

# Restoring Imo Charter of Equity: Elites and Socio-Political Development of Imo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This paper is to consider the context of the destabilised equity charter for power shifts and rotation in Imo State of Nigeria since its creation and especially since 1979 when democracy began in Imo as a political entity. The paper will attempt to reflect on the history of power-sharing in democratic Imo, the breaches that came along the way but with the vision of restoring the pre-existing charter.. The issues to be considered are: Imo as a political entity, brief history of power-sharing in democratic Imo, equity charter and trivialization of inter-zonal histories, *godfatherism* and elitist materialism, equity as an objective and realistic concept, the necessity of restoring the pre-existing charter of equity and the need for a rotation of governorship in Imo State.

**Keywords:** Equity Charter, Power Sharing, *godfatherism*, Zonal domination, Political entity.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The science of justice is the science whose object is equity; precisely as fairness (or fair play) and being just or considerate in its entire ramification. Even as old as the human society is, Aristotle who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD, remarked the inevitability of equity and justice in the social realm. Imo State of Nigeria was created in 1976 with the view of maintaining equity and balance among political units (ethnic groups) in the Federation, and since its creation till today, several internal political segments have been created for developmental and equity purposes. Based on these intentions, a political conscience or internally agreed morality is generated for the reasons of equality in power rotation and sharing, and *Imolites* unanimously agreed to impose it on themselves, and this is the equity charter, which is thus a non-constitutional matter.

## 2. IMO AS A POLITICAL ENTITY

On February 3, 1976 amidst mixed feelings: Anxiety, joy, fears, speculations and desperation, the Muritala Muhammad-led Military Junta carved out Imo State out of the former East Central State of the Federation. Imo State then comprised of the present day Imo and Abia, as well as some parts of Ebonyi State; in accordance with the nationwide broadcast that stated the component Local Governments of the new State. It was evident that apart from the war devastated General Hospital, Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Imo Hotels, the Modern Shoe Factory and the Leather Industry (owned by a private company), there were no investments visibly made by both the defunct Eastern Nigerian Government and the later truncated East-Central State.

It would be recalled that on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1976, Lieutenant Commander Godwin Ndubuisi Kanu, the Federal Junta appointed first Military Governor of Imo State, moved from Enugu to Owerri. Ever since his appointment as the Military Governor of the new State, Imo, on February 3, 1976, he was in Enugu for consultations with the then Military Governor

of the former East Central State, Col John Atom Kpera who became the Anambra State Military Governor. And just a day he moved from Enugu to Owerri, on March 5, 1976, Commander G.N. Kanu announced his first set of civilian commissioners, which means that while consultations were going on between Col Kpera and Commander Kanu, so many scenes, activities, manipulations and lobbying were taken place.

We remember vividly then as Catholics, that it was on St Patrick's Day, Wednesday March 17, 1976; exactly six weeks after he was sworn in as the Military Governor of Imo State that Lt Commander G.N. Kanu made his maiden broadcast to *Imolites*. [Ndubuisi Kanu.1976]His State Broadcast was titled, "All Hands on Deck", (a real Naval and Military terminology and conception of synergy). In it, he stated his readiness to heal the post-war social wounds and thrall Imo forward. In the speech, he remarked that "regrettably" *Imolites* "had marked time for so long since 1976". He noted the lack or absence of dialogue and proper understanding between the former State Government and the governed, which resulted in great pressures of "being subjects without the compensating satisfaction of being properly governed". He attributed some of the latent frustrations of the State, which were as a result of "the uneven distribution of government amenities which led to a situation where some areas were over endowed with government patronage while others stagnated in backwardness".

According to AJN Nzeribe, in retrospect, *Imolites* then "saw in the creation of Imo State, the widening of the gates of opportunity; not as a disenchantment and outright frustration. They saw it as a fulfilment of a dream State and society in which insecurity and gross inequality should cease. They would struggle to transform the State capital into a great capital worthy of its great name. It was in these words that the first Military Governor of Imo State, invited all and sundry to play their parts in the exciting venture [Nzeribe, AJN1992.26]

In its existence as a political entity, Imo State has witnessed leadership, which proceeds from its national leadership. From its creation in March 1976 to December 1980, the State witnessed the administration of four chief Executives. Each has his own method of administration and power-sharing formula. This period as well had both military and civilian governments and elapsed in 1983, when the lengthiest Junta rule pioneered the State and managed power-sharing according to the Military Administration's choices and discretions.

