

GERONTOCRATIC KAKISTOCRACY IN NIGERIAN POLITY: QUESTIONING PROPER GOVERNANCE AND FUNCTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jude I. Onebunne

Abstract

Nigeria, country of many fragmented and disengaging nations, has continued to have problems with her polity right from her birth in 1914. Many scholars have tried to nail Nigerian problems to tribalism and ethnic6+ism which started with the amalgamation of unrelated nations, ethnic-tribal groups and independent regions as a country. Other intellectuals have moved a step from this endemic canker-worm in Nigeria polity to proffer corruption (as a result of years of awful governance) and bad leadership as the monstrous hydra-headed problem in Nigeria polity. Kakistocracy rightly defines the type of government practised in Nigeria polity where the worst in the midst the possible bests and outdated old persons are either elected or selected and or imposed on the populace in the name of democracy. The researcher in the course of this work finds out that as long as Nigeria is managed by *kakistos* and by *greontocrats* (those incapacitated by mere age) her governance will ever remain impalpable with an imperceptible and questionable development. .

Keywords: Greontocracy, Kakistocracy, Nigeria Polity, Governance, Development.

Introduction

Nigeria presents a paradox in her leadership and polity. The country is so rich with human and natural resources but majority of the masses are wretched, living under subhuman condition and in abject poverty. It is a fact that, in the 21st century, many nations of the world are basking under the euphoria of hyper-development, scientific cum socio-economic progress and a more civilized political awareness. As the 21st century challenges other nations unto progress and civilization, Nigerian story is quite a different one. A look at the effects of science and technology, and civilized politics across the centuries in the civilized world shows that while our (Nigeria's) contemporaries are on the threshold of scientific discoveries and hyper-technologies, Nigerians are still struggling for the very basic needs of life like food, shelter and basic education. Nigeria is still battling with the crisis of nation building while political instability confronts her daily. Failure in leadership, mediocrity, ethnicity, tribalism and ignorance backfire us. Good and qualitative education, and good governance challenges us. Nigeria is simply left as a country in crisis and rightly, she is with many nations. What can one then say about the unity, state and progress of this country and her polity and tribalism than in the words of Dr. Ahmed Datti that "Nigeria is a fraudulent togetherness"?

The aberrations of democracy in Nigeria leave her in a 'new' form of political storm with catalogue of violations of human rights and insecurities all over the nation. What of incessant riots, killings and religious intolerance, all in the name of God, or Allah in Nigeria? All these point to one fact; a call for re-engineering of Nigeria polity. As Achebe, C. (1983) opines, "Our experience in several administration within or outside has been an unbearable catalogue of hardship, neglect, backwardness, and poverty".

Another fundamental crisis in our nation building is the system of our government and the bureaucratic tardiness and ineptitude in our polity. The Nigerian system of government and her horde of political appointees, with or without portfolios, exercise a terrible drain on the economy for the nation building. As Ikoku rightly puts it:

Nigeria must move away from the concept of big government, as it has one of the highest cost of administration in the world. We spent almost half of our resources on running the government, with attendant looting of the treasury, leaving precious little for development, capital projects, economic growth, job provisions as well as the welfare of the people.

On the question of the crisis of nation building, Nigerian leaders need to dialogue with the citizens, or rightly put, the nations within her. On the table of dialogue and on no other will she resolve her problem of the crisis of nation building. Wole Soyinka is of the same opinion when he says:

In the absence of dialogue, monologues fill the vacuum. These monologues have commenced. The unilateral withdrawal, on a religious platform, of some states from the polity that Nigeria represents is one such monologue. Other monologues are only overtly brutal and violent... while this violence goes unchallenged, others are gearing to summon up sufficient courage to emulate our pioneers of contemporary religious atavism.

Nigeria, unfortunately, presents the same picture as in the days of the expectation of a messiah, and a political messiah for that matter. Such days are these periods of political instability, political bondage, and recklessness, hollow religiosity, economic bankruptcy and all sorts of social malaise as summarized by Mahatma Gandhi's seven deadly sins: "Politics without principles, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, business without morality, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice." In short, the story is that the economy is on the haywire, politics is a dirty game. Socially and morally, we are vulnerably driven to the Hobbessian *cul de sac* where life, as in state of nature is nasty, brutish and short.

Gerontocracy in Democracy

Webster's New World College Dictionary defines Gerontocracy as a rule of elders; gerontocracy was a form of social organization in which a group of old men or a council of elders dominate decisions by exercising some form of control. (Webster). Democracy has been seen as a government of the people, by the people and for the people. Oxford Dictionary sees it as a system of government that is formed by the whole population eligible members through elected representatives. A system of government characterized by majority rule and gives all citizens the power of voting. Democratic governance fosters transparency, accountability, the rule of law, respect for human rights, civic participation, and civic inclusiveness – all of which are necessary for securing economic productivity, equitable distribution and state legitimacy. This is however different from gerontocracy as the leaders who are to a large extent incapacitated in their discharge of official duties tend to be bias and have

power revolve round a selected few. Leadership and governance have been recognized as imperatives for the attainment of any political, social and economic objective of any nation. In Nigeria, contemporary effective administrative leadership styles cannot be discussed in Nigeria without using a known example and historical figure in the current political dispensation using the footprints of Mr. Peter Obi (Former Governor of Anambra State) as a reference point given that he has been popularly referred as an encyclopaedia of good leadership.

