revenue
2.	Arms, ammunition and explosives	Antiquities and monuments
3.	Aviation, including airports, safety of the aircraft and carriage of passengers and goods by air	Archives
4.	Awards of national titles of honour, decorations and other dignities.	Collection of taxes
5.	Bankruptcy and insolvency	Electoral law
6.	Banks, banking, bills of exchange and promissory notes.	Electric power
7.	Borrowing of money within or outside Nigeria for the Federation or of any State.	Exhibition of cinematography films; industrial, commercial, or agricultural development
8.	Census	Scientific and technological research
9.	Citizenship, naturalization and aliens	Statistics
10	Commercial and industrial monopolies, combines and trusts.	Trigonometrical
11	Construction, alteration and maintenance of such roads as may be declared by the National Assembly to be Federal trunk roads.	Cadastral and topographical surveys

12	Control of capital issues.	Universities, technological and post-primary education.
13	Copyright	Note* Section 4(5) of the Constitution provides that, “if any law enacted by the House of Assembly of a State is inconsistent with law validly made by the National Assembly, the law made by the National Assembly shall prevail, and that other law shall to the extent of inconsistency be void.”
14	Creation of States	
15	Currency, coinage and legal tender	
16	Customs and excise duties	
17	Defence	

Source: The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (some of the Concurrent and Exclusive Legislative List) Second Schedule, Part 1.

Nigeria’s federal structure was inherited from the colonial period, and the subnational units increased in number from 3 to 36 since independence. Two forces have motivated this increase in subnational (states). The first stems from the goal of creating a power balance between Nigeria’s ethnic minorities and larger majorities, by granting the ethnic minorities more states. However, in reality, the political economy of states creation rests on the fact that the higher the number of states to a particular ethnic group, the higher the amount of revenue they receive from the federation account. It was estimated that 22 of the 36 states constitute the dominant ethnic groups in Nigeria (Osaghae, 1998). In the same vein, the processes of state creation have also been affected by the struggle between centralisation and decentralisation. The decentralisation emerged from the local communities wanting to secure greater autonomy through having their state and having their share from the federation account. This manifested in the creation of Osun State out

of the Old Oyo State in 1991. The centralisation argument, on the other hand, stems from the fact that the military regime wanted the power to be centralised. It should be recalled that the Military system created all states in Nigeria and the rationale was to weaken the power of the regional government and strengthen the central government (Orji, 2008). The preceding analysis notwithstanding, decentralisation of political and economic power is very germane in a federal system of government. The more the power is decentralised to various states to please the ethnic groups, the less their agitation and thus the stability of the political system.

### **2.2.8 Issues in Nigerian Federal System**

Arising from this, there are many contending issues affecting the federalism in Nigeria. Some of these are discussed below.

#### **2.2.8.1 Federal Concentration of Power**

The centralisation of power and resources in the federal government is one of the most significant features of the Nigerian political system today. This over-centralisation is an outcome of its legacy of military regimes, national reliance on centralised oil revenues, philosophies and strategies that promote centralisation and the inadequate commitment paid by elites to achieve democratic decentralisation (Suberu, 2004). This over-centralisation has also resulted in the failure to implement correct federalist ideas and institutions, increased competition for control of the presidency and in effect central government, weak financial discipline at the centre, significant dependence of subunits on the federal government and calls to divide the country further (Olowu, see Suberu, 2004). For the ethnic minority communities, in particular, over-centralisation has led to various outcomes: a failure to ensure their economic development; a weakening of their autonomy and security which should be guaranteed in a true federal structure; the transfer of resources by the central government to other recipients; and extreme intervention of the central authorities in local and regional issues such as boundary disputes, issues which they should be left to resolve (Suberu, 2004).

Citing an article in the Nigerian newspaper, the Guardian (1994), Suberu (2004) notes that MOSOP, for instance, claims that the centralisation of powers in Nigeria has birthed an environment of unending marginalisation and poverty for minority and other non-ruling groups.



In the same vein, key elites from Nigeria's southern minority like Asemota, Douglas, Clark and Innih, noted in a communique that the country's extensive military intervention and the role of the three key ethnic groups in its democratic experience led to a shift from the federal principle to that of a unitary system which neglected groups like the southern minorities (Guardian, 1994, See Suberu, 2004).

Suberu (2004) notes that while the argument can be made that a stable central government is necessary for managing and preventing abuses of minority rights in subnational units, (a view supported by the fact that Nigeria in the late 1960's was able to guarantee the autonomy of regional minorities due to the centralisation of the federal government), this excessive abuse of such powers has subsequently contributed to the exclusion that these groups feel. As purported by Suberu (2004) and others that have written on Nigeria's federalism and prospects for decentralisation, the rights of regional minorities in effect will only be achieved not through an over-involved and strong central government but federalism that is decentralised. Decentralisation then will mean more autonomy, localised security, and protection from larger ethnic groups, and broader economic and political devolution of powers.

#### **2.2.8.2 Territorial Configuration of the Federation**

Having established over-centralisation as one of the banes of ethnic minority distress and disaffection in the Nigerian federal system today, another source of dissatisfaction among minorities is the internal territorial configuration of the federation. In multi-ethnic federations, constituent units are generally demarcated based on ethnolinguistic identities to allow different cultural groups the opportunity to enjoy and exercise autonomy within their respective territories (Suberu, 2004). In Nigeria, however, the boundaries of constituent states or regions have hardly followed identifiable ethnic boundaries. Thus, the pre-1967 regions were arbitrary and artificial units which merely secured the hegemony of the three major ethnicities over the minority sections (Nwozor, 2014). Although the 1967 state-creation exercise was primarily designed to promote a more equitable accommodation of minority groups within the federal structure, following reorganisation exercises have been mainly guided by the need to give satisfaction to distributive pressures primarily emanating from the minority communities (Olaiya, 2004).

Evidence from the preceding discussion shows that using territorial demarcation to promote the sectional interest of the major ethnic groups to the detriment of minority groups must

be stopped. If it has not been stopped, future territorial reorganisations in Nigeria should give overriding consideration to how to address the long-held grievances of the various ethnic communities (Ojo, 2002).

### **2.2.8.3 Diversity Issues**

At another level, it is pertinent to understand how the central government and its agencies have been able to manage and coordinate the relationships among the diverse groups in each state. Diversity represents one of the major defining characters of societies. The concept of diversity about political entity refers to a conglomeration of both ascribed and naturally, acquired attributes that distinguish individual/group characteristics, nuances, pretensions and predilections. These variables meet at the point where individuals influence the governance of the state. Instructively, individuals do not exist in straitjacketed isolation; they are members of groups, whose defining characters are in regular contact. To this extent, each political-entity is diverse- whether homogenous or heterogeneous. The diversity in different societies is our point of departure especially when diversity is not adequately managed. Usually, it has a tendency to generate mutual mistrust and hatred, which often lead to deep-seated acrimony. On the other hand, it's proper management puts the country in an advantageous position over its peers and strengthens its capacity for growth and development.

In political management strategies, states have been known to develop two approaches; one is the recognition and institutionalisation of diversity by creating a legal framework that accommodates them, while the other approach attempts to erase the lines of diversity by uniting all the various independent entities within it (Ojo, 2002). Lord Lugard, a British colonial administrator, made this possible during the 1914 amalgamation of both the Northern and Southern protectorates.

Ordinarily, one would assume that Nigeria's diversity ought to be a source of strength, but the contrary appears to be the case. The country is diverse in every way imaginable, culture, religion, ethnicity, etc., yet aspires to be united, hence the official by-line, 'unity in diversity' as espoused in Wheare's idea (Wheare's 1963). One can deduce from Wheare's perception that Nigeria can assume a unity amidst her diversity and relegate all individual identities to the background. However, this mission has been an almost impossible task to achieve, for Nigerians

have always found reasons such as culture and religion to recline to their various identities. In the Nigeria context, for unity in diversity to be achieved, the government must give adequate recognition to the various ethnic minorities rather than force them to be united at all costs. This will invariably provide them with a sense of belonging that could engender peaceful coexistence.

Against this backdrop, ‘diversity in unity’ would be a better appellation. Relatively, the extent of Nigeria’s diversity is confounding. Nevertheless, the complexity of Nigeria’s diversity should be a blessing rather than a curse. Published figures on languages spoken in Nigeria have ranged from 150, 400, and 394 (Anugwon, 2000; Aquiline-Tarimo, 2008; Azeez, 2009). Additionally, the number of languages is said to be in the region of 521; it is broken down as 510 living languages, two-second languages without native speakers and nine extinct languages (Aaron, 2015). What is, however, clear is the existence of English as the official language and the recognition of the languages of the three major ethnic groups: Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba. The choice of the English language is derived from the colonial origin and the necessity for a sense of unity; thus the use of a single language would provide a group of mutually suspicious peoples ease with which to conduct government business, among other benefits. Also, the government appreciates the importance of the other three major languages.

To demonstrate government’s interest in the promotion of the three indigenous languages, the value of the national currencies bear translations in the three major languages as shown in the national currency of 50 naira known as “Wazobia”<sup>2</sup>. Also, schools, whether privately or publicly owned, are encouraged to adopt at least one of the three major in their curricular (Anugwon, 2000). However, government’s language policies appear to have alienated the minorities; the adoption of the English-language as the official language of political interaction and economic transactions create some form of soothing balm. The religious aspect of the diversity is much more volatile than the language. It professes secularity, which by extension affects the component units (indeed the constitution prohibits both local and state government from adopting any religion) making the state have respect for religious freedom in practice. The provisions of Section 38 (1) of the 1999 Constitution have yet to strengthen the ability of the State to enforce respect for religious freedom or to prevent violence between religious groups. An accurate figure of the spread of religious groupings has never been established. Indeed, since the 1963 National Census, no religious question has been included in subsequent census questionnaires such as the 2006 population census

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<sup>2</sup> WAZOBIA stands for the 3 main ethnic groups (Yoruba, Hausa & Igbo)

(NPC, 2006). This move is meant to avert the political undertones that would be generated by the claim of numerical preponderance of any of the religious groups, especially the two major ones (Christianity and Islam).

What is not disputed is that the Nigerian religious space is composed of Christians-Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals, Muslims, and Traditional African beliefs. The religious spread between the major ethnic groups are Hausa- 99.9% Islam and 0.10% Christianity; Ibo- 97% Christianity and 3% traditional beliefs; and Yoruba- 60% Christianity, 36.38% Islam and 3% traditional African beliefs (Nnoli, 2003). The nature of the geographical spread of the two dominant religions has courted lamentations from close watchers of Nigeria's political processes (Nwala, 1997). It is believed that the continued existence of the religion-geographical polarisation of Nigeria into the predominantly Muslim northern region and the mostly Christian southern region without integrating the other faiths, is an anathema to the future political stability of Nigeria (Nnoli, 2003). In essence, an analysis of the religious situation in Nigeria must not fail to acknowledge the correlation between religious differences, ethnic and regional differences.

The North, which is dominated by the large Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups, is predominantly Muslim, with a sprinkle of Christians in such places as Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto (Zuru), Adamawa, and the entire Middle-Belt. In the South, a combination of dominant Christians in the south-east and a most likely higher number of Christians in the south-west make the region a Christian enclave. Thus, when religious tolerance is stretched to the limits and violence ensues, the attacks soon become ethnically orientated. There have been series of instances when religious intolerance has led to attacks on Christians and their places of worship in the north, and a backlash coming in respect of direct attacks on the Hausa in the south, and vice-versa. In essence, the Hausa man is perceived as a symbol of Islam in the South, although much restraint is exercised in attacking the mosque as an institution because quite a handful of southwesterners are also Muslims. On the other hand, the religious zealots in the north perceive every southerner as a Christian; thus, aside from attacking individuals, the churches are also burnt down, because very few northerners are Christians. In effect, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish religious violence from ethnic violence. In the end, despite the numerous constitutional provisions prohibiting religious intolerance, religious zealots have always found it necessary to pursue unabashedly their aims of destructions, which threaten the fragile foundation on which the State was built.

According to Nnoli (2003), the most fundamental trouble-spot for Nigeria's diversity is ethnicity, and there have been varying views about the exact number of ethnic groups in Nigeria. The most widely used figure is 250 groups, where Hausa, Ibo, and Yoruba make up 29%, 20% and 20% respectively, while the remaining figure comprises the totality of the minorities that range through the length and breadth of the country. Despite claims that some of these groups had interacted even before colonialism politically merged them, they are often at loggerheads in their colonial and postcolonial interactions. Nnoli (2003) further claims that the thickening of ethnic identity is a colonial phenomenon initiated by the contradictions of the years of the Depression and the Second World-War. The political economy dynamics of the colonial period, specifically between 1928 and 1948, led to the ethnicisation of Nigeria's socio-political environment.

According to Nnoli (2003), the mutual respect often dominates the relationships between settlers and hosts in some of the communities that have played host to the spectre of ethnic-motivated violence. Rather than creating an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence, the ethnic jingoists and chauvinists fan the embers of rivalry and discord. Some of those that have occurred in the past include the Sagamu, Kano, Bodija, and Idi-Araba Riots (Anifowose, 2006: 321). More incidents that are recent occurred in Bauchi (Boko Haram mayhem) and Jos (crises that started in 2009). Despite the provisions of Article 41 (1) of the 1999 Constitution, efforts are often made to alienate settlers in the scheme of things, while at other times immigrants attempt to ride over hosts. In effect, the spirit of accommodation and tolerance were not considered in the series of ethnic violence that occurred in the past and continue to happen. The damages have been tremendous, costing losses of human lives and material resources in addition to the unquantifiable loss of the spirit of 'oneness' that needs to be entrenched in a multinational society like Nigeria. The challenges inherent in diversity are not peculiar to Nigeria; however, each State must adopt internal mechanisms for managing its diversity. In this wise, Duruji (2010) cautions on the use of transposing solutions from one State to the other, but advice on the necessity of synchronising the peculiar circumstances of each State in any proffered panacea. The history, culture, values, politics, and economy are some of the many essential variables inducing conflicts; as such, their solution must be localised.

#### **2.2.8.4 Problem of Minority Question**

Within any plural arrangement, there is always a minority principally because of the existence of the crosscutting nature of labels in society. Omololu et al (2012) note the complexities in minority questions, as there is always a minority within another minority. The minority questions focuses on how to meet the needs and demands for minority groups for economic advantage and prosperity and how to include this on the agenda (Omolulu et al, 2012). Minorities have to contend with a dominant majority, thereby becoming subordinate and having less power, voice and influence in issues that affect them (Omolulu et al, 2012). Faleti (2006) thus concludes that the “minority question is present in all variables demarcating the differences amongst groups in heterogeneous societies, and we cannot eliminate or completely remove minority problems from a plural society”. Thus, there are the religious, ethnic, and language minorities. The relationship among the various ethnic groups in Nigeria remains one of the fundamental issues in Nigeria’s federalism. The ubiquitous nature of ethnicity can be gleaned from its impact on every aspect of social, economic and political lives. Ismagilova (1996: 25) comments thus:

The ethnicity is seen in different spheres of life, viz., in the activities of parties, in functioning of the ruling bodies, in the army, in the social and economic field, in the sphere of culture, etc. the parties that were active in the past decades in the predominant number of countries were created, as a rule, upon the ethnic principle. Even with the introduction of the multi-party system, there have been few changes in recent years. The presently existing parties and organisations, in reality, express the interest of definite ethnic groups. Thus, ethnic consciousness is a fact of reality which cannot be ignored.

Ethnic affiliation and ethnic identity are overriding other social cleavages and superseding other bases of differentiation to become the master principle and the dominant identity for purposes of socio-political action (Etang, 2004). Therefore in a plural society, attempts at integration should ensure that all ethnic segments of the population feel a sense of belonging in the whole. A contrary scenario would produce adverse circumstances of immense proportions.

The primary and most forceful minority groups in Nigeria are found to be ethnic groups. These groups are found virtually within all of the major ethnic groups and have continuously expressed their perceived insecurity ever since the creation of the federal arrangement, with its regional tripod basis. This perceived insecurity and marginalisation is borne out of the overbearing influences of the major groups in national political affairs and the determination of the fate of the minority ethnic groups. Therefore, they sought for better representation in the governance process of the yet to be independent Nigeria.

The Nigerian experience demonstrates the agony and frustrations of minority groups that are forced to coexist with the majority groups who are constantly engaged in fierce competition for domination of the broader political landscape. The regions as at independence were too large and consequently too powerful such that the majority ethnic group in each region is colossally larger than the ethnic minorities (Awa, 1964). This situation makes the minority politically insecure. In effect, the minority groups become pawns on the chessboards of the domineering majority groups. The minorities never appreciated the situation they found themselves all through the period of colonialism, and the perceived debilitating condition became worse with the creation of three strong regions, and the subsequent commencement of self-rule. The fear of what independent Nigeria held for the minority group became the driving force for agitation.

Eventually, the Sir Henry Willink's Minority Commission was set-up in 1957-1958 to assess the position of minority groups in Nigeria, vis-à-vis the majority groups, and offer suggestions and recommendations on how the situation could be improved, if need be. After its sitting, the commission outrightly disagreed with the notion of creating more regions as a remedy to the conditions faced by minority groups, and instead, recommended a more expansive role for the government at the centre to counter-balance the possible domination of the majorities over the minorities within their regions (Osaghae, 1992). The minorities were dissatisfied with the conclusions and resumed their agitation after independence (Awa, 1964). Eventually, a positive response was received with the creation of the Mid-Western Region in the 1963 Constitution. Subsequently, successive military administrations undertook state creation efforts beginning in 1967 for their political reasons, but also for the benefits of the minorities. The overriding principle has been the political empowerment of groups in Nigeria, and by extension, economic and social development.

However, the fact that some of these states were not economically viable raises a question on why they were created according to Osaghae (1992). Instructively, the nature of creating more states has yet to remedy the problems of the minority. The issue has become the marginalisation of the minority in every facet of national life. Hence, there is some sense in the restraint exercised by the Sir Henry Willink's Minority Commission known as the first minority commission in the minorities' quest for more states. To stem the tide of rancorous agitations from the minority groups, the Nigerian State must endeavour to settle problems to the mutual satisfaction of both majority and minority. A plausible way to do this is to ensure "*all* respective groups within feel themselves

as winners” (Osaghae, 1992). The likely way of feeling like winners is contained in Fleiner’s (1996: 92-93) methods of protecting minority rights at the constitutional level. These are (a) Granting autonomy and independent development; (b) Protection of individual rights; (c) Special rights for representation in state organs, and; (d) Support of and respect for cultural identity as well as; €Acceptance of the value of pluralism by the state. The absorption of these methods in the Nigerian system would guarantee a greater level of acknowledgement of ‘Nigerian’s’ by the ethnic minorities. A significant step in this direction is the institutionalisation of the “Federal Character Principle” (Aziegbe, 2014) which portends to provide a sense of belonging for all Nigerians in respect of opportunities for representation in every federal position, thus foreclosing the chances of marginalising the minorities.

Towards this end, Article 153 (1C) of the 1999 Constitution includes the establishment of the Federal Character Commission (FCC) among other related commissions and councils. Through this commission, government attempts to assure all, either minority or majority, that they will obtain adequate representation in the governance of the State. This is made possible through the states where minorities exist and states who have the opportunity to negotiate with the majority about individuals or groups chosen to represent them at the federal level. The process is however not without its hitches, such as mediocrity, reinforcement of ethnic jealousy and hatred, and complexity of minority within minority among other factors. The most grievous glitch is that the implementation of the Federal Character has heightened the fear of sectional domination in Nigeria (Olaiya, 2004). A reversal of the trend has, however, become impossible because of the reluctance of the operators to the path of justice and equity. The author recommends explicitly the emergence of quality leadership, rather than the restructuring of the Nigerian federation as the most crucial factor in the resolution of the minority question (Olaiya, 2004).

### **2.3 Power Rotation Principle**

Due to the volatile nature of ethnic rivalries and the need to promote ethnic inclusiveness in governance especially at the presidential level in Nigeria, various strategies have been devised by the political elites among which is the idea of the power rotation formula. This concept has attracted scholarly attention in Nigeria in recent times. Some of the scholarly works include Morgan, 2014; Uwaifo, 2016; Awopeju 2012; and Salawu & Hassan, 2011. In particular, the



concept of presidential power rotation found its way into the political lexicon of Nigeria, especially during the Fourth Republic.

Meanwhile, in the context of this study, the term zoning, power shift, power sharing, and power rotation have been used interchangeably. Historically, Morgan (2014) opines that the concept of “power shift” and “rotation” are not novel in the Nigerian political lexicon. It is not novel because it follows long historical agitations. This is because, since the attainment of independence in 1960, the fear of domination by one ethnic group over the other has defined the polity and this has continued to promote unhealthy rivalry among the major ethnic groups in the country. Following the historical trend, multi-ethnic competition in Nigeria is always characterised by constant suspicion, fear, and constant doubts of one another resulting in tension and deep resentment (Uwaifo, 2016). This unending suspicion led to the search for a method that could bring about equal representation for political power in governance.

