Political Power Rotation, National Security and Integration in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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Abstract

The paper examined the viability of political power rotation as a measure to address the issues of security and integration in Nigeria. This is motivated by the need for providing solutions to the challenges of insurgencies, insecurity and socio-political instability in the country. The study relied on qualitative method and was designed to examine the issue of political power rotation in relation to security and integration efforts in Nigeria. The primary data were sourced through in-depth interviews (IDIs) conducted with senior members of the academic, security, judicial and political sectors in Nigeria using purposive sampling while the secondary data were obtained from a structured literature review. Data collected were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and document analysis. The result revealed that, the problems of violent competition for power, unequal distribution of political powers, and agitation for secession including the proliferation of small arms constitute threats to Nigeria's quest for continuous harmonious existence and security. Moreover, the result showed that political power rotation, regime change or power shift on geo-political basis or ethno-religious basis cannot be a solution to the challenges of insecurity and secession agitations being witnessed in the country in the contemporary period. Despite these findings, the study concluded that the panacea to the phenomenon of insecurity that pervaded Nigeria is locatable within the country. It recommends effective political leadership, true federalism, viable regulatory framework, strengthened armed forces and other para-military agencies, and a political system of con-federalism where the quest for power at the centre is curtailed and where the centre is relatively loose and federating units have varying degrees of autonomy within which they can have some sort of self-determination.

Key words: Power Rotation, Security, Integration, Fourth Republic, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Political power relations in Nigeria, especially during the fourth republic, have been viewed as destabilizing. Several opinions which have to do with zoning, power rotation, power shifts, electoral reforms, and government of national unity have been advanced to address the problem of power relations in the country with visible impact of these opinions on 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2019 elections. For instance, in relation to the findings of Ehiabi and Ehimore (2011), the debate on zoning turned into an ideological divide between the northern and southern parts of the country as the north had insisted the region should produce the Nigeria president in 2011. The same political notion is being pushed towards 2023 presidential election. The argument about zoning and power rotation is that political contest to public offices should be decided on ethnic and geopolitical considerations. This argument is observed to be capable of further polarizing the fragile Nigerian body polity. Although this practice is unconstitutional, it has constituted an unwritten norm and practice among Nigerian politicians. It is in view of this that this paper looks into the issue of political power rotations in Nigeria, which is investigated from the perspectives of groups' contests for power, power acquisitions, regime change and power shifts as well as the attendant forms of insecurity that pervade the country's Fourth Republic. Also visible and of serious concern is constant challenges that characterize political power transfers in the country (Ehiabi and Ehimore (2011).

The state of Nigeria has become weaker, softer, more divided and contested, and generally unable to perform the functions of a normal state (Osaghae, 2006; Vinson, 2017; Mbah and Orjinta, 2020). In Nigeria, the stakes for power have been remarkably high, often violent and mysterious. The point is, politically motivated violence appears to intensify and mystify the stakes for power. Power politics in Nigeria is murky, violent and 'winner-takes-all game'. Besides, Nigerians are worried by the ferocity of current security situation. The upsurge of terrorist incidents in the country is seen as another phase of a prolonged struggle which is perceived to have domestic, regional and global dimensions. Besides the fact that Nigeria has been grappling with the forces of poverty, disease and disintegration, it has been observed by Akinlotan (2012), Ebenezer (2014) and Husted (2022) that the country is becoming increasingly susceptible to cultural and political fragmentation and even sectarian fractionalization. The thesis of this paper, therefore, lies in the assessment of political power rotation as to whether it is necessary for achieving strong security and continuous integration in Nigeria. Consequently, the paper constitutes one of the contemporary quests for definite solution to the issues of insecurity and lack of development in the country. The subsequent parts of the paper are structured along the motivation and research question, theoretical

framework, objective, conceptual and literature review, methodology, result and discussion, conclusion, and recommendations.

