

# From Awalokan to Emilokan: Interrogating the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" and the Culture of Entitlement in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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## Abstract

*This paper examines the political character of the Nigerian elite within the Fourth Republic, specifically focusing on the phenomenon of "Emilokan" (it is my turn). Rather than viewing this as a mere rhetorical statement, this study argues that "Emilokan" represents a deliberate action plan and a systemic practice embedded in the country's political culture. While the Nigerian democratic experiment has been guided by a South-North power-sharing dichotomy, this research highlights a critical transition: the shift from "Awalokan" (it is our turn a collective regional claim) to "Emilokan" (it is my turn an individualized entitlement). Although the phrase gained global prominence through President Bola Ahmed Tinubu during the 2023 electoral cycle, this paper asserts that such behavior is a foundational element of Nigerian political conduct. By utilizing a descriptive and content-analytical methodology, the study applies the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" theory to explore how power is concentrated and rotated among a small group of elites. The findings suggest that Nigerian political behavior is heavily predicated on this sense of entitlement, which often prioritizes power acquisition over developmental governance. Ultimately, the paper concludes that this entrenched culture of "Emilokanism" has hindered the emergence of leadership capable of achieving comprehensive national development.*

**Keywords:** Emilokan, Political Behavior, Political Culture, Political Parties, Fourth Republic Nigeria.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a creation of the British colonial master a product of the circumstances of a confused beginning master-minded by the British arc-colonialist, Lord Fredrick Lugard. A country whose political antecedent can be traceable to Britain's domination. The origin of the name Nigeria (Niger-Area) as the country along the river 'Niger' has no strong political legacy as there is no claim to establish the fact that the river Niger started in Nigeria or ended in Nigeria among West African countries. No wonder the late Chief Obafemi Awolowo philosophically described 'Nigeria as a mere geographical expression'. This implies that Nigeria has a body but no soul or spirit; a confused state from onset [1], [2]. This was the suspicion, mistrust and fear of domination. founded on the establishment of Nigeria when political leaders of North and South first met each other in 1947 in the Federal Legislative Council where the motion of independence was moved by Chief Anthony Enahoro in 1951[1]

The dilemma of the Nigerian predicament was intrinsic as the Nigerian leaders were preoccupied in the struggle to achieve independence without resolving their differences [3]. This is one of those circumstances when individuals with different identities, different political culture and behavior were bonded together in the name of unity although

despite the problem of diversity. The politics sectionalism, regionalism, ethnicity, and primordial attachment since the first republic to the fourth republic, had led to economic retardedness of the country and that is the cause of Emilokanism democracy. Democracy with zoning formula that is traditionally brings it is my turn to political existence in Nigeria. The fourth republic political rotation of power consciously or unconsciously gives birth to the Emilokanism agenda in Nigerian politics. The statement Emi Lokan emanated from Awa Lokan(it is our turn), that is, it is Yoruba time, and from the Yoruba people Bola Ahmed Tinubu believes it is my time. However, the focal point Emi Lokan is the political characters of the dominant players in the 2023 election, but this has been reflected in political behavior of Nigeria's from the inception of the Fourth Republic. Emilokanism's agenda is not only the political behavior of Nigeria's president, but it is also the characters of other presidential aspirants from other parties. This paper examines Emilokanism a reflection of the political system in the fourth republic.

## 1.2 POLITICAL SITUATION OF NIGERIA BEFORE THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

Democracy is an important phenomenon in any given political system.

The political situation from first to second republic of Nigeria was parochial, sectionalism, and bias in characters as each political party is culturally and ethnically inclined. The political system of Nigeria has been x-rayed in the third. aborted republic opened the Nigerians to a diarchy system of government; and the June 12 political saga. On June 12, 1993, the presidential election was annulled which resulted in military coup by events that started with civic uprisings in Southwest states and the entire Nigeria. This period paved the way for General Sani Abacha's rise to power, a military era that eventually culminated in the restoration of democratic governance in 1999. During these six years of intense political upheaval and counter-movements, India remained deeply engaged with the Nigerian situation. Simultaneously, the socialist left assumed a leading role, spearheading the grassroots struggle for change both in the streets and through organized political channels." [4].

The x-ray of Nigeria's political system in the third aborted republic opened Nigerians to a diarchy system of government; and the June 12 political saga. The annulment of the presidential election held on June 12, 1993, set in motion a chain of events that began with civic uprisings in southwest states and across Nigeria, saw a military coup that installed General Sani Abacha as Nigeria's leader and ended with the reinstatement of civilian rule in 1999. During those six years of revolution and counter-revolution, Nigeria's socialist left was at the center of the democracy movement that led the struggle on Nigeria's streets and beyond [4].