To this end, the disparity in the rotation of political power among and within the various ethnic nationalities creates resentment and hatred that might eventually result in violence and war in the system. These are as a result of the fact that Nigerian federalism lacked the required solid foundation for a federal system that is formidable. These eventually led to loyalty to a multi-ethnic society rather than loyalty to the nation (Uwaifo, 2016). When there is fear of domination and mutual suspicion, competition for power becomes unavoidable among multi-ethnic groups. In an attempt to douse these tensions and to ensure equitable distribution of presidential power in the country, the political elites introduced the term - power rotation principle. This concept, however devoid of universal definitions, is mostly conceptualised about the perception of the person defining it as the following definitions below show.

In the opinion of Robinson (2014), power rotation is defined as the movement of political power from one zone to the other with the much hospitable characterisation that guarantees each zone equal and inevitable access to the presidency, irrespective of size, location or political pedigree. Political Bureau Report (1987) defines the rotation of political power as a procedure by which political positions are being shared among top military officers or democratically elected civilians. To Awopeju (2012), power rotation can also be referred to as a means of sharing critical political appointments among the elite in a multi-ethnic society. Salawu & Hassan (2011) sees zoning of presidential power as one of the expressions of ethnic nationalism in Africa. In a simple understanding, zoning of public office especially that of the president depicts that political offices

are shared and rotated from one part to the other. This could be ethnic, regionally or religion based, ranging from the North to South or East and West or Muslims and Christians or vice versa. Based on this arrangement, a former Nigeria Senate president (Okadigbo 1999) expressed his understanding that the zoning formula was adopted among Nigerian political parties with a view of ensuring rotational arrangements in the presidency and other significant offices like Vice President, secretary of the federation and permanent secretary at the executive level. Even at the legislative level, offices including that of the Nigerian Senate President, Speaker of the House of Representatives are also zoned.

In practical reality, power rotational arrangement in the Nigeria Fourth Republic was followed by Olusegun Obasanjo; he demonstrated adherence to the formula in his appointment during his tenure. For instance, during the first term in office (1999-2003) the president was from the south (South West), the office of vice-president went to the North East, while the office of Senate president went to the South East, and deputy speaker and secretary to the government of the federation offices went to the South-South. Similarly, the office of speaker of the House of Representative went to the North West while those of deputy senate president and party chairperson went to the Northcentral zone of the country. The same thing played out under Umar Musa Yar'Adua regime, the speaker of the House of Representatives was impeached, and the replacement was taken from the South West. With this arrangement, the government demonstrated and settled the PDP's rotation power-sharing principle.

While justifying the adoption of the rotational principle, Okadigbo (2001) justified that the idea behind the practice was principally to ensure the promotion of Nigerian unity and stability in the political system, keeping in mind economic growth and development in the country. He further remarked that rotational arrangements were expected to promote a sense of belonging among all ethnic groups by treating them equally to identify themselves with the Nigerian Constitution (Vanguard, 5<sup>th</sup> April 2001). The power rotation principle was developed as a written document in the constitution of the People's Democratic Party's (PDP) in 1999. The cardinal goal of the principle contained in Article 7(2c) the idea that the zoning policy is in consonance with the law of equity, justice, and fairness and the party shall adhere to the policy, and also, it shall be enforced by the appropriate executive committee at all levels (Nwala, 1997). In line with this, the party maintained since 1999 that all-important appointed and elected public offices shall reflect the

formula between the North, the South, and among the six geopolitical zones, and this is important for realising the federal character principle stated in the 1979 and 1999 constitutions.

For Sanusi (2010), zoning/power shift is a complicated issue, its potential contribution to national unity is dubious and its negative consequences unpredictable and unmanageable. Also, Agbakoba (2005) in Calculia (2011) opines that it is essential to ask why the drafters of the constitution prescribed zoning or its constitutional name, federal character. The reason is quite simple, there are two types of federations: homogenous federations and heterogeneous federations. A homogeneous federation is where citizens have a strong sense of national unity, and a diverse or divided federation is where citizens hold loyalty to their ethnic groups rather than national government. In a unitary system of government like Ghana, Uwaifo (2016) opines that unity is not a significant issue and the social forces such as the centrifugal and centripetal forces allow a stable central government. In a heterogeneous society or diverse and divided federation like Nigeria, citizens identify with very distinct groups. Sometimes some members may see their identity as compatible with the sectional interest rather than national identity, thus creating tension around the issue of national unity. In this situation, Nigeria is a perfect illustration of a diverse or divided federation.

From whatever angle one may look at power rotation, it is important to know that it is a strategy for resolving disputes on who sits as President in the social hierarchy (Suberu, 1996). Instead of fighting over who should have power over whom, power-sharing is based on a joint exercise of power. If conflicts can be reframed to focus on how such power sharing might take place, they can become much more constructive (Calculia, 2011).

### **2.3.1 Structure and Processes of Power Rotation**

Orji (2008) in his thesis titled, “Power-sharing: the element of continuity in Nigerian politics” categorises power-sharing into three major dimensions, which include: the territorial, fiscal and political aspects. He opines that the territorial aspect of power-sharing relates to federalism and the creation of states. The fiscal aspect of power-sharing relates to the revenue allocation system, and finally, the political aspect of power-sharing refers to the methods of office distribution (Orji, 2008).

### **2.3.1.1 Territorial Dimension of Power Rotation**

In the territorial dimension of power-sharing, the creation of the state is the arrangement through which federal units are formed, and territorial powers are shared. First, there is the creation of ethnically homogeneous states during Nigeria's First Republic (1960-1966), especially among the geographically and demographically large ethnic groups like the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo. Then ethnically heterogeneous states were created to hold together several minority groups (Orji, 2008).

### **2.3.1.2 Fiscal Dimension of Power Rotation**

According to Orji (2008), the economic dimension of power rotation is linked to revenue allocation and dominated by two critical processes. At the vertical level of revenue allocation, power sharing is characterised by fiscal centralisation. This gives a more considerable amount of national revenue to the federal government vis-à-vis the state and local governments. At the horizontal level, budgetary powers are shared on the principle of equality of states. The principles of fiscal centralisation and equality of states are complemented by the centralised system of revenue collection and administration in Nigeria.

### **2.3.1.3 The Political Dimension of Power Rotation**

The political dimension of power rotation is concerned with office distribution. A constitution drawn up in 1979 saw the introduction of the principle of 'Federal Character'. The main purpose of this, according to Section 14(3) of the 1979 constitution, was to ensure 'that no state, ethnic, or sectional groups shall have a predominance of persons in government and any of its agencies'. This meant for example: (a) the government should have at least one minister from each state; (b) the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should have a member from each state; (c) governors from all states should be represented in the Council of State and the National Economic Council (NEC).

Also, political parties, the armed forces, and the civil service were also to adopt the principle of Federal Character. In 1996, the Federal Character Commission (FCC) was established to oversee the implementation and practice of the Federal Character. The principle of Federal Character faces four main challenges: first, it relates to the states as the primary political entities which do not necessarily ensure ethnic and religious balance within the country; second, it deals with the inclusion of different groups. However, it does not address how to ensure that one group

does not secure for itself all critical positions of power. Thirdly the Federal Character and state creation have increased the power of Nigeria's ethnic majorities at the expense of ethnic minorities, who feel marginalised in the political sphere.

Further, the Federal Character does not ensure that representatives from the same ethnic group or geographical region do not monopolise key offices. Nigeria's power-sharing systems have tried to address fear and suspicion among the country's various ethnic groups for decades (Rustad, 2008). However, corruption at large-scale, and irresponsible exploitation of oil resources are making those systems weak and, in some instances, counterproductive. The violence in the Niger Delta poses a threat, not only to people in the area but also to Nigeria's fragile democracy as well as regional security in West Africa. Given the rising international demand for oil, a full-blown crisis in the Niger Delta could further destabilise the volatile crude oil market with far-reaching consequences.

From the preceding, the arrangement that was put in by the constitution, as expressed in the federal character principle, is a prototype of power rotation principle designed to ensure equitable distribution of power and offices; to avoid the feeling of being marginalised as well as enhancing stability in the political system.

#### **2.3.1.4 Historical Overview of Power Rotation in Nigeria**

The issue of equitable power rotation has been very contentious in Nigeria, since independence. This constant debate led to the setting up of the committee on power-sharing during the 1994/1995 constitutional conference in Nigeria. Ladan (2011) reports that the Committee saw itself as being saddled with the onerous task of finding a solution to an age-old problem which had defied not only all past attempts at a permanent solution but also evoked high emotions from all parties. Therefore, the first issue to be resolved was to adopt a concept of power that went beyond the political form (Ladan, 2011). The idea of the clear-cut rationale behind the power-sharing formula becomes sacrosanct to the committee. The Committee decided to see power rotation as examining issues of equity, fairness, and justice in the allocation of economic, military, bureaucratic, media and intellectual power (Ladan, 2011:34).

The Committee also recognised that in a country like Nigeria with its diverse peoples and their corresponding different political, cultural and economic endowments, true federalism must

reflect a genuine attempt to regulate relationship among the groups, as well as reflect these identifiable divergences within a framework of national unity (Ladan, 2011:40). The concept of national unity does not, however, imply national uniformity. It is axiomatic that federal systems vary from one country to another and that each federal society devices its unique federal form congruent to its peculiar socio-economic and political challenges (Ladan, 2011:35-36). The Committee further laid claims to the composition of Nigeria's federal system which reflects its diversities, history and its people at a particular point in time. The Committee noted that in true federalism, powers and functions of the components units that made up the federation must be separated and demarcated to ensure mutual understanding between local inhabitants and at the same time foster national integration (Ladan, 2011:40).

From the preceding, having considered the political difficulties and historical experiences of the country, the Committee strongly concluded and recommended that Nigerians should devise their power rotation formula in line with the institutions based on past experiences of the country. According to the Committee, this conclusion and recommendations become paramount because imbalances orchestrated most of the conflicts, violence, and tensions in many parts of the country in power distribution of political offices.

### **2.3.2 Agitation for Presidential Power Rotation in Nigeria: Analysis of Contributing Factors**

In the past two decades, power rotation has attracted academic attention. This is born out of the fact that ethnic cleavages and the quest for self-determination are some of the most severe sources of violence and conflicts in many heterogeneous societies including Nigeria (Lijphart, 2002). There is also “a common assumption that democracy and political stability would be difficult to achieve in multi-ethnic societies. Behind this assumption is the notion that deep social divisions and political differences are elements, which would ensure chronic instabilities and breakdown of democracy” Orji (2008:20). On the contrary, the emergence of power rotation challenged this assumption because power rotation can facilitate democratic stability in plural societies (Suberu, 1996).

Literature affirms that power rotation is subdivided into three strands— territorial, fiscal and political dimensions (Orji, (2008). The political dimension of power rotation is concerned with

office distribution. In Nigeria, power rotation is implemented through methods of federal character and zoning formula. Orji (2008:32) writes that:

The federal character principle ensures that each state of Nigeria is considered in the selection and recruitment into government agencies, while zoning is an informal arrangement, in which the states in Nigeria are aggregated into zones or regions to allocate offices. These processes ensure that the top political offices are shared among Nigeria's ethno-regional elite groups.

On this note, to provide a better analysis of power rotation agitation in Nigeria, it is pertinent to examine some of the contributing factors.

### **2.3.2.1 Elite Competition**

One of the dominant factors contributing to the agitations for power rotation formula is the rivalry and unhealthy competition among political elites in Nigeria. This study earlier established that power rotation is a concept developed by the dominant political elites, especially the Northern elites in the People's Democratic Party (PDP), to cater for their parochial interest. Historically, party politics in the 1950s and 1960s were dominated by competition among the three dominant ethnic groups (the North, Igbo and Yoruba). The three dominant political parties (NPC, NNPC and AG) emerged to represent the interest of the three ethnic groups, and the three parties controlled each region of Nigeria, that is Western, Eastern and Northern Region respectively. With this arrangement, it appears that the goal of the three elite groups was to exercise political hegemony in Nigeria as a whole or at least maintaining parity with other groups. As a result, there was a deliberate strategy by each of the elite group to tighten its control on its Region while striving to gain access into the other regions (Jackson, 2000).

In this struggle, the North's great asset was the large population that gave it 174 out of 312 seats in the Federal Legislature in 1960. Here, the Yoruba and Igbo elites realised that they could only control the federal government if they capture seats in the North. They helped organise minority parties in the North while the North reacted by sponsoring minority parties in the Eastern and Western regions. This was the setting against which the general elections of 1959 and 1964 took place. This intense competition among the elite groups led to gross electoral malpractices and chaos among the political opponents in the three regions (Dudley, 1977). In 1964, the Igbo elite mobilised the Eastern region to boycott the general election, on the basis that it was rigged in the North. There were also allegations of blatant rigging in the Western Regional election of 1965

which led to violent protests and disorder (Sklar, 1991). All these circumstances prompted the military officers to intervene in January 1966.

However, the coup was seen primarily as an Igbo sponsored coup as many of its leaders were Igbos. To make matters worse, the coup leader (Kaduna Inzegwu) surrendered to Major-General Aguiyi-Ironsi, an Igbo officer who was the most senior officer. In July 1966, Ironsi was assassinated in a coup masterminded by mostly Northern officers, which ushered in Yakubu Gowon as the Head of State. This elite competition for power created rancour and hatred among the dominant ethnic groups and had been consistently threatening the stability of the polity. This ugly situation led to the outbreak of civil war between 1967 and 1970, and many lives and properties were lost. Power rotation becomes necessary to manage this unhealthy rivalry in the thirst for power acquisition among the three dominant ethnic groups.

### **2.3.2.2 Ethnic Identity and the Question of Minority versus Majority**

Another contributing factor that fuels the agitation for power rotation is the nature of ethnic diversity and the notion of a minority and majority syndrome of the country. Otite (1990) describes ethnicity as one of the most basic and politically salient identities in Nigeria. This claim is reinforced by the fact that Nigerians are always identifying themselves with their ethnic relations in both competitive and non-competitive settings. This is further reflected in the report of the Authoritative Survey (25<sup>th</sup> November 2000) on “Attitudes to Democracy and Markets in Nigeria”, that “ethnicity is demonstrably the most conspicuous group identity in Nigeria” (Lewis and Bratton 2000: 27). The report shows that almost one-half (48.2%) of Nigerians chose to identify themselves with an ethnic identity, compared to nearly one-third (28.4%) who opted for class identities, and 21.0% who selected a religious identity (Lewis and Bratton 2000: 24-25). In essence, close to two-thirds of the population see themselves as members of one ethnic, religious, cultural or regional group than as Nigerians, and tend to promote class identity in their workplace (Lewis and Bratton 2000: 25).

The issue of ethnicity in Nigeria has its origin since the pre-colonial period and is further strengthened by the colonial and post-colonial regimes. Despite its historical linkage and the quantum of studies that scholars have devoted to it, the actual and total number of ethnic groups in the country remains unanswered. Because of this, different scholars have come up with different



estimations which include 619 (Coleman 1958), 394 (Murdock 1975), 161 (Gandonu 1978) and 374 (Oтите 1990). In the same vein, a report by the ethnic mapping project puts the number at over 500 (Ekeh, 2004:22). In arriving at this figure, different authors used various criteria, but the common one includes kinship, language, common origin, and the territorial origin. There is also the fact that factors such as common origin, boundaries, and ethnic identities are not subject to a single understanding and as such, it remains a factor in the continuous debate. A practical example of this problematic definition is the case of the Ikwerre in the Rivers State. History had it that before the civil war, they were Igbo but later isolated themselves as a separate group. This situation of migrated groups from the original group because of war constitute another category of problematic classification as an ethnic group (Odetola, 1978).

Scholars like Osaghae (1998) have summarised and categorised the issue of ethnic identities into majority and minority groups. Osaghae (1998) noted that the unequal size and the population of the groups are instrumental to the categorisation. Historically, the origin of minority and majority groups could be traceable to the way colonial masters delineated the former regions into large groups dominated by Hausa/Fulani in the North, Igbo in the East and Yoruba in the West. It is important to note that before the creation of these regions, there were no major or minor group distinctions in the country. However, with the emergence of the regions, there exist the core and periphery groups characterised by majority and minorities. This situation is further polarised by the creation and multiplication of states and local government areas which replaced the existing regions, therefore making the new majorities and minorities more prominent.

Further development in the realm of ethnic identities was occasioned by the creation of states and local government which led to the expansion and spread of ethnic identities in various states of the federation, and as such influenced the conflicts within the state and local communities. The consequential effect of this led to the upsurge of conflict between indigenes and non-indigenes, and settlers and non-settler's dichotomy.

On the final note, it is now established that the recurrent crisis among various groups was to redefine themselves as minorities have felt marginalised in the struggle for equitable distribution of power and resources at the national level. Such redefinitions have not, however, changed the historical context of the majority-minority cleavage.

The dominant ethnic groups have been rotating presidential political power among themselves since the attainment of independence in 1960, except for the slight changes seen in

Goodluck Jonathan, from the South-South minority group, emerging as the circumstantial president after the death of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2010). As a result, the agitation for equitable distribution of power remains the focal point of tension by these groups called minorities, and this contributes to the uprising of the power rotation formula to accommodate their interest.

### **2.3.2.3 Religious Factor**

Ranking next to ethnicity is religious identity, which has been consistently used by the political elites to agitate for power rotation. This religious factor dominates and serves as the propelling factor that fuels ethnicity among the core Hausa-Fulani in the North, especially those states that adopted Sharia law in the Fourth Republic. To this end, Lewis and Bratton (2000: 25) argue that the Yoruba ethnic grouping was susceptible to define themselves ethnically than Hausa who identified with religion only. In Nigeria, religions were largely classified into three— Christian, Muslim and Traditional. Of the three, traditional beliefs are the least politically active; they comprise of ethnic groups and subgroups which cut across villages, clans, and kin groups that culminates in the worship of different gods and goddesses. Although, there are some exceptions in parts of the Kogi, Kwara, and Nassarawa states where masquerade activities associated with traditional religion constitute the source of conflicts. Consequently, Lewis and Bratton (2000: 5) submitted that Christian and Muslim identities had been the basis of religious differentiation and conflict, with Nigerian Muslims much more likely to lay claim to religious identity than Christians have. How this differentiation underlies the North-South cleavage (regarding the North and South that is predominantly Muslim and Christian respectively) and hastens ethnic divisions in the North has already been referred to.

However, it must be reiterated here that despite the broad categorisation of Christians and Muslims, several sub-cleavages have at one time or the other been politically salient or have the potential to be and have generated intra-group conflicts. For instance, among Christians, there are several denominations, including: The Protestants (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and Lutheran), the Catholics, the Evangelical Church of West Africa, (ECWA) the Seventh Day Adventists, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and a host of 'home-grown', 'white garment' (Altamura and Celestial) and Pentecostal churches. Pentecostal churches, which by some accounts represent the fundamentalist segment of Christianity in the country (Udoidem, 1997). Also, through umbrella bodies like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), and the

Catholic Bishops Conference (CBN), churches have demonstrated significant roles as supporters of civil society who fought relentlessly against the military regime, thereby promoting democratisation in Nigeria. Nevertheless, Protestant-Catholic cleavages have been a significant factor in elections among the Igbo of the southeast (Udoidem 1997).

Furthermore, among the Muslims too, there are several sects and fundamentalists including the Sanusiyya, Tijanniyya, Ahmadiyya, and Quadriyya, who have engaged in conflict with each other. There are also some umbrella organisations, which aim at the propagation of Islam. One of these is the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), which was founded by the Sardauna of Sokoto in 1961 (Dudley, 1975). After the Iranian Islamic revolution in the 1970s, there was an increase in radical and fundamentalist activities amongst Muslim youths giving rise to Muslim sects like the Maitatsine, Izala movement, Muslim Brothers (Shiites) and the Taliban, all calling for perfectionist Islam based on Sharia law. That is the eradication of heretical innovations and the establishment of an Islamic state or theocracy, among others. The activities of these sects exacerbate the religious conflicts that escalated the Northern political landscape in the 1980s and 1990s (Dudley, 1975). Most of these involved conflicts between Muslims and Christians with clear ethnic undertones, but some, especially those involving the Izala, also entailed anti-state mobilisation. Factors that have heightened the politicisation of Muslim identities include: state policies and interventions, which Christians allege are pro-Muslim (for example state sponsorship of pilgrimage to Mecca and membership of the Organization of Islamic Conference – (OIC) - are cases in point); the attempts to extend Sharia law to the federal level; and the adoption of Sharia law as the fundamental law by a number of states.