Motivation, Research Questions and Objective: This research was informed by the challenges of insecurity and threats of disintegration that often seemingly characterize the aftermaths of power transfers in the country, and this also becomes imperative as the country prepares towards 2023 general elections. There have been protracted efforts to address insecurity issues and achieve continuous development since Nigeria's return to democratic government in 1999. Despite such efforts, the country has not experienced a stable internal security and the citizens have not been convinced as regards its developmental progress. The political and security landscape in Nigeria has emerged to constitute a subject for much thought and rigorous research in the past, and especially since the beginning of the fourth republic. For instance, the context of Nigeria as a multi-ethnic state, with cultural differences among its component ethnic groups, has been described as weak and characterized by intense competition for power among the political elites, hence the suggestion in the past for single term of office for political executives in order to facilitate ethno-regional power-rotation and deter electoral malfeasance by political incumbents (Dauda, 2001; Suberu, 2004; Salawu and Hassan, 2011; Ebenezer, 2014; LeVan, 2019; Veenendaal and Demarest, 2021).

The geo-political complexities of Nigeria state have brought attention to the crucial contemporary issues of political power rotation and security threats as being visibly experienced in the country, especially in the recent democratic period. Despite existing explanations on the issues of political power and security in Nigeria, the phenomenon of insecurity has not been explained from the perspective of political power rotation in relation to security and integration, particularly in the Fourth Republic (1999-2022). Besides, the ongoing tensions and palpable fears within Nigeria over the hyper-centralization and possible collapse of the federation, as well as recent incidents of banditry, kidnapping, militancy, ethno-religious conflicts, sectarian violence, and domestic terrorism, all of which have claimed thousands of lives during the 1999-2022 period, are undoubtedly illustrative of the profound challenges and insecurity militating against Nigerian federalism and geo-political system. All these have not been traced to the country's political power structure and there seems to be no sudden solutions. Therefore, a multidimensional strategy is needed to address the root causes while suppressing the negative manifestations through appropriate use of collective and generally acceptable national power. The concern here, therefore, has to do with whether the insecurity, specifically violent or armed conflicts were brought about by Nigeria's failure to manage her diversity and political power relations to ensure fairness and equity or not. The question is, how could political power rotation constitute a constitutional necessity and governance concept to ensure national security and integration in Nigeria?

Objective: The comprehensive objective of this study is to examine the viability of political power rotation as a measure to preventing the emanation and escalation of insecurity and

disintegration in Nigeria. This is with a view to finding means by which the challenges of insurgencies, insecurity and socio-political instability can be subdued in the country.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to establish the necessary theoretical basis and most importantly a clear understanding of the paper, the power-sharing theory as expounded by socio-political and conflict scholars is given a critical consideration. The assumptions of power-sharing theory have been explained on the basis of three models: the consociational model, the incentivist model and the tri-polar model. The groundwork for the development of the consociational model was laid by Arthur Lewis's (1965) *Politics in West Africa*. Lewis made one of the earliest calls for a rethink of the idea of impracticability of democracy in plural societies. The author distinguished between two types of societies. That is, plural society and class society. According to Lewis, plural societies are divided by tribal, religious, linguistic, cultural and regional differences, and they are more likely to be found in colonized territories of Africa, Asia and Latin America. On the other hand, class societies are societies in which social class is the key source of political identification and differentiation, and this type of society is predominant in Western Europe. Lewis argues that majoritarian democracy is inappropriate in plural societies because of the risk that primordial groups may be polarized, arousing intense competition between the groups in government and those in opposition. It is further suggested that the kind of democracy that plural societies need is such that do not polarize the ethnic groups between government and opposition; but one that unites them in a coalition government.

Arend Lijphart's consociational model is grounded on ideas similar to those enunciated by Arthur Lewis. The consociational model was developed in Lijphart's groundbreaking work: *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (1968). The key element in Lijphart's consociational model is elite cooperation. The political stability of consociational democracies is explained by the cooperation of elites from different groups which transcend cleavages at the mass level (Lijphart 1977). Related to this element are four important defining features of the consociational model. The first is executive power-sharing where each of the main groups shares in executive power in a grand coalition government. The other basic elements of the consociational model are: the application of proportionality principle in office distribution and revenue allocation; autonomy or self-government for each group, particularly in matters of cultural concern; and veto rights that would enable each group to prevent changes that adversely affect their vital interests (Lijphart 1977).

