

**Political Parties, Rotational Presidency and
the Challenge of Nation Building in Nigeria**

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Abstract

This article examines Nigeria's political parties and the principle of rotational presidency. Nigeria is among several countries in Africa confronted by threats of political instability and social conflicts that characterise most multi-ethnic nations on the continent. This situation in Nigeria is leading political actors in the country to canvass for the adoption of rotational presidency as a potent political arrangement that can guarantee stability among the constituent parts. The article argued that, given the weak nature of political parties in Nigeria, their fragile institutions and the multi-party system, the adoption of rotational presidency is impracticable; and if it is forced to be, it is not likely to be sustainable. The article adopts the historical-descriptive method, and relies on Simon Hug's System Demand theory for theoretical elucidation. It debunks the claim that rotational presidency will accelerate the pace towards national development, and contends that the idea is a pacifist design likely to further highlight the differences among the component parts and retard the nation's stride towards socio-economic and democratic advancements. As a way forward, it recommends a single term of five years without

necessarily being rotational, and pushes for a system that will allow parties to field candidates from any region on the basis of merit and ability. It also emphasises the need for the institutionalisation of internal democracy in the parties, as opposed to imposition of candidates and fitful tinkering of party rules in favour of particularistic agenda.

Key words: Zoning, rotational principle, intergovernmental federalism, political parties, Nigeria.

Introduction

Most countries in Africa, with particular reference to Nigeria, are plagued by serious challenge of nation building and development. The history of African states since the collapse of colonialism, with the exception of a few, could be said to be the history of political instability, social conflicts, misery and underdevelopment. In other words, a number of African countries after the attainment of political independence were plunged into crises of genocidal proportion as a result of the activities of the emergent political class (Mamdani, 2010; Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2007; Achebe, 1983). It was under these circumstances that many African states started to contemplate on a socio-political order that could guarantee the stability and working of their various states.

In the case of Nigeria, the country had convulsed from the crisis of civil war, through several military interruptions, to an annulment of a generally accepted election, as well as attempt at establishing a dictatorial order. On the whole, the sense of popular disenchantments, mutual suspicions and fear of political domination among the constituent parts are evident from the actions and social conversations in Nigerian society. Efforts at crafting a mode of socio-political arrangement that can ensure unity and political stability has seen the country moving from regionalism to federalism, and innumerable conferences and confabs. Despite these endeavours, threats and counter-threats

continue to stream from the various regions of the country, suggesting that the country still remains divided.

Against this backdrop, there have been renewed calls for the introduction of the idea of rotational presidency by political actors as a panacea to the challenge of nation building and to allay the fear of domination by any section of the country (Akinola, 2014; Nwaneri, 2013). This article is an attempt to interrogate the potency and practicability of the idea within the contexts of multiparty system and weak political structures and institutions.

Reflection on the Development and Character of Political Parties in Nigeria

As a mechanism for the activation of political power, modern political party system is among the major political inventions of several centuries of yearnings for a viable mode of socio-political organisation capable of providing access to the political arena to individuals across the social spectra. This development was in response to the wake of Enlightenment and the gradual recession of old feudal institutions as a result of the increasing pressure of insurrectionary clamours for popular participation in the political processes across the world, especially in Europe where it started (Hug, 2001; Swain, 2001; Ninalowo, 1997). By way of definition, a political party is an organised group of people seeking political power by ballot within a political system (Odukoya, 2013; Swain, 2001). It could be gleaned from the above definition that the central aim of a political party is to gain control of the institutions of government through the instrumentality of the ballot box. This is what distinguishes political parties from any groups of people sharing common ideas.

The development of political party system in Nigeria can be traced to 1922 when Sir Hugh Clifford became the governor of Nigeria. Subsequent development gave birth to a new constitutional arrangement that came to be known as Clifford Constitution of 1922. This significant event allowed the

development of political parties in Nigeria, the first of which was the Nigeria National Democratic Party (NNDP) founded by Herbert Samuel Heelas Macaulay in 1922. The party featured prominently in the 1922 elections for the Lagos Legislative Council, and continued to dominate Lagos politics until the advent of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) founded in 1933 by notable nationalist thinkers such as Samuel Akinsanya, Ernest Ikoli, Dr, Kofo Abayomi and H.O. Davies. Other prominent founding members of the NYM included Adeyemo Alakija and Nnamdi Azikiwe. Some of the immediate goals of the NYM involved ending indirect rule and the mobilization of the different ethnic groups in Nigeria to fight for the attainment of independence (Adeniyi, 2011; Nwankwo, 2002).