All these bring about tussles between having a Christian leader who will promote Christian agendas or Muslims in the realm of power. In balancing these, political parties like PDP have always put into consideration religious power balances when rotating power. For example, in 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo was a Christian and Vice President Atiku Abubakar was a Muslim; Late President Umar Yar'Adua was a Muslim, and Vice President Goodluck Jonathan was a Christian (2007).

#### **2.3.2.4 Regionalism**

Regional cleavages and identities evolved from the structures created and consolidated by the colonialists in the process of state formation in Nigeria. The most fundamental of the cleavages

is, between the North and South, these being the initial structures of the colonial state, were administered separately even after the two units were amalgamated in 1914. The other cleavages emerged with the introduction of a three-region structure (North, East, and West) in 1946. A fourth region, Mid-West, was created in 1963; but partly because of its status as home to minorities, the creation did not fundamentally alter the tripartite regional structure existing before the military sacked the First Republic in 1966. The ethnic majority-minority cleavage and the majoritarian basis of politics took roots within these structures.

The new elite was regionalised from inception, and especially after 1946 when the political space was opened to more Nigerian participation, the majority elite segment deployed strategies of ethnic mobilisation and exclusionary politics to establish hegemonic control of the regions. With the meaning of regionalism reduced to “North for Northerners”, “East for Easterners” and “West for Westerners”, a discriminatory system under which people from other regions living in these areas were deprived of rights and privileges and excluded from the political process had become entrenched. This was how the infamous distinction between indigenes and non-indigenes strengthened. Although the erstwhile regions were abrogated in 1966, they remain crucial political cleavages till date. The new forms of exclusionary politics that have emerged alongside new political-administrative structures, which later reinforced discrimination against non-indigenes, namely ‘statism’ and ‘localism’, was because of the upsurge of regionalism. In another development, the conflict around the regional identities led to the demarcation of the country into the six geo-political zones (Northeast, Northwest, Northcentral, Southwest, Southeast, and South-South) in 1996 with the sole aim of rotating federal power and resources (Agbaje, 1998). These geopolitical zones remain until this day.

Even so, the former regional divisions remain very strong, particularly with the efforts of the various elite segments to re-organise along old regional lines. A case in point is the Northern elite, which, through organisations like the Northern Elders Forum and the Arewa Consultative Forum, has continued to mobilise around the theme of pan-regional unity. In 1996, at a reform conference, the agitation for Presidential rotation among the six geo-political zones became stronger, and these are what gave birth to the idea that PDP started using in the fourth republic (1999).

### **2.3.2.5 Rat Race for the Presidency**

In a federal arrangement like Nigeria, every indigenous group will constantly be competing to assume the presidency, which makes leadership issue a turning point in the country. Nevertheless, scholars and observers of Nigerian federalism over the years realised some structural manoeuvrings in the federal arrangement, such as the long-time of military rule, which discarded virtually all federal principles by making the federal government the superordinate and the states subordinate to the federal might. Similarly, it was also observed that some regions (North) were feeding on other (South) regions for survival due to limited resources of such region. This had made some regions, especially the Northern Region, to assume a hegemonic position and constantly fight for the presidency in order to allocate resources to their region. The exclusive dominance of the presidency by northerners since Nigeria's independence underpins ethnonational agitations that threaten the polity (see section 1.2).

The leadership question in Nigeria is directly linked to the country's inability to resolve the conditions of its statehood satisfactorily. As Achebe (1984:1) stated, "The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership." To this end, there was a carryover mentality of the leadership problem from the colonial days. The post-independence leaders deepened this problem when they assumed the role of withdrawing British colonialists. In the end, the strong involvement of the western and eastern region during the nationalistic struggle against colonial rule made the colonial masters create a special love and affinity for the North who were very docile during the struggle (Mimiko, 2006). The British were consequently transferring the political power to the North by outright manipulation of the system in two important ways. First, they manipulated census figures to favour the North by ascribing numerical demographic superiority to it. British colonialists abrogated the principle of North-South parity in the allocation of seats in parliament and, in its stead, introduced a population-weighted principle that allocated 52% of the seats in parliament to the North (Osaghae, 1998; Mimiko, 2006). Second, the Nigerian independence was tactically delayed so that necessary human capital could be put in place in the North before granting independence (Oladeji, 2006).

Thus, since 1960, except for the interregna of January–July 1966, 1976–1979, and August–November 1993, the North held on to power until 1999 (Oladeji, 2006). The Northern elite, who took over from the retreating British colonialists, ruled both as military Autocrats and Democrats for forty, out of Nigeria's fifty-three, years as an independent state in the process. They tactically

destroyed Nigeria's federalism by concentrating all power at the centre, to the detriment of the regional government, making the federal government all powerful. The consequential effect of the arrangement was the creation of a powerful presidency that was all in control when determining the socio-economic and political fate of the elite class. For this reason, the federal government accumulates more powers and assume a monopolistic control over Nigeria's wealth (Obianyo, 2003).

Furthermore, leadership questions should not solely base on ethnicity, as this will appear too simplistic and theoretically barren. Therefore, other factors that are sacrosanct for appreciating the selection process in the ascension to the Nigerian presidency should be appreciated. Within the federal arrangement of the Nigerian state, it is not possible for any of the over 300 ethnic groups to jump over others to ascend to the presidency. The ascendancy of the presidency has always been manipulated within elite ranks. The inclusion of a clause of federal character in the 1999 Nigerian Constitution is intended to appease and minimise the tensions that often accompany the sharing of state resources among the elite (Section 14 (3) & (4), Nigerian Constitution 1999). The minority ethnic elite expressed fears of marginalisation in the pre-independence era because the majoritarian card has been played to their detriment. They, therefore, demand for the creation of separate regions for the western, eastern, and northern minorities. To address this demand, the Willinks Commission was set up and addressed the complaints.

The commission observed in their report that, "the minorities who have appeared before us have thought of separation as a remedy for their troubles but unity might have the same effect, and though unity cannot be manufactured by a Commission, a machinery can be devised which aims rather at holding the state together than at dividing it" (Ojiako, 1981: 44). Instead of the Commission to address their demand, the tendency for the maintenance of Nigerian unity does not allow them to do justice to the demand. They, then, recommend a political solution that is not in accord with the wishes of the minorities. The recommendation states that the constitutional entrenchment of a Bill of Rights and the creation of Special and Minority Areas are under the direction of boards to address the peculiar problems of the Niger Delta (Osaghae, 1998). In the end, the Willinks Commission and the British government, rather than address the fears of the minorities by giving them a sense of belonging in the ascendancy of the presidency, looked over the issue and hoped that the emergence of national political parties after independence would help to assuage such fears (Osaghae, 1998). After independence, the leaders who assumed the power

made an attempt to address the fears of minorities by creating the Midwest out of the Western region; they also attempted to carve minority regions out of the Eastern and Northern regions before a military coup d'état changed the political permutations. However, the following tensions by minority states were more a product of an elite tactic of readjustment and inter-regional alliances to capture, rather than justice.

The leadership crisis in Nigeria was deepened and sustained by politico-economic forces. Onimode (1983: 64) notes that, "After flag independence, political power was handed over to reactionary bureaucratic bourgeoisie who were more anxious to manipulate state power to strengthen their tenuous legitimacy and fragile economic base," than to discuss any national issue. Attempts by the elite to protect their status quo became the order of the day because the Nigerian leaders, who took power, had no secure source of material acquisition, and therefore, used political power for material accumulation (Ake, 1981). Consequently, leadership positions among the post-colonial leaders became a means to an end, with the view to amass the wealth of the state for their personal aggrandisement and self-enrichment (Ikpeze et al., 2004). For this purpose, it is not out of point to assume that the recurrent ethnic agitation for zoning and power sharing was merely an elite quest to create an avenue for ascension to power, and not a manifestation of ethnonational patriotism.

#### **2.3.2.6 Issue of Marginalisation**

The mantra of marginalisation in Nigeria is not a recent phenomenon; it is intricately linked to the foundation of the Nigerian state (Obianyo, 2003). The Nigerian state is a kaleidoscope of ethnic groups and it is estimated that the number of ethnic groups in Nigeria ranges between 250 and 400 (Suberu 2003). The amalgamation of these seemingly disparate ethnonational entities, to create the Nigerian state, was done in 1914. Nevertheless, since then, real integration has remained seemingly elusive. The perennial centrifugalism that characterises inter-ethnic relations in Nigeria is a pointer to this integration dilemma. The dominant elite in the post-independence era believed that the crafting of a state out of the disparate ethnic groups was a mistake that rendered the emergent state a mere geographical expression (Coleman, 1986). This thinking engendered a patently divisive mindset that promoted anti-assimilationist and anti-integrationist dispositions. There is no doubt that the colonial policy, which created and handed over state power to "master" ethnic groups, laid the foundation for inter-ethnic conflictual relationships on the continent. But

the inability of the elite to rise above the restrictions of primordialism and the gains of primordial sentiments for the sustenance and enhancement of their positions of dominance exacerbated and entrenched the ethnic mindset. In blaming colonialism for laying the foundation for ethnicity, just because it brought various ethnonational entities together (Suberu 2003), no provision seems to be made for the culpability of the elite in failing to take advantage of the cosmopolitanism of the colonial era to forge ethnic integration.

As part of its modernisation efforts, colonial governments embarked on the transformation of several hitherto rural areas into urban centres. These cities attracted people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Although the intentions for such modernisation efforts were to drive the socio-economic and political interests of the colonial overlords, these emergent cities later became centres of cultural diversities. But rather than use the platform of cosmopolitanism, which these emergent colonial cities represented, to unleash the forces of assimilation and integration, the elites created fiefdoms of ethnic enclaves that promoted ethnic consciousness and further deepened ethnic rivalry. The political platforms, which the nationalists formed as avenues for engaging the colonial government, were characteristically moored on ethnicity (Coleman 1986). Prior to independence, the recourse of the elite to ethnicity as a means to advance their narrow interests created fear among the minority ethnic groups. The ensuing agitations by these minorities were driven by their fear of being marginalised in an independent Nigeria. In other words, they needed reassurance that the Nigerian state would have spaces for them beside the dominant ethnic groups of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. The Willinks Commission, which the colonial government set up to look into the fears of the minorities, preferred unity among the various ethnic groups on the premise that appropriate machinery be devised to drive it (Ojiako 1981). Thus, in actuality, the issue of marginalisation in the Nigerian state inheres from the current accorded ethnicity in Nigeria's body politic as well as the incapacity of the national elite to create the basis for integration. It is incorrect to contend that the Nigerian elite did not attempt to address the issue of marginalisation in the polity.

Apart from the policies of representativeness and inclusiveness enshrined in the Nigerian constitutions, especially the 1999 Constitution, Ukiwo (2005:14) identifies the motley of attempts to manage Nigeria's ethnonational plurality and feelings of marginalisation. The attempts include, "federalism, the creation of regions, states and local governments, the shift from parliamentarism to presidentialism, the institutionalisation of quota systems in the federal parastatals and ministries,



the prohibition of ethnic political parties, consociation politicking, and the adoption of the federal character principle”. There appears to be no agreement about who is marginalised in Nigeria’s body politic. Almost every group alleges that it is marginalised in the scheme of things in the federation (Obianyo, 2003). Thus, there are cries of marginalisation at every level of government in Nigeria.

The range of issues that drive the allegation of marginalisation, includes ethnic domination at the local and state levels; limited opportunities for the lower class to be recruited into the elite class; exclusion from state patronage system; revenue sharing formula; and resource control and quest to recapture political power. Essentially, the concept of marginalisation in Nigeria denotes exclusion from or denial of means to the power and resources at the state level. Within the Nigerian state, the tendency has been to attribute elasticity to the concept by linking it to ethnic groups instead of restricting it to the political elite. In so doing, the elite who are excluded from the political matrix, hide behind the ethnic cover to allege the marginalisation of their ethnic groups. They deploy such propaganda to mobilise the people for the prosecution of their “wars”, masked as an irredentist campaign to ethnic reinstatement. Lewis (1994) and Obianyo (2003) fell into this conceptualisation trap when they erroneously inferred that marginalisation depicts the neglect, exclusion or inequity in the distribution of socio-economic amenities with respect to a group.

With regard to the military era, Lewis (1994:330) asserts, “northern military dominance has continually provoked feelings of disenfranchisement from southern ethnic groups and the Christian community, and communal rancour escalated throughout Babangida's rule”. The whole politics of marginalisation is anchored on inter-elite rivalry based on the principle of exclusion and not deprivation (Odunze, 2012). The elite who are involved in the marginalisation campaign are those who have been dislodged from the mainstream of socio-economic and political activities of the state. However, this does not suggest that instances of generalised marginalisation are non-existent in the Nigerian polity. The entrenched resource injustice in the Niger Delta alienated the people from the oil wealth generated in their domain and deprived them of the enjoyment of their environment, and the state-supported exclusion of the Igbos as part of unofficial policy of punishing them for the civil war of 1967-1970 are representative of group marginalisation in the Nigerian polity (Osaghae, 1995).

Obianyo (2003) periodises the emergence of marginalisation mind-set in Nigeria’s political firmament to the colonial era. As has been noted, the penchant of Nigerian elites to resort to

ethnicity as a major tool for their reproduction deepened the significance of the allegation of marginalisation. The contemporary resurgence in the allegations of ethnic marginalisation could be located to the period following the annulment of June the 12, 1993 presidential election. Despite the broad-based electoral mandate that made it possible for M. K. O. Abiola to be regarded as the winner of that election and the widespread post-annulment agitations aimed at securing a revalidation, the Yoruba elite considered the annulment as the marginalisation of the Yoruba ethnic group and centred its agitation on this elite make-belief. This narrowness sabotaged national alliances, decelerated the tempo of the anti-state campaigns, and diminished the groundswell of support for the revalidation of Abiola's presidential mandate (Lewis 1994). Since 1993, every ethnic group has painted its own pictures of marginalisation under the auspices of their elite. Interestingly, both the major and minor ethnic groups are not left out in this competition to overreach themselves. The mantra of marginalisation has been elevated to an amulet for effective inter-elite bargaining. This is so because the agitation for the reversal of marginalisation is anchored on the principle of violence, pursued on the auspices of militant and rogue groups. These groups possess, not only nuisance value, but also the actual capacity to unleash violence.

The myth that surrounds the various claims of ethnic marginalisation is the lack of correlation between such claims and constitutionally guaranteed provisions that promote representation in the polity. Despite the yearnings for marginalisation, no state among the federating units in Nigeria has ever been excluded from the federal government or denied its allocations from the federation account. Yet the polity is awash with claims and counter-claims of ethnic marginalisation. By implication, the allegations of marginalisation have nothing to do with the alienation and exclusion of the states or ethnic groups within them but more to do with elite politics among the political gladiators.

## **2.4 Global view on Democratic Consolidation**

Scholars from developed democracies have used different definitions of democratic consolidation. The concept has attracted the attention of scholars and policymakers since the advent of the third wave of democratisation. Since democratic consolidation cannot be discussed outside the purview of the concept of democracy, it is useful to begin to operationalise the concept of democracy itself. Therefore, democracy in this study stands for a people-centered system of government, people-decision on government, people-choice of government and people-support for

the government. This entails periodic popular elections in which the sanctity of the electoral process is strictly guaranteed. It is important to understand that it is only people that decide the existence of democracy. Implicit in this position is the connotation that democracy not only allows mass participation, by way of encouraging the electorate to participate in the selection of their representatives but is also nourished by transparency and accountability in public administration (Yagboyaju, 2013). It should be emphasised that democracy thrives better in many parts of the world where there are also strong democratic institutions. In other words, democratic principles thrive and are more effective when strong institutions of modern government (Yagboyaju, 2013) support them.

With this in mind, democratic consolidation is a conscious attempt at protecting those elements of democracy for effective governance. From the global perspective, those definitions proposed by international scholars are based on two conceptions of democracy: one is a “minimalist conception,” emphasizing procedural or formal democracy (Schmitter, 1992); the other is a “maximalist conception,” focusing on the outcomes of politics, such as institutionalisation of political institutions, social justice, and economic equality. Schmitter (1992:424), who belongs to the minimalist school of thought, defines democratic consolidation as, “the process of transforming the accidental arrangements, prudential norms, and contingent solutions that have emerged during the transition into relations of cooperation and competition that are reliably known, regularly practiced, and voluntarily accepted by those persons or collectives that participate in democratic governance”.

In his own contribution, Linz (1978: 158) asserts that a consolidated democracy is one in which none of the major political actors, parties, organised interests, forces, or institutions consider any alternative to the democratic process to gain power or have a claim to veto the action of democratically elected decision makers. To put it simply democracy must be seen as ‘the only game in town’. Democratic consolidation is about regime maintenance and about regarding the key political institutions as the only legitimate framework for political contestation and adherence to the democratic rules of the game (Ogundiya, 2009). In a more poignant analysis, Diamond & E. Onwudiwe (2009) contends that democratic consolidation means the quality, depth, and authenticity of democracy in its various dimensions has been improved: “political competition becomes fairer, freer, more vigorous and executive; participation and representation broader, more autonomous, and inclusive; civil liberties more comprehensively and rigorously protected;

accountability more systematic and transparent.” Several of the newly emerging democratic regimes are far from consolidated, they are merely surviving without consolidating. Particularly, in the less developed regions of the world, these fragile democratic regimes have experienced significant uncertainty over the rules of the game due to their terrible economic conditions and other social problems. Although many Third-World countries (like Nigeria) have experienced transitions to procedural democracy such as free elections, with few barriers to mass participation and meaningful party competition, this democratic change definitely does not guarantee democratic stability (Lewis, 1994).

Furthermore, democracy can be said to be consolidated when it can avoid democratic breakdown and erosion by ‘eliminating, neutralizing, or converting disloyal players and moving a step further towards completing and deepening democracy measured by the high expectations of regime continuity (Schedler, 1998). In his further analysis, Schedler (1998:101) opines that democratic consolidation is “an omnibus concept, a garbage-can concept, a catch-all concept, lacking a core meaning that would unite all modes of usage”. In the literature, there are two ways of viewing the concept of consolidation: Consolidation as avoiding democratic break down (Linz and Stephan, 1996) and consolidation as the transformation from a diminished sub-type of democracy to a consolidated liberal democracy (Valenzuela, 1992). The former has to do with the process of stabilizing and maintaining the new democracies while the latter focuses on the process of deepening, completing or organizing democracies (Shedler, 1998). Despite the nebulous nature of the concept, most scholars accept its original understanding as being associated with the challenge of securing and extending the life expectancy of new democracies, and of building immunity against the threat of regression to authoritarianism (Schedler, 1998).

Basically, the process of democratisation can be divided into two distinct parts, transition and consolidation, although temporarily the two can overlap or even coincide. Transition is the process, which describes the change from an authoritarian regime – starting with its breakdown – to a functioning democratic regime. It is the process of a radical change in the form of government. When one regards democratisation sequentially, consolidation follows or partially overlaps with transition, yet, there is no common understanding of consolidation. Originally, consolidation was used synonymously with stabilisation or sustainability, however, the persistence of the young Latin-American democracies in a time of strong backlashes and only limited experience of democracy, changed the understanding. The Latin-American democracies persisted although they

were not regarded as consolidated according to many concepts. O'Donnell (1996) pointed out that one should not confuse the persistence of a democracy with the consolidation of a democracy (O'Donnell; 1994/1996). In fact, there is no automatic progress towards consolidation. The development can either go backwards to authoritarian governments or forward to democracy. However, it might also happen that defective executive-biased democracies become consolidated, that they neither break down nor develop towards democracy or polyarchy to recall Dahl (Merkel; 1997:19).

These democracies contain the democratic minimum of elections, but in-between the elections they suffer from a lack of civil rights and/or rule of law. The original meaning of stability became more and more blurred, and consolidation became a term which was or is used for deepening or completing democracy. Schedler (1998) presents the different notions of democracy under five different headings: preventing democratic breakdown, preventing democratic erosion, completing democracy, deepening democracy and organizing democracy.