The incentivist model is based on Horowitz's (1985) contention that consociationalism failed to highlight the incentives for elite cooperation and inter-group accommodation. Horowitz claims that even if the elites commit themselves to a consociational arrangement at the outset in a competitive political environment, centrifugal forces emanating from their followers and political opponents may easily undermine the durability of the agreement. He therefore, argues

that what is needed to strengthen consociationalism is to create incentives for sustainable elite cooperation and inter-group accommodation (Horowitz, 1985; 1991). This incentive, according to Horowitz, can spring from modifications in the federal and electoral systems. The tri-polar model on its own categorizes power-sharing arrangements into three major dimensions. These are: political, territorial, or economic. The territorial dimension of power-sharing is made up of arrangements that define the territorial structure of the country and specifies the process of devolution of powers. The fiscal dimension of power-sharing constitutes principles and practices of national revenue sharing. The political dimension of power-sharing includes principles and practices of distributing political and bureaucratic offices.

This theory fits into this study because in the past two decades, power-sharing has attracted tremendous attention in academic and policy discourse. This development can be attributed to the fact that in the 1990s, ethnic cleavages and the quest for self-determination emerged as one of the most serious sources of violent conflicts in the world; one which requires a constructive management (Lijphart 2002). Besides, the significance of the power-sharing discourse is claimed to have stemmed from the opportunities provided by the wave of democratic transition in Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe for constitutional engineering. The contemporary significance of power-sharing was however preceded by the development of arguments in the 1960s and 1970s that challenged a common assumption that democracy and political stability would be difficult to achieve in multi-ethnic societies (Orji, 2008; Brusis, 2015; Ambali and Mohammed, 2016; Vinson, 2017; Trzcinski, 2018; Gerring and Veenendaal, 2020). Behind this assumption is the notion that deep social divisions and political differences within plural societies are elements which would ensure perennial instability and breakdown of democracy. However, this claim was challenged when it was shown that power-sharing can facilitate democratic stability in plural societies.

Veenendaal and Demarest (2021) find that informal power-sharing practices in Nigeria is remarkably such that political elites rely on patron-client networks to maintain support, while inter-elite relations in the country are strongly adversarial. The authors, however, argue that consociationalism and power-sharing theory arrangements are more likely to succeed in small societies simply because small population size would most likely produce close-knit, personal relations between political elites from different groups, resulting in consensual political relations. This theory, therefore, becomes relevant to this paper in that it explains how power-sharing can facilitate democratic stability in plural societies like Nigeria. It is observable that there is palpable lack of cooperation among Nigerian elites from different groups, especially in relation to leadership and political power transfers which has often resulted in political instability and conflicts. The theory clearly addresses this situation with plausible solutions.

Power Rotation, National Security and Integration: Political power rotation could be described as conventions held by political parties to rotate candidates for office on an ethno-regional basis, which is also a practice known as "zoning" (Trzcinski, 2018; Husted, 2022). For instance, there is rotational presidency whereby political parties have often nominated candidates for the executive

branch to rotate the presidency between north and south after two terms in office since the 1999 transition to civilian rule. There has been a continuous debate on both zoning and the rotational presidency based on contentions over which group or zone may be considered as due for office. It is believed that any suspicious attempt to violate such conventions have led to conflict, violence and insecurity. This has resulted to post election violence in past. In 2011, for example, hundreds of people were killed and huge property destroyed along ethnic and sectarian lines as a result of post-election riots that engulfed the northern part of the country simply because of frustrated expectations among northerners that a northerner was due for and would return to the presidency.

The concept of security has many dimensions including individual security, business security, group security, national security, regional security, ethnic security, global security, etc. of all these dimensions of security, national security seems to be the most contentious and often examined definition of security (Ujah and Eboh, 2006). This is because nation-states often assume the role of guarantor for individual, business or socio-economic, political and group security. Security may be defined, at the primary level, to indicate the quality or state of being secure, as freedom from danger as well as freedom from fear or anxiety (Kanji, 2003). National security is a very important issue in the survival of any nation. Without adequate security of lives and property, the system will be rife with lawlessness, chaos and eventual disintegration. This is why security is explained as an all–encompassing holistic concept and considered as a dynamic condition, which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests (Nwolise (2006; Omede, 2011; Fayeye, 2012). The security of a nation is predicated on the maintenance and protection of the socio-economic order in the face of internal and external threat as well as the promotion of a preferred international order, all of which minimize the threat to core values, interests, and the domestic order.