Thus, as a self-ruled political entity, Imo has elected and shared power amongst its citizens in 1979-1983 (Chief S.O. Mbakwe's regime), 1992-1993 (Chief Evan Enwerem's regime), 1999-2007 (Chief Achike Udenwa's regime), 2007-2011 (Chief Ikedi Ohakim's regime), and 2011-2015 (Chief Rochas Okorocha's regime). The grand questions here are: How has power been shared among the various arms of government in the State? How has it been rotated among the component political zones of the State? Has it been equitable and constant?

### **3. A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF POWER-SHARING IN DEMOCRATIC IMO**

The concept and reality of power-sharing and equity charter, is not an Imo State problem alone, it is universal amongst the entire States of the Federation; it is a National and Federal trend and trait. In the Federal level, from October 1, 1960-1966, 1979-1983, 1992-1993, 1999-2007, 2007-2011 and 2011-2015, the Nigerian Presidency, Vice Presidency, Senate Presidency as well as the Speaker House of Representatives, etc., have been rotated amongst the component socio-political divisions in the country. Such power sharing formula and charter has also existed in Imo State since the inception of democracy in 1979-1983, which had polarised Imo State into 3 political segments for sharing-power among the 3 arms of government. The 3 political units: Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe have had as Governors: 1979-1983 (Okigwe Zone), 1992-1993 (Owerri Zone), 1999-2003; 2003-2007 (Orlu Zone), 2007-2011 (Okigwe Zone) and 2011-2015 (Orlu Zone). A run down of this tenure-leaderships shows that for these 22 years of democratic governance in the State, Okigwe Zone has ruled 8/22, Owerri 2/22 and Orlu 12/22. This shows that Okigwe zone has headed Imo State Government for 36% of the duration so far past and present, Owerri 9% and Orlu for 55% respectively. Even a blind man who has no auditory impediments or vice versa would see, hear and observe the obvious disparity and inequality in the power-shifts. It is likened to the Nigerian 53 years of self-rule, which had the Northern Nigeria heading the Federal Government for 37 years and the Southern Nigeria for 16 years.

In these regimes, power-sharing were accordingly slated amidst the 3 arms of government in the State. 1979-1983: Chief Samuel Onunaka Mbakwe (Governor, Okigwe Zone), Chief Amahala (Deputy Governor) and Dr Okechukwu

Okibedi/Nze HSK Osuji (IMHA Speaker, Orlu Zone). This power-sharing model was inaugural for the latter 3 senatorial zones though Imo, Abia and parts of the today Ebonyi State made up the then Imo State; as Owerri, Aba, Umuahia, Okigwe, Orlu, Afikpo, were provincial headquarters. This power-sharing model returned during the 1992-1993 short-lived civilian government of Chief Evan Enwerem (Governor, Owerri Zone), Dr Douglas Acholonu (Deputy Governor, Orlu Zone) and Hon Maxwell Duru (IMHA Speaker, Okigwe). At the return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999, Chief Achike Udenwa ruled from 1999- 2007 (Governor, Orlu Zone), Chief Ebere Udeagu (Deputy Governor, Okigwe Zone) and Hon Leo Agwuocha Chukwukadibia (IMHA Speaker, Owerri Zone). In 2007, the Imo State Governorship went to Chief Ikedi Godson Ohakim (Governor, Okigwe Zone), Dr Mrs Ada Okwuonu (Deputy Governor, Owerri Zone) and Hon Goodluck Nana Opiah (IMHA Speaker, Orlu Zone). This present regime (2011-2015), produced Owelle Rochas Anayo Okorochoa (Governor, Orlu Zone), Chief Jude Agbaso/Prince Eze Madumere (Deputy Governors, Owerri Zone) and Hon Benjamin Uwajumogu (IMHA Speaker, Okigwe Zone).