The Concept of Gerontocracy

The etymology of the term gerontocracy originates from the Greek language *gerousia* meaning elder. Elder has the connotation of leadership, social status, merit, and wisdom, other than old age in the ancient civilizations. Wikipedia sees gerontology as the study of the social, cultural, psychological, cognitive and biological aspect of aging. Gerontocracy was a form of social organization in which a group of old men or a council of elders dominate decisions by exercising some form of control (Webster, 1990, 514). Gerontocracy is the rule by elders or a type of government that associates leadership with elders. The same concept of leadership by elders has been cleverly traced to the Romans, British and the Church Civilizations by historians. Each civilization has a particular meaning to the status of elder. In this case, the age factor is trivial and does not qualify one to be an elder in such cases. It is wisdom, experience, knowledge, and righteousness that graduate one to be considered an elder. The concept of elder ought to connote intelligentsia and wisdom in leadership above the presumptive age dominance. To this extent, gerontocracy has some merits. But in African-Nigeria context, what we have as elders are far below knowledge that guarantees wisdom and intelligentsia.

In this context, the African customary and immemorial laws appreciate the elder as one that is rationally associated wisdom, meaning a person with specially attributes such as a thinker in the same Aristotelian concept of *philosopher-king*. Such concept of an elder does not necessarily make reference to old age or grey hair but tilt towards the amount of knowledge and wisdom the elder proves to have. Old age, however, contributes more to this claim. In the post-independent African society, gerontocracy in the political sense has become notorious as some elders cling on power to dominate and favour their next of kin. To such old and aged leaders, you see how fragile they look health-wise, even when old age tells them to their face that they are already weak, yet they will cling to that *deceptive African exalted slogan* of *retired but not tired*, after all, *nwanyi anaghi aka nka n'egwu omara agba*. Unfortunately, human nature has it that aging leading to old age typified in being elderly is in tandem with the concept of retirement from every active service as the human body and its systems weaken. This is because human beings are *essentially aging creatures*. Research has shown that there is a range for the age of progress (which is age of updating with regard to info-tech and development complaint) and this idea has helped in pegging the retirement age by the social scientists. Once aging sets in, human being can not be the same again nor can he be at his best. With aging typified in being elderly we expect the worst of human being. A simple look at African leaders as of 2020 and more on the Nigerian presidents, as of 2020-2023, past and present shows this dreaded

phenomenon often typified in many of them falsifying their age-claims. The continent of Africa is home to oldest feeble and gerontocratic leaders as updated by On-line *TalkAfricana* in June 2023 and shown below: Paul Biya of Cameroun (90 years), Hage Geingob of Namibia (81 years), Alassane Ouattara of Ivory Coast (81 years), Teodoro Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea (81 years), Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe (80 Years), Nana Akufo-Addo of Ghana (79 years), Yoweri Museveni of Uganda (78 years), Abdelmadjid Tebboune of Algeria (77 years), Ahmed Tinubu of Nigeria (75 years or 87 years), Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti (75 years). Nevertheless, there are some African Countries that have their dispassionately disassociated themselves from gerontocratic dispensation and have the youngest Presidents in Africa (Updated: 2023) as Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia (Age: 46), Andry Rajoelina of Madagascar (Age: 49), Évariste Ndayishimiye of Burundi (Age: 54), Mswati III of Swaziland (Age: 55) and Faure Gnassingbe of Togo (Age: 56).

Compare the above mentioned old presidents and Look at the other last Presidents Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe (87), Paul Biya of Cameroon (70), Santos of Angola (68), Ellen Sirleaf Johnson of Liberia (75) and Muhammad Buhari (80) and your conclusion is as good as mine. Unfortunately, most of these feeble presidents cannot chair a company nor allowed to be the CEO of any enterprising group of company, neither can they be Chairmen of any association like *Umunna*, Family-meeting or President General (PG) of any town by their age and its attendant consequences but many Africa countries prefer to let them manoeuvre to the top by every means, crook and cranny, hook and sink. Even in African Socio-political sphere gerontocracy can be allowed in certain leadership ceremonial positions as that position like *Igwe* or *Otosiri* but any post that has to do with government and needs life-engagement goes to the younger and intelligent-vibrant young-man like the *Onowu* and PG. Unfortunately, the practise of gerontocracy has gradually lead to the intruding practice of kakistocracy.

Kakistocracy

Kakistocracy according to *Oxford Language On-line Dictionary* is the “government by the least suitable or competent citizens of a state”. Merriam-Webster on-line dictionary equally defines it as “government by the worst people”. Kakistocracy, therefore, means a state or society that is governed by the least suitable or incompetent citizens. That is to say categorically that kakistocracy is the government of the worst in the midst of the seeming and comparable best. By all human standard and kind humane evaluation kakistocracy is the rule of the incompetent. Incapable and unqualified citizens of the state. This kind of rule has nothing to do with the idiomatic-fact that *in the country of the blind one eyed man is the king*. Never. Rather, it a type of leadership where the worst choice is purposefully made amongst better options. With the Greek origin, as early as 19th century kakistocracy is the government of *the worst*, the *kakistos*. It is literally a government of the worst people. It is a government by the least suitable. It is the government of the lowest degree of competent citizens of any state. Kakistocracy remains the leadership by the worst or least qualified in the midst of the best and most qualified. It is the government of the idiots. That is the *idiocracy*. It is the leadership of the idiots, the moron, the imbecile, the simpleton, the nincompoop, the feeble unreasonable elders and aged. There is middle term to this

word and type of leadership with regard to plutocracy, gerontocracy and other forms of government limited by age-related problems. Kakistocracy is quite different. It is a deliberate preferential acceptance of the the worst against the good, better, best of the citizens. Often thinkers and researchers have linked kakistocracy to the type government imposed and practised by the colonial and imperial masters especially the Britain which has subjected some countries to remain under their rules till date.

