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## **Presidential Power Rotation and Unflinching Role of Ethnicity in Nigeria “Fourth Republic”**

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### ***Abstract:***

*The domineering influence of presidential power by a particular ethnic extraction over other regions has remained unabated since independence. Thus, the drive to deliberately reverse the presidential slot for the region of the nation perceived to be most politically marginalized arose. Such domination and alienation got to its climax in the June 12, 1993 Presidential election. Rotational principle was adopted to shore up the affirmative action (federal character principle) earlier devised to manage inter-ethnic rivalry. Despite that, ethnicity was regurgitated in 1999, 2010 when late Umaru Musa Yaradua died, 2011 and 2015. The Northerners perceived the death as an interruption of their turn. The fear of mistrust and hate among the ethnic groups created a vacuum. The aim of the study was to find out the contributions of presidential power rotation to the unflinching role of ethnicity in Nigeria “fourth republic”. The research adopted the analytical, prescriptive and speculative methods. Group theory was the theoretical prism used. The paper recommends a president who will unite Nigeria and play the role of a father to all, equal number of states assigned to every zone and equal representation in appointments.*

**Keywords:** *Presidency, power rotation, unflinching, ethnicity*

### **1. Introduction**

The unflinching role of ethnicity has remained unabated after about fifty-seven years of political independence. In that direction, the grievance was the domineering influence of presidential power by a particular ethnic extraction over other regions. It became imperative that the most politically marginalized should deliberately be allowed to take over power Shinkafi, (2003). The climax of such unflinching role of ethnic domination and alienation got to its zenith in the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential election. The Northerners clinched unto power and refused to hand over to a non-northerner in that election Idowu, (2004).

In an effort geared towards finding a suitable definition of power that would be acceptable to all, power-sharing was adopted. The goal was to regulate relationship among the ethnic groups as well as reflect the identifiable divergences within the framework of national unity since it has been the cause of tensions, conflicts, stress, emotions and rains in Nigeria Laden (2011). To address the restiveness, rotational principle was adopted to shore up the affirmative action (federal character principle) earlier devised to manage inter-ethnic rivalry precipitated by the annulment of June 12<sup>th</sup> presidential elections Aiyede, (2011).

Despite that, ethnicity was regurgitated in 1999, 2010 (when late Umaru Musa Yaradua died), 2011 and 2015. The Northerners perceived the death as an interruption of their turn and felt shortchanged when Good luck Jonathan decided to throw his hat in the ring for the 2011 presidential ticket of People’s Democratic Party Akanmode, (2011). The agitation reoccurred in 2015 election perceived by the northerner’s as an avenue to wrestle power that unjustly eluded them Kimenyi, (2015). The protest has continued unabated for fear of ethnic domination of the Presidency by the different ethnic groups Ogbonda, (2010).

Incessant agitation for presidential power became the bedrock of politics in the nation Adamu and Ocheni, (2016). That led to violence, threatening of Christians and killings of innocent lives in the nation. Worthy of note, is that the fear of mistrust and hate that beclouded the relationship among the ethnic groups in Nigeria skyrocketed the role of ethnicity which became a major source of worry Ilobi (2010). It was on that premise that the research sought to find out the contributions of presidential power rotation to the unflinching role of ethnicity in Nigeria “fourth republic”.

## 2. Presidency

The concept is hydra headed in nature and occurred most often in political science as the office of the President of a nation which encompasses governmental institutions, administrative and policy making agencies Merriam, (2018). It also the position of being the President of a nation or organization or the period of time during which someone is a president Longman Dictionary, (2018). In the same dimension, a presidency is the executive office of a nation, state, company or other large organization. Furthermore, it represents the period of time spent in the office as a president Andrew, (2018).