The next major constitutional development was Richard's Constitution of 1946. The Constitution came into effect in January 1947 and split the country into three regions of North, West and East. Regional councils were also created in each of the regions. Although the segregation of the country into three regions by Richard had been criticised as planting the seed of ethnic politics in Nigeria (Nnoli, 2007), it was the Constitution that gave impetus to the development of major political activities in the country. The coming of Richard's Constitution inspired the creation of three dominant political parties, namely: the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) founded in 1944, the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) in 1949 and the Action Group (AG) founded in 1951. With the exception of the NCNC which had a measure of nationalistic complexion, these political parties could best be described as tribal organizations that lacked an all-embracing mandate to set the country on the path of national development (Joseph, 1997). For instance, the NPC led by the late Premier of Northern Region and the Saduana of Sokoto, Sir Ahmadu Bello, as the name and motto of "One North, One Destiny" suggested, was specifically for the North. The party was an incarnation of *Jamiya Mutamen Arewa*, a socio-religious group of northerners formed

with the intent of assisting traditional rulers in the North to discharge their duties to the colonial administration of indirect rule in northern Nigeria (Adeniyi, 2011). Another north-based political party in the early 1950s was the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) founded by Aminu Kano in 1950. Though the party was not known to have achieved any significant power, it was said to be more ideologically-based than the NPC (Nwankwo, 2002).

On the other hand, the AG led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo emanated from a socio-cultural organization named *Egbe Omo Oduduwa* established in 1945 by Chief Awolowo along with other notable Yoruba political figures. The original aim of the organisation was to capture political power for the Yoruba and see to the unity of the Yoruba people (Adeniyi, 2005). The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroon led by Herbert Macaulay and Nnamdi Azikiwe later became known as the National Convention of Nigerian Citizens when Southern Cameroon opted to become part of the Republic of Cameroon in 1960. The party also could not survive the plague of tribalization of political parties as it subsequently acquired ethnic colouration like its Yoruba and Northern counterparts (Adeniyi, 2005; Achebe, 1983). Thus, it can be said that the major political parties in the early days of political development in Nigeria were characterised by tribalism, and the emergent political class lacked national political consciousness.

On Political Ideologies and Outlooks

Beyond the ethnic character of these various political parties, there were other important factors such as political ideologies, which affected their different political and social outlooks. The AG was a liberal party in favour of socialist ideology or what was conceptualised as “Democratic Socialism”. The underlining philosophy of this concept was to create a society where the rigid forces of supply and demand were replaced with a conscious and scientific mediator which would ensure that the masses were not left at the mercy of the forces of supply and

demand often manipulated by racketeers. For the AG therefore, socialism connotes the study of economic forces with a view to directing them for the continuous welfare of the people. The party was renowned for its in-depth policy analysis and robust debates on national issues; but it was suspected as advancing the course of communism by the colonial authority and some elements in the party at the centre (Nwankwo, 2002; Joseph, 1997). On the other hand, Nnamdi Azikiwe was considered as an advocate of “Democratic Welfarism”, a derivative of the concept of “welfare state”. While Dr. Azikiwe was an idealist who saw pan-African movement as the solution to political and socio-economic challenges of the continent, Chief Awolowo was a realist and had little regard for the idealist universalism of Azikiwe and the NCNC. The NPC was a conservative party that was not known to be ideologically-driven (Omodia, 2012). With these ideological and ethnic divides surrounding the parties, the ground was set for fierce political contestations among them and their respective regions. To a greater or lesser degree, these constituted the beginning of the remote causes of the eventual collapse of the First Republic (Joseph, 1997).

Other specific events that might approximate as the immediate causes of the fall of the First Republic deserve some attention. It has been argued that the fall of the First Republic started with the squabbles in the AG between Chief Awolowo and his deputy, Chief Samuel Akintola, in 1962 (Nwankwo, 2002). The episode began to unfold on 19 May, 1962 when the Western and Mid-Western Executive Council of the AG decided by 81 to 29 votes to expel Akintola from the party and remove him as the Premier of Western Region on the grounds of gross misconduct; but Akintola rebuffed the move and refused to quit. Subsequently, a memorandum signed by a majority of the AG members was sent to the Governor, Sir Adesoji Aderemi, asking for Akintola’s removal as the Premier. The Governor granted the request and on 21 May, 1962 Akintola was replaced with Adegbenro on the

recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee of the AG, and the new Premier was sworn in on 23 May, 1962. Rather than making good his exit, Akintola went to court to challenge his dismissal and refused to respect the order of the Governor. The ensuing disagreement between anti-Akintola and pro-Akintola supporters graduated into a general mayhem of regional proportion. In what looked like anticlimax, Chief Awolowo was rounded up and charged with treasonable felony and jailed through the instrumentality of federal power (Omodia, 2012; Nwankwo, 2002).