The civil society organizations were entrenched in the left shift within the human rights society. democracy and oppose the military led transition, which led to the June 12, 1993. elections saga. The civil liberties were the outstanding structured human rights groups. Committee to the Defense of Human Rights and Organization (CLO). These organizations created their alliance Campaign for Democracy (CD) that was initiated in 1991 in order to become. opposed to the political transition of the military leaders; the provisional government should replace it. which would assure a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) [4]. Over time, the CD could not deliver the goal of restoring Chief Masood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola (MKO Abiola). The group was divided into factions and radical left group among them created Democratic. Alternative (DA) on 4 June 1999. This group is formed beyond the pressure group to. be able to form a political party and compete and win the election; based on their model. of the radical left party African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa; of which the prime the charter of liberation was the manifesto. The other party that was formed during this period was the National. On 1 October 1994, popular radical lawyer Chief Gani Fawehinmi started the conscience Party (NCP). and was a firm opponent of the military government in Nigeria. The pro-June 12 section of the civilian political stratum that was the hallmark of the radical pro-democracy movement CD created. the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) [5], [6]. NADECO took the form of the sovereign. slogan of national conference, which the radical left had already proclaimed, but changed its.

underlying ideas [7] [4]. However, this worked against the effort of these radical left parties in Nigeria. realize their objectives and dreams, yet these movement parties establish a precedent on how to enhance. the democratic revolution which gave way to the Fourth Republic.

During the early 1990s, Nigeria's civil society landscape became deeply rooted in a left-leaning ideological shift, particularly within the human rights sector. These organizations sought to challenge the military-led transition and advocate for genuine democracy, a struggle that eventually culminated in the June 12, 1993, election crisis. At the forefront were structured advocacy groups such as the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO) and the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR). In 1991, these entities formed an alliance known as the Campaign for Democracy (CD) to oppose military governance and demand the establishment of a provisional government tasked with convening a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) [4].

However, as the movement progressed, the CD faced internal challenges in its mission to restore the mandate of Chief MKO Abiola. Ideological fractures led a radical faction to splinter from the alliance, resulting in the formation of the Democratic Alternative (DA) on June 4, 1994. Moving beyond traditional pressure-group tactics, the DA aspired to become a formal political party. They modeled their structure after South Africa's African National Congress (ANC), adopting a manifesto inspired by the Freedom Charter.

Parallel to these developments, other influential political vehicles emerged. On October 1, 1994, the renowned radical lawyer Chief Gani Fawehinmi founded the National Conscience Party (NCP) as a direct challenge to military rule. Concurrently, the pro-June 12 wing of the civilian political class formed the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) [5], [6]. While NADECO adopted the "Sovereign National Conference" slogan originally championed by the radical left, it reframed the underlying objectives to suit a broader political coalition [7], [4]. Though these ideological shifts occasionally created friction among the various radical factions, the precedent set by these movement-driven parties ultimately served as the catalyst for the democratic revolution that ushered in Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

The public reaction to the annulment of the June 12 election was unprecedented, exposing deep-seated national fault lines that threatened Nigeria's very corporate existence [8]. Amidst widespread apprehension regarding the future of democratic consolidation, the country was plunged into a state of political upheaval. In a tactical move to manage the crisis, General Ibrahim Babangida opted to "step aside," establishing an Interim National Government (ING). This body was led by Chief Ernest Shonekan, a Yoruba businessman, in a clear attempt to appease the Yoruba ethnic group, who felt targeted by the denial of Chief MKO Abiola's mandate [8].

This maneuver highlighted the pervasive influence of ethnic consciousness within the Nigerian state. In a pluralistic society defined by diverse ethnic identities, the decision-making process of the Babangida regime appeared to defy conventional