#### 4. EQUITY CHARTER AND TRIVIALIZATION OF INTER-ZONAL HISTORIES

A sociological school of thought opined that man is a product and a maker of history; as such, history makes man and while man remains a maker of history. Consequently, every human activity is historic. The present distortion of the equity charter in Imo State in my opinion is a brainchild of history. For instance, as a child, I remember the deriding song, “Obodo niile emepechela ofodu Okiwe n’Orlu,... This deriding song is a historic reality that as at the creation of Imo State, provincial towns of Okigwe, Orlu, Ohaozara, Afikpo, etc., were in very deplorable states, Okigwe and Orlu sectors were worse, while Umuahia, Owerri and Aba were blossoming. Such reality put to song, was never satirical and could thus prod a people to awakening; even to a long-term perspective planning (to use Anthony James Catanese’s words). Similarly, shortly after the war and losses of Imolites’ housing properties especially in Port Harcourt, many displaced victims moved to Towns like Owerri, Aba, Umuahia where accommodations were possible but rendered difficult by the middle-man who became gainfully employed (as agents). Their source of income was the “kola” and those who failed to take advantage of their services and type of agency-arrangement were openly told, to move out of the area if they do not like it. Chief AJN Nzeribe (in his *Emergent States in Nigeria: The Challenges of Development. The Imo Experience: 1976-1986*), noted that “the arrogance of a typical home bred Owerri house agent or middle-man while discussing in a beer parlour over the plight of new arrivals in the town could succinctly be summed up in the following words: *Onye si naala Owerri ari ya mma, ya kwara lee*” [Nzeribe, AJN. 1992. 18]”

Comments of these sorts as said earlier, nudge the concerned to alertness; are nonetheless challenges that result to positive outcomes in nearest future. Today, after the massive loss of properties of Ndigbo after the war in places outside their homelands and ethnic lands, every Dick and Harry seek to develop their lands and thus seize every opportunity meant for the even-development of the entire state to develop their lands in the name of dividends of democracy. Since after the 1999 era that marks the end of Junta in Nigeria and in which many civilians thrilled during the Military regime, the inception of democracy has made politics, the shortest means for rapid community development and the amassment of wealth. And since who plays the piper dictates the tone, political office holders are conceived as “Our opportunity to develop our area; the more “we are in-charge”, the more development we have dividends of democracy”. Notwithstanding whether it denies others of what suppose to reach them.

This mentality justifies the constant quest for transfer of higher institutions in Imo and Anambra States by every Governor on seat, to his area, as well as the other valuable structures existing before or supposed to exist in his or her regime. Funnily, could these justify why Okigwe and Orlu Zones who were previously backward in development, have gibbered momentum out of the 22 years of democracy in the State? This mentality may be one out of the many factors that lead to the emergence of *godfatherism* in the State. Godfatherism (or *Babanigbejo* as Prof Olufemi Taiwo calls it), is often personified, even though the valence in virtue of which he comes by the influence he has and the power he exercises is not limited to any single factor. The godfather may personify ethnic privilege in a situation in which membership of a given ethnic or national group bestows unearned or unmerited benefits. Yet, despite the numerous valences involved in his emergence the common denominator is that the *Babanigbejo* deploys other than rules to secure advantages for his clients (who may be an individual, a group or political unit) as well as for himself. Let us see then how this godfatherism affects the equity charter in a political unit like Imo State.

### 5. GODFATHERISM AND ELITIST MATERIALISM

The former Governor of Enugu State, Dr Chimaroke Nnamani during a public lecture in Babcock University, Ogun State, defined *godfatherism* as an attempt by the elite to create a godfather zone- a region for select few- to escape the rigours of proper democratic mobilization and mass participation[Nnamani Chimaroke.2008.64] This definition has some implications. It is *in se* centred on a democratic polity and reveals an elitist statue (that creates a cabal) and an oligarch, while its modus operandi contains manoeuvring manipulations of democratic charters, processes and *de rigueur* for true democracy. True democracy according to Loius Nkemdilim, is the people's government based on fair and equal treatment for everyone and their right to take part in making decision concerning them[Nkemdelim,Louis.2012.3]. This definition of democracy is practically out of the question in Imo State.