Kakistocray has over the years metamorphosed unto other forms of ill-fated government thereby tilting towards the apartheid, neocracy (government administered by new or untried persons) and Kleptocracy (from Greek *kleptos*, *thief*, is a government whose corrupt leaders (*kleptocrats*). All these form of government used their political power to expropriate the wealth of the people and land they govern, typically by embezzling or misappropriating government. Nevertheless, a look at the Greek political organization will buttress our appreciation of the type of government and the tpye of people within the state. The human society gives humanity opportunity for meaningful life and meaningful contribution to life. The contribution is meaningful if it borders on human effort. The Greeks acknowledging this fact decided to categorize human beings on earth into three types as: *The Idiots*, *The Tribesman* and *The Citizens*. *The Idiots* are those who don't care, defies every civility and lives like mere brutes amongst others. *The Tribesman* is too tribalistic and look at everything from the point of view of his or her tribe or ethnic background. It can really be terrible to have a tribesman as a leader, he would alienate the rest and would be very sectionalistic in political appointment. *The Citizens* are people who believe you are part of them and their tribe. For them we are one and they do things as law prescribes and loves and treat humanity as one caring for the well-being of others. In complementarity, the Roman Society has three major social classes as the *Citizens*, *Non-citizens* and *Slaves*.

The Country Nigeria

Nigeria is a federation of 36 states with federal capital territory - Abuja. The Federal Capital Territory, also known as FCT, is the capital of Nigeria. The Abuja FCT is not a state but is administered by a Federal Minister appointed by the President as part of his cabinet. Each state in Nigeria is sub-divided into Local Government Areas (LGAs). There are a total of 774 local government areas in Nigeria. At independence in October 1, 1960, Nigeria has three (3) regions: Northern Region, Western Region and Eastern Region. In 1963, a new region, the Mid-Western Region, was created from the Western Region. Then four years later in 1967, the regions were replaced by 12 states by military decree by the then Head of State General Yakubu Gowon. In 1976, seven new states were created by military decree by the then Head of State General Murtala Mohammed bringing the total to 19 states, including the Federal Capital Territory Abuja (Abuja was carved from parts Kwara, Niger, Kaduna and Plateau States with the bulk of landmass carved out of Niger State). In 1987, the then military President General Ibrahim Babangida created two new states - Akwa Ibom State from Cross River State and Kastina State from Kaduna State, bringing the number to 21 States. Four years later (1991), General Babangida created an additional nine (9) states bringing the total to 30 States. Finally in 1996, the then military Head of State General

Ibrahim Abacha created six (six more states, bringing the total to 36 states, which remains till present date).

Geographical and Political Settings of Nigeria

Nigeria is blessed with rich natural resources and abundant human resources. Nigeria is located between latitude 4°N and 14°N of the equator and between longitude 3°E and 15°E of the Greenwich meridian. Therefore, the latitudinal extent of Nigeria is about 10° (14°N - 4°N) while the longitudinal extent is 12° (15°E - 3°E). Nigeria is in West Africa and centrally located in Africa. Apart from the Atlantic ocean in the south, she is surrounded by francophone (French speaking) countries. She is bounded in the west by Benin Republic, in the north by Niger Republic, in the east by Cameroun Republic, in the north-east by Chad Republic and in the south by Atlantic Ocean. Nigeria is the fourth largest country in West Africa in terms of land area after Niger, Mali and Mauritania. The total land area of Nigeria is approximately 923,768 square kilometres. The greatest distance from east to west is approximately 1,300km while from north to south is about 1,100km.

In terms of population, Nigeria is the most populous single country in Africa and the seventh largest country in the world with a population of about 220million persons based on the united nation recent estimate. The country, Nigeria, came into existence in 1914 as a result of the the acclaimed amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates. She became independent in 1960. As at independence, the country had three regions namely, North, East and West. The Northern region had its headquarters in Kaduna, East in Enugu and West in Ibadan. In 1963, Nigeria became a republic and the fourth region known as Mid-West was created from the then Western region with its headquarters in Benin City. The political divisions remained four until 1967 when the country was further divided into twelve states. In 1976, the country was further divided into 19 states. In September 23rd 1987, two more states were created, making the total number to be 21. Nigeria presently has thirty six states and a Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja which is the federal capital of Nigeria. Nigeria as a member of African Union has been regarded as the giant of Africa. Studies show that Nigeria has over 500 indigenous languages are spoken in Nigeria and more than 250 ethnic groups. Lagos is Nigeria's largest city as well as its former capital.

Moltchanova, Anna (2007) in *Nationhood and Political Culture* appreciated nationhood as a complex phenomenon that includes aspects of personal and group identity, history, culture, and political preferences. All of these features are shared by several kinds of groups, not only by national groups. Nigeria is often called the "Giant of Africa." This name comes from the vastness of its land, the diversity of its peoples and languages, its huge population (the largest in Africa), and its oil and other natural resources.