Having examined democratic consolidation from the perspective of globally developed democracies, it is pertinent to discuss the concept of democracy in relation to democratic consolidation from the view of developing democracies. According to Yagboyaju (2013), the concept of democracy cannot be completely defined without the principles of public accountability, mass participation, and majority rule and minority rights. Mimiko (2010) and Yagboyaju (2013) concludes that any political system that provides for these principles qualifies to be called a democracy (any system that does not, no matter the magnificence of physical infrastructure of democracy put in place, cannot justifiably refer to itself as a democracy). The problematic issue here is that the sanctity of these principles is a function of the majesty of physical democratic infrastructure – the excellence of strong democratic institutions. Hence, according to Ogundiya (2009) cited in Akubo and Yakubu (2014), democratic consolidation is about regime maintenance and the key political institutions as the only framework for political contestation and adherence to the democratic rules of the game. Democratic consolidation should therefore consequently connote a consistent and sustained practice of democratic principles (Yagboyaju 2013). Beyond conceptual orthodoxy, however, democratic consolidation might as well be denoted as when democracy is being consolidated (when democracy is being consolidated in defence of the people-centeredness of the precepts of democracy). Democracy is therefore, a system of government and a system of defence. It is a system for defending the powers of the people against

usurpation by political goons. Democracy defends the hopes of a people against an onslaught by sundry intruders. Therefore, in the context of developing democracies, the stronger the defence mechanisms of democracy, the nearer the tendencies of the system toward democratic consolidation. Hence, democratic consolidation critically refers to the growing of the defence mechanisms of democracy. Consequently, democratic consolidation is a process, not an accomplishment. Some scholars tend to view democratic consolidation as a realisation of achievement. According to Valenzuela (1990) cited in Akubo and Yakubu (2014), the building of a consolidated democracy involves in part an affirmation and strengthening of certain institutions, such as the electoral system, revitalised or newly created parties, judicial independence and respect for human rights, which have been created or recreated during the course of the transition. In this context, democratic consolidation becomes a post-transitional condition, curiously akin to some developmental fixity. Yagboyaju (2013) further opines that democratic consolidation could be said to effectively prevail in most mature and advanced democracies of the world, where many of the prominent democratic principles largely constitute the political culture.

Nevertheless, democratic consolidation is a lot more than all of this. In fact, democratic consolidation is a feature of all true democracies. While the need for building the defence mechanisms of democracy may be more pronounced in emerging democracies, all democracies are prone to attacks that necessitate the fortification of democracy. This process of fortification is democratic consolidation. Democratic consolidation, therefore, is not an end in itself. Hence, the issue of a consolidated democracy is out of consideration. This is because, assuming that such a state is attainable, the subsequent development will invariably translate to a different type of monstrosity which would be an anathema to strong democratic ideals.

#### **2.4.1 Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

In discussing democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic, it must be recognised that Nigeria falls among the developing democracies. For this purpose, issues and challenges of democratic consolidation of most emerging democracies will be taken into consideration. For more understanding, Liberal Theory of Democracy is espoused in analysing democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The Liberal Theory of Democracy is common among capitalist countries such as United States of America, Britain, France, as well as peripheral capitalist

countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa (Akinola, 1996). Put differently, liberal democracy describes the form of democracy prevalent in western politics and gaining adherents throughout the globe. This idea of democracy emerged when capitalism became the dominant mode of production in Europe and North America. The major exponents of this theory are John Locke, J.J. Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, Baron De Montesquieu, etc. The essential features of this theory include the acceptance of capitalism, competitive party systems as opposed to one party systems, rule of law, pressure groups, separation of powers and checks and balances, emphasis on civil liberties or individual rights such as freedom of speech, assembly, press and religion, free, fair and periodic elections based on universal franchise, and abhorrence of revolutionary approach to change of government.

Essentially, the liberal theory of democracy sets-out to design a political system which encourages individual participation and enhances the moral development of the citizens. It grants all adult citizens the right to vote and be voted for regardless of race, gender or property ownership. The utility of this theory as a framework of analysis is that it helps to examine democracy and democratic consolidation in the Nigerian Fourth Republic analytically, as it designs the systematic structure through which a democratic political system can function effectively and efficiently. Besides, it exposes and explains the expectation of any political system, especially as it relates to the conduct of credible election which is one of the factors responsible for consolidating democracy. The liberal theory of democracy has come under fire from critics. It has been criticised because it does not respect absolute majority rule (except when electing representatives). The liberty of major rule is restricted by the constitution or precedent decided by previous generations. In addition, relatively small groups or representatives in the society hold the real power. It has also been criticised because it is merely a decoration over an oligarchy.

For Marxist, Socialist, and left-wing Anarchists, liberal democracy is an integral part of capitalism. Therefore, it is class-based and not democratic or participatory. For non-democratic socialists, it is an honest force used to keep the masses from realizing that their will is relevant in the political process. Besides, liberal democracy is an expensive form of government as democracy means an organisation of opinion, propaganda and frequent elections; all this involves huge expenditure. Money which should be used for productive purposes is spent on electioneering and nursing the constituencies (Asirvatham and Misra, 2009). Although other theories such as the elitist theory of democracy, the pluralist theory of democracy, the classical theory of democracy,

political-economic theory, and Marxist theory of democracy could have been used, none is sufficient enough to analyse democratic consolidation better than the liberal theory of democracy. Arising from the tenets of democracies as presented by the liberal theorist, it has however been met with some challenges which in turn affect the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. Some of these are examined below:

#### **2.4.1.1 Electoral Malpractice**

One of the tenets of democracy is the orderly change of government through credible free, fair and periodic elections. Since the restoration of democratic rule in Nigeria, it has been observed that rotation of government has been orderly while elections have been periodic. Between 1999 and 2011, three different civilian administrations have emerged and there have been three successive transitions from one civilian government to another (Obasanjo Administration, 1999-2007, Yar'Adua/Jonathan Administration, 2007-2011; Jonathan Administration, 2011-2015 and Buhari Administration, 2015 till date). This is also applicable to the legislature. Since 1999, the country has successfully passed through three legislative houses at both the centre and the component units. Elections in the Fourth Republic also experience monumental irregularities and malpractices where institutions of state such as the police, the military, and the electoral body collude to manipulate the electoral process in favour of certain candidates or political parties. This magnitude, also, increases with every election, Akume (2014), Ogbonnaya, Omoju, and Udefuna (2012).

#### **2.4.1.2 Poverty**

Poverty is another factor that constitutes challenges to the democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Nigeria is blessed with abundant human and natural resources, and yet its people are poor. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2016), Nigeria is ranked 118 out of 196 among the world's poorest country. UNDP (2016) further says that in Nigeria hunger exhibits its ugly face in most homes where the average citizen contends with a life of abject poverty. Thus, the average Nigerian is alienated from himself as he lacks the wherewithal to afford the necessities of life such as education and medical facilities. According to Victor (2002) cited in Ogbonnaya,



et.al (2012), about 70% of Nigeria's population is poor. The consequence of this is, the poor masses are easily brainwashed, and their right of choice of government is manipulated, making an objective choice seldom to consideration. Besides, various forms of inducements and gratification such as the stomach infrastructural policy (availability of food) which provide temporary relief from the scourge of poverty are given central attention in making people have democratic choices. Poverty has also been identified by some scholars as one of the causes of security challenges confronting the nation (Awoyemi, 2012; Harrington, 2012).

### **2.4.1.3 Corruption**

Corruption constitutes one of the greatest challenges and threats to democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. The incidence of corruption in the country reached a crescendo in 2004 when a German-based non-governmental organisation called Transparency International (TI) in its 2004 Corruption Perception Index (CPI) report, projected Nigeria as the 2nd most corrupt country in the world (132nd out of 133 countries surveyed) (Akinyemi, 2008). Nigeria has also been ranked as the 3rd most corrupt country in Sub-Saharan Africa and 143rd out of 183 countries surveyed around the world in 2011(Transparency International, 2011).

According to the Transparency International (2011), the level of corruption and other related crimes in the country attracted between \$4million and \$8 million dollars loss on a daily basis and a loss of about \$70.58 million dollars to the national economy annually, and that the country has lost more than \$380billion to graft since the country attained independence in 1960. It has been argued that the war on graft has been difficult to win because policymakers themselves (Olu-Olu, 2004) perpetrate the act. A clear indicator to this fact is the US\$620, 000 oil subsidy scandals rocking the National Assembly. Another disturbing one is the two armoured cars bought by the National Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) at a cost of 255million naira for the Aviation Minister Stella Oduah (Ogundiya, 2010). According to Omololu (2007), there is nothing that debilitates democracy more than corruption; it not only distorts governance but also defaces the outward perception of the country in the international community and diminishes the quality of life of the citizen by diverting funds for social service into private pockets.

#### **2.4.1.4 Incumbency factor**

Incumbency gives the incumbent an undue advantage over other participants in the electoral process through the means of manipulating the entire electoral process. The manipulation can occur through different ways: compilation of voters' register, the appointment of loyal electoral officers, the protection of stolen mandates by members of the electoral tribunal, the use of state instruments to intimidate, coerce and threaten opposition parties while also limiting their access to state-owned media houses, all in efforts to maintain and extend the time of the incumbent in office, and the use of state resources to fund their campaigns (Adeosun, 2004). The cumulative effect of the incumbency factor on democratic consolidation is that it leads to the erosion of the principle of democratic governance, which has led to the emergence of political godfathers and family dynasty (Nwanegbo and Alumona, 2011). This ugly phenomenon manifested itself during Obasanjo's re-election in 2007 and his bid for the third term agenda. This is seen during Goodluck Jonathan's second term in 2015 before losing to President Buhari. All these attest to the application of incumbency power to wrestle power at the expense of other contenders, which is detrimental to democratic consolidation.

#### **2.4.1.5 Insecurity**

One of the daunting challenges confronting the present democratic dispensation is insecurity. Since the return of democracy, the country has experienced ethno-religious crises, sectarian mayhem, etc. that questions and shakes the survival of the country. Some of these crises include: Yoruba/Hausa-Fulani disturbance in Shagamu, Ogun State (1999); Aguleri, Umuleri and Umuoba Anam of Anambra State(2012); Ijaw/Itsekiri crisis over the location of Local Government headquarter (1999); the Jukun, Chamba and Kuteb power struggle of control over Takum (2009); incessant turbulence in Jos; the aftermath of 2011 election and the eruption of crisis in the northern part of the country; and the constant sectarian crisis exemplified by the activities of the Boko Haram. The analysis of the above upheaval will reveal that Nigeria's democracy is under siege prompting Dauda and Avidime (2007) to argue that the current security situation In the country is a major obstacle to the consolidation of democracy. It is important to note that despite these challenges there is a light at the end of the tunnel with the progress of changes in government the country has been experiencing since 1999. After fourteen years of uninterrupted democracy, the

longest in the history of the country, Nigeria can be said to be growing and developing democratically.

From the foregoing, this section has examined and analysed the tragedy that has befallen the country since the restoration of democratic rule on 29 May 1999. The two concepts (democracy and democratic consolidation) which are germane to this discourse were thoroughly examined. The section also analysed the challenges confronting democracy and democratic consolidation in the country. Some of the challenges discussed include electoral malpractice, poverty, corruption, incumbency factor, and insecurity. Based on this, there could be a significant improvement in democratic consolidation in Nigeria because of the presence of some elements such as a vibrant press, independent judiciary, budding civil society as well as acceptance of elections as a means of choosing political leaders.

## **2.5 Gaps in the Literature**

While studies have interrogated the adoption of power rotation as a viable option in achieving political stability in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (Nwala, 1997; Waidigbenro 2015; Aku, 2015; Alli 2010), not much academic work has appraised presidential power rotation in relation to its impact on political stability in the Nigeria's Fourth Republic. For instance, Nwala (1997) submits that the decision for power rotation was an effort to proffer solutions to the challenges of one ethnic group dominating political power at the expense of other ethnic groups, reducing the instability in the Nigerian polity. It is evident from Nwala's submission that power rotation was approached from all ethnics groups that make up the federation, and not specific to the presidential position.

From another perspective, Waidigbenro (2015) notes that the urgent demand for rotation of power unavoidably resulted from the efforts to create a sense of belonging amongst the elite in the various ethnics groups since the federal character principles prove inadequate to balance the situation. Aku (2015) in the same vein argued that the rotation of political power could rescue minorities from political obscurity and also guarantee majority interests, foster national stability and ensure the success of democracy.

Furthermore, Alli (2010) opines that the opportunity to give all six geopolitical zones a taste of presidency was the original intention of incorporating rotation and arrangement of political

power into the PDP constitution. In this arrangement, every zone has equal opportunity to enjoy a four-year term in the presidency after which the race would be thrown open (Alli, 2010).

From the foregoing, it is established that scholars from different perspectives have contested power rotation formula. An observation of scholars' submission revealed that it was only Alli (2010) that is being specific with presidential position in his argument for power rotation formula while others have neglected the concept. In view of this, this research intends to bridge this gap by contributing to the discourse on power rotation with a specific focus on the position of the President. This becomes urgent because representatives of various sections, regions and ethnic groups, agitating for equal distribution of political power and positions, continue targeting the presidential seat, which is seen as the peak of resource allocation. This study will further examine and explore the discourse on power rotation and the presidency in subsequent chapters.

## **CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In social science discourse, there exists an avalanche of eminent theorists that produced extensive interaction in the field of inter-group relations in plural societies/states. Some of the theoretical approaches include the functionalist, the federalist and the cybernetic. The functionalist approach requires the study of Nigeria within the primordial ethnic, cultural, economic, linguistic and religious heterogeneity, and the need to drive the citizens into a homogenous unit which may permit participatory government (Harris, 2012). This may be performed through the process of political socialisation. The federalist model (Friedrich, 1966) extols the creation of a central government that coordinate the constituent units, while the cybernetic approach (Elazar, 1994) emphasises the establishment of contacts and promotion of interactions through which the component units would understand and appreciate themselves better. These approaches are said to contribute to effective national integration which fosters political unification of the component parts into one whole unit.

Despite the relevance of the above theoretical approaches, none is sufficient enough to analyse ethnic diversities viz-a-viz power rotation and democratic consolidation better than the relative deprivation theory, integration theory, and liberal democratic theory. These theories serve as an effective way of achieving political stability and preserving both integration and democratic consolidation in deeply divided societies like Nigeria through effective power rotation principle. For instance, relative deprivation can be used to interrogate the conflict among the elite which could be as a result of disintegration. When the North is monopolising office, the elite from the south may feel relatively deprived. This act can erupt into conflict via the intervention of the Southern elite, and only the rationale for power rotation comes in as a solution.

### **3.2 Relative Deprivation Theory**

The meaning of relative deprivation can be gleaned from the works of its finest exponents. In his book *Why Men Rebel*, Ted Gurr (1970) argues that people become dissatisfied if they feel they have less than they should and could have. Over time, such dissatisfaction leads to frustration and then rebellion against the (real or perceived) source of their deprivation. Elsewhere, Gurr

(2005: 20) argues that structural poverty and inequality within countries are “breeding grounds for violent political movements in general and terrorism specifically.”

The first exponent of the relative deprivation theory is the Sociologist known as Samuel A. Stouffer (1900–1960). He is credited with developing relative deprivation theory after World War II. The event that motivated Stouffer to develop the theory was aptly demonstrated in the article published by Pettigrew (2015). While crediting the origin of relative deprivation theory to Stouffer, Pettigrew (2015:1-3) reveals that that:

Two examples became especially famous while Stouffer was conducting research for the army during the World War II. He and his wartime colleagues found that the military police were more satisfied with their slow promotions than the air corpsmen were with their rapid promotions. Similarly, African American soldiers in southern camps were more satisfied than those in northern camps despite the fact that the racist South of the 1940s remained tightly segregated by race. These apparent puzzles assume the wrong referent comparisons. Immediate comparisons, Stouffer reasoned, were the salient referents: the military police compared their promotions with other military police, not air corpsmen whom they rarely encountered. Likewise, black soldiers in the South compared their lot with black civilians in the South, not with black soldiers in the North who were out of view. In this case, satisfaction is relative according to Stouffer.

From the above quotation, Stouffer reported that World War II soldiers measured their personal success by standards based on their experiences in the military units, as opposed to the standards in the armed forces. Stouffer first wrote of relative deprivation theory in his study entitled *The American Soldier* (1949), a part of a four-volume series entitled *Studies in Social Psychology in World War II*. The series and its component study was a compilation of the data collected during a five-year wartime project that was funded by Carnegie Corporation and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) (Heck & Wech, 2003).

Porto (2002: 17) also contributes to the relative deprivation theory by explaining that people’s feeling of dissatisfaction arising from the sense of having less “than they could or should have,” can take different forms, such as members of a society or organisation have decreasing amounts of what they previously possessed; improving conditions which then deteriorate; and rising expectations, where people raise their expectations about what they could and should have (Porto, 2002: 20).

The relative deprivation theory was further advanced by Runciman (1967) who identified three types of relative deprivation, namely: egotistical, fraternal, and double deprivation (cited in Gupta, 1990). The first refers to the sense of deprivation arising from a comparison of individuals

with others within the same ethnic group. The second entails a collective sense of deprivation of groups in comparison with other groups, usually perceived by individuals in the group, who themselves are however satisfied. The third includes the combination of one and two above as perceived by the individual. Building on the Runciman's argument of the three types of relative deprivation theory mentioned, psychologist, Fay Crosby (1979) deduced that egotistical deprivation is simply a part of a chain of the variable. These include: environmental antecedents, preconditions, felt deprivation, mediators, and behaviour. He added that these four conditions require another fifth condition, that is, lack of personal responsibility to produce a sense of deprivation in an individual. In other words, as long as the individual would blame him/herself for his/her failure to attain a cherished goal, the feeling of deprivation would not surface in that individual.

Karl Marx's (1970) position on relative deprivation reveals that the disequilibrium between demand and supply of socio-political and economic goods causes political unrest. In a similar vein, "people take up violent resistance when they feel frustrated by the gap between what they *have* and what they *feel they should have*" (Gupta, 1990: 2 emphases added). This behavioural hypothesis casts some worthwhile doubts on the traditional explanations that situate conflict within the sphere of irrationality and instinct. Indeed, the problem of linking frustration with aggressive behaviours remains insurmountable with the given hypothesis since it is one thing to be frustrated but another different thing altogether to resort to aggressive or anti-social behaviours. In other words, frustration appears only to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for an individual or a group's participation in political violence. This is where Crosby's (1979) fifth condition, (as earlier mentioned) becomes relevant in understanding the dynamics of the relative deprivation theory.

Gurr (2005: 24) in his analysis advances Relative Deprivation (RD) as the tension that develops from a discrepancy between the 'ought' and the 'is' of collective value satisfaction which disposes men to violence. According to the definition provided by Gurr, Relative Deprivation is the discrepancy between what people want— their value expectations, and what they actually gain— their value accruing capabilities. Gurr explains that the intensity of relative deprivation varies strongly in terms of the average degree of perceived discrepancy between value expectation and value capabilities (Gurr, 2005: 25). This implies that people are more likely to revolt when they lose hope of attaining their societal values, and the intensity of discontent/frustration varies

with the severity of depression and inflation. Gurr asserts that ethnicity is the obvious basis for mobilizing oppositions against the state; the higher the degree of frustration, the greater the political instability. For example, in Nigeria, these reflected in the uprising situation that aroused from the North, and the unrest situation that affected political stability when President Jonathan (Southerner) showed his intention to run for the presidency and after he won the election, respectively. Also, the emergence of the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and other samples can be seen from the rising violence and killings in many parts of North Africa and the Middle East.

In short, the intensification of RD regarding political participation, prosperity, collective/communal values and societal status can lead to a 'decline in ideational coherence' which consequently leads to violence and a breakdown in social order. The failure of the state to meet people's value expectations, which they believe they are rightfully entitled to, can eventually lead to disorientation amongst the citizenry, and discontentment on the part of the people towards the state (Saleh, 2011: 236). Gurr (2005) holds that the societal conditions that increase the average level or intensity of expectations without increasing capabilities, increase the intensity of discontent.

### **3.2.1 Case Studies**

Relative deprivation theory has been used to explain many conflicts and violent activities across the globe. The term relative deprivation was first used in a series of social-psychological studies of the American armed forces published in 1949 under the title *The American Soldier* (Stouffer, 1949). This work was based on a large body of research carried out by the US War Department between 1941 and 1945. It focused on factors affecting the motivation and morale among troops in the US army. The concept of relative deprivation was developed to explain how dissatisfaction among troops did not always arise directly from the objective hardships they suffered but varied according to how they framed their assessments of their own situation. These assessments typically were based on comparisons they made between themselves and others who might be in a different situation but who, nevertheless, were somehow thought of as providing relevant reference points for self-assessment.

The most influential development of Relative Deprivation in relation to collective rebellion is probably found in the classic work of Ted Robert Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (1970). Essentially,



Gurr maintains that collective violence is functionally related to relative deprivation and he derives fundamental ideas of the relative deprivation theory from Aristotle who believes it is the relative sense or feeling of inequality, rather than an *absolute* measure that derives revolution (Richardson, 2011:5). The principal cause of revolution is the aspiration for economic or political equality on the part of the common people who lack it, and the aspiration of oligarchs for greater inequality than they have (Richardson, 2011). Thus, social discontent is spurred by relative deprivation which provides motivation for collective violence as reminiscent of the political upheaval in Northern Ireland (Birrel, 1972). Drawing on the relative deprivation and conflict in Northern Ireland, Birrel (1972: 317) contends that group tensions develop from a discrepancy between the “ought” and the “is” of collective value satisfaction.