Generally, electioneering in Nigeria is capital intensive, and this has led to the emergence of: The *godfather phenomenon* and *political financiers* or sponsorship, (which practically becomes the proprietorship of the State and the one that blows the piper); of political plinths and cult-personality whereof certain cold wars come, which often end up in schisms and inter-party defections, brutish politicking, electoral violence and political assassinations. Being the sole proprietor or the owner of the Government of the political unit in question (State, Senatorial Zone, Federal Constituency, State Constituency, Local Government Area, Ward, etc), the godfather *inter alia* rises at will and chooses whoever he or she deems fit for governing the very political unit for his or her proper politico-economic advantage. R.A. Joseph described this process of using government positions to pursue personal or group interests as *prebendalism*[ Joseph R.A.1987], a political trait that has ruined every facet and unit of the country's political vitality. This spontaneous and individualistic uprising often does not concur with the general equity-charter or economy of power shifts, as he or she employs every possible measure in order to assure success in his or her venture.

According to John O Odey, the godfather's activities frustrate every facet of the socio-political and economic growth and stability of the political unit where he has cultivating interests, and because he holds or knows his whereabouts within the key holders of government positions, whatever he does or engages in is covered[John.O.Odey.2002.70-71], accepted and swallowed even when it is very bitter and nauseating. The godfathers and elitists materialism are for him mere activities of sycophants, through whose activities peace and order, stability and equity are muzzled before and during elections in the country[John.O.Odey.2002.116] Researchers world over have come to the common opinion that large economic returns are the accoutrement of every political godfather. Thus, Katznelson and Kesselman's question: Who gives political contributions?[Ira Katznelson,Mark Kesselman.1979] has swift responses in the Nigerian political language: The accumulative oligarch, the comprador bourgeoisie, the affluent business men that vest their economic might into politics for commercial and deference gratifications.

Money is a political maternal milk; consequently, political funding is bilateral in that both the financier and the sponsored concurrently pursue same political goals, formulate concomitantly same teleological strategies and being divided, each group (of the sponsor and the sponsored) has considerable leverage on the other in a procedural interchange. This leverage has consequences on the very political unit in question. For instance, when a society that operates a pluralist party system has several candidates featured for elections, the tendency of getting multiplied competitions which severity proves virility and goes in tandem with the masculine political tone, the rule of survival of the fittest becomes the acceptable norm and the concepts of equity and justice in power-shifts and sharing become nominal. This is because the plutocracy and oligarchic tendencies turn the political arena into a coterie of financiers who given together become caucuses that determine the course of events within the political unit; not minding any form of traditional agreement in existence in the political unit. This certainly leads to Anthony James. Catanese's *The Devil Theory*[Anthony James Catanese.1974.106.]<sup>1</sup> of power elite dominance of state and local politics and planning to the exclusion of all other special interest groups, (which is absurd in modern democracies as practised in Europe and America, and now envisioned in most developing countries, notably our country Nigeria).

What concerns us most here is how to solve the constant destabilization of the equity charter by *godfatherism* in Imo State and in the Federation at large. How should *Imolites* and Nigerians face the godfather challenges today, vis-à-vis the equity charter? Prof Olufemi Taiwo promptly reminds us today that the modern political environment or society has bent to *process* than *outcome* in politicking, and remarks that trusting your Leader, Godfather, Ethnic Group or Chief may not be best to secure a State's or Nation's advantage. The godfather phenomenon has direct link with procedure. That is why

“godfathers thrive in environments in which people, in this case, politicians, don’t think that they can trust the process that guides, authorises, and selects winners in the enterprise that they participate in to yield outcomes that are favourable to their interests[Olufemi Taiwo.2011.160]” especially after investing on the *godson*. Thus, there is almost a contradictory relationship between the *Babanigbejo* (godfather) phenomenon and due process. The legacy of this tragedy shows itself more in the lack of trust in the play of rules. This is because if those that play the rules end up getting short shrift, it is not likely that trust in the efficacy of the rule-following will be enhanced[Olufemi Taiwo.2011.161]. Consequently, a whole culture is created in which generations are socialized into believing that they cannot obtain any benefits except by their linkage to godfathers[Olufemi Taiwo.2011.164-169].<sup>1</sup> The fact as Taiwo sees it is that in the modern dispensation, *process* is absolute in such a way that substantive justice is sacrificed for procedural justice. By so doing, what we practice in the contemporary Imo State is not a democracy or any political system that has been appropriately matched with any pre-existing sorts.