Taking cue from the above, it connotes the office and functions of a president who is the elective head of constitutional republic. Additionally, when it is used to define the office of head of state or government, it has two meanings depending on the nature of the presidential function. For instance, in United State of American and Latin American Republic, the functions of head of state and active head of government are combined in the Presidency. On the other hand, Germany, India have only the functions of head of state vested in the President and the active direction of government is vested in a cabinet headed by a premier, chancellor or prime minister Gould and Kolb (1964). In the same vein, is the position of being the President or the period of time during which someone is president. It also means the office or function of the President Collins, (2018). In corroboration of that, it is the job of being a president, or the period of time that someone has this job Macmillan, (2018).

### 2.1. Power Rotation

Is the rotation of presidential power between the North and South, according to the rules of the People Democratic Party (PDP) Agbakoba, (2011) In the light of that, power sharing/rotation is a strategy for resolving disputes over who should control the powerful or exalted seat of the President. In other words, it entails the arrangement of People's Democratic Party (PDP) to rotate the Presidency between the South and the North Akinola, (2010).

Similarly, power rotation is a mechanism for alternating power between the Northern and Southern office holders every eight years Foreign Policy Magazine, (2017). It is worthy of note that power rotation is an unofficial system of alternating presidential power between the major political regions such as the South-East (Igbo's), South-West (Yoruba) and the North (Hausa). This simply captured the six zones by collapsing them into three indicating the major ethnic regions Soyemi, (2016). In a nut shell, it is the distribution of Presidential power turn by turn among the six geopolitical zones on the basis of two terms of eight years as stipulated by the People's Democratic Party.

### 2.2. Ethnicity

It connotes interacting members who perceive themselves as belonging to a named or labeled social group with whose interest they identify. It entails differences in language, religion, colour, ancestry and culture to which social meanings are attributed and around which identity and group formation occurs Omilusi, (2015). Ethnic group is an informal interest group whose members are distinct from the members of other ethnic groups within the larger society because they share kinship, religious and linguistic ties Oladiran, (2013). It is a socially defined category of people who relate to each other based on common ancestral, social, cultural or national experience. In a similar dimension, it serves as an organizing force which assists in bringing the people together to fight or seek a common goal Mudasiru, (2015).

### 2.3. History of Presidential Power Rotation in Nigeria

The late Dr. Alex Ekwueme spearheaded the campaign for zoning and rotational presidency during the 1994/1995 National Constitutional Conference Nwachuku, (2018). The fulcrum of the proposal was the division of Nigeria into six regions and a few advocated for eight regions. The idea was for presidential power to rotate between the North and South, according to the rules of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Agbakoba, (2011). The Constitution was to be promulgated into law by Late General Sani Abacha before his proposed ambition of being a civilian president but he died out of divine providence on June 1998.

That informed the agreement that the Presidency would rotate on the basis of single term of five-years from one geopolitical zone to another. There was no anticipation of two term presidency or two-term governorship. The Governorship was to rotate between the three senatorial zones of the State for 30 years after which the President can come from any part of the nation. The Peoples Democratic Party was formed under the umbrella of this principle (Nwosu, 2010).

In 2003, the lawmakers were accused of stopping the second term ambition of the Governors and the Presidents to front their interest. The argument was that for the amendment of the Constitution, National Assembly requires two-third 2/3 or 24 of the 36 States because the 1999 Constitution was seen as an imposition from the military. Patriots led by late Rotimi Williams Senior Advocate of Nigeria used the five-year single term call to ask Olusegun Obasanjo to serve additional one year without re-election and they wanted a quick amendment of the Constitution to make it effective. They were of the view that it would speed up the rotational Presidency Principle among the geopolitical zones geared towards erasing marginalization by those agitating for presidency.

Surprisingly, many governors in 2003 came for re-election indicating that amendment was not possible. Olusegun Obasanjo and his men came for re-election as well. It became impossible to introduce the five-year single term for the President. Many Governors never wanted rotational presidency because they were afraid of not being re-elected. Ibrahim Mantu was asking for its re-introduction in 2007 because the Governors who were opposed to it ended their term in 2007.