In another case, one may argue that the causes of various forms of violence in Nigeria can be traced to socio-economic factors such as “unemployment, especially among the youth, poverty and a deteriorating standard of living, especially in the north” (Alozieuwa, 2012: 3). The position of Davies (1962) is relied on as he argued that the occasion of political violence is due to the insupportable gap between what people want and what they get. That is the difference between expectations and gratifications; “this discrepancy is a frustrating experience that is sufficiently intense and focused to result in either rebellion or revolution” (Davies 1962: 5). It is no coincidence that one of the worst forms of political violence in Nigeria today (that is Boko Haram insurgency) originates in the most socioeconomically deprived parts of the country, the North: where unemployment and chronic poverty are rife, and radical Islamists groups have challenged the authority of the state on the insincerity and failure of the government to the citizens. In the South-East, specifically, the Niger Delta, where Nigeria’s oil resource is mostly located, environmental degradation caused by irresponsible oil practices by international oil companies has compromised the major source of livelihood of indigenous people. In turn, this has given rise to various militant groups in the region, often consisting of unemployed youths, who have engaged in kidnappings, oil pipeline vandalisation, extortion, car bombings, and other forms of violent attacks all of which are detrimental to the Nigeria political stability (Omotola, 2006). Consequently, the feelings of unmet needs by these groups of people propel them to engaging in violence and conflict as a reaction to the government insensitivity to their needs.

The rise of various ethnic militia groups (OPC, MASSOB, MEND, Egbesu) that have violently attacked other groups and institutions of government in Nigeria, can be traced to the

feeling of marginalisation, in terms of allocation of resources as well as control of power by the members of those ethnic groups. Ethnic, religious and linguistic identities sometimes serve as parameters for allocation of resources and control of political power, including appointments to public offices. This is in utter disregard for the legally accepted framework put in place through the federal character principle, which was established to ensure that no single group is dominated or marginalised. However, sometimes the members of the elite manipulate the implementation of the federal character principle, resulting in lop-sidedness in such allocations. In the case of Nigeria, as the masses live in poverty, the members of the political class loot public treasury and live in affluence, thus creating various militia groups that see the state as the enemy of the people. While at the extreme end is an unending crisis of the Boko Haram terrorist group which continues to unleash pains and sufferings on the people of Nigerian, especially the North-eastern part of the country.

### **3.2.2 Critiques of Relative Deprivation Theory**

Criticism of Relative Deprivation theory has centred on its use as a predictor of collective protest and violence. Relative deprivation was attacked by the inundation of publications in the 1970s and 1980s, regarding it as a cause of violence and protest. The major critics to the theory of relative deprivation came from the following distinguished scholars: Edward Muller (1980) in political science and Charles Tilly (2003), John McCarthy, and Mayer Zald (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 2001) in sociology. The first focus of their critique involved questioning the then-popular J-curve hypothesis by Davies (1962), which held that after a period of improvement, expectations for continued improvement will develop, but protest is ignited when a sharp discrepancy between expectations and reality occurs, and improvements are slow. He cited Rhode Island (1842– 1843), the Russian revolution (1917), and the Egyptian revolution (1952) to support his claim. In addition is the urban race riots in the United States during the 1960s followed by a period of economic and political gains for the African Americans (Pettigrew 1964). But is this procedure an essential component of uprisings? Many critics thought not; they supplied data from other collective disruptions that do not fit the J-curve posited by Davies. For example, Snyder and Tilly (1972) investigated collective violence in France from 1830 to 1960 but their time series over these 131 years did not support the J-curve model (see Davies 1974 for a rejoinder). Thompson (1989) also developed a time-series of political violence in Northern Ireland from 1922 to 1985 and found no

rapport between unemployment rates and lethal violence. It should be noted that these authors did not claim to be testing Relative Deprivation theory instead, they speak of “deprivation” and “frustration.” And Davies (1962) explicitly regretted that he had to use such “crude indices” like industrial strikes and employment rates rather than “cross-sectional interviews” with individuals. Delinquent arose when later critics of Relatives Deprivation cited these macro studies as evidence against the validity of Relative Deprivation theory generally. For example, McPhail (1971) approximately collate the results of ten studies of five urban American race riots and claimed that there was scant empirical support for Relative Deprivation as a factor in riot participation. But his use of only macro-level indices to gauge Relative Deprivation as conclusion undermined his studies. This failure to use data from individuals, as Finkel and Rule (1987:58) point out, nullifies McPhail’s dismissal of Relative Deprivation “as a potential determinate of individual behaviour.”

Gurney and Tierney (1982) came up with another hypercritical review of a selected subsection of studies that purported to test the role of Relative Deprivation in social movements. The use of macro measures was rightly challenged to infer relative deprivation by these authors, but they favourably cite studies, such as McPhail’s (1971), that make use precisely of this ecological fallacy. They also ignore the crucial distinction between individual and group relative deprivation. In addition, these critics claim there are few affiliations between attitudes and behaviours as an extreme assertion that had been thoroughly disclaimed by social psychologists like Dillehay (1973) and Kelman (1974).

Behind much of the sociological rejection of RD, there is a belief that it is too psychological, that it draws attention away from the important structural factors that are elementary to the sociological idea of the collective protest (McCarthy and Zald 1977, 2001). The criticism notwithstanding, RD played a tremendous role in the course of social movement. Four decades ago, Robin Williams (1975) had a similar view that led him to offer a broad overview of the role of RD in an organised protest. He hypothesised that RD’s role in sustained protest would be more advantageous when there is: (1) a collective sense of RD in political power, that (2) occurs swiftly; and (3) the deprived collectively is large, commands substantial economic and political power recently achieved, and is internally cohesive; and (4) the established “control elements of the society have given signals of, indecision, weakness ,disunity, or actual encouragement of militant dissent” (Williams 1975:373). Several of these forecasts have already

been supported (e.g., Dube and Guimond 1986), and the rest deserve careful testing. Moreover, RD also informs current political and policy discussions of income disparity.

### **3.3 Integration Theory**

Integration theory was propounded by Myron Weiner (a renowned American political scientist specializing in democratisation, ethnic conflict, political demography, child labour and the politics and policies of developing countries). According to Weiner (1971), integration may refer to the process of having culturally and socially discrete groups together into a single territorial unit. This definition presupposes that there is in existence an ethnically-pluralist society in which each group is characterised by its own language or other self-conscious cultural qualities. This territorial integration implies that the territory must be in existence under the control of one state and one government and that the authority of the central government must be firmly established over all the country's territories. The ultimate goal of national integration as a process (irrespective of the preferred strategy) therefore, is the political unification of the constituent units into one whole nation, like that of Plato's polis (city-state). This is known as the process of state building, as opposed to the process of nation-building.

National integration is one among the five types of integration identified by Weiner. The others are: territorial, value, elite-mass and integrative behaviour (Weiner, 1971). Territorial integration refers to the ability for the State and other public institutions, to achieve the communication link by road, rail, air, sea, river, lake ... so that people have the opportunity to move easily to reach any part whatsoever of the national territory. It concerns, therefore, the meshing of the territory by lines of communication and to promote transportation, links, tourism, market supply, human and commercial exchanges, etc. (Weiner, 1971). For the purpose of this study, national integration is chosen as a tool of analysis. The choice of national integration rests on the premise that it has the capacity to integrate various ethnic nationalities to peacefully coexist and thereby promotes stability in the political system which is the focus of this research study.

According to Weiner, national integration refers specifically to the creation of a sense of territorial nationality which overshadows or eliminates subordinate parochial loyalties to the region or ethnic groups. This integration involves the amalgamation of disparate social, economic, religious, ethnic, and geographic elements into a single nation-state— a homogenous entity, the like of Plato's Polis, the city-state. This kind of integration implies both the capacity of government to control the territory under its jurisdiction as well as to stimulate a set of popular willingness by

the people to place national interest above local or parochial concern. Also, where national integration thrives, the individuals realise their rights and privileges, identify fully with the state and owe allegiance to it because they see themselves as standing in direct relation with it.

Similarly, Etzione (2003) has argued that integration as a condition for integration means that the political community and the effective control over the use of violence are controlled by the central government who allocate resources and rewards accordingly. Lindberg (2009) has asserted that through integration, larger groupings emerge or are created among nations without the use of violence. It involves joint participation in a regularised and on-going decision making. Puchela (2007) defined political integration as a set of processes that produce and sustain a concordance system. In this case, this is a system where the various ethnic nationalities could possibly and constantly harmonise their interests, compromise their differences and reap intrinsic rewards from their interactions. This would produce dependable expectations of peaceful changes among the citizenry. Indeed, political integration theory has been linked to functionalism. Khurana (2014) connotes that national integration projects a view of having a people of one country with the notion of a collective identity. This also reveals that there are other identities such as ethnicity, religion, and regional backgrounds, yet the people are seen as one people. We then make use of national integration as the backbone of uniting the Nigerian people who are from different ethnicities and a spread background of regionalism.

### **3.3.1 Case Studies**

National integration as a theory has been used to unite people of different ethnic groups into having a sense of national unity rather than regional or sectional outlook. This theory has been applied in Germany where nationality is based on affiliation (right of blood – *jus sanguinis*), culture, language, or religion. The German idea of nation is not political but refers to a genealogical conception of the national community, which according to the German Nation is made up of all those who have some German blood. In the same vein, in Cameroon, national conscience is used to talk of national identity which shows the sentiments of belonging to a nation; it contributes to attaining unity which is based on the Cameroon diversity (Collier, 2009). The Cameroon national identity can be perceived as an observable and living reality of unity in diversity.

Terwase, Abdul-Talib, and Zengeni (2014) agree, in the case of Nigeria with diverse ethnic groups and different religious backgrounds, and with a population of over 170 million people, National integration could also be applied to resolve ethnic differences and achieve national unity. To this end, this work intends to focus on the part of national integration which aims at uniting the people from different ethnic diversities in Nigeria, and it will be looking at how unity among the people would promote peace and harmonious relationship between the diverse ethno-religious group and turn it into a whole as one Nigeria in order to achieve political stability.

The Nigerian state is sectioned into six geopolitical zones; we have mostly the Hausa-Fulani as the dominant ethnic group in the Northern part of the country. The North consists of three significant zones such as North- West, North-Central, and North-East. In the Southern part of the country we equally have three zones such as the South-South, South-East, and South-West, now in these zones; the Yoruba purely occupies the South-West, and the Igbo in the South-East and the minorities are mostly found in the South-South region of the country. Until all these people are united into a whole as one people, then peace, unity, and political stability would be sustainable within the Nigerian polity.

This is where the quest for national integration is promoted in view of resolving the conflicting issues such as rotation of the presidency for equal representation and political stability in Nigeria. From the foregoing, a conclusion can be drawn that national integration is made possible when ethnicities within a political entity achieve integration this will bring about social order and stability in the polity.

### **3.4 Liberal Democratic Theory**

Liberal Democratic Theory is another theoretical framework for scrutinizing the discourse on democratic consolidation and power rotation. Scholars like Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, John Locke, J.J. Rousseau, Hobbes, Baron De Montesquieu, among others, have contributed to this theory; it has been applied among capitalist countries such as the United States of America and to some extent in Nigeria. The creeds of this theory include the acceptance of capitalism, competitive party systems as opposed to one party system, the rule of law, the presence of pressure groups, separation of powers, checks and balances, and the presence of free, fair and periodic elections. Civil liberties or individual rights emphasised by this theory include freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of press and freedom of religion (Mohammed, 2013).

Kwasau (2013), used the concept of the “will of all” (The Liberal Democratic Theory) to recognize the notion of liberty: gain when one is free from intervention and interference of another. Hobbes breaks down free society through the individualisation of the citizen. In contrast to Rousseau who sought to save freedom from the controls of innovation, Constance argued that modern progress required a more individual conception of freedom. The theory holds the fundamental notion of people as individuals who are naturally born holding the absolute rights of being ‘equal and free’. Mohammed (2013) adds that democracy according to the theory is the best of all systems only when it is effective at defending the individual citizen’s ability to act freely whether in relation to other individuals or to the state. Locke established the idea that authority is conferred to be independent by the people which make the government’s purpose to follow the collective will of the people. If the government fails to do so, then the people have the right to revolt. The people represent the ultimate judges of the government’s power. The theory highlights how democracy can instrumentally help protect individual citizens against the arbitrary will of a tyrant by basing state legitimacy through the implicit consent of the people. Liberal Democratic Theory places a considerable emphasis on the conservation of the conditions necessary for individuals to protect their private property and to trade freely without the fear of insecurity. Individuals must have the right to follow their interest without any arbitrary interference by other individuals or the state as a whole. Mill (1976) justified that political decisions match the aggregated interests of all individuals within a community, and democracy allows the state to follow the best interest of the people. Liberal democratic state gives instrumental benefit to the individuals who form part of it. Liberal Democratic Theory generally defends a narrower view of democracy where politics is considered a sphere of society in its own right, separate from the family, religion, and economy.

Essentially, liberal theory of democracy sets-out to design a political system which encourages individual participation, and enhances moral development of the citizens. It grants all adult citizens the right to vote and be voted for regardless of race, gender or property ownership.

### **3.4.1 Application of the Liberal Democratic Theory**

The utility of this theory as a framework of analysis is that it helps to examine power rotation and democratic consolidation in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic analytically. It designs the

systematic structure through which a democratic political system can function effectively and efficiently. Besides, it exposes and explains the expectation of any political system, especially as it relates to the conduct of credible elections, which is one of the factors responsible for consolidating democracy. This theory compliments this study such that participation is one of the significant attributes of any democratic system as against minority and sectional interest. In Nigeria, the recurrent clamour for power rotation was born out of the age-long observations by the political elites of one section or region of the country perpetuating the highest political office (presidential seat) at the expense of other regions of the federation. This has resulted in continuous agitations and unrest, by the perceived marginalised groups, which constitutes threats that is detrimental to the stability of the political system. This theory, therefore, is recommended to be embedded in Nigeria's politics through the instrument of power rotation. It embraces collective and individual involvement and contribution towards the idea of rotation of power by not leaving it in the hands of the elite alone.

On this note, the idea of the liberal theory is to allow mass participation of all interested groups in the affairs of the country through the use of power rotation mechanism. Hence, embracing political stability and consolidating the nascent democracy in Nigeria.

### **3.4.2 Critiques of Liberal Democratic Theory**

The liberal theory of democracy has come under fire from critics. It has been criticised on the grounds that it does not respect absolute majority rule (except when electing representatives). The liberty of major rule is restricted by the constitution or precedent decided by previous generations. Also, the real power is held by relatively small groups or representative in the society. It has also been criticised on the grounds that it is merely a decoration over an oligarchy. For Marxist, Socialist and left-wing Anarchists, liberal democracy is an integral part of capitalism. Therefore it is class-based, not democratic or participatory. For non-democratic socialist, it is a reasonable force used to keep the masses from realizing that their will is relevant in the political process. Besides, liberal democracy is an expensive form of government. Democracy means an organisation of opinion, propaganda and frequent elections. All this involves vast expenditure; money which should be used for productive purposes is spent on electioneering and nursing the constituencies (Asirvatham and Misra, 2009). Although other theories such as the elitist theory of



democracy, the pluralist theory of democracy, the classical theory of democracy, political-economic theory and Marxist theory of democracy could have been used to explain this study, none is sufficient enough to analyse democratic consolidation better than the liberal theory of democracy.

In conclusion, the theories underpinned in this study enlighten more to the issue of the rotational presidency, why it is essential in a politics of a diverse nation, and how they influence the relationship between power rotation, political stability, and democratic consolidation. All these concepts will be more elaborated in the next chapter.

# **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESIDENTIAL POWER ROTATION AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC**

## **4.1 Introduction**

This section discusses presidential power rotation and democratic consolidation in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It covers the rationale for the introduction of power rotation principle; operational modalities put in place for power rotation in its 1999 constitution; challenges confronting the use of power rotation in Nigeria; the relationship between Power Rotation and Stability of Nigeria Political System; and the consolidation of presidential power rotation in Nigeria fourth republic.

## **4.2 Rationale for the Introduction of Power Rotation**

Several scholars, opinion leaders, commentators, and the public analysts have contributed to the reasons for the adoption of a power rotation mechanism in Nigeria. The issue of marginalisation is one of the most cogent reasons for the agitation of this idea, and the theory of deprivation can be used to analyse it. Furthermore, when a particular group in a heterogeneous society is denied fundamental rights, especially political right to leadership by another group within the same society, then uprising of conflict tend to set in which will result to political instability and unrest in the society. The adoption of power rotation is an idea that tends to eradicate the upsurge caused by marginalisation. It can also reduce deprivation. However, for further understanding of the rationale for the introduction of power rotation, it is pertinent to trace some notable historical milestones that made the agitations a necessity in Nigeria's federalism.

### **a. 1960 to 1979**

Nwozor (2014) notes that since independence in 1960, the northern part of the country has been known for their dominance in the leadership of Nigeria mostly in critical positions in all areas. This interest is buttressed by the fact that in the First Republic (1960 - 1966) a Northerner, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, was the Prime Minister (Kamar, 2005). When the military took over in 1966, apart from about a three-month stay in office General Aguyi Ironsi

(a Southerner) and General Yakubu Gowon (a Northerner) assumed the mantle of leadership in 1966 up to 1975. Between 1967 and 1970, there was a civil war between the Nigerian federal government and the secessionist state of Biafra (the Igbo ethnic group in southeastern Nigeria). One of the reasons for this civil war was marginalisation over the issue of leadership and supremacy of the Northern elite. In 1975 another Northerner, General Murtala Mohammed took over till 1976 when he was assassinated and his second in command, General Olusegun Obasanjo, a Southerner took over with his programmes until 1979.

From the foregoing, Nwozor (2014) carefully observes that the extended period of ruling by the Northern Elite, both in the military and democratic regimes, gave them the opportunities to develop a perception that stated, 'power is their birthright' thus developing into a slogan, 'born to rule'. It is the same perception that informed the Northern elite to believe that given presidential power to another region is a loan. In fact, the study established that Northern elite believed that the Obasanjo presidency in the Fourth Republic (1999) was a "loan" to the South to reward and douse the tension that emerged over the annulment of June 12 elections in 1993. In other words, the ceding of power to the South-West was unintentional but forcefully done to accommodate another region temporarily. This ugly perception manifested in the eight-year regime of President Obasanjo (1999–2007) with the recurrent demand by the Northern elite for the regime to promulgate sharia laws (Kamar, 2005). Thus their encouragement of religious riots and threats of impeachment to the presidency created a lot of tensions and unrest in the political system throughout the regime (Kamar, 2005).

#### **b. 1979 to 1983**

This is the period classified as the second republic. President Shehu Shagari was voted in democratically in 1979 through the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). NPN was formed in 1955 through the coalition of the Northern People's Congress (NPC) and National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC). Alhaji Shehu Shagari was in power from 1979 to 1983 before the military took over on December 31, 1983, to mark the end of the second republic. Ibrahim (2000) makes us understand that there was a level of unity across the Federation as it was expressed in the election of 1979, where Shehu Shagari got higher votes in the minority defined areas in the south than in the traditional "Hausa Fulani" areas in the north. They were in control of the nation's affairs until 1983.

### **c. 1983 to 1999**

Another Northerner, General Mohammadu Buhari became the Head of State from 1983 (through a military coup) up to 1985. General Ibrahim Babangida, a Northerner, took over the affairs of power with the emergence of a palace coup in 1985 up to 1993. There was serious chaos caused by the annulment of the presidential election in that year. It was won by a Southerner, Chief Moshood Abiola. After this, Babangida stepped aside, but handed power over to an interim government put up by himself which was headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan (a Southerner). Shonekan spent 83 days in office from August 27 to November 17, 1993, before he was toppled by another Northerner, General Sani Abacha. Based on this development, the Northern region has not just been accused but proven as continually monopolizing power in Nigeria. Furthermore, a vivid account of Nigeria's history as revealed in Table 1 shows that since independence in 1960, the northern part of the country has been known for their dominance in the leadership of Nigeria mostly at key positions in virtually all areas (Waidigbenro, 2015).

Based on the development of the 1993 annulment of the election, various agitations came up from different angles of western Nigeria; either of rotation of power in presidency or restructuring of the federation, even Sovereign National Conference. Based on this, different rational groups were mobilised for that course. Olaitan (1998) submits that the crisis of June 12, 1993, presidential election had brought up questions as to the continued marginalisation of some segments of Nigeria in the political and power equation in the country. Indeed, the annulment was perceived as denying a particular region (South) the control of Nigeria presidency. The scholar, however, submits that the solution to the perceived injustice lies in devising a framework for the working of the polity called Nigeria. Whereby all segments would have a sense of belonging by providing access to all important positions and offices in the country.