### 6. EQUITY AS AN OBJECTIVE AND REALISTIC CONCEPT

Aristotle in *Book 5* of his (*Nicomachean Ethics*) noted that[J.A.K.Thomson.1976.] “equity and justice are neither absolutely identical nor generically different”. Equity for him is superior to legal justice but not to justice as being a different genus. “Thus, justice and equity coincide, and although both are good, equity is superior. What causes the difficulty is the fact that equity is just but not what is legally just: It is a rectification of legal justice”. Aristotle further defined an equitable man, (a virtuous elite, an equitable politician and political office holder aspirant) as, “one who chooses and does equitable acts, and is not duly insistent upon his rights, but accepts less than his share, although he has the law on his side. Such a disposition is equity”. By justice, Aristotle meant remedying an inequitable division between two parties by means of a sort of arithmetical progression- *the mean relative to us* (or to a particular situation and circumstance). Consequently, he ruled that “in arithmetical proportion the equal is a mean between the greater and the less”.

Equity is a human concept; it is a disposition that corrects anomalies or wrong situations. Consequently, a just man is one who does and prefers balanced acts, knowing his rights but does not insist on it; instead, gives in to the *mean*, to what is virtuous at a particular instance- *The mean relative to us*. Equity thus is an objective and realistic concept that is employed or sought for; for the correction, rectification or remedying of an inequitable sharing between or among parties. Without equity as rectifying than distributive justice, (which favours merits and rights, survival of the fittest and might is right), concentration of goodies will be overloaded or excess in some places while rare and deficient in others.

### 7. THE NECESSITY OF RESTORING THE PRE-EXISTING CHARTER OF EQUITY

Common good in human societies attain every individual and group by means of equity, a proportional divisional attitude in the social realm that in general sense is democratic, and proportional as Aristotle explained, “is a property not only of number as composed of abstract units, but of number in general; for proportion is an equity of ration[J.A.K.Thomson.1976]” Based on these and recalling the brief account of power-sharing in democratic Imo above, one finds that the ratio is 2:8:12, which is never egalitarian and thus unjust, that out of 22 years of democratic rule in the State, the Owerri Provincial Sector or Owerri Zone has only ruled Imo for 2 years (as Governor) and 8 years (as Deputy Governor). While the Okigwe Zone had 8 years of Governorship stool, 4 years of Deputy Governorship; and Orlu had 12 years of Governorship and 2 years of Deputy Governorship. In the Legislative Arm, the Owerri Zone has had the IMHA Speakership for 8 years, Okigwe for 6 years and Orlu for 8 years.

The causes of this inequitable power-sharing have both zonal domination and political parties’ factors. In the zonal domination factor, two internal or sub-factors justify the possible reasons of the continuity of inequity in power-rotation and sharing formula in the State. Firstly, the geometric composition of the zones vis-à-vis the numbers of component Local Government Areas and their population in the State, is in itself disproportional. While the Owerri Senatorial Zone (Imo East) has 9 LGAs, Okigwe (Imo North) has 6 and Orlu (Imo West) has 12. This implies that out of the 27 Local Government Areas in the State, Imo West has 44.4% of it, Imo East has 33.3% and Imo North has 22.2%; each being greater or lesser than the other in retrogressive or progressive order of 3.



Politics certainly, is a game of numbers, and those that have it are always the majority. Thus, given by the data presented above, it takes just Orlu Zone plus two other Local Government Areas from Okigwe or Owerri where the ruling party gets majority votes to win and dominate. While it takes Owerri and half of Okigwe and one-third of Orlu to deliver Owerri man; it takes Okigwe and Owerri entirely to get a narrow escape delivery of an Okigwe man or half of Orlu, one-third of Owerri and the entire Okigwe to get such. Orlu Zone thus becomes an inevitable force for domination by virtue of its composition. This situation could be likened to the composition of the six geopolitical zones of the Federation and the difficulties Igbos (South Eastern Nigeria) have in gaining majority. It takes extra-boundary coalitions for success under this reality. The North Eastern Nigeria has 6 States, North West 7 and the North Central has 6 States plus the FCT, while the South Eastern Nigeria has 5 States, South West 6 and South-South 6. This imbalance gets more or lesser domination when what Okwudiba Nnoli calls *Ethnic Politics* [Okwudilba Nnoli.1978] and its domineering principles and traits enter it. This means that unlike the North East that has 21 Senators and others 18 each, the South East States have just 15. This gets worse in the House of Representative where Abia has 6 members, Anambra 7, Ebonyi 5, Enugu 8 and Imo 8 (totalling 34 members) while Lagos (has 19) and Kano (has 15) alone totalling 34; Kastina has 14, Sokoto has 11 and Rivers has 12, Delta 5 and Cross River 3, etc.