The effect was that out of 36 states, the newly elected Governors were 11 and 25 were re-elected. It is the same people who insisted on late Abacha transforming himself into a civilian president that were at the forefront of rotating presidential power of the State. Sadly, since then once presidential election is approaching, the issue of presidential rotation will be regurgitated showcasing an unflinching role of ethnicity in the polity Obiagwu, (2003).

S/N	Names	Zone	Period	Ethnic Tenure
1	Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe	S-E	1/10/60-15/1/66	6yrs
2	Alhaji Abubarkar Tafawa Balewa	N-E	1/10/60-15/1/66	6yrs
3	Major General J.T.U. Aguiyi Ironsi	S-E	16/1/66-29/7/66	6mths 14dys
4	General Yakubu Gowon	N-C	29/7/66-29/7/75	9yrs
5	General Murtala Mohammed	N-W	29/7/75-13/2/76	7mths
6	General Olusegun Obasanjo	S-W	13/2/76-30/9/79	3yrs 7mth 1dys
7	Alhaji Shehu Shagari	N-W	1/10/79-31/12/83	4yrs 3mths
8	Major General Muhammadu Buhari	N-W	31/12/83-27/8/85	2yrs
9	General Ibrahim Babangida	N-C	27/8/85-26/6/93	8yrs
10	Chief Ernest Shonekan	S-W	26/8/93-17/11/93	3mths
11	General Sani Abacha	N-W	17/11/93-8/6/98	5yrs
12	General Abdulsalami Abubarkar	N-C	8/6/98-29/5/99	1yr
13	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	S-W	29/5/99- 29/5/2007	8yrs
14	Alhaji Musa Yaradua	N-W	29/5/2007- 6/5/2010	2yrs 11mths
15	Dr. Goodluck Jonathan	S-S	7/5/2010- 29/5/2015	5yrs
16	President Muhammadu Buhari	N-W	29/5/2015 till date	3yr 7mths

*Table 1: Heads of State in Nigeria and the Duration of Power by Geographical Zones*  
 Source: Adapted from Nwobi, U. A. (2011: 8) "Rotational Presidency and Democracy in Nigeria '1999-2007'" A Doctoralseminar Paper Presented to the Department of Public Administration and Local Government, University of Nigeria Nsukka, Updated by the Author

The table confirmed that, fifty-eight years since independence, the North-West zone would have held presidential power for about fourteen years seven months (14yrs 7mths). The North-Central ruled for about eighteen years (18 yrs.) while the North-East extraction ruled for six years (6yrs). In the South, the South-West zone has ruled for about eleven years, ten months and one day (11years 10 months 1day). The South-South ruled for about five years (5yrs). The South-East held power for about six yrs. (6yrs).N: B Late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe of South-East was just a ceremonial president. The North-Central ruled more than other zones. 36yrs 7months while the South ruled for a total number of 22 years 10 months. This was indicative of the fact that, power has remained unflinching in the hands of the Northerners for too long and to the exclusion of other ethnic regions hence the need to reverse it. Table 2 below represents the distribution of heads of states and duration according to their geographical zones.

Zone	No of Heads of State	%No of Heads of State	Total Duration in Power	%of Duration
North-West	5	33%	14years	24%
North-East	1	7%	5 years+3.ymonths	9%
North-Central	3	20%	18years	31%
South-West	3	20%	11years+9.5months	20%
South-East	2	13%	5 years 10months	9%
South-South	1	7%	4 years+2months	7%
Total	15	100%	59years+1month	100%
Subtotal North	9	60%	37years+3.5months	64%
Subtotal South	6	40%	21years+9.5months	36%