Furthermore, there is a need to ensure balance in filling political offices, especially the presidency, as the narrow head of all structures of leadership. Even the focus of the often-publicized Sovereign National Conference is restructuring with its centre point of rotation of presidency specifically from the North to the South. Amuwo and Herault (1998), observed that the primary drive towards institutional reforms in a federal system is the recognition that existing state institutions, particularly at the centre, are inadequate to apprehend, comprehend and resolve

immediate and new changes. Restructuring is meant to serve as a steering mechanism to properly give focus and locus to attempts at collective identity and distributive politics. The aim is to correct perceived structural defects and institutional deformities. It is intended to lay an institutional foundation for a more just and an equitable sharing of the political space by multinational groups cohabiting in a federal polity. This type of agitation could not be more than the struggle by the elites for the acquisition of power and wealth.

Thus, the restructuring effort of the Nigerian polity under General Abacha's regime through the National Conference of 1994 was informed primarily by factionalism of the elites, the persistent demand by pro-democracy and human rights groups, and the call for a Sovereign National Conference. Those actions were not more than a means of getting a share of the resources of the country through access to political power. There is no wonder then that even in the constitutional conference of 1994, there was no issue that received greater attention than the issue of power rotation. The issue generated a very sharp division in the committee on power-sharing in the conference with the southern members massively supporting it while their Northern counterparts are mainly opposing it. However, a committee, formed, came up with the resolution that was attained through the North/South rotation of presidency. However, the resolution was amended by the military, led by Sani Abacha, by making the rotation to be on the basis of six zones and six positions. The game plan was never concluded before the demise of General Abacha. General Abdusalami who succeeded the leadership did not continue with the issue but left the idea with the political parties and instead adopted the 1979 constitution which has no provision for power rotation. Thus, the interest of a southern president in the name of presidential power rotation was finally achieved in 1999 through the democratic election of President Obasanjo. That was the beginning of Forth republic

### **4.3 Justifications for Power Rotation Formula: Scholars' Views**

Considering the agitation generated over the issues of power rotation formula and its significance to the stability of the political system, scholars who subscribe to the use of the formula have brought forward various justifications for its adoption in the Nigeria political system. Nwala (1997) submits that the decision for power rotation was an effort to proffer solutions to the challenges of one ethnic group dominating political power at the expense of other ethnic groups so as to reduce instability in the Nigerian polity. The theory of integration can be induced here to

bring about collaboration and co-operation within the political terrain of the country. The theory brings about peaceful co-existence between both large groups and small groups that came together to become a heterogeneous society. Waidigbenro (2015) notes that the urgent demand for rotation of power unavoidably resulted from the efforts to create a sense of belonging amongst the elite in the various ethnics groups, as federal character principles proved inadequate to balance the situation. Aku (2015) argued that rotation of political power could rescue minorities from political obscurity and at the same time guarantee majority interests, foster national stability, and ensure the success of democracy.

Alli (2010) opines that the opportunity to give all six geopolitical zones a taste of presidency was the original intention of incorporating rotation and arrangement of political power into the PDP constitution. In this arrangement, every zone has equal opportunity to enjoy a four-year term in the presidency after which the race would be thrown open (Alli, 2010). To buttress this claim, the Chairman of the Power Sharing Committee at the reform conference of 1994, Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife, proclaimed that his committee had recommended that the presidency should rotate among the six geopolitical zones, “such that no one zone should have a second chance to produce the president when there is a zone which has not produced the president once” (Ezeife, 2010: 2). Similarly, all positions such as executive, bureaucratic, military, and political offices were expected to be rotated among the six geopolitical zones. Power rotational arrangement would also serve as the basis for situating government units and parastatals as well as the location of infrastructural development. It is believed that when this is done, federalism will be sustained in Nigeria. Nwala (1997) also argued that anyone who thinks that power will not shift in Nigeria under specific contexts (survival of various groups) is making a great mistake and an enemy to the Nigerian federalism. Away from the position of Nwala (1997), Banjo (2010) sees a rotation of political power as antithetical to democracy and its principles, considering the way geographical zones were loosely-defined without recourse for electorates.

After considering the political atmosphere in Nigeria, Ezeibe, Abada, and Okeke (2016) acclaimed that the rotation of the presidency should be maintained among the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria for the promotion of unity and stability of the political system. It will also result in economic development. Ezeibe, Abada and Okeke's (2016) argument centres on the fact that the neglect of the principle of power rotation is anti-elitist and these political elites whose economic survival depends on the rotational arrangement will always rise to defend it. They further argued

that the marginalised group, in showing their dissatisfaction toward the central government over the neglect of their region in presidential positions, always employed strategies like secessionist agitation, hate speeches, violence, and vandalism. An example of these groups is the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and their agitation to secede out of Nigeria which resulted in the civil war of 1967- 1970. Till this present moment, they continue to voice their dissatisfaction over this issue of neglect. The authors further maintain that PDP used the mechanism of power rotation to douse political and ethnic tensions from 1999 to 2015, but it was distorted in 2010 following the death of President Yar'Adua which was occasioned by reactions mostly expressed when the PDP lost the presidential election in 2015. This abandonment propelled several ethnic groups based in the South-East and South-South to renew calls for the disintegration of Nigeria, which is dangerous to its stability. Hence, the power rotation mechanism should be adopted by the incumbent political party, All Peoples Congress APC (Ezeibe, Abada and Okeke, 2016). At the constitutional conference of 1994, the Committee on power-sharing perceived these issues of power rotation as touching on the question of equity, fairness, and justice in the allocation of power which will bring about peace and unity (Rothschild, 1995:3).

In another development, Ladan (2011) is of the opinion that power rotation among the major ethnic groups and regions in Nigeria has been a volatile as well as thorny issue, particularly since independence. It has been a perennial 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. This is further corroborated by Amuwo (1998) who opines that this issue is not unconnected with the plural and ethnic character of the Nigerian federation. Amuwo (1998) states that much of the tensions, strains, emotions, and conflicts in the polity were the consequences of the problem of presidential power rotation and that no other single issue received greater attention than the issue of rotational presidency. To this end, Ake (1998) opines that a grossly erroneous perception of asymmetry of power in a federal union may produce disaffection and resistance to the federal way of life and that such resistance is, indeed, responsible for the political instability in Nigeria. In line with this submission some scholars, opinion leaders, and commentators have suggested that power rotation is necessary to ensure a stable political system. Acknowledging the volatile nature of Nigerian federation and the call for power rotation, President Jonathan at Inauguration was categorical when he said that the national conference was significantly expected to give particular attention to the concern over

Nigeria's future beyond 2015, especially the issue of power rotation amongst the nation's ethnic nationalities Ake (1998).

Agbakoba (2011) contributed to the rationale for power rotation in Nigeria when he posited that the call to abolish rotational arrangement seriously underestimates and ignores the complex political character of Nigeria. In an insightful remark, Ogbowe (2014) is of the opinion that the continuing quest for a stable polity is in itself a constant reflection of the reality as well as the inevitability of Nigeria's diversity. He predicted the necessity for a credible power rotation model and described it as the desperate urgency of its present circumstances. Agbakoba (2011) also argued persuasively that the rotational arrangement has the potential to accommodate various interests in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria. This will also go a long way in reducing complaints of domination and marginalisation in the political system. Ezeibe, Abada, and Okeke (2016) argue that because the economic interests of the political elites are better served through the rotational arrangement, they, therefore, capitalize on it in Nigeria. On several occasions, these regional ethnic leaders are often called upon to represent their regions each time it was the turn of their ethnic group, region or geo-political zone to produce the occupant of any given position.

It was gathered that the rotational arrangement principle was the most outstanding innovation of the 1994/95 National Constitutional Conference. Hence the adoption of rotation of political offices was to safeguard Nigeria's federalism. Based on the revelation of the conference, Nwala (1997) submits that it is the history of inequalities, sectional domination of political power and national resources in Nigeria in favour of the North that engineered the idea of the rotational arrangement of political position(s).

#### **4.4 Historical process that led to the omission of the concept of power rotation within the 1999 Nigerian Constitution**

Since the attainment of independence in 1960, there have been consistent agitations among the various ethnic groups in the country to be given fair and equal representation in governance. This culminated the efforts of various governments to put in place several strategies for ensuring equal representation in governance. Historically, rotation of political positions in Nigeria officially dates back to 1979. It was first expressed by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in the internal nominations for prominent federal positions. However, the idea became pronounced after the



debate of the 1994/95 National Constitutional Conference (NCC) established by Decree No. (3) 1994 (FRN Gazette, 1994).

On this note, Amuwo (1998) stated that the 1994/1995 National Constitutional Conference inaugurated by General Sani Abacha is not unconnected with the issue of equitable power rotation arrangement because it has become a very contentious issue in Nigeria, especially since independence. On January 17th, 1994, the Abacha military junta set up the National Constitutional Conference Commission (NCC) under Decree 1 of 1994 with the responsibility to organise a constitutional conference for the purpose of: reviewing all previous constitutions; tackle all the problems of past failed attempts at democratisation; and chart a way for the entrenchment of democracy in Nigeria (Nwala 1997).

The primary constitutional contributions of the Conference included: (a) the demarcation of Nigeria into geopolitical zones (b) proposal for the rotation of executive positions, namely president, governors and local government chairmen, and other key leadership positions in the National Assembly (NCC report section 229 :1-5) (c) a single five-year term for the presidency and governorship (NCC report sections 138 & 140; 149 & 184) (d) the elimination of the opposition factor and winner-takes-all system (section 148:7-8) (e) the inclusion of a derivation principle stating that certain percentage should go back to the states producing wealth for the nation then putting the lowest benchmark allocable to mineral producing states at 13 per cent (Section 160). This represented a significant increase from the then prevailing 1 per cent (Nwala, 1997). Despite the acceptance of these recommendations by the Abacha junta in principle, they never made it to the 1999 constitution (the ground norm of the present republic) because of the death of Abacha, and because most elites from the north were not in support and felt it could jeopardize their political ambition. The non-incorporation of the rotation of key executive positions in the constitution underpinned the horizontal ethnic hatred that has characterised politics in the Fourth Republic.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the rotational arrangement to date has not been recognised in the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Power rotation, therefore, is an arrangement designed by the political elites in PDP through shared understanding. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) only enshrined this principle in its constitution in 1998. Section 7(2) of the PDP 1998 constitution states, "in pursuance of the principle of zoning, justice, and fairness, the party shall adhere to the policy of rotation and zoning of party and public elective

offices, and the appropriate executive committee shall enforce it at all levels” (Nwala, 1997: 10). Having said this, it is pertinent to assess the operational modalities of power rotation mechanism among the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). Other political parties did not subscribe to the idea of the rotational presidency, but they have an internal mechanism for sharing political offices.

In 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo who hails from the South Western part of the country became the democratically elected president of Nigeria under the umbrella of PDP. The rotational and sharing arrangement was put into operation to elect the Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives (see Table 3). President Obasanjo was also obliged to give recognition to this arrangement by the appointment of the Secretary to the Federal Government and Head of Service of the Federation (see Table 3).

In the observation of a Nigerian based social activist, Olisa Agbakoba, on political rotational arrangement principle, he said that the principle seems to fit into the heterogeneous and federal nature of the Nigerian state, helping to accommodate all groups as much as possible, therefore reducing complaints of domination and marginalisation (Awopeju, Adelus, and Oluwashakin, 2012). The trajectory of rotational arrangement debacle started when President Olusegun Obasanjo ruled for eight years (1999-2007) and handed over to a Northerner, President Musa Yar’Adua in 2007 whose death in May 2010 shortened the rotation arrangement that was expected to keep the position of the President in the North for eight years. Immediately after the demise of President Yar’Adua, the constitutional function was put into operation making the then Vice-President, Goodluck Jonathan (Southerner) the President. This change from the North to the South in 2010 increased mutual suspicion and hatred among the various religious and ethnic groups in the country. Meanwhile, the Northern elite in PDP expected to nominate a Northerner for the office of the President in the 2011 Presidential election; the nomination of President Jonathan by the party announced the death of the political rotational arrangement consensus. After President Jonathan was elected in 2011, the North felt short-changed by the party. This scenario orchestrated the crisis and violence that followed the 2011 Presidential election and the escalation of insecurity in the country. Before this occurrence, the Northern elites were looking for a way to subvert the constitution, ensuring that the North replaced late President Yar’Adua as a continuation to his regime. This mindset created reluctance and opposition to the approval of the Vice-President as acting President even though the Nigerian constitution acknowledged it. Eventually, adherence

to constitutionalism became imperative, and Dr Goodluck Jonathan assumed the role of Acting President.

Furthermore, it was on a constitutional basis that President Jonathan completed Yar'Adua's term of office. He was not expected to re-contest during the 2011 general election. Declaration of intention to run for 2011 election would have appeared to the Northern elite as an attempt at breaking the gentleman agreement on power rotation within the party. This phenomenon created different reactions from the members of the public as issues of constitutionalism. Morality and integrity were employed to justify the action.

Before the 2015 general elections in Nigeria, the polity was hit up with the pace of *Boko Haram's* bombings and attacks in the Northern part of the country; the political elites resolved to ensure that power rotation shift back to the North. All major opposition parties merged and formed the All Progressives Congress (APC) to wrestle power from PDP and the South. In 2015, the new party fielded a North-West Presidential candidate (Mohammadu Buhari) and a South-West Vice-Presidential (Yemi Osinbajo) candidate while PDP fielded a South-South President (Goodluck Jonathan) and a North-West Vice-Presidential (Namadi Sambo) candidate. Consequently, the APC won the 2015 Presidential election by 53.95 per cent (INEC, 2015), since then they have disregarded the rotational arrangement principles which informed the nomination of the President and Vice- President at the party's primary election.

From all indications, it is clear that President Jonathan's eligibility was protected under the 1999 Nigerian Constitution on the principle of the right to vote and be voted for, provided the candidate meet the stipulated requirement was guaranteed in the Nigerian Constitution. The PDP Constitution also recognises this right as well as the principles of the rotational arrangement. Furthermore, the constitution did not provide a margin for a possible force majeure, and this formed the basis for the controversy about the presidential aspirations of President Goodluck Jonathan in 2011.

#### **4.5 The Practice of Power Rotation Principle in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

It must be established here that the Fourth Republic was ushered in when the military handed over power to a democratically elected president in 1999, under the purview of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Thus, in examining the practice of power rotation formula in the Fourth Republic, the author shall break into regimes for clarity purpose.

#### **4.5.1 Power rotation under President Olusegun Obasanjo**

Obasanjo ruled as the president between 1999 and 2007. The Power rotation principle was fairly and evenly distributed during the first two terms of the Obasanjo regime. This assertion is validated in the sense that the distribution of the key national offices represents the six geopolitical zones of the country. For instance, during the first term in office (1999-2003), the President was from the south (South West), the office of Vice-President went to the North East while the office of Senate President went to the South East, and Deputy Speaker and secretary to the government of the federation offices went to the South-South. Similarly, the office of Speaker of the House of Representative went to the North West while those of the deputy Senate President and Party Chairman went to the Northcentral zone of the country.

Furthermore, there was a slight change during the second term (2003-2007) of the Obasanjo regime. The distribution shows that the office of Deputy Speaker moved from the South-South to the North East because the former occupant of the position was not re-elected in the national election of 2003-2007 National Assembly session. This gave an opportunity for the North and South to have four slots each. The change was accounted for by the movement of the position of deputy speaker, and these change in the allocation system is in the fact that, although several Senate Presidents were impeached during that period they were never replaced by their Deputies. Instead, replacements were drawn from the South East, to which that office was allocated. The same applied in the case of the Speaker of the House and party Chairman. Table 2 below contains a list of top national government and party offices, showing how they were distributed under the Obasanjo administration according to the six geopolitical zones.

**Table 3: Rotation arrangement under President Olusegun Obasanjo administration (1999-2007)**

Office	Name	Geo-Political Zone	Period
President	Olusegun Obasanjo	South West	1999-2007
Vice-President	Abubakar Atiku	North East	1999-2007
Senate President	Evan Ewerem	South East	1999-2000
	Chiba Okadigbo		2000-2001
	Ayim Pius Ayim		2001-2003
	Adolphus Wabara		2003-2005
	Ken Nnamani		2005-2007
Speaker of the house	Salisu Buari	North West	1999-2001
	Ghali Umar N'abba		2001-2003
	Ahmed Bello Masari		2003-2007
Deputy Senate President	Ibrahim Mantu	North Central	1999-2007
Deputy speaker	Chibudom Nwuche	South-South	1999-2003
	Babangida Nguroje	North East	2003-2007
Secretary to the government of the federation	Ufot Ekaette	South-South	2003-2007
Party Chairman	Solomon Lar	North Central	1998-1999
	Barnabas Gemade		1999-2001

	Audu Ogbe		2001-2005
	Ahmadu Ali		2005-2008

Source: Author’s Compilation (2018)

**4.5.2 Power rotation under President Yar’Adua**

Umar Musa Yar’Adua became the President in 2007 after the end of Obasanjo second term in office. In President Yar’Adua’s tenure, the power rotation arrangement was as follows: the President was from the North-West, the Vice-President came from the South-South, the Senate President was zoned to North Central, while that of the Speaker of the House went to the South West, the office of Deputy Senate President and Party Chairman went to the South East respectively. The Speaker of the House of Representatives was impeached, and his replacement was taken from the South West to demonstrate an even distribution of office under President Yar’Adua’s regime. With this arrangement, the regime demonstrated and settled the PDP’s rotational power arrangement principle which was also in tandem with the federal character principle. That is the uniformity and equality in sharing government positions and offices among all the six geopolitical zones across the country. Federal Character itself was put in place for equal distribution of political offices including appointment and location of federal government parastatals and institutions.

However, when Yar’Adua illness became severe and it was clear that he was not going to complete his fir<sup>st</sup> term, there was an intense fear that this would upset the balance. This was because, unlike in the case of impeachment by the National Assembly where it is easy to replace the officers with people from the allocated zone, the Constitution provides that the Vice-President should act as President where the President is unable to perform his functions. The secrecy about his health status along with the failure of formally handing over power to the Vice President as stipulated by the Constitution before his medical-related travel was met with fierce reactions by the members of the public. This scenario heated up the polity until the National Assembly, submitting to pressure from the civil society and with the support of the Governors’ Forum, empowered the Vice-President to act as President, drawing on what it called the ‘Doctrine of

Necessity'<sup>3</sup>. This was only achieved after three major decisions were reached. These decisions addressed the fear the North had on Goodluck Jonathan becoming the substantive president; he would not relinquish the position in 2011 to enable the North to complete the eight-year term to which it was entitled under the party's rotational presidency arrangement. (Gabo 2010) To allay this fear and to ensure conformity with the rotational presidency formula on the ground, the following three decisions were reached by PDP members:

1. that the PDP's presidential candidate for 2011 would come from the North;
2. that Goodluck Jonathan should become acting president;
3. that preparations for the 2011 party primaries should begin immediately

Following the demise of President Yar'Adua and the swearing-in of Goodluck Jonathan as the substantive president as stipulated by the Constitution, the issue of rotational arrangement was put in disarray, and by implication, the power-sharing principle became the dominant issue in the build-up to the 2011 general elections.

**Table 4: Power rotation arrangement under President Yar'Adua (2007)**

Office	Name	Geo-political zone	Period in office
President	Umar Musa Yar'Adua	North West	2007-2010
Vice President	Goodluck Jonathan	South-South	2007-2010
Senate President	David Mark	North Central	2007-2011
Speaker of the House	Patricia Ette (impeached)	South West	2007
	Dimeji Bankole	South West	2007-2011
Deputy Senate President	Ike Ekwerenmadu	South East	2007-2011
Deputy Speaker	Usman Bayero Nafawa	North East	2007-2011

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<sup>3</sup> Doctrine of Necessity implies the implementation of law, rule and regulations guiding the affairs of a nation

Secretary to the Government of Federation	Baba Gana Kingibe	North East	2007-2009
	Yayale Ahmed	North East	2009-2010
Party Chairman	Vincent Ogbulafor	South East	2008-2010
	Okwesilieze Nwodo	South East	2010-2011

Source: Author's Compilation (2008)

In the table above, we have changes in some positions and more than one person occupying the position; this is as a result of the impeachment and replacement that took place.

#### **4.5.3 Power rotation under President Goodluck Jonathan**

After several debates, opinion polls, Northerner's fear, the supremacy of the Constitution was implemented to the latter, and Goodluck Jonathan was sworn in as the substantive President in 2010. President Goodluck Jonathan hails from the South-South zone, the office of the Vice-President was zoned to the North-West, the Senate President office to the North-Central, the Speaker of House of Representatives to the North- West, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation to the North-East and that of the Head of Service to the South-East.