Understanding the Concept of Nation and Nationhood

Nation etymologically is from the Latin word *natus* meaning the root, made, produced by nature. In our context and usage, it has to do with people from the same root having same language, habit of culture in their dressing, type of food and so on. An on-line Cambridge dictionary defines nation as the fact of being a nation (= a country with its own government, language, traditions, etc.). Moltchanova, Anna (2007) in the paper "Nationhood and Political Culture, gave a new definition of nations thus: *Nations are groups whose members share and identify with a particular kind of political culture, or a set of beliefs and attitudes concerning politics. Basic to this political culture is the belief that membership in the group defines the bounds within which political authority can originate meaningfully for those it governs.* This is why nations in this line of thought is seen as *substantial entities; 'nation' is a category of practice, not (in the first instance) a category of analysis.*" The sense of a nation gives the idea of nationhood. Therefore. Nationhood is as a result of proper understanding of nation. Nationhood is the status of being a nation. In the article "Nationhood and Political Culture", Moltchanova, Anna, maintains that *Nationhood is a complex phenomenon that includes aspects of personal and group identity, history, culture, and political preferences.*

Nation and nationhood are carefully expressed within the bounds of love for the fatherland. Hence, the idea of a nation as well as the concept of nationhood are linked as one entity in trying to identify a political independent community with citizens from same root in terms of origin. Nigeria in this regards with her multifaceted ethnic groups properly described as nations. Nigeria has many nations with different languages and other peculiar life style with regard eating habit, dressing and other aspects of cultural dispositions. Theo Nwalor, in his preface to Jude Uwalaka's book, *The Struggle for An Inclusive Nigeria: Igbos To Be or Not To Be? A Treatise To Nwaigbo*, however, refers to Nigeria as a three-legged structure. Hence, he reiterates that "this tripodal structure, Nigeria, is made up of Yoruba Nigerians, Hausa Nigerians and Nigerian Igbos. To be authentic Yoruba or authentic Hausa or authentic Igbo and authentic Nigeria, are not mutually exclusive". These differential varieties ought to be the beauty of one country with many nations. And these varieties expresses in a very deep sense the often glorified maxim unity in diversities and diversity in unity.

Understanding Ndigbo of Igbo Nation

An Igbo is a native inhabitant of Nigeria. The Igbo is among other nations and ethnic groups that make up the entity created *via* the purported 1914 amalgamation of the Southern and Northern protectorates by Lord Laggard and infamously named as such as Nigeria by the creator's mistress. The Igbo nation or tribe is very indigenous to the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. The Igbo nation remains an ethnic group well-known for their enterprising spirit, independent disposition and adventurous nature. The Igbo people are natively referred to as Ndigbo. This nation of Igbo people has great value system embedded in their cherished culture and adorable tradition and popularized more in their variety of food, dance, music, musical instruments and diverse symbolic festivals. *Ndigbo* have this admirable resilience typified much in the reflection of their *Ikenga* symbolism. Many scholars and researchers have severally demonstrated that the Igbo people descended from Eri, a divine figure who according to folklore, was

sent from heaven to begin civilization. Eri was the son of Gad and Gad was one of the sons of Jacob from his concubine, as mentioned in the Bible. Folklore has it that Eri lived in Egypt.

In his classical book *Igbo Mediators of Yahweh Culture of Life*, Philip Chidi Njemanze exposed the link between the Igbo people and the Jews with compelling arguments. This is a book about the Culture of Life of Igbo People, the Chosen People of God. The Igbo people were Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt, Kings of Ancient Israel, Phoenicians, Greeks, Etruscans, Iberians, Carthaginians, Ugaritians, Lemnians, Mayans, Olmecs, Ancient Chinese, Extraterrestrials in UFOs, Babylonians, and Jewish authors of the Holy Bible. The Igbo people built the pyramids and invented electricity, computer, auto-mobile, air-plane, helicopter, and submarine. Igbo Orie—Mediators of Almighty God. The Chosen People of God! YaHWeH, Ya IHo Wụ IHe, meaning, ‘God, the Divine Light that enlightens’. This renowned Academician Dr. Prof. Philip Njemanze has described the Igbo people as the only ancient Jews as he gave lecture on the occasion of the *Igbo Hebrew Cultural Heritage Organization* in partnership with *Impact Africa Educational Foundation International Gathering For Peace and Human Rights and The African Diaspora Union*. For him the Igbo people are genetically ancient Jews and not the modern ones. There are currently almost 10 Igbo States: Abia State, Anambra State, Akwa Ibom State, Bayelsa State, Cross River State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State, Imo State, Rivers State and Delta State.

However, the Igbo people are natively found in Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo, Delta, and Rivers State. The Igbo language spoken in many dialects though with what they regarded as central Igbo language, is predominant throughout these areas, although Nigerian English (the national language) is spoken as well. As a result of years of transatlantic slave trade, Igbos have migrated to other countries including Jamaica, Cuba, Barbados, Belize, the United States among others. Elements of Igbo culture have been found in many of these Countries as well as in *Jamaican patois*. Nevertheless, the Igbo political system differs significantly from most of its West-African neighbours. With the exception of a few major Igbo communities which have an *Eze*, *Igwe* or *Obi (king)*, Igbos have a traditional republican system of government, which is a consultative assembly of people, which guarantees equality to citizens. This is why Ndigbo have the practice of a system of government inform of *Ohacracy* as *Ohazurume* with principles of *Onyebiribeyabiri* as well as *Igwebuike* and *Ibunanydanda* as different expressions and forms of *Egbe Bere Ugo Bere* expressing the singular fact of Belongingness as the *African-Igbo Metaphysics of To Be*

Igbo Nation is equally know as ubiquitous people. A popular saying has it that any place you travel to and couldn't find *Onye Igbo*, just know that that place is never habitable. This is Igbo Spirit that has to do with the attitude of adapting easily wherever Onye Igbo Finds himself or herself. Beyond the shores of South east Nigeria there exists a fraction of Igbo people amongst other tribes as Bubi and Fang in Equatorial Guinea. These Igbo extraction still speak Igbo Language till date. Equatorial Guinea, located at the Eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea, West coast of Africa, is the only Spanish speaking country on the continent. They speak Pidgin

English, Fang, Igbo and Bubi indigenous languages, as well as Spanish, the official language of Equatorial Guinea. Nigerians call the country *Panya*, a corrupted version of the word "España" (Spain) which is pronounced España. An on-line source has it that Igbos of Equatorial Guinea, numbering 53,500 in Equatorial Guinea, a country with a total population of 1.5 Million people. Besides other tribes, Igbo is third largest ethnic group in Bioko, Equatorial Guinea. Most of the descendants of these Igbo people were and or transferred from Arochukwu. When slavery lost its glory in 1883, they were emigrated to Bioko during the Spanish exploitation plantation in the 19th century and have settled there forever.