*Table 2: Distribution of Heads of State and Duration in Power by Geographical Zones*  
 Source: Adapted from Opeyemi, A. O. Siyaka, M and Opeyemi, A. (2014) Power Sharing Conundrum and the Challenges of 2015 General Elections in Nigeria, Journal Of Development and Economic Sustainability, Vol 2, No 3, Pp 9-21

In the light of table 2, out of 15 heads of states and government, the North produced nine who ruled for 66% of the period accounting for about (37years) while the South produced six heads of states who ruled for 34% translating into (about

19years). During the military dispensation, it was a mirage wishing to have a balance of power. The North-West produced the highest number of heads of states 5 the north-central has had the longest stay in power for about 18 years. If we add another two years of Buhari 2017 and 2018, the North would have tasted power for 39years.

### 3. Methodology

Three approaches were used in this research for the examination of political problems namely: the analytical method which is the understanding and intelligent examination via proper use of language, prescriptive approach establish standards for assessing values, judging conduct and appraising situations and speculative method observes events or phenomena and recommends solutions to them and other societal problems. Secondary source of data was used. Logical analysis technique was used to analyze data. On the reliability of the material used, the research materials and approaches used could be considered to the extent that they are analytically consistent with the exigencies of Nigeria.

#### 3.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical prism for this research is the Group theory. The leading proponent of group theory is Arthur Bentley (1875-1957) known to American political scientist as the founder of the group theory of politics James, (1978). In that light, the conflict between the political parties, geopolitical zones, ethnic groups for control of power and resources of the nation is championed by the elites of various groups either to gain control of the State over the central rivals or control of the ethnic community over local rivals. These groups have specific interest that binds the membership together. The value of power of the State at the centre is by virtue of their ability to influence decisions and most importantly allocate values authoritatively in their favour (Onah, 2005).

This was reflected on the ethnic champions who dine and wine with their counterparts from other ethnic groups and remain a Nigerian as they enjoy governmental patronage. They cease from being Nigerians once their interest is threatened and they preach to people how much they have been marginalized because they have failed to get over-valued government contracts, make the list of ministerial nominees or get their choice of lucrative portfolios. The real victims of marginalization are Nigerians of all ethnic origin who suffered unnecessary deprivation due to bad governance like the unemployed youths in Nigeria recruited as political thugs by ethnic political champions, Nigerian children deprived of their rights to primary health care, basic education, farmers whose land and fishing waters are degraded by mineral exploration without adequate compensation for resettlement Dinneya, (2004).

### 4. Presidential Power Rotation and Unflinching Role of Ethnicity in Nigeria

The issue of ethnicity is trace able to the colonial era when it was conspicuous in the tripartite rivalry between the ruling classes of the three major ethnic groups. There were agitations from the ethnic minority groups in each of the Hausa-Fulani of Northern region, Yoruba of the Western extraction and the Igbo of Eastern extraction for a separate state of theirs, because they perceived ethnic majority groups as enemies. That metamorphosed into the early cry for regions before independence till date Nnabuihe, Aghemalo and Okebugwu, (2014).

The fear of ethnic domination was regurgitated when Olusegun Obasanjo took over power in 1999. The core Yoruba political elites felt that Obasanjo although a Yoruba, was a Northern candidate who might be subservient to the Northern political machine. The Yoruba's therefore voted en masse for the other Yoruba candidate Olu Falae who lost the election. They felt that their interest would have been better protected under Olu Falae Egbueze and Ojirika, (2017). Ethnic mobilization and chauvinism intensified and the other ethnic groups living in Yoruba land were attacked by the Yoruba militia organized in the Odua People's Congress. The beginning of Obasanjo's era was incongruous as the main challenge and fear came from his own ethno-regional base. However, the challenge eased when the Yoruba associates split the Yoruba composition to the Government and galvanized significant support for Obasanjo who won at the end of the day Jibrin (2001).