political logic, favoring instead a strategy rooted in ethnic balancing [9]. Scholars have argued that had the winner of the 1993 election been Alhaji Bashir Tofa of the National Republican Convention (NRC) rather than Chief MKO Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the likelihood of the annulment would have been significantly lower. This suggests that the crisis was less about electoral irregularities and more a byproduct of ethnic bigotry and the instrumentalization of identity in Nigerian politics. However, the ethnic sediment opened Nigeria state to another chapter of the political phenomenon of political power rotation in the fourth Republic. The June 12 saga created the belief that it was the southwest time (the Yorubas) to rule the country. The Nigerians' political behaviors confirmed this as it was only the southwest people who produced the president at the dawn of the Fourth Republic, political competition centered around the three primary parties that defined the new democratic era. Chief Olu Falae emerged as the leading presidential aspirant for the Alliance for Democracy (AD), eventually running on a joint ticket with the All People's Party (APP). Within the People's Democratic Party (PDP), prominent figures such as Chief Bode Olajumoke were among the early hopefuls seeking to shape the party's direction. Ultimately, it was the retired military general, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, who secured the PDP ticket and was subsequently elected as the President of Nigeria [3]. The platform of political structure that begins the fourth republic gives way to 'Awa Lokan' (It Is Our Turn), which can be interpreted by any politician who feels among his people that he is the next to power Emi Lokan (it Is My Turn) either by action or speech. The beginning of the presidency by the southwest politician and the inclination of all aspirants to the western part of the country logically has paved the way for Awa Lokan conventionally in Nigeria politics which paved the way for Emilokan.

## 2.0 Theoretical Framework: The Iron Law of Oligarchy

The "Iron Law of Oligarchy" is a seminal political theory developed by the German-born Italian sociologist Robert Michels in his 1911 work, *Political Parties*. At its core, the theory posits that elite governance or oligarchy is an inescapable reality for any democratic organization, regardless of its initial egalitarian intentions. Michels argues that this transition is driven primarily by the strategic and operational complexities inherent in managing large-scale entities [10].

Michels' central thesis suggests that as complex organizations grow, they inevitably evolve into oligarchies. He observed that every organization eventually comes under the control of a "leadership class" an elite inner circle that functions as professional administrators, executives, spokespersons, or political strategists. Crucially, Michels contends that these leaders often cease to be the "servants of the masses" and instead prioritize the maintenance of their own status and influence [10]. According to this framework, it is the leadership group, rather than the general membership, that ultimately dictates the organization's direction and

dominates its power structures.

Furthermore, Michels suggests that democratic mechanisms intended to hold leaders accountable are frequently compromised. This occurs because leadership power is sustained through the ability to reward loyalty, the monopolization of organizational information, and the exclusive capacity to regulate the decision-making process. By utilizing these strategies, the elite can subtly influence or even bypass the outcomes of democratically reached decisions. Ultimately, Michels argues that the stated goals of representative democracy often serve as a mere façade for elite rule; in his view, the emergence of an oligarchy is an unavoidable byproduct of modernity and institutional development [10]. Michels contends that this "leadership class," rather than the general membership, will inevitably expand its influence to dominate the organization's core power structures. He suggests that democratic efforts to ensure leadership accountability are frequently destined to fail. This subversion occurs because the authority of the elite is rooted in several key pillars: the power to reward personal loyalty, the monopolization of internal information, and the exclusive control over the procedural frameworks that govern decision-making.

By leveraging these strategic advantages, the elite can exert a profound influence over the outcomes of any "democratically" reached decisions. Consequently, Michels argued that the official objective of representative democracy the elimination of elite rule is essentially an impossibility. From this perspective, modern representative democracy serves as little more than a sophisticated façade designed to legitimize the authority of a specific elite group. In his view, the emergence of an oligarchy is not a failure of the system, but an inescapable consequence of institutional organization [11].

### 2.1 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE THEORY

Reflecting on the postulations of Michels and other scholars in this political theory makes it very relevant for this work. This is so because oligarchy has been established as an enterprise in the democratic organization process, and in the Nigerian context. Oligarchism has become rooted in Nigeria's democracy which made it impossible to eliminate the elite role and tendency from the political structure. The oligarchism structure in Nigeria's democracy with the conventional rotation of power in the political system paves the way for 'it is our turn' and the elite group with each peculiar character is using the medium to enhance their political behavior with the spirit of Emilokan (It Is My Turn) [16], [17]. The political system and structure in Nigeria's politics paved the way for the reaction of it is my turn among the politicians in line with conventional political power rotation between the southern and northern dichotomy of the country; this is in line with the analysis [18], [19].

### 3.0 AWA LOKAN (It is our turn) PDP IN PERSPECTIVE

The institutionalization of power rotation within the Nigerian political system has inadvertently fostered a culture of "ethnic entitlement."