The basic notion of national security emphasizes the overall security of a nation and nation-sate in the context of the protection or safety of country secrets and its citizens (Fagbohun, 1990). National security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic, diplomacy, power projection and political power. Accordingly, in order to possess national security, a nation needs to possess economic security, energy security, environmental security, etc. Security threats involve not only conventional foes such as other nation-states but also non-state actors such as violent non-state actors, narcotic cartels, multinational corporations and non-governmental organizations; some authorities include natural disasters and events causing severe environmental damage in this category.

The concept of integration is not new in political discourse. For Dudley (1976), the concept remains unclear in terms of its interpretation as it has been used interchangeably with concepts such as nation-building, national development, political development and sometimes it can be used inclusively to embracing all these terms. With integration, it is believed that the various components of a social polity should be satisfied in respect of justice, fairplay, equitable distribution of resources and accessibility to the accruing national opportunities. It is in relation

to this that Okene (2011) conceives integration as the feeling of the history of togetherness and high sense of community in all sectors within the polity. Accordingly, integration is developmental in all forms of human and physical endeavours with a view to ensuring that society is lived, guided, guarded and administered with tolerable minimum conflicts. For Oyadiran and Adeshola (2017), national integration is an indelible mark indicating indissoluble, united and sovereign nation as well as indicating unity of purpose, common position and agreement to co-exist as an indivisible or indissoluble national entity. This definition shows that the concept can also be referred to as nation-building, national cohesion, national loyalty, oneness and national unity. This further indicates national integration as a situation whereby members of a community co-exist with sense of belonging among themselves.

Although the concept of integration has been described as elusive due to its being replete with different definitions in the literature (Ojo, 2009; Ahmed and Dantata, 2016; Oyadiran, and Adeshola, 2017), this paper purposely situates national integration as a honest, selfless, patriotic and voluntary union of different nationalities including other sub-cultural groups which formed a formidable common front with a view to pursuing national unity consistently through a continuous peaceful and harmonious coexistence. This explains the nature of Nigeria as a plural society with multi-ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic diversities and in dire need of common national identity since the amalgamation of the different groups that make up the entity now known as Nigeria (Orjinta and Ameh, 2020). Different efforts have been made to ensure a continuous integration of the country, especially through constitutional means, political systems and the adoption of various policies, all of which have seemingly failed to produce the desired and convinced impact effect on the country's unity. This is partly because many national policies and decisions designed and practiced in the past have been based on ethnic, tribal and regional influence and interpretation thereby constituting hindrance to strong and successful integration of the country. The foregoing definitions have provided a convincing insight into the fundamental components of integration in Nigeria so as establish the possibility of political power rotation in integrating the different entities that make up Nigeria and bringing about lasting security.

The Nature of Politics and Struggle for Political Power in Nigeria: Nigerian politics and the political system could be considered on the basis of the interaction between geographic, ethnic, economic and social variables in the country. The amalgamation of three incompatible and different nation-states into one Nigeria through Lugard's 1914 intervention is one of the factors that characterize socio-political relations in the polity of Nigeria. In corroborating this assertion, Akinjide (2001) is of the opinion that the forced amalgamation by Imperial Britain of the various nationalities of Lagos, the North and the South in 1914 was the genesis of the country's present crisis of confidence and political succession. It is also believed in some quarters that the struggle among the contending interest for the control of the central government is the major source and cause of Nigeria's 'do or die' politics and recurring instability. The first generation of Nigerian political class inherited a country designed for them by the British and they never had time to reinvent the British design. They had to face many issues arising from the mistake or benefit of

1914 or of 1959/60 which were responsible for the series of military adventures and the politics of zoning, rotation and power shift that are based on the ethnic, religion and regional factors (Omoruyi, 2006; O'Leary, 2013; Onuh and Ike, 2019; Mbah and Orjinta, 2020).

