



## The Rationality of Rotational Presidency: Multi-ethnicity Hampers Smooth Educational and Political Development

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### Abstract

This study was initiated to examine the idea of rotational presidency with a view to ascertaining its suitability or adoptability as a model for any country where multi-ethnicity hampers smooth educational and political development. The decision to pursue this course of inquiry follows the failure of broad conflict reduction mechanisms to work in the governance of Nigeria. This pursuit is undertaken so as to develop new insight into the concept of federalism and how it might be practiced in Nigeria in a way that would enhance education, socio-economic, and political development, justice, equity and fairness for each of its component parts. This however cannot be realized until problems pertaining to the failure of political leadership are resolved. This study argues that the solution lies in democracy through the building of lasting democratic institutions and structures of power. This is what rotational presidency represents as it would produce an effective cross cutting of political parties and a political leadership that is legitimated by the willing consent of the governed. Rotational presidency, as a social re-engineering of Nigeria's federal system both in terms of political arrangements and economic management, and educational development is predicated on these premises.

**Keywords:** Rotational Presidency; Rationality; Education; Political Development; Nigeria; Federalism; Regionalism.

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### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria as a state had attempted to establish harmonious co-existence as a framework for governance. This includes two broad conflict reduction mechanisms, the structural and the distributive. Structural approaches to conflict management include the use of confederal and federal relationships, separation or "radical surgery", and regional autonomy (Horowitz, 1985, p. 18). According to Horowitz, the distributive approaches involve differential allocation of government positions and resources to less advantaged groups.

Nigeria has adopted some of these measures with questionable results. Although ostensibly a federal state, federalism has been largely abandoned by political leaders in favour of strong central government (Eresia-Eke, 2002, p. 128). This is the root of many of the contemporary conflicts of the Nigerian state. 'Radical Surgery' in the form of the Biafran secession, was tried and rejected, principally because it was not by mutual consent (Rothchild

& Olorunsola, 1983, p. 83). Attempts at a distributive policy from the 1970s onwards, following the principle of 'federal character' whereby national resources and public offices were meant to be allocated in such a way as to reflect the plural nature of the Nigerian society, have also failed. This is, in part, due to a lack of proper implementation and the way it was seen by most southerners, as a system that favours those groups already in power (Okpu, 1977, p. 68).

Southerners and radical "progressives" see restructuring towards an ethnic confederation or variants of regional autonomy as the answer to present educational, political and economic inequalities. Nigeria, as a country struggling to enthrone democracy and development, is confronted with the choice of entrenching democracy through the wholesale regurgitation of foreign political systems or from rotational presidency – a variant of an indigenous system (Akinola, 1996, p. 13). While globalization does not push a people towards mimicry it does make the information and experiences that have positively affected lives in other societies more readily available for examination. In addition, according to Olorube (2010), National economies, and even national cultures, are globalising. Everything, including relations among family and friends, are rapidly being organised around a much more compressed view of space and time. These ideas can then be harnessed and aligned to meet the needs of specific circumstances. From this perspective, globalization is the preservation rather than the loss of identities. It is this variant that we urge Nigeria, and by extension other African countries, to adopt as it aligns with their realities.

The biggest issue facing Nigeria today is the so-called "National Question", which has been described as 'code name for all controversies, doubts and experimentation that surround Nigeria's search for stability' (Sklar, 1963, p. 24). A critical aspect of this 'national question' is the problem of ethnic domination. A broad section of Nigerian society remains profoundly dissatisfied with the country's education and political administrative structure and generally, the way it has been governed (Eresia-Eke, 2002, p. 143). Thus, the "National Question" cannot be addressed through the unwholesome adoption of foreign cultures or political systems but must be dealt with in a home-grown system. Fortunately, federalism (and not the variant presently operating in Nigeria) is malleable.

Demands for political restructuring by means of a national conference range from the cautious to the radical. It has been claimed, and not unreasonably, that leaving the issue unresolved endangers the very cohesion of the Nigerian state (Amuwo, et. al, 1998 p. 189). This view reflects a trend in popular opinion across the country. It is partly in recognition of this, that the government of late General Sani Abacha, declared as one of its priorities the convening of a constitutional conference. Following its deliberations, the constitutional conference recommended rotational presidency proviso amongst the six geo-political zones of the country (Eresia-Eke, 2002, p. 111). While this particular proviso has been since expunged from the 1999 Constitution, the manifestos of political parties do contain provisions for power sharing in the country. It is in this regard that this study undertakes examining the rationality of rotational presidency and its implication in Nigeria.