Secondly, Chief Udenwa's second tenure was the starting point in the shattering of the equity charter in the State. Like Aristotle said, equity as justice does not insist on one's rights (fundamental or constitutional) but the acceptance to maintain the *mean relative to the situation at hand*, a sacrifice against sufficiency unto the second tenure. Almost all politicians accepted this with good faith, all in the enthusiastic view and aura of returned democracy. The equity charter was thus re-shaped to 8 years than the former 4 years that was envisioned; that since Okigwe (Mbakwe) and Owerri (Enwerem) has all gone; Orlu (Udenwa) should have gone same for 4 years and then turn the mantle of leadership to Okigwe. The latter waited patiently for the second tenure and new 8 years order to end so that an Okigwe man would go for their 8 years, which indeed ended and Chief Udenwa being very faithful now to the pact, handed over to an Okigwe man for their 8 years tenure turn. It was at this same juncture of the Okigwe Zone completing their 8 years charter that the Orlu Zone (Okorocho) came (as Prof Wole Soyinka's would call our mountaineer compatriots in his *The Man Died* [Wole Soyinka.1978]) and forcefully snatched it away back to Orlu Zone.

The other factors are *godfatherism*, political parties' domination and their popularity in some zones than in others or the emergence of *meritocracy* from another zone, whose turn is not yet due in the equity charter. Thus, *godfatherism*, *party affiliation* and power tussle among the multi-party system, is fundamental to the inequitable power-rotation or power-sharing, which certainly is not a constitutional matter but discretionary, an internally generated political charter that measures at the same time as the State's power-sharing and power-shift conscience for every *Imolite*. The problems involved here abound in the sectional or zonal skirmishes, political party manoeuvrings, individuals' ambitions, the electorates' choice, which may sway from the equity charter draw. Above all, this equity charter is not as forceful or binding as the Nigerian Constitution is, but a mere party agreement for unanimous power-rotation that could be enshrined as the State ordinance than an unwritten law that roams in the people's conscience.

Equity charter herein becomes a sort of casuistic ethics or what Aristotle called *the mean relative to us*, and should be yielded by every conscientious *Nwa Imo*, godfather, politician, supporter or electorate. For the sake of justice, we make bold to state that the Chief Udenwa's truncated (extra 4 years) equity charter train and the Ohakim (4 more years) extension denied, should be discretely reshaped back to the *ab initio* charter of 4 years tenure. As such, Okigwe (Ohakim) has 4 years, Orlu (Okorocho) should compete his 4 years and give way to Owerri Zone in 2015, after which Okigwe takes up again. If this amendment is disallowed or ignored, inequity will continue to exist in the power rotation and sharing method in the State.

## 8. THE NEED FOR A ROTATION OF GOVERNORSHIP

Based on the above analyses of causes and outcomes of destabilizing the equity charter in the State, there is need for a mandatory rotation of governorship in Imo State, and possibly let such be passed as a bill into law. However, to realize this proposal of a rotation of governorship, certain structures have to be put to place. The three senatorial zones need to harmonize their human resources, interests (that have been individualized) as well as other factors as *godfatherism*, revenge, etc., and thus share them among the dominating political parties in the State, which candidatures would be worthwhile personalities that can deliver when given mandate.

Once this is done, the first step towards ensuring a rotation of governorship is set. What remains is what Rev Fr (Prof) Jude Uwalaka calls “the necessity for a new covenant for mutual existence which would be an outcome of a formal national dialogue of all ethnic nationalities”[Jude Uwalaka.2003] This could be conventionalized or made relative to Imo as a State. A new charter, a new agreement or a new political covenant has to be drawn and finalized for non-distortable equitable power-sharing and shifts, with its harmonious mutuality kept aside), in a gathering like this *Summit* but in a wider range of invitation. In this sense, on a wider range that would include all registered political parties, elites and stakeholders of the State, all politicians across the State for a State’s political-dialogue of all the three Senatorial Zones, Federal Constituencies, Local Government Areas and Ward Leaders.