Igbo Nation as a dot

Nwachukwu, J. O. states that, Buhari had during an interview with Arise TV on Thursday, June 10, 2012¹ made reference implying that Igbo nation is merely *a dot*. When he said that the, "IPOB is just like a dot in a circle. Even if they want to exit, they will have no access to anywhere. And the way they are spreading all over the country, having businesses and property, I don't think IPOB knows what they are talking about. In any case, we say we'll talk to them in the language that they understand. We'll organise the police and the military to pursue them." However, Nwachukwu maintains that Afenifere, the apex socio-cultural organisation in the South West berated President Muhammadu Buhari for his recent offensive comment against the Igbo nation noting that "the President takes delight in ridiculing the Ndigbo which he used IPOB to represent." One must note that the Ndigbo or the Igbo Ethnic bloc who have business all over Nigeria is different from the secessionist group known as the Indigenous People of Biafra, IPOB. On another note, the dot-in-a-circle seems to give Ndigbo their ubiquitous nature knowing that *a dot* shows all round of a thing. Hence, the angle at a dot is 360 degrees. *A dot*, therefore, shows completeness of a sort. However, there came a need to acknowledge this *a dot* in a circle gave birth to great many National significant figures in Nigeria as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Odumegwu Ojukwu, Alex Ekwueme, Michael Okpara, Dennis Osadebe, Akanu Ibiam, Olaudah Equiano, Chinua Achebe, Chris Okigbo, Flora Nwapa, Chimamanda Adichie, Kenneth Dike, Elizabeth Isichei, Alvan Ikoku, Frank Ndili, Ifeajuna, Dick Tiger, Christian Chukwu, Nwankwo Kanu, Jay Jay Okocha, Chioma Ajunwa, Innocent Egbunike. The paper concludes by recognizing that this *a dot* in a circle has the highest literacy rate in Nigeria, the highest per capita income, the highest percentage of graduates in all fields of learning and the highest concentration of entrepreneurs in the whole of Africa.

Yoruba Nation

The name *Yoruba* was originally given to the Oyo people by the Fulani or the Hausa; it is interpreted to mean *cunning* (Bascom 1969:5). The word "Yoruba," used to describe a group of people speaking a common language, was already in use in the interior of the Bight of Benin, probably before the sixteenth century. The Yoruba people and descendant are black people who occupies the south-western area of Nigeria in Africa. Cambridge university Press noted in *Geography and Society* that the Yorubas are said to have sprung from Lamurudu one of the kings of Mecca whose offspring were-Oduduwa, the ancestor of the Yorubas, the king of Gogobiri and of the Kukawa, two tribes in the Hausa country. This is why the origin and existence of the

Yoruba race can be traced to their ancient father ODUDUWA who migrated from the ancient city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

Oduduwa was not only the first ruler of a unified Ife, but also the progenitor of various independent royal dynasties in Yorubaland, and is today venerated as “the hero, the warrior, the leader, and father of the Yoruba race”. The Yoruba people (Yoruba: Ìran Yorùbá, Ọmọ Odùduwà, Ọmọ Káàárò-òdǹjìrẹ) are a West African ethnic group who mainly inhabit parts of Nigeria, Benin, and Togo. The areas of these countries primarily inhabited by the Yoruba are often collectively referred to as Yorubaland. An *On-line Britannica* describes Yoruba as one of the three largest ethnic groups of Nigeria, concentrated in the south-western part of that country. The Yoruba-speaking peoples share a rich and complex heritage that is at least one thousand years old. Much smaller, scattered groups live in Benin and northern Togo. The Yoruba numbered more than 20 million at the turn of the 21st century.

An *On-line Cambridge* source has it that “the Yoruba cultural area and geographical spaces have adjusted over time, due to migrations within West Africa and beyond. Yoruba people have moved, like many other African groups, and they are continually moving to new areas. The modern map, placing Yoruba mostly in south-western Nigeria, is a product of the nineteenth century – it does not accurately represent the settlement and migration patterns of the Yoruba before that time.” However, the war in the mid-nineteenth century significantly altered the Yoruba geographic space. The changing ruler-ship of Yoruba-speaking people also changed their landscape. During the height of Oyo’s territorial expansion, Yoruba territory extended as far as Ketu, Idassa, Shabe, Kilibo, and beyond, into the Republic of Benin and Togo, and to the north around the banks of the Niger River. The creation of international, regional, and provincial boundaries altered and reshaped Yorubaland further, realigning its peoples. In 1889, the Anglo-French international border divided part of western Yoruba. Currently there are 6 states in Yoruba Nation as: Ekiti State, Lagos State, Ogun State, Ondo State, Osun State, Oyo State and Edo State

Hausa Nation

Wikipedia has it that Hausa Kingdoms, also known as Hausa Kingdom or Hausaland was a collection of states started by the Hausas situated popular in the Northern Nigeria. Hausaland lay between the Western Sudanic kingdoms of Ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhai and the Eastern Sudanic kingdoms of Kanem-Bornu. Hausaland took shape as a political and cultural region during the first millennium CE as a result of the westward expansion of Hausa peoples. They arrived to Hausaland when the terrain was converting from woodlands to savannah. They started cultivating grains, which led to a denser peasant population. They had a common language, laws and customs. The Hausa were known for fishing, hunting, agriculture, salt-mining, and blacksmithing.