The relevance of this study can be seen to the extent that the tenants of rotational presidency are congruent with the principles of federalism – the political system adopted by Nigeria as its medium of governance. It may further be seen in the capacity to address the critical issues of Nigerian politics, namely, nation building, ethnicity, constitutionalism, political instability and political leadership. Nigerian politics today suggest a national consensus around the fact that the lopsidedness of political leadership in the country (since independence) must not continue. As a result, the findings of this study serve as a medium for providing the statutory arrangements needed to end this lopsidedness and as a deliberate political strategy for ensuring that every section of Nigeria produces political leadership.

This latter objective is important because ethnic conflict has been identified as a basic threat to education and democracy in Nigeria. Nigerian societies are notable for their primary group loyalties and multi-nationality, which constitute sources of potential conflict, especially when exploited as a political strategy by the urban elite who engage in ethnic balancing acts to remain in power. One panacea would be to democratically domesticate ethnicity with sufficient guarantees to address the fears and anxieties of marginalized groups. A democracy defined by the will of the masses on the basis of equity, fairness, social justice and self-determination would make the productivity of ethnic domination less attractive. Such a democracy will produce a highly accessible and enhanced political participation anchored in equality and national cohesion through a reach that transcends all ethnic barriers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopts three approaches to the examination of philosophical problems namely: the analytical, prescriptive and speculative methods. The analytical method or philosophical analysis is concerned with the proper use of language in any discourse; hence, our understanding of philosophical issues as well as their intelligent examination depends largely on our ability to understand the proper use of language. It is in light of this, that attempts are made to analyze and clarify the central concept of this work, i.e. rotational presidency and its implication in Nigeria.

The prescriptive method seeks to establish standards for assessing values, judging conduct and appraising situations. The prescriptive method enabled this study to appraise the practice of federalism in Nigeria vis-à-vis other countries where it is also the preferred medium of governance. The usefulness of this can be seen in the fact that the introduction of the rotational presidency proviso into Nigerian federalism would neither alter the standard practice nor change the value of the system.

The speculative method employs or dwells on the construction of coherent views on everything that humanity contemplates. It tends to see the world as a conglomeration of systems with the universe representing the largest system of which all others are a part. This method provides a systematic thinking which attempts to account for events that occur in or on systems that exist as part of a larger whole. It is not interested in probing the meanings of words or setting and making value judgments. Instead it tends to observe events or phenomena and recommend solutions to them and other societal problems. Using this method, the study was able to recommend solutions that will help the Nigerian polity overcome the pitfalls of the model of federalism currently operating in the country.

The materials used in this study were largely adopted from the works of experts in the area of education, social and political studies, especially those with relevance to the Nigerian situation. In addition, some commentaries on the social realities of Nigeria were used in order to arrive at a correct and adequate representation of the facts as they are. In the analysis, insights into the current state of affairs of the Nigerian state proved useful in situating the facts in their proper context. On the reliability of the materials used, it should be noted that no statistical procedure was employed in the study thereby making the use of quantitative research instruments irrelevant. The research materials and approaches used can be considered to the extent that they are analytically consistent with the exigencies of Nigeria.

## **THE RATIONALITY OF ROTATIONAL PRESIDENCY**

Nigeria has often been described as a colonial creation. To this effect, according to Young (1988, p. 144), it acquired the character of an imposed state 'lacking in normative acceptance by the society'. This view was further revealed when after independence in 1960 it dawned on Nigerians that Arthur Richard was indeed right when he notes that:

*It is only the accident of British Suzerainty, which has made Nigeria one country. (That) it is still far from being one country or one nation socially or even economically. (That) socially and politically there are deep differences between major tribal groups. They do not speak the same language and they have highly divergent customs and ways of life and they represent different stages of culture (Amuwo et. al., 1998, p. 191)*

The above configuration highlights the need to transform the state from its origins of imposition into a living, viable, and normative state with a national unifying appeal and institutional framework. Indeed, the history of the Nigerian state, from the commencement of the decolonization process, has been geared towards establishing a basis for the emergence of a true Nigerian state that enjoys the widespread support of its diverse people and is able to function effectively over its territory. This effort somewhat contradicts the real drive of state building, which is concerned primarily with the consolidation of the existence of the state.