Like Jude Uwalaka that suggests a political platform that co-operates with neighbouring political units (for the Igbos to get to a rotation of presidency), this Igbo political platform demands that the component parts, groups and peoples having claims of *Imoliteness* will have to spell out the basic socio-economic and political structures, rights and policies necessary to establish a new Imo State that meets up with the demands of equity in power-sharing and shifts.

While mandating this rotation, it further necessitates that the component Federal Constituencies, Local Government Areas and Wards rotate this rotation in a manner that gives belongingness to others. It further necessitates that other elective and appointive political positions be spread across the remnant component parts. This is the sense of true federalism. If this charter of equity is not ensured, in a Ward, in a Local Government, in a Federal Constituency, in a Senatorial Zone, a particular group of majority set-up or upper hand framework will perpetuate domination of power and Common good to the detriment, nay, to the deficiency of others-[To be Aristotelian in perspective.]

More so, factionalism within the privileged class could be adduced as a factor for the disruption of the equity charter in the State. Okwudiba Nnoli (in his *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*[Okwudiba Nnoli 1978.140-175]) noted that factionalism within the privileged class (in every society, political party or association) contributes to the politicization of ethnicity, and in Imo case, of zones and class, which result to inequitable power shifts and sharing. Many political parties today were born out of factionalism amongst the privileged class. Many intrigues and manoeuvrings that resulted in the distortion of the equity charter in 2003 and 2011 were all from this privileged class. The emergence of most apex political office holders (appointive and elective) often to the shattering of already reached rotation charters, were from the privileged class.

A recent and perfect example of this claim is the emergence of Chief Ikedi Ohakim in 2007 as the Imo State Governor. Fresh in our memories are the PDP clashes of the Titans, which resulted to Senator Ifeanyi Ararume bearing the ticket and Engr Charles Ugwu holding the flag; none of whom finally made. This crisis during the last moment of Chief Udenwa’ regime was at the root of factionalism in the ruling party in Imo State then: Agenda and *Onongaono*, then the emergence of CAN (especially the Alliance for Good Governance facet) as a strong political party in the State after PDP and APGA, and later PPA ascended to the stool of leadership in the State because of the clash, and without any of the three strongest political parties making it. These clashes of the Titans and factions amongst the privileged class in PDP, not only generated ACN’s emergence but made Imo then a none PDP-led State; echoes of which still linger today.

In this regime of Chief Rochas Okorochoa, APGA [Now APC] has also entered into deep factions within the privileged class and certain clashes of the Titans are at the neck of dragging the party’s political swiftly mobile feat to the mire. But one common feature in the depth of power possession, power shifts and sharing in the State, is the very idea of the always distorted equity charter. Each time the ruling party is in power, it always tries to envision the equity charter, believing continuity of their political party in the steering of the State affairs, and by the time inter-party clashes or inter-senatorial zones rivalry occur among the privileged class, or even when a strong godfather-monster rises in furry and determination to achieve a selfish end, the party not only loses the State’s headship but destroys the equity charter already formed and Imo goes back to zero status again.

Thus, for 14 years of Democracy (1999-2013), Imo State has been ruled by PDP (1999-2007), PPA (2007-2009), PDP (2009-2011), APGA (2011-2013+), etc. In each distortion, the equity charter suffers, mostly as it was a PDP’s envisioned model of ruling and interchanging the baton of leadership from one senatorial zone to the other in Imo State and Nigeria till 2050. In this decision, the PDP-led Government of Chief Udenwa justifiably turned the charter of 4 years rotation (in the spirit of 2<sup>nd</sup> tenure that reigned in his time) to 8 years before it became Okigwe’s turn and which he ensured. Yet, the

Orlu zone that distorted this charter in 2003 and 2011, can still correct it by either giving the turn to an Owerri zone and then it becomes Okigwe 4 years, Orlu 4 years and Owerri 4 years or allowing an Okigwe man to complete their 4 remaining years, then Owerri zone takes over for 8 years.