Upon the completion of President Yar'Adua tenure by President Jonathan in 2011, the question arose as to whether President Jonathan would contest the 2011 Presidential election or not? This debate came to the limelight because the position of the President was zoned between the North and South before it could be shifted to other regions, according to PDP's rotational arrangement (Opeyemi, Siyaka & Opeyemi, 2014). President Goodluck Jonathan later contested and won the 2011 Presidential election. It, therefore, became apparent to the North that the gentleman's agreement to power rotation had been broken and this marked the severe national security problem in the country (Omodia, 2012). To buttress this submission, Awopeju, Adelus & Oluwashakin (2012) concluded that the North indeed made Nigeria ungovernable for President Goodluck Jonathan through agitation from Northern elites, riot in the North and the spring up of the terrorist group-Boko Haram.



**Table 5: Power rotation arrangement under President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (2010)**

Office	Name	Geo-political zone	Period in Power
President	Goodluck Ebele Jonathan	South-South	2010-2015
Vice-president	Namadi Sambo	North-West	2010-2015
President of Senate	David Mark	North-Central	2007-2015
Speaker of the House	Aminu Waziri Tambuwal	North-West	2011-2015
Deputy president of Senate	Ike Ekwerenmadu	South East	2011-2015
Deputy speaker	Emeka Ihedioha	South East	2007-2011
Secretary to the government of the federation	Baba Gana Kingibe Yayale Ahmed	North East	2007-2009 2009-2015
Party chairman	Vincent Ogbulafor OkwesiliezeNwodo Almadu Sheriff	South East	2008-2010 2010-2012 -2015

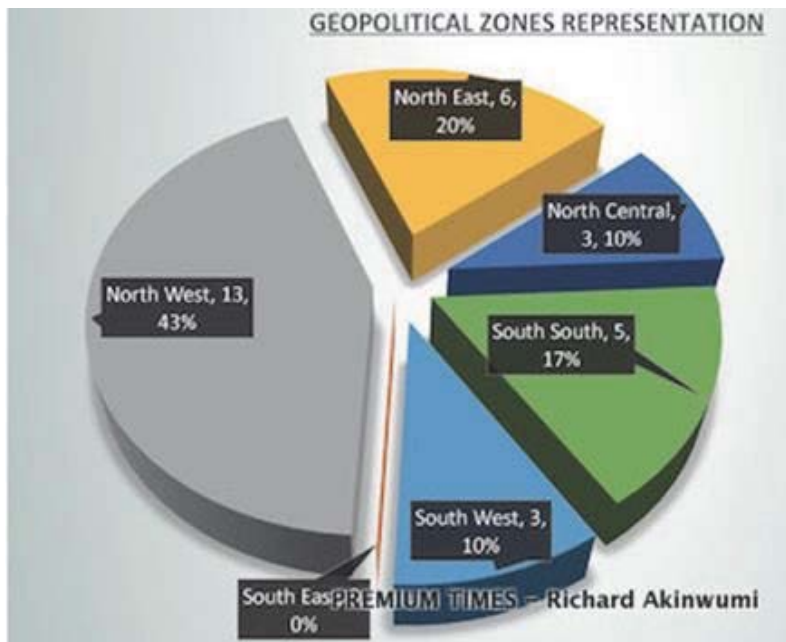
Source: Author's Compilation (2018)

#### **4.5.4 Power arrangement under President Buhari (2015 till Date)**

Furthermore, this study would be incomplete if the power arrangement under the present administration is not included. (Akinkunmi, 2016) President Buhari in the first instance made 30 appointments into crucial various government offices. Out of these 30 appointments for key government officials made by President Buhari, 22 appointees were from the North while only

eight were from the South; these appointments demonstrated that the South-East is alienated because none of the appointees is from the South-East. (Akinkunmi 2016) President Buhari reiterated the illogical and vindictive rationale for this alienation during his first visit to the United States of America after he was sworn in as the President of Nigeria. There, he explained that it would amount to an injustice to treat those who voted for him and those who did not vote for him equally. Since the South-East did not massively vote for Buhari in the 2015 Presidential election, the geopolitical zone should not expect much from his government (Ezeibe - 2016). This submission substantiates the description of Muhammadu Buhari’s 2015 electoral victory by Alhaji Mujahid Dokubo-Asari (Social Activist) as a gang up against the Niger Delta and South-East (Ezeibe - 2016). The power arrangement under Buhari Administration is represented in the graph below.

**Figure 2: Sharing of crucial government officials under President Buhari so far (2015 to date).**



Source (Akinkunmi, 2016)

From the above sharing arrangement, Akinkunmi (2016) observed that the appointments of President Buhari were overwhelmingly lopsided, lacking in gender balancing, national inclusiveness. Moreover, from this study, respondents from the South-East and South-South described President Buhari as an ethnic jingoist, religious fundamentalist, and Northern irredentist.

The above description of Buhari was validated by his appointments which negate Section 14 (3) of the 1999 Constitution that provides as follows:

The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or any of its agencies.

All People Congress (APC), the party under whose umbrella President Buhari came into power, find all means to defend the lopsided appointment of President Buhari (Omodia, 2012). To this end, Bisi Akande (the former Interim Chairman of the All Progressives Congress) in his defence statement stated categorically that rotational arrangement is not a part of APC. It is a PDP arrangement, and APC will not practice it. He was also supported by the Chairman of the APC, John Odigie Oyegun (from south-south geopolitical zone), who corroborated the appointment as merit-based and devoid of any bias. He further averred that the appointments considered those who possess quality and intelligence that can drive change and the developmental agenda of President Buhari. This expression made the observers of political events lament that the people of the South-East lacked good character and intelligence that can drive a vision to bring about the change agenda of President Buhari (Omodia, 2012). In the opinion of Oyegun, the idea of rotational arrangement encourages all forms of electoral malpractices such as ballot box snatching, stuffing, and manipulation of electoral results at collation centres to maintaining a specific region or zone in power. Hence, zoning does not support the principle of the fair and open contest between all constitutionally eligible candidates. To this end, the inalienable rights of the citizens to vote and be voted for has been eroded by the political parties. The rotational arrangement is therefore antithetical and damaging to the principle of democracy. It promotes division rather than fostering unity, dividing Nigeria into regions and tribes, and ethnic colouration instead of uniting the nation. So long as the rotational arrangement places embargoes temporarily, on a group of people based on geopolitical zones from running for any elective office, it is a violation of the principle of human equality and dignity enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

From the foregoing, it is apparent that the debate against rotational arrangement has gained momentum since PDP lost the presidential election. One of the most popular arguments is that the

power rotation arrangement, quota system and the federal character principle sacrifices meritocracy in favour of mediocrity and that power rotation arrangement is merely used to serve the central purpose of the Nigerian state which is to divide up the country's oil wealth among elites at the expense of economic development (Omodia, 2012).

#### **4.6 Nexus between Power Rotation and Stability of Nigeria's Political System**

In this section, efforts are made at examining the nexus between power rotation and political stability. This is done by juxtaposing the ideas and submission of scholars as we have those in favour of power rotation and those against the formula.

A study conducted by Ezeibe, Abada, and Okeke (2016) revealed that power rotational arrangement is a mechanism for the promotion of national cohesion. It is the system put in place due to the recognition of the right of the people to be a part of the political system. The abandonment of the formula will no doubt further expose the Nigerian state to the risk of national disunity and disintegration. The authors further reveal that the adoption of power rotation formula will suppress the effect of inter-ethnic distrust arising from ethnic and religious intolerance in Nigeria, and will make a massive success in maintaining national and political stability in Nigeria. This is because the rotational principle accommodates the interest of the multi-ethnic groups that make up the federation.

Unlike Ubana (2017) who examines the aftermath of power rotation on Nigeria federalism, the author concludes that power shift only leads to bringing to incompetent office people who do not have the charisma for Leadership. The author's argument centre on the fact that power rotation has brought no changes in the Socio-economic indices of the Country. The author also suggests that if Power rotation is the consensus factor to solving Nigeria's political problems which the writer does not believe, then its operations should be an addendum/enshrined into the document binding the Country called the Constitution.

Agbaje (1989) predicted that the notion of power rotation is not likely to be as effective as we have seen since 1999 and that the notion is not necessary although it could injure the polity. This is because Nigeria exhibits characteristics which are traditionally identified in the comparative literature as toxic to power rotation arrangements. One characteristic is a network of

broad social and territorial divisions, corresponding roughly with political loyalties engaged in asymmetrical political relationships with very little cross-cleavage allegiances.

In another blunt opinion, Ubana (2017) unequivocally submits that the notion of power rotation is unnecessary, not only because of its dictates but it has also been taken care of by constitutional provisions of federalism, federal character, and transparency in the implementation of democratic principles. Specifically, power rotation can only lead to interest articulation in a particular zone despite there being a best qualified in another zone; this will also lead to bringing to incompetent office people (Ubana, 2017).

Nwozor (2014) started his contribution to the debate on power rotation from the constitutional point of view by arguing that the elite dichotomy regarding North and South can be analytically useful, but the rotation formula is flawed and lacks legitimacy about the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It must be emphasised that (Section 135 (2)) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantee only one term of four years. Nwozor (2014) further contends that power rotation tends to undermine the geopolitical system and bolster the nation's North/South division. He concludes that the power rotation formula will undermine the hitherto geopolitical zones and depersonalize the ethnonational identities, which are essential building blocks for the Nigerian Federation.

In his own opinion, Ibrahim (2000) opines that President Jonathan's ambition to contest in 2011 fuelled the debates of power rotation policy where some northern hegemony described the ambition as anti-unity and a party agreed arrangement for North's eight-year term of presidential position. Ajaero (2010) concludes that Jonathan's presidential ambition undermined rotational policy, and this threw the country into a Hobbesian state of mutual ethnic war, or better called, a politically unstable society. Some scholars see power rotation as an attempt to protect the interest of the minority in a democratic society like Nigeria. They also see power rotation as capable of mitigating the recurrent agitations for minority right, thus dousing the political tension within the polity. Others see it as antithetical to the ideals of democratic culture (Omotola, 2010; Agbaje, 2010).

In another development, Alli (2010) follows the emergence of the power rotation formula as the creation of People's Democratic Party (PDP) in 1999 with a view of giving opportunities to all geopolitical zones a shot at the presidency. According to the formula, each zone is expected to

enjoy a four-year term in the presidency after which the race would be thrown open, and the second four-year term is available only to an incumbent but through the process of re-election.

Scholars such as Ahmed (2010) argues in line with the implication of imbalanced political power rotation; he attributes various crises to the imbalanced power and the orchestration of youth unrest that characterise the polity with the intention of protecting the interests of their ethnics groups. By implication, the failure to amicably settle the issue of power rotation formula not only multiplies tensions within the polity but also limits the range of choices available to the electorate which invariably constitute a significant threat to the stability of the political system of Nigeria.

Aziegbe, (2014) carried out a comparative analysis of federalism in the United States and Nigeria and examined why federalism has not succeeded in managing and accommodating diversity in Nigeria. The author traced Nigeria's federalism from the colonial era through the orchestrated merger of the various ethnic's groups into one. The author noted that differences in ethnic and religious groups continue to be a source for crisis and tension since independence in Nigeria. This problem becomes intensified when power is unevenly distributed. The author, therefore, calls for the adoption of specific structures put in place by advanced federalisms like the USA, such as independence of the constituent actors, desirability, and partnership, equality of power representation and weak central government.

Aiyede (2011) contributed to the debate on power sharing and opines that the issue has become a prominent characteristic of Nigerian politics. The author observed that power rotation has become essential considering the various post-election crises witnessed in Nigeria, especially the devastating effect of the annulment of the June 12 Presidential election. The author notes that experience from Nigeria provides useful lessons on the theory and practice of power-sharing in a plural society with a federal system of government. Aiyede (2011) examines explicitly the implications of debating power-sharing, following the build-up to the 2011 elections, with the insinuation that Goodluck Jonathan (a southerner) came in into the presidential race after the death of President Umar Musa Yar'Adua (a northerner). This, in the opinion of the Aiyede (2011), was a clear upset of the power-sharing arrangement. Aiyede (2011) in his study found that the 'zoning with rotation' principle is beneficial for the stability of the polity because it promotes good representation of various ethnics groups that make up the federation in Nigeria. However, its sustenance, according to Aiyede (2011), depends on its flexible application by the power elites and the ability to negotiate among themselves to ensure equilibrium of power and political offices.

In another finding, Aiyede (2011) revealed that the ‘zoning with rotation’ principle is problematic and negates the central tenet of democracy because of its constraints on the notion of free political competition which is sacrosanct to democracy.

Olaiya, Apeloko, Amanchukwu, and Shiyanbade (2014) contributed to the debate by alluding to the fact that various mechanisms have been put in place to recognise the rights of individuals in a diverse society like Nigeria among which is the rotational formula. The authors have critically analysed rotational formula and considering its records of political stability level from 1999-2010, have found that there was evidence of improved and strengthened ethnic relations, albeit politically within that period. The authors submit that the rotational arrangement strategy is required, such that the interests of the various sections of the country are factored into the political space to the enhanced ethnic relation in the Nigerian polity.

#### **4.7 Challenges Confronting the Use of Power Rotation in Nigeria**

It must be recognised that there are arguments and counter-arguments in the use of the power rotation principle in Nigeria. Before examining the counter-argument, which will serve as the challenges in the use of power rotation principle from the scholarly point of view, one major lacuna that has continued to militate against the full application of power rotation principle is the failure of its entrenchment in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Besides, research has shown that power rotation is an internal arrangement put in place by the then ruling political party (People’s Democratic Party). What the 1999 Nigerian Constitution guaranteed was one term of four years in (Section 135 (2)). Even the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP) envisaged a single four-year term for its presidential candidates. This gives room for the freedom of participation by all entities that make up Nigeria; it is a gap that is filled by the theory of liberal democracy. This theory, if applied, will give equal liberty to every member of an ethnic group equal right of participation in the governance of the country either from majority group or minority group. According to Alli (2010), “The PDP in 1999 designed the power rotation formula to give all the six geopolitical zones of the country a chance to have a shot at the presidency. Each zone was expected to enjoy a four-year term in the presidency after which the race would be thrown open.” The second four-year term is available only to an incumbent, and it is not automatic; it must be earned through re-election. This phenomenon renders rotational formula powerless since the

party seized to be in power. Arising from this, it is imperative to examine some of the factors or challenges that may render its use unacceptable in the Nigeria context.

#### **4.7.1 Inter-Ethnic Distrust**

One of the major factors hindering the adoption of the power rotation principle is the nature of inter-ethnic distrust among the major ethnic groups in the country. Nigeria is no doubt a deeply divided society where issues (ethnic issues) are vigorously contested and debated to defend or show the supremacy of one ethnic group over others (Smyth, 2001). Some of the issues that generate conflicts of interest revolve around the fundamental issue that is sacrosanct to the legitimacy of the state. These include the control of state power, resource allocation, and citizenship. As a consequence, these issues are centrifugal forces that tend to tear the nation apart. There is hardly a consensus among the representatives of the various constituent units that make up the federation.

#### **4.7.2 Sectional Interest**

Power rotation also becomes problematic because Nigerian political actors still lack a sense of national leadership. They, instead, represent sectional interests. All alluded in section 4.5.4 above; it was gathered that the first 30 appointments for key government officials made by President Buhari were to serve the sectional interest of the Northern elites. For instance, the report shows that 22 appointees were from the North while only eight were from the South. None of the appointees was from the South-East. This made the observers of the political events to describe Buhari as an ethnic jingoist and a Northern irredentist. It is because of the interest of the elites in the particular section or region of the country that prompted other regions to agitate for the adoption of power rotation formula.



#### **4.7.3 Personal Ambition of the Political Elites**

Another critical factor that may hinder the adoption of power rotation is the inordinate ambition of some political elites to contest. For instance, President Goodluck Jonathan's declaration of intention to contest in the 2011 presidential election pitted regional elites against one another. The confusion and ambiguities attached to zoning and rotation fuelled and exacerbated ethnic-regional claims and contentions. This confusion was powered by the crisis of personal ambitions (Samuel, 2007: 180). The perception that President Jonathan's ambition was anti-unity and assortative of the North's presidential turn was rooted in the premise that the rotation of power was for an eight-year term. This premise fuelled assertions that Jonathan's presidential ambition undermined power rotation policy, and this threw the country into a Hobbesian state of mutual ethnic war (Ajaero, 2010).

Agbaje (2010) argues that the very idea of power rotation seems antithetical to the ideals of democratic culture. In 1999, when democratic governance was restored in Nigeria after an extended period of military rule, there was a tacit consensus among the political elite to limit electoral choices for the presidency to Southern candidates. This was to serve as an appeal to the South over the issue of 1993 election which was apparently won by a Southern candidate (Moshood Abiola) but was annulled by the then Military President Ibrahim Babangida (Northerner). The result was the nominations of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (Southerner) for the PDP and Chief Olu Falae (Southerner) for the coalition of All Peoples Party (now All Nigeria Peoples Party, ANPP) (Omotola, 2010).

#### **4.7.4 Lack of Unanimous Agreement on the Part of Dominant Political Parties**

Another primary challenge militating against the use of power rotation in Nigeria, on the part of dominant political parties, is the lack of unanimous agreement to accept the formula in Nigeria. On this note, Akande (APC chieftain) classified power rotation as PDP arrangement which APC will not adhere to (2015). APC chairman John Odigie Oyejide (2017) supported the selection and appointment made by President Buhari and classified it on merit base. Could this now mean that South-East lacked in good character, intelligence, drive, and vision to bring about the gains of democracy because they were less selected in this present regime of President Buhari? The

leadership of the APC also argues that zoning encourages all forms of electoral malpractices (ballot box snatching, stuffing and manipulation of electoral results at collation centres) to guarantee a specific region or zone remain in power (Omodia, 2012).

#### **4.7.5 Leadership Tussle**

Another prominent factor militating against the adoption of power rotation principle is the question of leadership tussles in Nigeria. It has continued to linger unresolved for many years in Nigeria. Example of this is the agitation of secession by IPOB basically because they have been deprived and marginalised for so long from the corridor of national leadership. To this end, Ibeanu (1999) and Abubakar (2004) submit that the leadership question has remained unresolved because of the belief that the right to rule is a separate right of the northern political elite, and these bring instability repercussion from other ethnic groups.

#### **4.8 Rotational Presidency about Democracy**

Although democracy is a verse concept which does not have a unified nor particular agreed definition, it can be approached using its tenets features. To this end, Austin Ranney (1957) gave the most acceptable definition when he viewed democracy as a form of government organised by the principles of popular sovereignty, widespread consultation, political and economic equality, and majority rule. Some of its features include majority rule, a guarantee of fundamental human rights, equality of opportunity, and operation of the rule of law and constitutionalism. Nigeria today is a democratic state, perhaps with features above of democracy.

Democracy also entails full participation of the citizenry in the governance duties to ensure good governance. Meanwhile, democracy succeeds when the political system is stable. Unfortunately, with the movement to democracy, Nigeria is still plagued by instability. This perhaps could have propelled Ernest & Okoli (2014) to have argued that, in the Nigeria Fourth republic the ruling political parties are always seeking for a means to perpetuate itself in power while the opposition is in a constant struggle to take over power from the ruling party. The resultant effect of this struggle has continuously led to frustrations and aggressions by the opposition party

due to their inability to capture power from the ruling party. For this reason, the opposition may refuse to accept the election result due to perceived malpractices that characterised the election, and the feeling that the incumbent government sponsored the election through the instrumentality of the state apparatus. The implication of the above scenario is the continuous struggle and agitation for power rotation principle and the restructuring that has dominated Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

Furthermore, it must be recognised that scholars have divided opinions on the necessity for the adoption of the rotational presidency for democratic stability and consolidation. Odetunde (2006) is among those who subscribed to the idea that political power rotation is not suitable for democracy in Nigeria. He argues that the presidential power rotation in a winner takes all democratic system is detrimental for a developing nation like Nigeria. He emphasised that political zoning is nothing more than an arrangement among friends and it does not have anything to do with the governed. For that matter, suppose presidency is zoned to a particular part of the country, and there are entirely no qualified persons, it means Nigerians will elect an unqualified person to govern for four years. To worsen the case, at the conclusion of four years, sycophants will ask this unqualified person to run for re-election. With this analogy, Odetunde (2006) remarks that the immaturity of Nigeria's democratic system is what keeps returning Nigeria to an undemocratic means of what is now known as political power rotation to resolve our perceived political quagmire. Democracy, according to Odetunde (2006), is a simple system which when followed will make an otherwise complicated political setup easy. The undemocratic means is what he referred to as the rotational presidency arrangement.