According to legend, Hausa states were founded by the sons and grandsons of Bayajidda, a prince whose origin differs by tradition, but official canon records him as

the person who married Daurama, the last Kabara of Daura, and heralded the end of the matriarchal monarchs that had erstwhile ruled the Hausa people. The Hausa City States were independent political entities in what is now northern Nigeria. The first of the states, Gobir and Rano, emerged around 1000. All of the states remained independent until they were conquered by the Sultanate of Sokoto between 1804 and 1815. The seven true old Hausa states were Biram, Daura, Gobir, Kano, Katsina, Rano, and Zaria (Zazzau). Their seven outlying satellites were Zamfara, Kebbi, Yauri, Gwari, Nupe, Kororofa (Jukun), and Yoruba.

The Hausa nation had a colossal interference of the fulani via Jihadist of Usman dan Fodio. As result of such assimilation, Hausa–Fulani form the core and vast majority of the populations of Daura, Zamfara, Kano, Katsina, Zazzau, and Sokoto. Despite relatively constant growth from the 15th century to the 18th century, the states were vulnerable to constant war internally and externally. By the 18th century, they were economically and politically exhausted. By 1808 the Hausa states were finally conquered by Usuman Dan Fodio and incorporated into the Hausa-Fulani Sokoto Caliphate. Currently the Hausa States in Nigeria are 18 States thus: *Adamawa State, Bauchi State, Benue State, Borno State, Gombe State, Jigawa State, Kaduna State, Kano State, Katsina State, Kebbi State, Kogi State, Kwara State, Nasarawa State, Niger State, Plateau State, Sokoto State, Taraba State, Yobe State and Zamfara State*

Fulani Nation

Dictionary.com has it that fulanis noun, plural Fu·la·nis, (especially collectively) Fu·la·ni for Also Fulah [foo-lah] . a member of a pastoral and nomadic people of mixed African and Mediterranean ancestry, scattered through western Africa from Senegal to Cameroon. the language of the Fulani, a Niger-Congo language closely related to Wolof. The Fulani people, also called Fulbe (pl. Pullo) or Peul, are well known for the delicate decoration of utilitarian objects such as milk bowls that reflect their nomadic and pastoral lifestyle. The history of the Fulani in West Africa begins in the fifth century A.D. *Dictionary.com* has it that although some historians postulated an origin of the Fulani in ancient Egypt or the Upper Nile valley [3], written records suggest that the Fulani spread from West Africa (currently Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania) around 1000 years ago, reaching the Lake Chad Basin 500 years later. *Online Britannica* has it that the Fula people, often described as the Fulani, are regarded as the world's largest nomadic group: about 20 million people dispersed across Western Africa. They reside mostly in Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, Cameroon, Senegal, and Niger.

The *Fula*, *Fulani*, or *Fulbe* people is an ethnic group in Sahel and West Africa, widely dispersed across the region. Inhabiting many countries, they live mainly in West Africa and northern parts of Central Africa, South Sudan, Darfur, and regions near the Red Sea coast in Sudan. Wikipedia has it that, Fulani, also called Peul or Fulbe, a primarily Muslim people scattered throughout many parts of Africa, mostly in West Africa from Lake Chad in the east to the Atlantic coast. They are concentrated principally in Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, Senegal, and Niger but can also be found in several other countries.

Fulani lives in the North. The Hausa-Fulani are an ethnic designation that includes the Hausa and the Fulani, ethnic groups that are spread throughout West Africa with smaller populations in other African regions. The combined Hausa-Fulani category refers to Hausa and Fulani living in northern Nigeria. Currently the list of Fulani states includes different territories in the North such as Gombe, Sokoto, and Katsina. No state is completely a Fulani state. The Fulani just exists in few other state. Besides, you can meet these people in Bauchi as well as Kebbi. Some live in Yobe, and it is possible to meet some Fulani people in Benue. Most of Fulani groups are of the nomadic type.

Other Nations in Nigeria

The other nations are the minor tribes or ethnic groups that exist independent of the other. Nigeria as a country of many nations houses more than 250 ethnic groups with major ones as treated above as Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and recently Fulani is popular because of their socio-political influence in Nigeria. CIFORD Country Profile of Nigeria via University of Birmingham on-line source maintains that Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups, the most populous and politically influential being Hausa-Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, Kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5%. *Wikipedia* endorses the fact that Nigeria is a very ethnically diverse country with more than 371 ethnic groups, the largest of which are the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. To this end, there is at least 371 tribes in Nigeria. With an over 500 languages which are spoken among its about 230 million people. This is a result of the number of existing ethnic groups, some of the popular languages spoken in Nigeria are listed as follows: Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Kanuri, Ijaw, Ibibio, Edo, Fulfude, Tiv etc. Nigeria has one official language which is English, as a result of the British colonial rule over the nations. Research in 2018 has that Ethnicity in Nigeria is shown below as Hausa 25%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo 18%, Fulani 6%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.4%, Kanuri 2.4%, Ijaw 1.8%, and others 19.9%.