## 9. CHOOSING RIGHT LEADERS

According to Jude Uwalaka, “many times we propel upstarts and men of questionable character to leadership positions whose qualification is simply because they have made quick money somewhere and by whatever means [Jude Uwalaka.2003.87]”. This calibre of men distorts the equity charter. When for instance, it is Owerri zone’s turn to produce the Governor and in Mbaitoli LGA, there is a politician of extra-ordinary quality who is a member of one of the prominent political parties, and for reasons of sentiments and politicized lineage, he is dropped while another man from Mbaise, Ngor Okpala or Owerri replaces him, the latter of lesser quality and perhaps of a questionable character that poses disaffection from the masses-electorate. How would PDP, APGA or APC, etc, (notwithstanding the party in power) think and believe that the equity charter would stand, if the opposition party brings up a worthwhile gubernatorial candidate from a senatorial zone which turn it is not yet?

It is of reasons similar to these that made Alexander Crummel envision the rightful type of leaders who should be projected as flag and ticket bearers in elective positions in the State. For the zoning pact or equity charter to survive and besides the necessities adduced as *conditio sine qua non*, the zone which turn it is and the political parties in it and in the State as a whole, should front “men of force and energy; men who will not suffer themselves to be out-rivalled in enterprise and rigour, men who are prepared for pains and want, and suffering; men of invincible courage that the spirit cannot be tamed by transient failures, incidental misadventure, or even glaring miscalculations; men who can exaggerate the feeblest resources into potent agencies and fruitful capital. Moreover, these men are to have strong moral proclivities, equal to the deep penetration and the unyielding tenacity of their minds. No greater curse could be entailed... than the sudden appearance... of a mighty host of heartless buccaneers... filled with feverish greed. With hearts alien, from moral good and human well being [Alexander Crommel.1995.224].

Politics is a game of numbers, of intrigues, of manipulations and manoeuvrings, of outfoxing the other by surprises. It is highly unstable, with no permanent friend, no permanent enemy but with constant interests, ambitions to be, to have, to possess, to dominate and dominion over others. “It is a game of wits, of strategy and counter strategy. This means that a lot of secrecy is of the essence for success [Jude Uwalaka.2003.86]

## 10. CONCLUSION

Power in Imo State has got a different conception, far-fetched from what the founding fathers had in mind. Political elitism, *godfatherism* and clannish or ethnic centeredness have flawed the equity charter in the State. Prof Chinua Achebe saw this attitude as a seminal absence of intellectual rigour in the political thought of our founding fathers- a tendency to pious materialistic wooliness and self-centred pedestrianism [Chinua Achebe.1985.12]. The Imo charter of equity will have to reckon with consistency in pacts and fairness, with the Igbo notion of *Onye tabiri, onyetu nwanne ya*. For the equity charter to be realistic, constant and vital in Imo State, it has to live as a vital conscious element in the minds of every *Imolite*.

General Ibrahim Babangida during a public lecture 23 years ago titled “Nigeria as I See It” took a thorough swipe at the materialistic and greedy tendencies of the Nigerian elites, which certainly is the root of the innumerable *Imolite* and Nigerian woes. The worst features in the attitude of the Nigerian elites since Independence have been factionalism, *godfatherism*, disruptive competitions, extreme greed and selfishness, indolence and abandonment of the pursuit of excellence [Newswatch.1980.16]

This mentality and political attitude must stop for fairness to thrive in Imo State. The Imo charter of equity should be based on the Igbo perspective of fairness- *E mee onye ka e mere ibe ya*,... The equity charter is an internally agreed morality that *Imolites* unanimously imposed on themselves. It is never constitutional. Yet Igbos everywhere have varied forms of internally imposed morality (like Nso Ala) that governs all and is respected by all. Since the history of the democratic Imo, this equity charter has been thwarted twice. The recent distortion that denies Okigwe Zone their turn,



favoured Okorochoa but was caused by the Owerri Zone whose turn 2015 ought to be. Owerri Zone gave Rochas the bulk vote that destabilised the equity charter. Owerri sold out truly that time. But without sin there is no forgiveness. Thus, justice has to be followed. Let us forgive the Owerri Zone and turn the power-turn to it, come 2015, after which Okigwe takes over in 2019, etc.

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