State building efforts in Nigeria, particularly before independence, peaked with the nationwide debate preceding the Macpherson Constitution in 1951, a debate which, in the words of Awolowo (1970, p. 141), was designed to elicit the true feelings of Nigerians on how the Nigerian state should operate and be administered. This was followed by a series of constitutional conferences in the lead-up to 1960 so as to usher in the independence constitution, which endorsed a federal, west-minister system of government and a three-region structure for Nigeria. This system collapsed in 1966 given enormous strains and dislocations and prompted military intervention (Dudley, 1978, p. 146).

The political contests under the First Republic demonstrated a brazen lack of unanimity on the rules and institutions governing the Nigerian state. These contestations were to continue even under military rule. In general, military governments rely on force and order to elicit compliance instead of the more ideal political norms of consultation, bargaining and compromise needed in meaningful state-building efforts. The result in Nigeria was a thirty-month civil war (Joseph 1987 p. 189). Other state-building efforts, including the change to a presidential system of government and a provision on the emergence of national political parties for the Second Republic in 1979, also did not produce appreciable results. The republic collapsed under intense strain through another military intervention on December 31, 1983. The subsequent political transition programme, supervised by the Babangida military government and seeking the introduction of a compulsory two-party system and the creation of new states,

lead the country down a dead-end road with the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election. This annulment precipitated a dire political crisis out of which Nigeria is yet to emerge.

It was against the background of this political crisis that the Abacha military government convened a constitutional conference, with full constituent and plenary powers, to fashion a new basis for the existence of the Nigerian state. It was a response to the crisis which has brought with it questions of the perpetual marginalization of some segments of the Nigerian polity in the political and power equation in Nigeria. The essence of June 1993 presidential election debacle is the perception of a deliberate ploy to deny a segment of the population access to and control of the Nigerian presidency after victory in a national election. The task before Nigerians, therefore, is to devise a framework for the operations of the Nigerian state that would give all segments of the polity a sense of belonging through real access to all-important state positions and offices. There is the need to ensure balance in filling political offices, especially the presidency, which stands as the arrowhead of the institutional representation of the state.

If the Nigerian state is to be assured of its continued existence, the complaints raised by the presidential election debacle must be addressed by a formula that assures significant segments of the Nigerian polity access to important state offices. According to the 1995 constitutional conference reports, these segments have come to associate their continued participation in the Nigerian enterprise and a sense of belonging with access to state offices, particularly the presidency, such that it becomes imperative to conceive of a framework of rotation in which all segments of the polity are guaranteed access. As a matter of fact, state-building efforts, in addressing the issues raised by the June 1993 presidential election imbroglio, have of necessity, to initiate a process of rotational presidency since it is clear that only guaranteed access to this state office will assuage the feelings of marginalization responsible for the vocal questioning of the existence of the Nigerian state. It is against the background of the collapse of the existing framework for the institutional functioning of the state, under pressure of complaints of marginalization, particularly with respect to control of important state offices like the presidency, that the idea of rotational presidency becomes imperative, rational and highly desirable in the Nigerian situation.

### **The Premise and Practice of the Federal Character Principle**

Although the British Colonialists dominated and exploited what came to be known as Nigeria through the colonial state under Lord Lugard, the Northern and Southern protectorates were administered differently. While in the North, the British employed a system of indirect rule and incorporated the Emirs into the colonial administrative structure, in the South, particularly among the Igbo, colonialism depended on its appointees – the warrant Chiefs. As Afigbo (1989, p. 9) rightly notes, the policy of indirect rule, which was premised on the principle of divide and rule:

*Provided a strong argument for keeping the course of development in the Northern and Southern provinces rigorously apart, for reducing all contacts between the peoples of the two groups of provinces to the absolute minimum and for excluding the former group of provinces from the sphere of the Legislative Council.*

The growth of British commercial and colonial interests in the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to British Christian missionaries establishing institutions for formal education in order to create understanding between the colonial rulers and native Southern Nigerians to perpetuate their economic, political, social and religious imperialism. Nearly all of today's developing countries were once colonies. That is, they were under the direct administrative rule of one or more European power. For example, America broke free from European rule in the late eighteenth century, but most countries in Africa, the Near East, and Asia won their independence only in the past 50 to 60 years. Between 1945 and 1968, 66 countries gained political independence from colonial rule (Ololube, 2009, pp. 6-7). According to Brint (1998, p. 67), most of the developing world consists of rather new states of which Nigeria is one. Brint further contends that colonial rulers were mainly interested in raw materials, cheap labor, and acquiescent subjects, thus schooling for the masses was considered helpful, but it was a comparatively low priority. In the absence of strong official support, Christian missionaries often introduced formal education as a way of evangelizing the indigenous populations.