This structural arrangement, designed to manage the country's diverse demographics, has allowed various elite groups to leverage the southern and northern dichotomy to advance their specific political behaviors. This phenomenon is encapsulated in the contemporary "Èmi lókàn" (It is my turn) and "Awa lókàn" (It is our turn) ideologies, where political actors interpret the conventional rotation of power as a personal or group mandate [12] [14].

The birth of the Fourth Republic introduced a distinct structural foundation for Nigeria's democratic process. Notably, this era established a precedent for selecting presidential candidates from a specific region to address historical grievances a move that, for the first time in Nigeria's history, saw major contenders emerging from the same ethnic group. This strategic arrangement provided a platform for "turn-taking" politics, fostering a "survival of the fittest" environment among elites who viewed the office through the lens of regional or personal entitlement.

In the formative months of the Fourth Republic, three major parties emerged: the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All People's Party (APP), and the Alliance for Democracy (AD). In the internationally monitored 1999 general elections, former military head of state Olusegun Obasanjo secured the presidency under the PDP banner. On May 29, 1999, Obasanjo was sworn in as President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria [12].

It is widely observed that the military's desire to stabilize the nation influenced the selection of Obasanjo, who was perceived as having a truly national outlook [17]. At the dawn of this republic, there was a prevailing national consensus that the presidency should be occupied by a candidate from the Yoruba heartland. Consequently, the transition to democratic rule was met with widespread optimism, as Nigerians anticipated an era defined by stability and economic growth [18], [19].

The 1999 election of Obasanjo was unique; despite his Yoruba heritage, his primary electoral support came from outside the South-West, representing a significant shift from the ethnic-based voting of the past. He was regarded as a rare political figure whose loyalties transcended tribal affiliations [18]. Upon assuming office, he implemented mechanisms to address the nation's deep-seated divisions, utilizing the armed forces to manage ethnic tensions and ensuring his cabinet included representation from all 36 states [18].

The overwhelming support from non-Yoruba voters for the PDP at that time reinforced the perception that it was "the Yoruba's turn." However, following Obasanjo's eight-year tenure (1999–2007), the political pendulum swung toward the North. This led to the 2007 election being dominated by Northern candidates, including Umaru Yar'Adua (PDP), Muhammadu Buhari (ANPP), and Atiku Abubakar (AC), reflecting the consensus that power must shift to the Northern political class [20].

It was believed that the interest in the military to stabilize the country led to the election of Olusegun Obasanjo as a man who has a national outlook character [17].

At the inception of the fourth republic, Nigerians were of the notion that the political power of the presidential head should reside in the Yoruba land. Nigerians greeted the transition from military to democratic transition with widespread jubilation as they looked forward to a new era of stability, peace, and prosperity with the elected president Obasanjo [18], [19]. The 1999 election of Obasanjo, a Yoruba who drew most of his electoral support from non-Yorubas, represented a departure from old experience. Obasanjo was one of the few Nigerian politicians whose loyalties had the characteristic of a national outlook that was not determined by his tribal origins [18]. After his election, he tried to develop mechanisms to fight some of the country's more divisive problems. He called upon the armed forces to combat ethnic disturbances, and his cabinet contained at least one member from each of the 36 states [18]. The voting behaviors of non-Yoruba and their positive turnout for the PDP political party reflected that it was a Yoruba time. After 8 years of Obasanjo administration (1999-2007), it became clear that the political power must shift to the Northern part of the country in 2007 that is "it is the turn of the northern politicians". The major contestants were the northerners, who were Umaru Yar'dua PDP candidate, Muhammadu Buhari ANPP candidate, Atiku Abubakar AC candidate, and other political parties in April 21, 2007 election [20].

In the general election held on 21 April 2007, Umaru Yar'Adua of the PDP was declared the winner. This specific election remains a subject of intense academic and political debate, largely due to perceptions that the outgoing president, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, heavily influenced the selection and imposition of his successor. Reports from various observers concluded that the electoral process lacked transparency and failed to meet the standards of a free and fair contest [21], [22], [23].

Despite these procedural flaws, the voting patterns clearly reflected a national acceptance of the "Northern turn." The collective support for the three leading Northern candidates accounted for an overwhelming 85.65% of the total votes, signaling a strong adherence to the regional rotation principle.

The political landscape shifted unexpectedly following the death of President Umaru Yar'Adua on 5 May 2010. His Vice President, Goodluck Jonathan, assumed the presidency in an acting capacity before securing a full mandate in the subsequent year's general election. This 2011 cycle was widely regarded by both domestic and international observers as a significant improvement over the 2007 polls. While it was characterized as being substantially freer and fairer than previous Fourth Republic elections, it was nonetheless marred by certain persistent administrative malpractices [23].