Nigerian politics is characterised by ethnic sentiment or what could be referred to as ethno-national sentiment. This means that the political choices are largely based on primordial criteria. The ethnicization of politics and the appropriation of national or public resources for the pursuit of ethnic projects or agenda which the occupation of public office gives access to, have made political contests a do-or-die affair. This tradition of politics in Nigeria according to Ake (1995) undoubtedly puts an unusually high premium on political power. He further points out that in such a situation, political power competition assumes the character of warfare. Accordingly, because political power is overvalued the struggle for it is very intense and prone to lawlessness. This intense power struggle in Nigeria constitutes factors responsible for the country's failure at democratization. In this type of politics, violence is bound to be endemic. Consequently, the use of proliferated weapons to pursue/and or fight and leave no stone unturned to retain the position in Nigerian politics becomes a routine venture.

One of the greatest problems facing Nigeria in particular is the peaceful regime change. Most of the political crises that Nigeria has faced were argued to have emanated from the country's inability to transit peacefully from one regime to another (Jekada, 2005; Ebenezer, 2014; LeVan, 2019). In the power tussle to control the central government, the power calculus of the Nigerian polity, the fallout effect has been the increasing crises of marginalization and fear of domination which is common but not limited to the minority groups. An examination of these crises will virtually reveal that they are not only associated with the struggle for power but are indeed, crises of succession. It has been argued that if the violent struggle for power is one of the major causes of a war and insecurity, transforming the way in which power is obtained, maintained, and exercised is essential for success in creating viable peace (Dziedzic and Hawley, 2005; Hoffman, 2009). Accordingly and specifically, it is suggested that, as a result of state collapse and internal war, a domestic balance of power must be restored in favor of legitimate institutions of government. This can be accomplished by ensuring that violence-prone power structures are dislodged and the motivations and means for pursuing violent conflict are diminished.

The State of National Security in Nigeria (1999-2021): Since the advent of democracy in 1999, the Nigerian nation has on daily basis experienced an upsurge of activities that threaten and endanger its national security. Nigeria continues to face serious security challenges on several fronts in its fourth republic, especially in the northeast where there have been a continuous fighting between government forces and two armed Islamist insurgencies (Boko Haram and an Islamic State-affiliated splinter faction, the Islamic State West Africa Province), which has resulted to killing of tens of thousands of civilians, displacing millions, and involving extensive human rights abuses (Husted, 2022). Accordingly, this has also been the case in

northwest and central parts of the country, where disputes have escalated between herders and farmers and contributing to deteriorated security conditions characterized largely by armed criminality, mass abductions for ransom, ethno-religious violence, and emergent Islamist extremist activity, amid rising interethnic and interreligious tensions. This has not been limited to the northern part as an escalation of violent confrontations between the country's security forces and armed separatists have resulted in killing of dozens in the southeast in 2020-2021. The southwest has also faced different crimes, attacks and kidnappings in recent times, all of which forced it to establish a regional security outfit. The Niger Delta area and the south-south generally have long faced criminality, agitations, episodic militancy and attacks on vessels raising challenges for the country's security forces.

During the fourth republic, the national security of the country has been under perceived threat as there is breakdown of law and order, lack of economic security due to political instability affecting investment climate as well as the democratization of violence, ethnic sectarian which manifest in the contest of identity transformations and political instability are common denominator to the country's security dilemma (Fatai, 2012; LeVan, 2019). Similarly, the Nigerian society is getting more and more insecure, more people are getting into crimes and they are getting more ruthless, desperate and sophisticated. Since the advent of the present democratic dispensation, new forms of violent crimes have become common; these include kidnapping for ransom, pipeline vandalization, Boko Haram bombings, political violence and more (Otto and Ukpere, 2012; Husted, 2022). Other forms of violent crimes in the recent times include banditry, terrorism, armed violent herdsmen, among others. Specifically, insecurity has become more intense and pervasive with the new phenomenon of Boko Haram (Fatai, 2012). Boko Haram, which is perceived as a terrorist group, is seemingly bent on imposing a new power relations in the context of ethno-religious and political conflicts. Nigeria national security, therefore, faces a serious challenge and it is the internal division which is fatal to Nigeria survival.