In fact, it would require a large volume in Nigerian political history to chronicle the constellations of factors that propelled the collapse of the First Republic. It suffices to say that the 1964-1965 elections, which were the first federal parliamentary elections after independence, represented the final stage of democratic experimentation in the First Republic. The elections involved two main political alliances: the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA).

The elections initially scheduled for December 1964, was postponed for several weeks because of inconsistencies between the number of names on voting rolls and census returns. There was also allegation by UPGA that the NNA was attempting to rig the elections. Thus, the UPGA called for boycott which was heeded by its supporters. After the elections, the NNA had 198 of its candidates elected out of 261 constituencies returning results. The credibility and outcomes of the elections were contested by the UPGA with the party threatening to reject the results. Consequently, there were widespread protests by the supporters of UPGA against what was considered as apparent infraction of democratic principles by NNA. In the ensuing confusion, it was alleged that a section of the military had become disaffected with the entire situation. The unfolding events led to the final collapse

of the First Republic in 1966 following the January 15 military coup (Adeniyi, 2014; Omodia, 2012).

Political Parties in Nigeria in the Post-Civil War Era

What followed the eventual collapse of the First Republic pushed the country into a civil war that did not end until January 12, 1970. The military regime that supervised the war held sway over the nation till 1979 when another opportunity for the return to civil rule appeared. In September 1978, the ban on political activities was lifted and the country witnessed the emergence of an array of political parties in a manner so ridiculous that one of the parties was named “You-Chop-I-Chop” Party. Nonetheless, after the then Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) finished its screening, only five political parties scaled through. The five included the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), the Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP), the Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) and the Peoples Redemption Party (PRP).

In an effort to avoid creating the kinds of tribal organizations pretending to the status of political parties in the First Republic, there was an attempt to put in place a constitutional mechanism to restrain political parties in the country from tilting towards extreme sectionalism. Thus, the 1979 Nigerian Constitution required political parties to reflect the doctrine of Federal Character in the composition of the members of the executive committee and key offices. This informed the principle of zoning which many of the parties adopted.

In all events, it had been argued that the situation in 1979 was not quite different from what it was previously because most of the parties reestablished themselves on regional basis (Adejumobi, 2011). Be that as it may, at the end of the 1979 electoral exercise, the NPN emerged winner at the centre; but the administration was short-lived after a military coup led by Major General Muhammadu Buhari took over government from President

Shehu Shagari in December 1983 on allegation of large scale corruption (Samuel, 2007). General Buhari's administration was overthrown by Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida on August 27, 1985. This led the country into an extended period of military rule presided over by General Babangida, until June 12, 1993 when he stepped aside following massive protests against his annulment of a transition to civil rule that was pointing to Chief Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) as the likely winner. The events that followed the annulment of June 12, 1993 presidential election saw the emergence of General Sani Abacha (1943-1998) until the return to civil rule in May 1999 upon the demise of General Abacha in 1998.

The new political class pretended to patriotism, and in a bid to remove the fear of political domination by one region of the country against the other, the dominant political party at the time, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) adopted the principle of rotational presidency (Pindinga & Olaniyi, 2010). Though the practicability of this principle in Nigeria is doubtful in light of the political ruse that attended the 2011 general election and the emergence of President Goodluck Jonathan, there are still persistent calls for its adoption. It is this concern that prompted the impetus for the present article.

Theoretical Considerations

Any political initiative by political actors, including the move to adopt the idea of rotational presidency by the Peoples Democratic Party in Nigeria, constitutes a political behaviour that is amenable to theoretical exposition. This article relied on Simon Hug's (2001) System Demand and Opportunity Push theory of political behaviour to attempt an explanation of the underlying reasons for the idea of rotational presidency in Nigeria. Rather than turning again to the regularly emphasised Game Theory in the analysis of socio-political behaviour (Ordeshook, 2003; Swain, 2001), Hug's System Demand and Opportunity Push theory is

preferred here because of its simplicity and lack of high-sounding theoretical highfalutin which makes them easy to understand.