The Nigeria political voting behaviors and power arrangement pattern indicated power rotations between the Southern-Northern Dichotomy in the 16 years of PDP ruling, this conventional power rotating formula is a reflection of political practice that shows it is our turn. The divine arrangement of President Goodluck Jonathan's presidency (2011-2015), through the death of Umaru Yar'dua, does not stop this ideology [24].

In the 2015 election, Nigerians' voting behaviors and the political elites' structures through the alliance of different political parties such as CPC, ACN, ANPP, part of APGA, and newly defected PDP to form APC political party against the ruling party PDP then shows that political power was to shift to the north, the gave president Mahammadu Buhari of All Progressive Party (APC) landslide victory over the then president Goodluck Jonathan (PDP) [25]. Awa Lokan/Emi Lokan is an endemic culture of Nigerian politics from a conventional political outlook; even when it is not stipulated in both the Nigerian constitution and the dominant parties' constitution.

### 3.2 AWA LOKAN (It is our turn) APC IN PERSPECTIVE

The political behaviors in the northern sphere of Nigeria in 2015 the presidential election results indicated that the northern people believe it is their time to rule the country. This was complemented by the votes in the Southwest party of the state. The electoral data from the 2015 and 2019 general elections reveals a consistent trend in which the electorate showed a strong preference for the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, President Muhammadu Buhari. This pattern suggests a strategic alignment with the prevailing political sentiment that it was the North's turn to hold the presidency. Consequently, the APC secured the largest share of the national vote in both cycles, solidifying its mandate through these successive presidential victories [26]. These focal periods were between 2015-2023, that is 8 years of Buhari's administration; within the APC political party, it is the southern sphere turn. This is the message that produces a phrase Emi Lokan from eminent Lagos politician and presidential candidate of APC for the 2023 general elections the incumbent president of Nigeria.

### 3.3 EMI LOKAN TINUBU IN PERSPECTIVE

3.4 The statement Emi Lokan genuinely came from the heart which was feeling frustrated by some political elites in the APC wing toward the primary election. During a pivotal campaign address to party delegates in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Bola Tinubu famously uttered the Yoruba phrase "Emi L'okan." This expression, which translates to "It is my turn," was delivered in the lead-up to the APC presidential convention and quickly became a defining slogan of his campaign [12], [13]. The declaration underscored his claim to the party's nomination, framed within the context of his long-standing contributions to the political landscape. He expresses his desire to be president, and he believes he deserves the position. The aspiration to gain the presidential mantle gave birth to this statement. During a high-profile meeting, Bola Ahmed Tinubu recounted his pivotal role in Nigeria's political history, specifically how his strategic support was instrumental in propelling Muhammadu Buhari to the presidency after Buhari's three previous unsuccessful attempts. Tinubu articulated a sense of political meritocracy, suggesting that having "paid his dues" through years of party building and kingmaking, the responsibility of leadership should now fall to him.

This sentiment was encapsulated in his now-famous Yoruba declaration, "Emi lo kan" (It is my turn), a phrase that became a defining mantra of his 2023 campaign [14][27][28].

Emilokan is an expression of stake on a claim or right not given to negotiations, it is neither a plea nor a bargain. It is a readiness and invitation to settle the deal without further Ado [29]. *"The political rotation of power was believed by Tinubu that it is southerner time and among the southern regions it is southwest (Yoruba), and among the Yoruba politicians, it is my turn". This is a statement from Awa Lokan (It is our turn) to Emi Lokan (it is my turn).* This asserted statement originated from an agreement and negotiation between Tinubu and President Muhammadu before the 2015 general elections; the element of the feeling of being betrayed gave birth to the statement "is our turn, and among the politicians, I am the one that deserved it because I have paid my dues". Obasanjo former president of Nigeria claimed this statement is the wrong attitude and mentality for Nigeria's leadership now [30]. This shows People are self-centered and their self-interest prevails over others [31]. But from the protagonist's perspective, Emilokanism is an act of demanding someone's right to what he deserves [15] [32]. However, beyond the focal statement of Bola Ahmed Tinubu all other dominant political players in other parties were rooted in the spirit of Emilokan in their political behaviors. Their action speaks more than their voice.