In another analogy, Odetunde (2006) opines that to understand a mature democracy does not need a rotational system, the American system must be examined. In a mature democracy, the president is not as important as those in his cabinet. The ministers are experts in their fields and ought to be the gears that run the engine of government. When a leader knows his shortcomings and surrounds himself with qualified aids or what we call Ministers capable of coming up with sound policies, the president is to tap the knowledge of these individuals and present them as his. First, the American system can afford to have an unqualified person as president (but their system of sorting out presidential candidates will not allow this). This is because that individual has a mature and responsive governing system because of the nature of the (a) Judicial system (b)

Legislative system (c) Respected press to ascertain the check and balances; and more importantly (d) Responsive electorates that know their rights and are willing to lay their lives to defend the rights. This is unlike in Nigeria claimed democracy.

In another controversial argument as regards to the relationship between rotational presidency and democracy, the leadership of the APC, John Odigie Oyegun, in a press release (2011) argues against the rotational arrangement. According to him, it encourages all forms of electoral malpractices which include stuffing and manipulation of electoral results at collation centres, and ballot box snatching with the intention of maintaining a specific region or zone in political power (Omodia, 2012). Thus, it does not give credence to an open contest between all constitutionally available options. To these end, the political parties limit the power of choice against all the eligible voters in Nigeria to exercise their franchise. The rotational arrangement on this note is seen as an anathema to the basic tenets of democracy, and the rotational system enhances division rather than fosters unity in the political system. In other words, the rotational system contradicts the basic tenets of liberal democracy as enshrined in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In a supportive argument to the above, Odunze, (2012) contends that democracy cannot be deepened, and the attainment of sustainable development will be difficult with the rotational arrangement. This is because Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country with diverse ethnic groups who continuously agitate for the representation of their group, and the rotational principle destroys the unity as it accommodates the interest of the multi-ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. Also, the leaders that emerged after independence who were the representative of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria are in support of the rotational arrangement.

Kamal and Bello (2014) argue that the clamour for rotation in democratic Nigeria, with various ethnic linguistic and cultural diversities, negates the fundamental principles of democracy and its sustenance will hardly be achieved. Continuous calling for power rotation depicts the extent of ethnic consciousness which is a negation to integration. Rotational presidency only creates ethnic heroes who will pride themselves in taking the more substantial part of the national loot back to their regions. Ramalan (2010: 221) is right when he 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.

Rotational presidency is not fruitful to Nigeria's 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 appointments. Nigeria politics is characterised by the “*winner-takes-all*” approach. In a society with such a mentality, the risk of breeding mediocrity is increased. In the same vein, supporters of rotational presidency have also cited the instance of Switzerland. Odunze (2012) argued that there are basic structures that make rotational presidency thrive in Switzerland. These are checks and balances, and the rule of law which is hardly implemented in Nigeria. Nigeria's common idea that government offers an opportunity to amass wealth is not a commonly held view in Switzerland.

Comparatively, in Nigeria, rotational presidency among geopolitical zones was introduced in the Fourth Republic by People's Democratic Party (PDP), and it is still embedded in their party constitution. Even though it is not contained in the Nigerian constitution, the challenge also is the workable structures and the attitude of Nigerians. The call for rotational presidency has taken regional dimensions; it is the northern elites that are crying for power rotation to be respected as agreed upon in PDP (Whaham, 2012). The slogans or clichés of equity, justice, fairness and transformation are not ended in themselves as preached by the apologists of the rotational presidency but translating them into concrete realities.

Akindiyo, Mohammed and Adanri (2014) argue that the inability to design a mutually agreeable and fair power rotational arrangement as portrayed by the political class is one of the issues Nigeria is battling. That if it is not well managed, it could serve as an albatross to political stability.

In a further examination of the nexus between power rotation and democratic stability in Nigeria, the study by Ernest & Okoli (2014) aptly revealed the extent to which lack of power alternation breeds crisis among the ruling elites, thereby undermining the democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Ernest & Okoli (2014) examine, in their study, if the lack of political power alternation destabilises democratic stability. The study reveals that if governmental power is concentrated in one hand, it will undermine democratic stability in the country. Ernest & Okoli (2014) further

revealed that the continuing accumulation of the state resources by the ruling elite, the employment of state apparatus to retain themselves in power, and the constant struggle by the opposition party to change status quo, constitute impediments to democratic stability in the country. As a result, Ernest & Okoli (2014) later revealed that a lack of governmental turnover leads to political instability which will subsequently undermine democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

In line with the above, Wahman (2010) argued persuasively that the fact that the opposition party won 2015 (from PDP to APC) election does not guarantee democracy just because the newly elected governments are also concerned with future re-election and will find all possible means to retain incumbent benefits and power in order to attain the prospect of future elections. Wahman (2010) further notes that constant change in government could serve as an opportunity for political liberalisation, provided that the new government is willing to sacrifice the institutions that might give them electoral advantage in future elections. An example of Senegal and Kenya was cited, and Wahman (2010) warned that if opposition political parties are used as means of achieving personal ambitions among state elites, building and achieving an improved democracy will be a difficult task. However, if elites from the zonal regions can concur on rotational arrangement, stability in polity will be attained.

#### **4.9 Consolidation of (Presidential) Power Rotation and Democracy in Nigeria's Fourth Republic**

It has been argued in the preceding sections that the idea of rotational presidency is not a democratic product since it is orchestrated by elites without the principles of popular sovereignty and widespread consultation, the hallmark of democracy. For the fact that it lacks this solid foundation of democratic correlates, sustainable democracy can hardly be nurtured. On this note, the theory of liberal democracy will be suitably devised for analysing the consolidation of power rotation and democracy in Nigeria fourth republic. This is further explained by Dumoye (2010:2), in his work, *Nexus of Democratic Consolidation and Development Imperative in Africa*, where he noted that sustainable democracy involves the widespread acceptance of rules to guarantee political participation and political representation. Democracy is a universally recognised ideal based on values common to people everywhere, irrespective of cultural, social, or economic

differences. It is a political system that permits people to freely choose a competent, honest, transparent and accountable government.

From the previous discussion, it can be deduced that the phenomenon of rotational presidency which is an elite affair is capable of backsliding Nigeria's democratic journey so far made. Dunmoye (2010:3) further posits that sustaining democracy using the theory of liberal democracy means nurturing and reinforcing a democratic culture through: popular free participation, respect for rule of law, constitutionalism, vibrant civil society, consolidation of democratic institutions, accessible, free, independent and unbiased mass media, and periodic free and fair election under the aegis of an impartial elections management body. By contrast, it could be argued that the rotational presidency arrangement is undemocratic, as it denies some people equal chance and opportunity at all times.

Alluding from the foregoing, stabilising the nascent democracy constitutes a rare attribute in Nigeria. By implication, it depends on the successive leaders to devise strategies that could surmount the problem and create a stable political atmosphere. In most cases, most of the programmes developed by the government have often been abandoned as a result of instability in the political system. This is so because the character of the political system in Nigeria's Fourth Republic reflects the situation where the ruling party continues to seek strategies to retain itself in power through all possible means, while the opposition has equally continued to initiate its tactics to take over power. By consequence, if the opposition fails to capture power, they result in refusal to accept the election result, they get involved in sponsoring violence and threats to the incumbent government to accept its agitations. Conversely, the incumbent strives to consolidate its control of state power by using state machinery to appropriate resources and limit any form of opposition. In the face of this stiff competition, both the incumbent and the opposition have continued to exploit the interstices in the polity, and in most cases employ various tactics including ethno-regional and religious manipulation of the populace, using militant and extremist groups to perpetrate all kinds of violence in the struggle for power and control of resources (Agbaje, 1998).

In the face of intense struggle between the incumbent and the opposition, governance suffers, the needs of masses are not attended to, and the leaders continue to accumulate national resources for personal ambition to the detriment of the development of the society. By implication of the abandonment of the masses by the political leaders, Danbazua (2013) noted that many of the thugs used by politicians to either grab or retain power are those who formed the nucleus of

Boko Haram members: militants in the Niger Delta; Ombatse in Nasarawa; and increased the strengths of armed robbers and kidnappers on national highways.

Consistent with this view, Ogban-Iyam (2005) noted that the formation and emergence of groups like Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Odua People's Congress (OPC), Arewa People's Congress (APC), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) etc., is directly linked to the ruler's failure of dealing meaningfully with various demands made by the masses. Meanwhile, the emergence of these militant and extremist groups has been turned into an opportunity by the ruling elite who manipulate and instigate these groups to destabilise the country in order to satisfy their selfish political ambition and further loot the national treasury. This increases as more elections take place in the country and the struggle to capture and retain state power intensifies. For instance, the political environment after the 2011 general elections has been characterised by some of the worst forms of violence in most parts of the country. Orji (2008) documented some of these incidents of post-election violence, most of which were linked to both the ruling party and the opposition parties.

Related to the above is the issue of ethnicity and religion in Nigerian politics. The manipulation of the various ethnic and religious groups by the political elites has contributed in no small measure to the current instability in the country. For instance, the demise of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, and the assumption of office by the Vice President Goodluck Jonathan created opportunity for some political elites to fan the embers of ethnicity and religion by mobilizing political thugs to cause mayhem in parts of the country under the guise that the northern Nigerians have not completed their eight-year tenure and should be given the opportunity to take back the Presidency.

Nwosor (2014) argues in favour of the geopolitical zone for power rotation. However, power rotation according to Nwosor tends to undermine the geopolitical system and bolster the nation's North/South division. This arrangement by implication is capable of depersonalising and undermining the ethnonational identities, which are important building blocks for the Nigerian Federation. It may also result in the creation of structural flaws that will drive and sustain political tension within the polity and pose a severe challenge to the consolidation of Nigeria's democracy.

Nnoli (1996) explained that power rotation can lead to interest articulation by bringing a representative from a particular zone at the detriment of a qualified candidate in another zone,



leading to an incompetent candidate being brought in the name of zone representation. This decision limited the choice of voters and antagonised the idea of democracy to an extent.

In conclusion, it is clear that the challenges militating against the use of power rotation principle are numerous and this has continued to impede its actual practice among the political elites. Agbaje (1989) was futuristic about the issue of power rotation when he gave the notion that it might not last long, and this was seen in the aftermath of the political occurrence in 2011 when President Jonathan showed interest in the presidency. The experience of the level of political stability in the country between 1999 and 2010 would have improved if there was continuity in the rotational arrangement. The next chapter provides some recommendations for achieving power rotation in Nigeria's political environment.

# CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

## 5.1 Summary

The study has assessed rotational presidency as a mechanism for political stability in Nigeria's Fourth Republic. In the introductory part, a brief history of Nigeria as a region was examined to understand the dynamics of the fragmentation in the term, ethnicity. The section equally encompassed a brief history on the presidency since Nigeria's independence in 1960. This was done to x-ray the equal distribution of the presidency position or the domination of one region over others regarding presidential positions. This has many implications for the current political instability ravaging Nigeria as a country. On this note, the study revealed that Nigeria is fragmented into three dominant ethnic groups that are constantly competing for presidential power. Among these three dominant groups, the Northern part of the country had benefited immensely compared to both the Western and Eastern regions since the attainment of independence. This has therefore culminated in the recurrent agitation for power rotation among the perceived marginalised group within the country as a federation. With regards to the literature review, various concepts such as federalism, power rotation, and democratic consolidation were all examined from both global and domestic points of view. The study revealed that federalism remains the only mechanism that can be used to manage the crisis in a plural society like Nigeria, without losing the recognition of the various ethnic groups that make up the federation. On democratic consolidation, all tenets of democracy such as participation, the rule of law, periodic election, and independent judiciary among others must be respected and strengthened so as deepening democratic culture in Nigeria. Attempts were also made at examining the nexus between power rotation and democratic consolidation. The study revealed that democracy is consolidated when political systems are stabilised. In other words, power rotation has the potential of stabilising the political system and by extension lead to democratic consolidation.

Chapter Three of this study was dedicated to theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. To this end, the theory of relative deprivation, integration and liberal democracy were all examined and found basis to the understanding of a plural society like Nigeria by integrating all ethnic groups for national unity, cohesion and stability of the polity. Despite the uniqueness of these theories, it was equally met with some criticisms. Efforts were made in chapter four to discuss

presidential power rotation and democratic consolidation in Nigeria's fourth republic. This, to a very large extent, highlights some of the historical processes that led to the omission of power rotation within the ambit of the 1999 constitution. The chapter also covers the challenges confronting the use of power rotation in Nigeria as it was revealed that factors such as inter-ethnic distrust, sectional interest, the inordinate ambition of some political leaders, and lack of unanimous agreement on the part of dominant political parties were major harbinger militating against the use of power rotation principle in Nigeria.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on this submission, this study, therefore, recommends the following:

1. Power rotation should be made constitutional in order to allow all the six geopolitical zones to have equal opportunity to rule the country Nigeria. This will promote unity in diversity as seen during the administration of President Obasanjo to President Yar'Adua. This is in tandem with the submission of Terwase, Abdul-Talib, and Zengeni (2015) that when power rotation is made constitutional, it will give equal opportunity to all the six geopolitical zones as well as promote unity between the Christians and Muslims. Religion will no longer be used as a tool in fighting political interest. Thus, the North and the South will grow in unity. Also, each zone will wait for their turn of leadership as it reflects within the Nigerian constitution as suggested. Therefore, this issue of rotation of presidency should be enshrined in the Nigerian constitution to avoid truncation when in the hands of political parties, as witnessed during the PDP/Jonathan led government in 2011 after the death of President Yar'Adua. The rotational arrangement will, therefore, solve all forms of political conflicts between the North and the South.
- 2 There is more need to educate both the majority and the minority groups in Nigeria, through our media and religion, to love the country. Its diversity can only become her strength only when the citizens give room for peace and unity. Nigeria should be considered first before personal or group interest/ambition; people of the North and South should see Nigeria as their priority not their region nor ethnic groups. The country cannot move forward when these selfish interests are considered before the interest of the country at large. Nigerians

must stand united, and should promote unity in diversity, as a people who see themselves as one. The political elites should stop playing politics with fundamental issues that affect the national unity and cohesion of the country for their interests. Therefore, power rotation arrangement should be sincerely and genuinely adhered to and adopted. This submission also corroborates the findings of Nwozor (2014) who asserts that the Nigerian elite has hidden under the canopy of ethnicity and regional marginalisation to mask and advance their political interests with the agitation for power rotation formula. This should not be the case once the policy of rotation is adopted.

- 3 In line with the above, personal, sectional or ethnic interest of the political elites should be carpeted for national interest. It was observed in the recent times among Nigerian political elites that they mostly focus on issues that concern politicking rather than governance and representation which is the basic responsibility of being elected. That means, whenever politics takes centre stage, governance suffers. On this note, early warning mechanism should be put in place to minimize controversies and sensitise the citizens more about the benefit and progress embedded in the function of rotational policy. It can be introduced into the curriculum of our education, and forum and conferences can be held regularly to discuss the assessment of political power rotation once adopted. As noted in the work of Terwase, Abdul-Talib, and Zengeni, (2015), the early warning mechanism should be put in place to monitor and address issues that may result in social and political conflicts in Nigeria at the early stage. Such issues should not be ignored as the rotation of the presidency to the North in 2011-2015 was and further truncated by the PDP. In as much as the North agitated for it, the South still went against the arrangement.
- 4 In tandem with the foregoing, debates over national issues such as the adoption of power rotation formula should be all-encompassing. It can be discussed during a sovereign national conference where all representatives of the various ethnic groups, and well-meaning Nigerians that cut across the various interest groups, are represented rather than the monolithic ideology of one political party. The debate on power rotation, as Oyegun (2017) noted, was an agenda of the People's Democratic Party without regards for other political parties. This scenario propelled the present government to oppose, and refuse to

practice, the idea as undemocratic, believing that it promotes mediocrity in governance at the expense of competency. This study, therefore, strongly recommends that issues like this should be debated where all political parties, ethnic groups, and civil society groups should be represented to avoid sectional interests. This will bring about national acceptance and proper functioning of the idea.

- 5 In a more pragmatic view, a single term for the presidency will be the fastest panacea to the challenges of succession and political instability in the country. This idea will make the policy of rotation achievable and will give the presidential candidates the idea that they are public servants accountable to the citizens, and the office of presidency belongs to the public, not their inheritance. This idea will encourage the president to serve and implement good and rapid policies that will be of great benefit to the Nation as a whole, not just a region. Plus, soonest, another candidate from another zone will emerge, and the predecessor policy will influence the new, and this will bring about successful continuity.
- 6 There should be an evolving power rotational arrangement that is home-grown, touching on all elective positions at the local government level, state level and then national level. Grass root politics is very important; rotation should be in all level of government position. Political power rotation policy should not just be about the presidential position but should be practised in the local government council as well as state level.
- 7 Embracing devolution of power will reduce the concentration of power at the national level with over-bearing influence on the state. The concentration of power at the presidency makes the position a keen contest, and this arrangement negates the true principle of federalism. Nigeria needs to practice true federalism channelled towards decentralisation of power and resource control. This idea will make the position of Presidency function progressively as an administrator rather than a controller. If this is done, agitating groups may feel secure with enough resources in their disposal to herald development at the state and local level instead of looking up to the presidency for help. This will go a long way in achieving true federalism as well as help in reducing the on-going agitations for restructuring. This will, in turn, promote political stability in Nigeria.

- 8 Democracy entails inclusiveness which ensures that the people become the object and subject of good governance. Meanwhile, democracy cannot thrive without stability in the polity. Unfortunately, despite the transition to democracy, most African states are still plagued by instability. The study recommends that there is need to strengthen state institutions especially the electoral body and state security apparatus. This will enhance a level playing ground and fair competition, and guarantee that the votes of electorates count, thereby preparing the polity for possible peaceful alternation in power.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

There is equally an undeniable relationship between political stability and democratic consolidation. Nigeria is going through a tortuous journey, and at the centre of it all is the power rotation arrangement that is, perhaps, the explanatory factor for the gamut of challenges shaking the nation to its root. Most especially as the country approaches elections year (2019). Given the findings, this study welcomes the idea of power rotation as a mechanism for promoting stability in Nigeria's political system. The author, although, is sceptical about the intention of some elite as some political elites only embrace the concept to harness their political gains. Irrespective of the elite's attitude, the concept had demonstrated a level of stability as seen between 1999 and 2010, when it was put into practice.

Many believe the instability issue has been a prevalent problem since the amalgamation (1914) of the North and South by the colonial masters without indigenous consultation. However, in all the administrations of the military and the civilians, one thing remains constant: a nation embodied with diverse ethnic backgrounds and diverse religion both from the Northern and Southern part of the country. The military rule in the past created a gap between the South and the North since power was in most cases residing in the Northern part of the country. Between the periods of 1966-1976, and 1983- 1999 leadership from the North created an imbalance between the North and the South.

Most importantly, the Nigerian state can integrate her diverse ethnic groups into a united people who see the country as their nation and cooperatively work together to build the country,

Nigeria. To guarantee broader representation, evidence from this study revealed that Nigeria has adopted a complex power-rotation arrangement, in which its elements straddle federalism and electoral systems in order to guarantee broad representation, cross-regional collaboration in the appeal for votes and, particularly, to ensure that all segments of society feel they have guaranteed access to the number one position in government. This framework has evolved since the 1960s; the federal character principle was introduced in 1979, and the rotation arrangement principle emerged out of the post-12 June 1993 presidential election annulment negotiations. Evidence in the literature revealed that the power-rotation arrangement was essentially responsible for stability in Nigeria between 1999 and 2007. It was, however, upset by the death of President Yar'Adua and the interest of Goodluck Jonathan, his Vice-President, in standing for the presidency before a president was sent from the North. The little rumpus experienced with the rotation formula due to the death of Yar'Adua is not enough justification to allow the enemies of the principle to toss it overboard. If Nigeria gets it right with the arrangement, it would not only be for her sake but also for the sake of other multi-ethnic, strife-stricken countries around the world.

Furthermore, Nigerians must not be too squeamish as to the adoption of the principle, as great societies adopt systems which suit their history and ethnological realities; and Britain evolved the parliamentary system with the fountain of her unity in the monarch. The Americans fashioned a presidential-congressional system which has sustained them, uninterrupted, for more than two centuries. The rotational system may prove to be Nigeria's channel of contribution to her unity and political stability because it is a realistic approach to political and psychological integration (Akinola, 1996: 21)

From all indications, this study concludes that a comprehensive power rotational system with democratic culture can take Nigeria closer to the emergence of stable, meaningful, purposeful and beneficial politics. It should also be entrenched in the country's constitution. The rotational system should be allowed in Nigeria to give equal opportunity to all the six geopolitical zones where the presidency and the other top political positions would rotate. This is in order to have a united Nigeria where peace and political stability would be achieved or sustainable through the integration of the people as one united country. It is on this basis that democracy triumphs and is consolidated.

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