After independence in 1960, Nigeria's federal government had little influence on education matters at the primary and secondary school levels because that was the constitutional responsibility of the regions. This resulted in a multiplicity of educational policies and practices and varying standards of education which gave rise to uneven development. Prior to the coming of the British, various regions and people of Nigeria had their own educational system, as is the case in other countries of the world (Ololube, 2009, p. 7). According to Fafunwa (1991), the young were taught how to conform to social customs and traditions of the community and to learn a trade or vocation to make them good citizens. Such education was aimed at maintaining continuity in various vocations

(especially in medicine, arts and crafts) and the continuity of culture by transmitting to successive generations not only accumulated knowledge but standards of belief, norms and values (Ololube, 2009, p. 7).

The pattern of uneven development was exacerbated not only at the political level, but also in the educational sphere. Raufu (1987, pp. 81-96) notes that while Christian missions were allowed to establish schools in the Southern provinces, they were curtailed from doing so in the North under the pretext that the North was Islamic in its religious practice. The disparity in educational advancement between the North and South widened and brought with it a magnitude of prejudices which widely exist and will continue to exist. Afigbo (1989, p. 9) again affirms the above trend in writing:

*...the Colonial administration passed on the Nigerian wards the prejudices which had enabled them to think and act in the belief that this "informal federation" was a marriage of convenience between incompatibles. The North looked down on the South as uncivilized, pagan, indisciplined, rowdy and nakedly materialistic. The South returned this contempt with compliments, regarding the North as feudalistic, conservative, uneducated... And as the pliant tools of the imperial master*

The Colonial policy of indirect rule not only exacerbated the North-South dichotomy but introduced regionalism via the 1946 Richards Constitution. Tom Forest in his book, *Politics and Economic Development in Nigeria*, aptly argues that British colonial policy entrenched a tripartite regional system of government in which the major ethnic groups – the Hausa-Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba – respectively dominated the three regions of North, East and West. Forest (1993:39) sees the underlying competition between the ethno-regional groups as:

*... the struggle for economic advancement by individuals and communities and the fear of political and economic domination accentuated by the uneven development of disparate communities. These fears were strikingly evident in the bitter controversy over census and in the aggressive ethnicity that came to the surface. Despite the operation of a federal system of government that ensured considerable decentralization of powers, there was too much at stake at the centre for a compromise to be struck.*

The constant desire by the diverse ethnicities of Nigeria to either control the federal centre or ensure access to "national cake" has been at the heart of the national question and federal character debates. During Gowon's military administration, Nigeria not only endured a bitter and destructive civil war, but the federation was also restructured from four regions into twelve states. As the pressure for more states persisted, the Murtala-Obasanjo regime increased the number to nineteen and introduced far-reaching reforms at the grassroots level by giving autonomy to local governments. To return the country to civil rule, the regime set up a Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC). It was at the 1975-6 CDC debates that the concept of federal character as a political lexicon emerged in Nigeria's search for a stable democratic order.

The tragic history of Nigeria's First Republic greatly influenced the perceptions and attitudes of the CDC sub-committee that examined the powers and functions of the Executive and Legislative arms of government in a multi-ethnic or plural society. According to Afigbo (1989, p. 4), it was in an effort to promote national unity and integration that the sub-committee proposed the adoption of the Federal Character Principle which, according to the framers of the 1979 Constitution, is anchored in the:

*...distinctive desire of the peoples of Nigeria to promote national unity, foster national loyalty and give every citizen of Nigeria sense of belonging to the nation notwithstanding the diversities of ethnic origin, culture, language or religion which may exist and which it is their desire to nourish, harness to the enrichment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.*

Simply put, therefore, the Federal Character Principle seeks to create a sense of belonging and participation among the diverse ethnic groups and political groupings in the governance of the post-colonial state. It is an outcome of the anxieties and fears of domination that characterize ethno-regional relations in Nigeria. Furthermore, the Federal Character Principle, and its application in the governance of Nigeria, is symptomatic of the desire by the different ethnic groups, especially in the North, to ensure access to both civil service and political positions.

Based on the dimensions of the Federal Character Principle and its practice, we can observe that the situation necessitating such a framework for the accommodation of diverse peoples of Nigeria in public life, still exists. Rotational presidency is another variant of that principle touted to take care of areas of public life not considered in the adoption of the Federal Character Principle. To reject the rotational presidency proposal when its variant, the Federal Character Principle, is enshrined in the constitution amounts to the use of different standards in relating to peoples of the same country under the same circumstances.