### 3.5 EMILOKANISM (IT IS MY TURN) CHARACTER OF NIGERIAN POLITICIANS

The escalation of political tension stems from a complex interplay of individual ambitions, regional interests, and deeply rooted ethnic and religious identities. Furthermore, the confrontational attitudes of various political parties have significantly strained the electoral process. This "heating of the polity" is often driven by a perceived sense of entitlement among certain groups and actors, who view the acquisition of power as a communal or personal right rather than a democratic contest. This dynamic often leads to polarized rhetoric and heightened friction during election cycles. [12] [27]. The concept of "Emi lo kan" (It is my turn) transcends mere rhetoric; it is a profound political aspiration and a pervasive element of African political culture that Nigerian politicians can neither ignore nor escape. While the phrase is most famously associated with Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a contextual analysis reveals that the underlying sentiment Emilokanism drives the ambitions of other major players as well.

#### 1. The Southeast and the "Our Turn" Narrative (Awa lo kan)

From a surface perspective, Peter Obi's departure from the PDP just days before the presidential primary was framed as a necessity because the party's internal shifts hindered his "vision" [32][33]. However, this vision can be interpreted as the Southeast's collective version of "Emi lo kan." Supported by the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, the argument was that for the sake of equity, the Southeast was due to produce an Executive President, not just an "Igbos Head of State" [32].

Obi's move to the Labour Party became a compulsory vehicle to pursue this regional aspiration, reflecting a belief that, within the context of the South, it was indeed the Southeast's time.

**2. Atiku Abubakar and the Northern Rationale**

Similarly, while Atiku Abubakar did not explicitly use the phrase, his political behavior was deeply rooted in the same logic. Many Northern PDP stakeholders argued that the North was "owed" more time to balance the scales. Their calculation was purely mathematical: the South had held power for roughly 14 years (Obasanjo and Jonathan), while the North had held it for only 10 (Yar'Adua and Buhari) [36]. Atiku's assertion that he had been "preparing for 30 years" to implement an agenda of restructuring and security is a reflection of a seasoned Emilokanist a belief in a long-awaited personal and regional destiny [35].

**3. Defining "Awalokanism to Emilokanism"**

We can define Awalokanism-Emilokanism as an endemic political phenomenon where the acquisition of power is viewed through the lens of individual and collective entitlement. It is an endogenous character trait of the Nigerian political class a reaction to a system where power rotation (zoning) is the primary currency of stability.

**Comparative Analysis of Political Justifications**

The table below illustrates how the three major 2023 contenders utilized the "Turn-by-Turn" logic:

Candidate	Motif	Core Justification	Regional Backdrop
Bola Tinubu	<i>Emi lo kan</i>	Personal sacrifice and kingmaking for others.	Southwest (Yoruba)
Peter Obi	<i>Awa lo kan</i>	Marginalization and the need for Southeast equity.	Southeast (Igbo)
Atiku Abubakar	<i>Northern Turn</i>	Correcting the perceived imbalance of years in power.	Northeast (Hausa/Fulani)

Source: Authors compilation

**Critical Reflection: The Ethics of Aspiration**

The ultimate question for the Nigerian electorate is not the statement itself, but the intent behind it. Emilokan is a political behavior that warrants investigation before criticism. Is the source a heart prepared for public service, or is it a sense of entitlement that ignores the democratic will? As a phenomenon, it highlights the tension between "merit" and "rotation" in a multi-ethnic state.

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

The political space of Nigeria has paved the way for Emilokan with the politics of regionalism, sectionalism, religiosity, ethnicity, and parochial attachment which does not guarantee representative democracy. It enhances the politics of it is /my turn to eat the national cake. Our politicians are operating the mechanism of the iron law of oligarchy where the political elites are lords of who they serve their own interests rather than the citizens. Emilokanism is not a real fundamental problem in itself; it is an aspiration or desire to do or engage in something. The fundamental question here that the politicians and the political elite class should answer is the issue of whether it is our turn or it is my turn to do what? It is my turn in Nigeria among politicians result in corruption and selfish agendas rather than a mind that serves the citizens.

The paper recommended that citizens should redefine Nigeria in us which is full of deceit, ethnicity, religiosity inclination, and primordial attachment to a Nigeria that will be able to vote for credible leaders of virtuous characters and national outlook for better representation and accountability to all the citizens in respect of ethnicity and religions in the country. Likewise, the citizens, electoral bodies, and the government should discourage vote-buying. Politics should not be seen as an investment or payment of dues but as a medium of serving humanity to ensure human security and the livelihood of the citizens for a better tomorrow and democratic development.

**FOOTNOTES**

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