Incidentally, crisis erupted between the Hausa and Yoruba's because the main stream Yoruba leaders and the mass public resented the paternalism reflected in the choice of Obasanjo, of all Yoruba's that contested. The Hausa/Fulani leadership felt peeved that Obasanjo was favouring his kinsmen who rejected him at the polls. Muhammadu Buhari, Abubarkar Rimi, Wada Nas and others became a major opposition force against Obasanjo Ukiwo (2003). In the same perspective, the monopoly of the presidency by the Muslim ethnic group of the North had its counterpart in the ambition of the Yoruba to monopolize other positions in the Federal establishment posed a serious danger to the good governance and unity of the nation. The Yoruba's saw nothing in monopolizing all positions in the Federal establishment and any other Nigerian in their mist was an intruder. This infused fear in other Nigerians that after eight years, the Federal establishments would have been taken over by the Yoruba's. In addition, the Yoruba people that control the economy should not be allowed to take over the polity. This was based on the principle that no member of the tripod (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo) should be allowed to control more than one domain Omoruyi (2004).

Similarly, there was increased fear and anger in other parts of the nation. The Southern ethnic minorities in the South-South zone were equally afraid and unhappy with Obasanjo taking over power. The nation's national revenue, almost exclusively coming from petroleum exploitation is obtained from South-South. They therefore found Obasanjo's vehement opposition to their demands for resource control very offensive. Economically and strategically on the basis of sacrifice and services to the nation's democracy, South-South continues to make enormous contributions to the national efforts.

Economically from the minister of finance for April 2005 South-South proceed from oil and gas was ₦288 billion when compared with revenue from all other sources, it amounted to ₦26 billion for the same period showing a clear indication that Niger-Delta has contributed so much Horsfall (2005). Interestingly, the Igbo's in the South-East out of fear saw the election as another manifestation of the political marginalization they have been suffering since the beginning of Nigeria civil war in 1966. The Igbo's of South-East was shortchanged in the number of states assigned to their zone Jibrin (2001).

Furthermore, since independence the Northern elites have controlled the most strategic position in the nation. The Minister for Defense, have been from the North except General Alani Akinrinade, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for FCT and other important positions Adewale (2010). The 1999 election reflected influence of force of identity and ethnicity, though the emergence of the two presidential candidates moderated their impact. Again, the 2003 election showed a firm grip of presidential power by the retired military officers Omotola, (2010). That scenario set the stage for 2007 presidential election that received the worst heat in relation to ethnic violence Abubakar, (2015).

The late Musa Yaradua a Muslim from Katsina State took over the mantle of leadership from Olusegun Obasanjo and the turn of the North was interrupted by his death in 2010. His death frustrated all political strategies and networks of northern cabals. The dissatisfaction was further stirred when the former Vice-President Good luck Jonathan was elevated to the presidency by the collective will of the people Hoffmann, (2014). It was believed that the outcome shortened the turn of the North in power and extended that of the South. Thus, the perception was a "lost turn" for the economic and continued marginalization of the northern extraction. That exacerbated their frustration and ethnic fracture Kimenyi, (2015).

Incidentally, on 17th September 2010, a letter was written to PDP National Chairman by some northern politicians like Bello Kirfi, Adamu Ciroma, Lawal Kaita, Yahaya Kwande, Basir Yusuf Ibrahim and Iyorchi Ayu restraining Good luck Jonathan from contesting 2011 presidential election. They maintained that the eight-year term of the North must be exhausted by a northerner Olowojolu, (2015). The north felt shortchanged when Good luck Jonathan decided to throw his hat in the ring for the presidential ticket of People's Democratic Party in violation of rotational arrangement within the party Akanmode, (2011).

Eventually, Jonathan contested under the platform of PDP while Mohammodu Buhari and Nuhu Ribadu both from North-West contested under Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) respectively. These parties took advantage of the disagreement on zoning and rotation of power in the North as a means to recapture power. In the end, Good luck Jonathan won the Presidential seat for 2011 Nwozor, (2014). His emergence as the President triggered an estimated killing of 800 lives which was a reflection of unflinching role of ethnicity Animashaun, (2015). Furthermore, ethnic sentiment became intensified when both presidential candidates had more than 95% of their votes cast in their regions Adeyanju, (2011).