Essentially, the System Demand Theory holds that the emergence of any strategic political idea is due to the presence of a neglected demand in a socio-political formation. From this perspective, it can be argued that the calls for rotational presidency by its proponents represent an attempt to respond to a neglected demand in the society. Indeed, this line of argument is attractive to pacifists who share the view that the demographic and regional imbalances among the constituent parts in Nigeria are such that will continue to favour a particular section in democratic processes, to the extent that the group with the highest number of supporters will almost always triumph at the polls, to the alienation of other groups (Akinola, 2014).

To this end, rotational presidency system is a response to the demand of marginalised minority groups to have access to the highest political office in the country. On the other hand, the opportunity push theory represents a reaction to system demand theory. Hug (2001) notes that the presence of a neglected demand or a new issue is not on its own a sufficient reason for the emergence of a new strategic political behaviour. The author opines that political behaviour can equally be understood from the perspective of “opportunity push”. That is, what a political party stands to gain from a particular political action is a crucial element in political decision making and behaviour; and this is largely determined by the internal characteristics of the party and the political scene (Hug, 2001).

The foregoing arguments suggest that the bid to adopt rotational presidency is motivated by the desire to satisfy a neglected social demands, on the one hand; and what a political party stands to benefit from such strategic political behaviour, on the other hand. Although the theories are opened to contentions, they however provide a glimpse to what could be the underlying

reasons for the calls for the adoption of rotational presidency in Nigeria.

Rotational Presidency, Institutions and Party System in Nigeria

Section 223 (1b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria provides that “The constitution and rule of political party shall ensure that the executive committee or other body of the political party reflect the federal character of Nigeria.” Subsection 2b of the same section states that:

the members of the executive committee or other governing body of the political party shall be deemed to reflect the federal character of Nigeria only if the members thereof belong to different States not being less in number than two-thirds of all the States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999).

The above constitutional provision represents, in a very clear term, the principle of zoning; as distinct from rotational policy. For the sake of clarity, a definition of rotational presidency is proposed here to mean, a situation where people from the different regions that constitute a particular socio-political formation shall in the course of time alternate the position of the President in an ordered sequence among themselves. The rotation thesis is believed by pacifists to be the elixir of all political malaises that tend to afflict a multi-ethnic nation. However, a closer inspection of the doctrine suggests that it holds no promise for stability in Nigeria. Although Dahomey (modern day Republic of Benin) and Nigeria are not the same in many respects, the experience of Benin’s experimentation of rotational presidency should be instructive to the proponents of the idea in Nigeria. Attempts at adopting the idea as a stabilising

strategy of the polity in the Republic of Benin in the early 1970s did not only fail, but led to a military coup in 1972 (Lipschutz & Rasmussen, 1989). In addition, the manifestly weak parties' structures, institutions and *multipartism*, which are regular features of politics in Nigeria, are likely to impede the successful operation of the doctrine, as would be highlighted presently.

Weak Party's Structure and Institutions

The issues of weak structure and institutions that characterise many political parties in Africa have been matters of serious concern to scholars who have observed the inhibitory role they play in the realization of political and democratic advancements on the continent (Riedl, 2014). In fact, Emmanuel Gyimah-Boadi puts it succinctly when he observed that "African democratic systems suffer from weak party development; both the ruling and opposition parties are plagued by weak organizations, low levels of institutionalization, and weak links to the society they are supposed to represent". He pointed out that, the uncertainties which surround political parties in Africa are rooted in their weak constitutions and structures (Gyimah-Boadi, 2004:12).

From a sociological standpoint, structure refers to the organised set of relationships in which members of a group are variously implicated (Nolan & Lenski, 2009); while institutions connote the normative procedures by which the basic needs of an organization are met. Both consist of the regulatory agencies through which human conducts are patterned in the direction deemed desirable by members of a social group. It is immaterial whether the group is a political party, religious organization, volunteer organization or family. When the structure and institutions of any social groups are weak, they fail in their regulatory functions and become prone to maneuvering by social actors (Merton, 1968).

On what constitute the indices of weak political party structure, Quimpo (2007), Gyimah-Boadi (2004) and Mazula

(2004) provide insights on their features. According to the authors, weak party structures and institutions exhibit the following elements: (i) They tend to operate around personalities rather than programmes, platform and ideology. If they have platform and ideology at all, they represent mere adornment. (ii) Lack of adequate internal democracy and characterised by imposition of candidates. (iii) Low or absence of institutionalization of party's modus operandi. Hence there is usually erratic review or change of party's constitution. In all events, these parties tend to place a high premium on party loyalty and frown upon internal dissent.