3. **METHODS**

This paper relied on qualitative method and was designed to examine the issue of political power rotation in relation to security and integration efforts in Nigeria. In-depth Interview was designed to elicit views of respondents purposely sampled across diverse socio-ethnic, ethno-religious, geo-political, professional and academic backgrounds and sampled to be knowledgeable in this area of research. The in-depth interviews were conducted with senior members of the academic, security, judicial and political sectors in Nigeria. The opinions of the interviewees were sought on the possibility of power rotation in relation to geo-political background, particularly at the presidential level, serving as a positive response to the problem of insecurity, insurgencies and disintegration in Nigeria. The total number of respondents identified was 20 (academic [5], security personnel [5], advocates and solicitors [5], politicians [5]) while the interview was eventually conducted with 12 of the respondents. It identified the target participants through

purposive sampling while data collected were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and document analysis. Document analysis is conceived as a form of qualitative research that adopts a systematic procedure in order to analyze documentary evidence and provide answers to specific research questions. Glenn (2009) describes document analysis as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents including printed and electronic material and it requires that data be examined and interpreted with a view to eliciting meaning and gain understanding as well as developing empirical knowledge.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The nature of political contests in Nigeria is affirmed as either worse or bad since the advent of the Fourth Republic (1999-2021). This shows that political contests have not reached the level of maturity as envisaged despite years of democratic practices. The insecurity condition in Nigeria since 1999 has remained unabated as expectations regarding security stability in the country have not been satisfactory. If this continues as the real case, it could be dangerous to future electoral process or activities in the country. There seems to be a possible relationship between the recent democratic dispensation and upsurge of insecurity in Nigeria. An interviewee, a senior security officer, during a one on one interview corroborated the above inferences in his response saying, "*it is understandable to me that before the advent of this democracy we have had lesser militia organizations but today we find many violent organizations springing up in almost all parts of the country thereby threatening the peace of the country and giving security agencies sleepless nights.*" In another dimension, an interviewee, advocate and solicitor, held the view that "*democracy does not bring about insecurity in the Fourth Republic, it is just the way the political actors practice it in Nigeria that makes it to be characterized by insecurities in all ramifications.*" In their past research works and articles, authors like Omoruyi (2006), Omede (2011), Fatai (2012), Adetoye (2016), and Ahmed and Dantata (2016). have also recognized partly the socio-political discontents that have arisen in different parts of the country in the fourth republic which may go a long way in destabilizing a long expected stable democratic polity and national integration if appropriate strategies are not put in place by successive civilian administrations.

Prior to this study, the idea of power rotation in any ramification has turned into a debate that often generate a lot of arguments and counter arguments among scholars, professionals, and groups in Nigeria (Obiyan, 1999; Igwara, 2001; Nwachukwu, 2005; Omodia, 2010; Ehiabi & Ehimore, 2011; Vinson, 2017; Veenendaal, 2020). This paper posits that unsatisfactory political power change or power rotation at the presidential level is a major cause of insecurity in Nigeria particularly in the Fourth Republic, and asserts that balance of political power rotation among the core geo-political zones is not a solution to insurgencies in Nigeria. The unsatisfactory political power change/power rotation at the presidential level is revealed as a major cause of insecurity in Nigeria. Insecurity could be an end result of a loss of political powers in the country. The balance of political power rotation among the core geo-political zones has not served as a

solution to insurgencies in Nigeria. Consequently, there is impossibility of national integration and democratic consolidation in Nigeria if challenges of national insecurity persist.

Although the level of insecurity in the country has been growing even before the advent of democracy in 1999, Nigerian political leaders, elites and politicians are largely blamed for the upsurge of insurgencies, especially the rise in armed conflicts in the country's fourth republic. In the opinion of an interviewee, academic, "*the issue of insecurity has been with the country before the current democratic dispensation. It is difficult to directly associate insecurity with specific regimes in Nigeria. It is not necessarily a reflection of opposition to a specific regime. Rather it may be an opposition to the way the Nigeria state is run.* This view is also linked to the kind of political disagreements with various factions in Nigerian elites, but the extent to which this could be linked is also debatable. For instance, the Sharia could be linked to Obasanjo regime because of the claim that the Obasanjo's appointment did not favour the northern region at that period. In relation to the above issues, an interviewee, security officer, posited that "*the politics in Nigeria in the last twenty years has been characterized with power shifts which is reflective of greed and grievance and this has been the bane of security, integration and development in Nigeria since independence*. In another response, an interviewee, academic, held the view that "*Nigeria situation is such that people want to get power by all means and thinking that getting powers is their rights hence crisis and insecurity. Besides, the nature of political power shifts in the country has been characterized with sentiments and appeasements.*"