Similarly, the appointments of Olusegun Aganga from the South-South to represent Lagos State as a minister under Jonathan, Musiliu Obanikoro and Jelili, Akinwunmi Adesiyani in 2014 was in anticipation of rigging plans in the South-West during 2015 poll. Other appointments like Abati, Okupe and Fani-Kayode were geared towards using Yoruba's against their ethnic extraction. Such domineering influence of certain individuals in Jonathan's cabinet was seen as a significant level of alienation of the North and South Akinniyi, (2015).

In 2015 presidential election, ethnic sentiments were stirred up across the nation. The incumbent president rallied around for ethnic supports of his minority kinsmen and the larger Igbo's. Hate speeches, ethnic utterances and actions were the fall out of the election heightened the ethnic tension in the nation Akowe, (2017). In the same manner, the 2015 presidential election became an opportunity for the northerners to wrestle power back which they felt had unjustly eluded them after the death of late President Yaradua. The South-South also wanted to secure a second term in office. The South-West Yoruba's felt marginalized under the incumbent president and rallied round behind the opposition party that adopted their own son as the Vice -Presidential candidate Yemi Osinbajo. Ethnic sentiment beclouded the nation and, on that premise, an Abuja peace accord was signed to ensure maintenance of peace pre and post-election periods. Ethnic sentiment was showcased when paramount traditional ruler summoned the Ndigbo leaders to his palace and directed them to vote for his anointed candidate in the election or perish in the Lagos lagoon Olayode, (2015).

In the same dimension, the former Vice-President Namadi Sambo complained that Prof Osinbajo has over 500 churches and should be perceived as a threat to the Muslim north in terms of religion Okonkwo, (2015). In the same vein, the role of ethnicity was brought to limelight when both the President and Vice-President elect in 2015 got 90% of their votes on the basis of ethnic identity while that of Jonathan was on ethnic allegiance. The election was perceived to have demarcated the nation on ethnic lines Sule, Sani and Mat (2017).

President Buhari garnered support from three northern geopolitical zones including the South-West zone. Again, the running mate of the APC presidential flag bearer Prof Yemi Osinbajo is a Yoruba man, a Christian and a man that is highly respected and admired for his humility. That accounted immensely for the support he received from the South-West in addition to the common-sense revolution adopted by Action Congress of Nigeria (APC) Egobueze and Ojirika, (2017). The former Governor of Lagos State Ahmed Tinubu of APC used the failure of Jonathan's administration during election campaign without the candidate explaining to Nigerians the changes the APC government intended to enact when elected into power as a yardstick. The 2015 election that ushered in Buhari as the President reinforced the ethnic bias of the nation's politics. It led to the killing of 16 persons at different points. Furthermore, Northerners threatened Christians that it would have been worse if Jonathan had won the election Ezeani, and Agudiegwu, (2015). Ethnicity also resurfaced when the two major political parties

(PDP and APC) could secure majority votes cast only within their ethnic homelands but failed abysmally in other ethnic groups. The ruling party-based appointments on number of votes it got in each region Nwobashi, and Itumo, (2017).

In consonance with the above submission, APC emerged the winning party with Mahammadu Buhari as the Presidential flag bearer with 15,424,921 votes while Good Luck Jonathan Presidential flag bearer of APC had 12,853,162 votes. APC won in 20 states including FCT out of which are in North-West, North-East, North-Central and South-West zones while PDP won in 16 states of South-South and South-East states. Only one South-West state fell to the APC because the zone had a vice-presidential candidate which became a bargaining tool for their future ethnicity Egobueze and Ojirika, (2017). The bottom line was that the role of ethnic neutral zones came to play because of the large voting blocks in the North 18,160,946 versus the South 13,585,544 and Mohammadu Buhari won the Presidential election Ofili, (2015).