Nigeria Politics

Politics literally means "the things concerning the *polis* and is the origin of the modern English word politics. Aristotle asserts what Plato tacitly denies: that man is by nature a political animal. Man is by nature a political animal because he has the ability to communicate and to dialogue and about justice and the good. The city is prior to the individual. Aristotle in his *Politics* was very clear in his advocacy for a political community, *a polis*, that guarantees a good life. The city is a political partnership that comes into being for purposes of self-sufficiency but exists primarily for the sake of living well. Rahe, P. (2000, 16) continuing, is of the opinion that "mere life brought the *polis* into being...and through life of the *polis* that the gregarious beings (human beings) of this sort have a share in the good life".

Nigerian Polity is under democratic dispensation trusting the people of making a wise choice during elections. Unfortunately there this political syndrome and canker-worm that has continued to mar Nigerian Politics leaving her with a peculiar style of leadership popularly known as Gerontocracy and kakistocracy professionally referred

to as Gerontocratic Kakistocracy. Right from the time of independence, the almighty British rule, the hoax amalgamation and eventual republic, the imperial masters never meant well socio-economic and development-wise. Researches have shown that the colonial masters end up having over power on independence to the societal misfits and to disadvantaged areas. The British just like the French colonial masters places independence of their subjects in the fate and hands of the gerontocratic *kakistos*. An xray of Nigerian prototype is very important.

Nigeria became a British protectorate in 1901. The period of British rule lasted until 1960 when an independence movement led to the country being granted independence. The colonial era was from 1882 till 1960. Nigeria first became a republic in 1963, but succumbed to military rule after a bloody *coup d'état* in 1966. Back in history, Nigeria was actually birthed in 1914. On this purported amalgamation instead of annexation the British colonial masters had an agreement with the Jihadists on how to share and own Nigeria as an entity of protectorates.

Research shows that the following were the alleged *Nigerians* who officially was involved in the signing of the amalgamation: Sir Kitoyi Ajasa (a lawyer representing the African community in Lagos as a Legislative Council member of the Colony since 1902), His Highness, Oladugbolu (Alaafin of Oyo), Hon. R. Henshaw (Obong of Calabar), Hon. Maiturare (Sarkin Mussulumi and Sultan of Sokoto), Hon. Abubakar (Shehu of Borno) and Hon. Usman (Emir of Kano).¹ Note the representation in the discovered list. It is clear that the *pact* is between the British and the Northern Oligarchy even as Jihadists. These persons who signed the amalgamation were not *National Figures*. Their names have never appeared anywhere, as the *founding fathers* of this great Country. Something definitely must have gone wrong somewhere. There were a little more than 25 persons that were involved in the so-called "Amalgamation" of January, 1914. Only about six persons were selected in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural Nigeria, the rest were Jihadist and the British including Frederick Lord Lugard himself as well as Lewis Harcourt. Where were the founding fathers then? Was there some unknown agreement between these colonial masters and the purported six persons? What were the content of the treaty? Where is the document?

Ngobili, C. (2017) observes that after these years of mere annexation as amalgamation as the foundation of our independence, no northerner can sleep with his eyes closed in the southern part of Nigeria and no southerner can do the same in the north. Inter marriage remains a taboo! Excellence has been sacrificed at the altar of mediocrity in the name of quota system and federal character in different posts for the Nations' building remains a mirage. The known nationalists mentioned above were still babies at the time of this agreement. Continuing, Ngobili (2017) maintains that it's impossible to mix oil and water together and get a good result in the name of a mixture. Our problems started in 1914 because we don't know who signed it and their names and their intentions for signing it. If the so-called white-imperialists signed it in the midnight while we were sleeping, the cock has crowed, we have

¹ Ngobili, Chijioke (2017) *Nigerians Who Signed Amalgamation Documents In 1914* by Misterawo: 6:24pm On Oct 06, 2017 <https://www.nairaland.com/4101046/nigerians-signed-amalgamation-documents-1914#61170554>. Retrieved 04/07/2020

brushed our teeth, and taken our bath. Our eyes have opened to look for the amalgamation treaty and do something about it.

The Aftermath of Amalgamation is that Lord Lugard resigned in 1906 and left for Hong Kong. Then, in 1912, he returned to Nigeria as Governor General of both the Northern and Southern protectorates, charged with amalgamating the two territories into a single unit. He arrived again in Lagos in 1912 and introduced the so-called amalgamation of the colonial territories in 1914, and left the country finally in 1918. In addition, the World Wars of 1914 and 1939 diverted the attention of the Colonial Masters on their African colonies, particularly Nigeria as the largest. It was only in 1946, under the Richards' Constitution, that a feeble attempt was made to bring representatives of the various administrative units together at an assembly in Lagos, however, the seed of discord had started to germinate even as the Colonial Masters foster the local sense of difference with regard to the superiority towards the South and the assembly protested the British administrative style in Nigeria. It was at this meeting that the Northern leader, Ahmadu Bello, protested that *'The mistake of 1914 has come to light'*.

Lord Lugard's administration was hostile to the Christian missions and schools in the North for fear of any uprising revolutionary ideas might challenge British colonial rule. This is the source of the existing wide gap in education between the North and the South in Nigeria with profound political and economic implication for the country. Political inequalities as well as *Boko Haram* is a direct consequence of this gap and lapse. Lord Lugard and British colonial rule gave little or no thought to the consequences of amalgamation of people of different nations and multicultural background. Fafowora, D. (2013), maintains, however, that the indirect rule which is the product of amalgamation remains the major source of ethnic and tribal politics in Nigeria today. The Nigerian-Biafran war therefore was one of the fundamental mistake and aftermath effect of the amalgamation. With its proximity to the coast, the South had for long been subjected to western influences.