In view of the above elements (some of which have been witnessed among existing political parties in Nigeria), rotational presidency principle is not likely to be operable in Nigeria without any constitutional sanction. A case in point was what played out in 2011 general election in Nigeria following the unexpected demise of President Musa Yar' Adua of the PDP who was the North's candidate in the rotational presidency formula, after Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the same PDP and the Southwest's candidate. President Masu Yar' Adua died on May 5, 2010, about three years into his first term (i.e., before the expiration of the North's turn in the rotational formula). As usual in a presidential democracy, when a sitting President dies in office before the expiration of the administration's tenure, such a President is normally succeeded by the Vice President to complete the term. Thus, in spite of the political shenanigans and ruse that surrounded the last days of late President Yar'Adua by a cabal within the governing circle, Vice President Dr. Goodluck Jonathan succeeded Yar'Adua as Nigeria's President upon the death of the latter.

Nonetheless, at the expiration of the first term of the administration, the challenge of the applicability of rotational presidency principle by the ruling party came to the fore. With no precedence and prior arrangement on how to deal with the void left by the demise of a President from the North (a region which, by virtue of the rotational principle, was still entitled to another one

term of four years), and a Vice President from the South-South, the ruling PDP found itself in a state of quandary. As it were, the PDP's principle of rotational presidency as contained in Article 7.2 (c) of the 2009 PDP Constitution was set aside (its existence was even denied by some members of the party) to allow Goodluck Jonathan, a man of South-South extraction, to fly the party's presidential ticket in 2011 general election (Omodia, 2012).

The debates that attended the attempts to set aside the rotational presidency principle led to the emergence of two opposing camps, with one arguing in defense of the retention of the principle; and the other opposing its implementation. The first group comprising mainly individuals from the North contended that the rotational principle was inviolable, and that the North should be allowed to exhaust its turn in the spirit of fairness. The other consisting of people, many of whom are from the South, denounced the rotational principle as running contrary to democratic theory. Some even elevated it to a theocratic level and proclaimed the event as a "signature of God" and divine intervention to allow people from the South-South where the Nigerian State derives much of her oil revenue to preside over the affairs of the country; an opportunity some claimed have been unjustly denied them over the years (Omodia, 2012). After a brief period of uncertainty on the applicability of the principle, the party decided to settle for its revocation and allowed Dr. Jonathan to emerge as its presidential candidate.

It might be tempting to assume that the setting aside of the rotational presidency principle and the subsequent emergence of President Goodluck Jonathan was as a result of ethnic factor symbolised by the pressure from the South. However, a keen observation would reveal that the subversion of the principle against the party's constitution is a manifestation of weak party's structure and institution. As Nolan and Lenski (2009) note, group's structures and institutions exist to organize, regulate and direct social relationships and conducts in the direction that will fulfill

the aspirations the institutions were established to serve. Structures and institutions which are prone to erratic reviews and alterations in order to accommodate spontaneous non-collectivized agitations are weak and tend to fail in their regulatory functions.

The Multi-Party System Factor

By far, the most important obstacle to the practice of rotational presidency is multi-party system or *multipartism*. The concept of *multipartism* typifies a situation where there are more than one political parties representing different electoral alternatives in a competitive electioneering. The major problem with rotational presidency within the context of *multipartism* is how to synchronize the arrangement among the various parties. Nwaneri (2013) suggests that a way out of the difficulty surrounding the practicability of the idea is to make the agreement binding and constitutionally sanctioned. In this regard, Nwaneri notes:

... because the agreement is not binding by law and only limited to one party, it is always a cause of conflict within the party when the time comes for a sitting president to give way to another region to select their candidate for the position (Nwaneri, 2013:339).

Thus, the author proposed that the Constitution should be amended in order to change the informal zoning arrangement to a constitutionally binding electoral rotation system.

Rotational Presidency and Nation Building

Proponents of rotational presidency principle argue that it has the potential to confront the vexing issue of ethnic politics in Nigeria, put an end to the perennial cry of marginalization, curb extreme sectionalism and set the country on the path of nation building (Akinola, 2014; Onwudiwe, 2005). Before interrogating

the foregoing submissions, it is important to subject the notion of “nation building” to conceptual clarification.

In sociology and political science parlance, the term is sometimes used interchangeably with national integration involving a process that promotes national inclusiveness among different parts (Mylonas, 2012). In a broader sense, nation building has to do with efforts directed towards fashioning a country in a way that can guarantee stability, security and development for the good of the citizens. In this case, it embraces both the notions of national integration and socio-economic development (Ake, 2001).