## Social Justice and Reverse Discrimination

The concept of justice, like many social science concepts, remains a contested one among scholars. According to Rawls (1973, p. 10), at various times and under different historical, cultural and ideological influences, justice has been variously interpreted. Despite these discrepancies, the fact that justice is a distributive term is generally agreed on. In the view of Frankena (1976, p. 433), this means that justice has to do with the “allotment of something” to persons. Frankena suggests that these things may include duties, goods, offices, opportunities, privileges, roles, status and so on. It is important to note here, however, that justice, “has to do, not so much with the quantity of good and evil” that is being distributed, but more “with the manner in which it is distributed (Frankena 1976, p. 432). Likewise Miller (1979, p. 19) suggests, “the subject matter of justice (is) the manner in which benefits and burdens are distributed among men”. He goes on to describe a just distribution as that in which “each individual has exactly those benefits and burdens which are due to him”. This is supported by Bodunrin (1989, pp. 303-324) when he states that a society is considered just “if everybody is treated fairly in respect of the distribution of the society’s goods”.

Not surprisingly, the question of what treatment should qualify as fair treatment, and by implication, what distribution a just distribution, is not a settled one. Following Rawls (1973, p. 5) position, it could be said, if only tentatively, that even people who hold different views or conceptions of what justice is, can “still agree that institutions are just when no arbitrary distinctions are made between persons” in the assignment of “basic rights and duties and when the rules determine a proper balance between competing claims to the advantage of social life”.

One way of interpreting Rawls’ view is that justice entails the avoidance, as much as possible, of discrimination in the distribution of social benefits and costs. To achieve this, Rawls (1973, p. 60) suggests that every society should be organized so that:

1. Each person has equal rights to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty to others.
2. Social inequalities are to be arranged so that they are (a) one’s advantages, and (b) attached to positions and offices open to all.

It is important to note that in some circumstances Rawls recognizes the unequal distribution of social costs and benefits as leading to the attainment of justice. In other words, he foresees a situation whereby “an unequal distribution of any or all of (liberty, opportunity, income and wealth and the bases of self-respect) is to every one’s advantage” (1973, p. 83). This is possible he continues, when “an unequal distribution” is to “the advantage of the least favoured groups in the society”.

The implication of this is that an unequal distribution is not necessarily unjust. It is the principle inherent in this type of position, which protagonists of reverse discrimination or affirmative action have used to justify their claims. The argument being that some social and/or historical circumstances could be the basis for giving preferential treatment to some groups without compromising justice.

A closer examination of preferential treatment and more importantly, the justifications for it, are called for at this point. First, preferential treatment means giving to somebody what she might not have, under a prevailing circumstance, obtained on her own. As noted, preferential treatment is usually justified on the ground of historical antecedents and the inequalities, this had created. As Thompson (1973) argues, “if we have wronged “A”, we must make amends, justice requires it and failure to make amends is not merely callousness, but injustice”.

Preferential treatment therefore, can be seen as reparation paid for a past wrong. Affirming this view, Johnson (1971, p. 66) noted that “you do not take a person who, for years has been hobbled by chains...and then say you are free to compete with all the others and still just believe that you have been completely fair”.

One argument used to justify affirmative action or reverse discrimination in the United States has been that certain state policies were, in the past, biased against certain groups and that it is not enough to simply stop such policies. Conscious efforts must be made to correct some of the disequilibrium created by these policies. With respect to slavery in America, for example, racism became semi-institutionalized and Blacks and other minority groups suffered considerably as a result. In the light of the above, Moge kwu (1992, p. 215) agrees that the objective of affirmative action is first, recognition of this kind of discrimination. Second, it is applied as compensation for the past misdeed. Put differently, reverse discrimination, especially as it is being pursued through the principle of affirmative action in the United States, is based on the need to achieve the following objectives (among others):

- a. To ensure that past discrimination against Blacks and women does not continue.
- b. To offer officially and explicitly a symbolic denunciation of past racism and/or sexism in America.
- c. To provide role models for victimized blacks and women.
- d. To compensate victims of discrimination by preferring them over the beneficiaries of injustice (those who gained/gain from the status quo).