An interviewee, academic, believed that *"consensus democracy by the way of rotational presidency can give room for a sense of belonging and social justice and this may solve at least part of the problem of insecurity."* This was corroborated by an interviewee, academic, in that "*the solutions to insecurity are many, among which is power rotation. So I cannot rule it out as a solution to addressing grievances and insecurity in the country; it must however, be entrenched in the constitution of the land to be effective"*. Accordingly, the principle of power rotation could be a critical principle for addressing cases of fear of domination, perceived marginalization and instability in the polity. An interviewee, security personnel, also opined that "*because some ethnic groups keep nursing the grudges of marginalization, power rotation could be a solution.*" This indicates divergent views on the debate of political power rotation as a probable panacea to national security and integration in Nigeria.

Another interviewee, politician, had a view thus, *"I disagree with the issue of power rotation as a solution to insecurity in Nigeria. I view power rotation in Nigeria as a palliative factor. It is not sustainable and cannot address the issue of greed and grievances. It is only capable of creating a semblance of stability as a palliative measure.*" Similarly, an interviewee, academic, was of the view that, *"Power rotation cannot be a solution to the problem of insecurity in Nigeria because it exists among the elites. My argument is that if power rotation cannot address the problems of poverty; unemployment; dilapidated social amenities; poor and obsolete educational facilities, among other necessities, then it does not worth it"*. It is believed

that rotational presidency will distract Nigerians from the core issues and will only satisfy the elites and their neighbours, especially the big elements of the elite class. The argument here is that if political power rotation is effective in the first place, the villages, towns, states and regions of past leaders in Nigeria would have been transformed beautifully in terms of significant development programmes.

It is also believed that political power rotation would rather bring about insecurity instead of security and integration. In the opinion of an interviewee, advocate and solicitor, "*It should be known that the issues of zoning and power rotation purposely designed to give each group a sense of belonging have paradoxically generated the most acrimony between the North and the South, especially in the recent time. It cannot be separated from various levels of insecurity, especially in the northern parts of the country*". In a similar argument, an interviewee, politician, submitted that, "*The principle of zoning and relative agitation for its practice has remained endemic in Nigeria's electoral politics. This can only promote mediocrity and further bring about ethno-religious divide in the country. So, I don't see it as a solution to insecurity, insurgencies or possible disintegration.*"An interviewee, advocate and solicitor, also stated that, "*To me, political power rotation simply stresses differences between peoples, and is based on a principle of rivalry rather than cooperation. Its potential contribution to national unity is dubious and its negative consequences unpredictable and unmanageable.*"

The level of insecurity has been observed as high, including evidence of disintegration, especially in the country's fourth republic, but majority of Nigerians have not been convinced that political power rotation could be a solution. For instance, an interviewee, advocate and solicitor, was of the opinion that, "*The proposed rotational presidency as a solution is unfortunate. It is nothing but a disservice to the nation. It is a reminder of our dichotomy. I feel that a region or geo-political zone could be hanging on to rotation to hide its inadequacy. It is an attempt of people to try and hide their inadequacies by bringing in so many things that are counter or at cross purposes with democracy*". But arguably, an interviewee, advocate and solicitor, stated thus, "*I view political power rotation is a temporary solution. I don't think power rotation can work effectively, especially in addressing grievances, crisis and insecurity in Nigeria. Mediocrity makes people to be ethnocentric. The question is, which model are we practising? Which country has experienced insecurity and resorted to power rotation and found it as an effective solution*"?