On the issue of nation-building potentiality of rotational presidency, some scholars contend that rotational presidency represents one of the most outstanding innovative political arrangements in Nigeria that will help minimize conflicts during presidential election and promote equity, justice, fairness and stability in the country (Akinola, 2014; Nwaneri, 2013). Akinola, in particular, stressed that the idea was the country’s best option and attributed its recommendation by the National Confab group to an act of uncommon wisdom (Akinola, 2014). The claim that rotational presidency promises a great deal of reward for the country’s development is difficult to sustain. A deeper inspection of the idea exposes some of its negative consequences on the nation’s democratic, socio-economic and political advancements.

As pointed out earlier, the idea of rotational presidency in Nigeria is not constitutionally sanctioned and binding by law; thus, it is prone to generate conflict within the party when it is time for power to rotate to another region (Nwaneri, 2013). The tendency at such times is for pro-democracy elements to vociferate in protests against anti-democratic features of rotational presidency. To the extent that political parties in Nigeria lack the capacity to handle the critical issue of system maintenance because of weak institutions, such non-binding principles are often changed or suspended to the detriment of intergroup harmony and social order (Molutsi, 2004).

Furthermore, the practice of rotational presidency by its very nature shrinks the democratic space and makes it less participatory, thereby limiting the peoples' choices and alternatives contrary to democratic theory. The implications of this on nation building may not be immediately obvious; but the practice has the tendency of making the political and economic activities in the country less competitive, vibrant and robust (Bangura, 2013; Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2007).

Similarly, there is a need to give attention to the insights provided by the late Nigeria's National Security Adviser, General Andrew Owoeye Azazi, on the likely security implications of rotational presidency principle when parties are incapable of its maintenance. The late General noted the link between rotational presidency principle and the escalation of acts of terrorism in the northeast. He pointed out that the PDP got it wrong from the beginning by keeping a rule that indicates where power should go. Thus, when non-legal zoning arrangements are broken, the result as always, is the generation of social conflict (Nwaneri, 2013).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The focus of this article is on Nigeria's political party structure and institution, and the principle of rotational presidency. The article argues that, given the weak nature of political parties' structure and institutions in Nigeria, the calls for the adoption of rotational presidency will not augur well with the country. Therefore, the claim that rotational presidency will accelerate the pace towards nation building is not sustainable in view of the experience of the Republic of Benin, as well as the events that characterized the emergence of President Goodluck Jonathan in 2011 when the PDP's principle of rotation, as specified in Article 7.2 (c) of the party's Constitution of 2009, was breached (Ogunsanya, 2010). In addition, rotational presidency in a multi-party system as Nigeria will be difficult to implement to the extent that the principle is not constitutionally sanctioned.

Attempts have been made to point to the successful adoption of rotational presidency in intergovernmental federalism among the member states of the European Union (EU) as an indication that the system can work in Nigeria (Antola, 2002). However, there is a huge difference between an intergovernmental union and a country. An intergovernmental union's president does not have significant political influence on the internal affairs of the constituent states. There is only a form of economic cooperation as currently obtains in the EU. Rotational presidency is a pacifist strategy that tends to shrink the democratic space and limit competitive alternatives against democratic principles. Rather than enhance unity, the idea is likely to further highlight the differences among the country's constituent parts.

As a way forward, this article is proposing the following in form of recommendations:

1. Adoption of a single term of five years without necessarily being rotational. A single term will have the advantage of reducing re-election heat and the tendency of incumbents to abandon the real issue of governance for re-election bid, with its attendant socio-economic consequences.
2. There should be equitable distribution of the nation's wealth. The challenge of nation building in Nigeria is due more to the poor quality of leadership and injustice in the distribution of the nation's resources, than the issue of the region a leader emanates from. Therefore, there is need for a just and fair distribution of the nation's resources such that the regions from which the nation derives much of its revenue be adequately compensated.
3. Political parties in Nigeria should be reoriented and grounded in comprehensive programmes and ideology rather than operate around personalities that tend to exert overbearing influence on party's activities. Thus, parties should be encouraged to institutionalized internal democracy as opposed to imposition of candidates and

check the tendency of party leaders to fitfully tinker with party processes for particularistic agenda.

4. Another option is to consider the idea of regionalism with a centre to coordinate economic and security cooperation among the constituent regions. Each region will have its government and authority over its own internal affairs, but rotates the headship at the centre in turns as a coordinating agent.

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