Besides, the stifling ethnic struggles that becloud the polity made politicians reluctant to declare their interest. Subsequently, the northerners have already declared that power must remain in the North come 2019. In addition, the northerners stated that what transpired in 2011 and 2015 elections because of the demise of Umaru Yaradua won't repeat itself. The southerners were warned that fielding presidential candidates is tantamount to committing political suicide because Senator Bala Mohammed has been chosen unanimously by the northerners Nwachukwu, (2017). That was a political threat on the Southerners which intensified the role of ethnicity. Succinctly, the result of Presidential elections in general took ethnic lines rather than the candidates. Decisions to vote or who to vote for were taken by the leaders of those ethnic regions Nwobashi, and Itumo, (2017). However, future will tell who emerges as Nigeria's president in 2019. That has been the remarkable development in the polity since the kick off of political campaign.

## 5. Summary

The study was an effort to explore presidential power rotation in Nigeria to find out the contributions of presidential power rotation to the unflinching role of ethnicity in Nigerian. Group theory was the theoretical umbrella. The study employed analytical and prescriptive approach. Data were collected through the secondary source and analyzed using logical analysis technique. Shortly after independence, there was agitation in different regions for separate states of their own because the minority groups saw majority ethnic groups as their foes.

In 1999, the Yoruba's monopolized all positions in the Federal establishment to the detriment of other Nigerians. Similarly, the 2007 presidential election received the worst heat in relation to ethnic violence. In addition, the role of ethnicity was heightened when the north felt shortchanged and threatened the Southerners in 2011. Furthermore, the 2015 presidential election was an opportunity for the north to wrestle power back which they felt had unjustly eluded them after the death of late President Musa Yaradua. In a nutshell, the anticipation is that the unflinching role ethnicity will be intensified in the forthcoming 2019 presidential election if care is not taken.

### 5.1. Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study, the following recommendations were made.

- There should be a nomination of a President who will unite Nigeria and play the role of a father to all rather than a sectional leader who will promote personal or group interest above other groups. This could be achieved through citizens coming out in their droves to cast their votes unbiased and devoid of rigging election. Separation of tribe from government. State of origin and religion should be discarded in selection process.
- To have a balance of power, every geo-political zone should be assigned equal number of states. That could be achieved via creation of new states in the zones shortchanged. A good example is the South-East zone with five states under its umbrella. That would be minus one on the angle of marginalization.
- There should be decentralization of power. Unequal power exchange among the regions should be reconstituted and reformed in order to give greater freedom, protection and dignity to the inequitable regions. If regions are self-financing and self-governing, they will be independent rather than other regions.
- We must begin to see each tribe as unique in nature instead of our politicians using our diversity as a tool to bring about our adversity. This could be achieved through imbibing the culture of eradicating ego of superiority so as to pave way for peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.
- There should be collegial presidential system as it is in Swiss. The presidency of the federation should be rotated every one year (1-year tenure) among the members of the presidential council made up of the representatives of each of the six or more zones in the nation.
- Every ethnic extraction must be carried along in the scheme of governance so that we can have proper national rebirth. To achieve this, there should be equal representation in appointments to curb ethnic sentiment.
- There is need to reeducate the political elites on the indelible danger of applying ethnic card to acquire electoral office or presidential position.
- There should be a holistic approach of equitable distribution of power, developmental projects must be prioritized for true democracy to be installed. The earlier this is done, the better to avoid greater insurgency in the nation.

## 5.2. Conclusion

It was evident that presidential power rotation intensified the unflinching role of ethnicity. That was reflected in the skyrocketing of ethnic sentiment within the period of the study. Even in the forthcoming 2019 presidential election, it is anticipated that there will be crisscrossing of ethnic chauvinism.

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