From whatever perspective the matter is viewed, affirmative action is based on a sense of collective guilt and the moral obligation to pay compensation to the group wronged in the past. This is one sense in which rotational presidency could be applied and as such acquire relevance in the Nigerian state system. In this way, the rotational presidency becomes a socially engineered (preferential) institution to stop the wrongs and denials of the past. At the same time, rotational presidency is more than “preferential treatment” for a group. It is a general institutional structure being fashioned to ameliorate the deficient socio-political foundation of the Nigerian state. It seeks to strengthen the ability of the Nigerian state to effectively command the respect and loyalty of its diverse people through an institutionalized system of social justice.

Rotational presidency is not the same thing as the Federal Character Principle. The latter does imply preferential treatment for a group and this entails the denial of another groups’ rights. This is only justifiable in instances where the preferred group can be shown to have suffered wrongs or denials in the past through a policy or policies that were beneficial to the group that will now “suffer”. Conversely, if a group “A” cannot be shown to have been the cause (or beneficiary) of “B’s” present predicament, or better still, where “B’s” denial did not in anyway benefit “A”, the basis for preferential treatment in favour of “B” can hardly be sustained on any principle of social justice. In fact, to do that would amount to injustice against “A”.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis above has been undertaken to illuminate the inherent contradictions in the principle and practice of the federal character policy in Nigeria even though it has long been pursued as state policy. It becomes pertinent at this juncture to ask: “if the federal character principle is being implemented as a state instituted system of governance, then why not the rotational presidency with its superior framework for governance based on social justice.” After all, contemporary global evidence has shown that ethnicity is more enduring and self-reinforcing than scholars in the past were prepared to admit. This is not peculiar to under-developed societies, as the recent experiences of Eastern Europe, with its long exposure to industrialization and socialist ideology, demonstrates. Advanced western societies, among them Britain, the USA and France, also show evidence of persistent ethnic allegiances. A more helpful approach would be to recognize this reality and search for ways in which plural societies can co-exist harmoniously within a larger state and benefit from its advantages.

Federalism, plainly understood, is a form of government where the component units of a political organization participate in sharing powers and functions in a cooperative manner though the combined forces of ethnic pluralism and cultural diversity among others, tend to pull people apart (Ministry of Information, 1995). Arrangements of this type, though delicate, if carefully planned ensure sufficient grounds for the co-existence of “centre-seeking” and “centre-fleeing” forces. Peace is the reward for fortunate communities able to achieve and sustain this measure. Where people sometimes agree and sometimes disagree on the goals and means of cooperative governments, friction and conflicts do occur, and should the system work as planned, conflict-resolution is quite possible. This conflict-resolution is best realized through the timely and effective intervention of accredited authorities and organs of government.

As there are “strong” and “weak” forms of federalism according to Wheare (1963), there are also periodic variations, which permit “strength” or “weakness” within the same system to be measured differently. This is the case with Nigeria as with other federations. The lack of harmony between the “strength” and “weakness” periods of Nigerian federalism provoked the search for an alternative means of achieving it. This can be achieved through a constitutional provision for a zoning system and power sharing (rotational presidency). It is a political arrangement and an adequate power structure with the capacity to balance the conflicting claims and demands of national stability. The need for such an arrangement arises from the fact that power sharing lies at the root of all political systems and structures. It has been responsible for much of the tension, conflicts, stresses and strains in most politics, at least in the case of Nigeria. It has triggered most of the group confrontations and the resultant distrust, suspicion and instability in many countries.

Rotation of the presidency as a principle adopts a holistic rather than a monolithic conception and view of power, which would not confine it to a consideration of political power alone or that ability to control, act, exercise authority and influence for the benefit of a geo-polity. Rather, power sharing is seen as invariably touching on the question of equity, fairness and justice in the allocation of fundamental indices of power, which are identified as economic, military, bureaucratic, media and intellectual.

This recognizes that in a country like Nigeria, with its diverse peoples, and corresponding diverse political, social, cultural and economic endowments and interests, true federalism must be a genuine attempt to regulate relationships among groups as well as a reflection of these identifiable divergences within a framework of national unity. National unity in a federation does not imply national uniformity. It is for this reason that federal systems vary from one country to another and each federal society devises its own unique federal form congruent with its peculiar socio-economic and political challenges. The particular complexion of a country's federal system reflects the diversities, historical experiences and the disposition of its people at a particular point in time. Each unit in a true federal system has its powers and functions demarcated and guaranteed in such a way as to strike a compromise between local particularisms and national integration. Essentially, in the context of the clamour, rotational presidency has come to mean evolving our own power-sharing formula, making our own decisions and developing our own institutions anchored in our historical experiences.

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