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The major empirical finding this study relies upon is the far above average position of the respondents that power rotation, regime change or power shift on geo-political basis or ethno-religious basis cannot be a solution to the challenges of insecurity and secession agitations being witnessed in the country in the contemporary period. This study has provided arguments on the issues of political power rotation or power shifts in relation to security and integration challenges

in Nigeria, specifically in the country's fourth republic. The body of political power relations and security literature explored thus far and the qualitative analysis employed in this research has validated the basic objectives of the study. The related concepts of zoning and power rotation were believed to have been introduced into Nigeria's political vocabulary by the defunct National Party of Nigeria in 1979 and were embraced by the PDP in 1999. Supporters of this believe that at this stage in the country's nation-building process, a creative application of these principles will not only help to give muscle to the Federal Character provision of the Constitution but will also help to allay any fears of majority tyranny and socio-political discontents and insecurity. The political system in the Fourth Republic has been muddled up. Nigeria urgently needs formidable security, atmosphere of lasting peace, ethno-religious sanitation, nation building, and democratic sustainability. Most importantly, Nigerians generally, both the rulers and the governed, need to inculcate the idea and culture of good leadership irrespective of backgrounds as against the notion of power rotation or power shifts to a particular geo-political region of the country. The major point of this study, therefore, is that the leadership of a nation should be made of an uncompromising individual based on qualities of vision, integrity and ability to carry the people along to do its bidding. It is believed that Nigeria cannot continue to exist amidst of zonal terminologies which keep the country backward. This research has revealed that the real security and socio-political problem of Nigeria is not where the President comes from, but whether good governance is practiced. The problem is not in the ethnic or regional origin of the President, but in the inter-class conflict among the bourgeois for the control of state power.

Recommendations

1. Although some people may see political power rotation as a temporal euphoric answer to a permanent structural problem, the ultimate solution to the quest for power at the centre is having a federation of Nigeria where the centre is relatively loose and federating units have varying degrees of autonomy within which we can have some sort of self-determination. That is, the kind of balance of political power desired in Nigeria in order for all geo-political zones to have a sense of confidence and belonging in the polity is associated with a return of the country to regional government.

2. Nationalistic, effective, responsive and responsible political leadership could also be the answer. Specifically, The President should not see himself as a sectional or regional leader but govern with the spirit of nationalism. Nigerians in general, irrespective of their geo-political backgrounds, should be enlightened to appreciate and inculcate the culture of agitating for good and responsible leadership as against the notion of presidential power rotation among the dominant ethnic groups in the country.

3. True federalism could also be a solution. The Nigerian peoples can go to the Sovereign National Conference with a view to re-discussing the Nigerian project, to returning to a true federalism, to returning to the parliamentary form of government, to returning to resource control. This study's research has confirmed partly that the primary cause of the

sociopolitical and economic instability in Nigeria is the issue of resource agglomeration and distribution at the centre. The belief therefore is that the practice of true federalism and resource control will not only reduce its attraction but will re-channel the dissipated energies of the various federating units to resource creation.

4. There is need for a viable regulatory framework in Nigeria. Insecurity is not the problem in the country; the problem is the inability to deal with insecurity sincerely. Though not the root cause, poor regulatory framework is seen as bane of security in the recent time. If offenders, terrorists, sponsors of violence, those who make life unbearable for others are punished sincerely and accordingly, people are most likely to be discouraged from carrying out heinous and criminal activities. Having a strong institutional framework that prevents developments such as conflicts and corporate corruption will reduce insecurity situations in Nigeria.

5. Nigeria should embrace the political system of con-federalism. There is need for decentralization or the country will be disintegrated in the nearest future. By this is meant that there should be a weak central government. The different zones in the country should be allowed to develop at its own pace. There is need for the 'dismantling' of the federal arrangement while a new con-federal system that would give each ethnic group autonomous power and jurisdiction should be adopted.

6. The Nation's armed forces and other para-military agencies should be strengthened by the Government in terms of regular training, discipline, professionalism and modern equipments. At this juncture, the initial mission should be unbiased campaign against the proliferation of small, light and heavy arms in Nigeria.

7. Above all, there should be sincere equity and justice in the country. For instance, equal distribution of resources to all parts of the country but with special preference to regions that produce such resources will be a welcome development. If all ethnic nationalities are assured a sense of belonging in the polity, there would be peace.

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