Even before the acquisition of Lagos colony, there were already educated natives there. Christian missionary schools had been established in the South for well over fifty years before amalgamation. Before British colonialism in Nigeria, neither the *Ezes* nor *Obis*, the *Obas* nor the Emirs, enjoyed such autocratic powers as they did later experienced under British colonial rule. However, there were checks and balances. The amalgamation enthroned bizarre and corrupt practice of acrimonious unrest among Nigerians. This was what our current political leaders inherited and it explains their lack of commitment to the rule of law and public accountability. In effect, the 1914 amalgamation in Nigeria destroyed an indigenous political and administrative system that was far more democratic and accountable, and replaced it with a colonial system of government that was wholly undemocratic and lacked any kind of accountability. It laid the foundation for despotic and autocratic government in Nigeria, virtually without any checks and balances in the system. The Nigerian styled politics of *Kakistocracy* and *greontocracy* are explored under three broad areas of : Corruption, Bad-Leadership and Greontocratic-Kakistocratic Politics

Corruption

Oxford Languages Dictionary defines corruption as the dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. It is a form of deceit, duplicity, deception, double-dealing, misconduct, criminality. Corruption is *ihe rere ure*. Wikipedia defines corruption in Nigeria as “an anti-social attitude awarding improper privileges contrary to legal and moral norms and impairs the authorities' capacity to secure the welfare of all citizens.” Legally, *Cornel Law School, Legal Information Institute* defines that Corruption is a dishonest, fraudulent, or even criminal act of an individual or organization, using entrusted authority or power to make a personal gain or other unethical or illegal benefits...A lack of transparency and effective regulations are often the main causes of corruption. However, corruption seems to thrive in ignorance. Lack of Knowledge boosts corruption, Nevertheless, corruption of the best is the worst, *corruptio optimi pessima*. Theophilus Okere once gave a definite and succinct definition of Corruption as *ihe rere ure* and forms of *mmegbunile*, *aghughonile*, *chamdumnile*, *karawusanile*. These definite definitions give room for bad-leadership that has translated into bad-governance. Corruption in Africa like in Nigeria is our own modern self enslavement. The word itself has become a home in Nigeria.

Bad Leadership

The 20th century Webster's Dictionary defines leadership as the office or position of a leader or the capacity to lead. Political leadership is a form of governmental organization and administration in any organized community. It is a leadership determined by state or any organized follower-ship. Therefore, political leadership as a concept entails a polity and an organized government with some ends in view, as well as the means to such ends. True leadership and polity are concerned with good governance. It includes political, socio-economic, cultural and religious demand of human and society. Governance is related to government, it is also related to leadership, that is, the exercise of authoritative direction or control. Governance and leadership would as well demand the right spirit of exercising authority by those, who through the mandate of the people are responsible for guiding, guarding, directing, and serving the people for the good of all, especially the common persons.

True leadership and polity ought to satisfy the demands of the new era and make us relevant to the world. True leadership and polity demand courage, humility, sound morality, justice, wisdom, patriotism, acknowledgement of God's demand in His word and laws, and obedience to same, for faithfulness to the law is a condition of God's aid, which is inevitable for the survival and strength of any nation (Joshua 1:6-9). True leadership demands a leader with unquestionable character and transparent integrity, he must have the spirit of sacrifice and be of an exemplary life, among other things must shun any spirit of despotism or dictatorship, or egotism. Unfortunately, any reference to Nigeria, since her independence has been bedevilled by one political cum socio-economic plight or the other. It is always a history, of victimization and exploitation. It is a history of many rulers and false messiahs as leaders. It is a history of decades of political war in a religious garb.

True polity demands same as true leadership in salvaging people from shackles of ignorance, poverty and disease. It is a sort of restoration of the dignity of human beings, and redemption of human beings from poverty, oppression, neglect, intimidation and miscarriage of justice. It advocates for equity and fair play. True leadership and polity demand leaders with unquestionable integrity who are simply disciplined. The pangs of corrupt leaders, bad followers, poor governance and unsteady polity have been the bane of our experience with any failure in leadership. Hence, true leadership demands total responsibility and a willing response-ability of our leaders. The quest for true leadership and polity will be fulfilled when our leaders learn how to sacrifice their personal, selfish and nepotistic interests for the common good. Unfortunately, the situation in Nigeria demands a political messiah in our polity. Achebe, C observing thus said “*the trouble with Nigeria is simply a failure of leadership*”.

Bad leadership breeds bad and corrupt followers. Therefore, it would be unnatural to expect Nigerians to be saints when their leaders are simply corrupt. There is no gain saying that a lot of leadership socio-political reforms are required of our polity as presently constituted and practised. This is so because Nigerian politics has met much political turmoil and turbulent periods in which liars, praise singers, and blackmailers, and assassins are elevated unto official levels thereby leaving our political administration in complete quagmire. Hence, Nigerian politics can be seen as a politics of rancour and bitterness with politicians laden with strong sense of abuse, and obscenities. Everything is thereby politicized. With the foregoing, therefore, Nigeria remains a country that toys with her future leaders, the youths. Leadership is at the centre of these social dynamics and relationships.

Greontocratic and Kakistocratic Politics

On a program *The Platform 2016: Peter Obi Speaks on Developing Nigeria*, the encyclopaedia of Nigerian contemporary politics and Political cum socio-economic statistician, Mr. Peter Obi was vehement in appreciating the demand of good and responsible leadership and response-able follower-ship. Many years ago Nigeria had so much to waste and that chanced the invitation of the world to FESTAC '77 and National Theatre. The world actually came, saw and conquered Nigeria leaving her in financial mess and servitude of today. Years after many successive government borrowed to squander and for consumption. Nigerian-nations collapsed by that very act. At *the Platform*, Peter Obi x-rayed Nigerian predicaments within the bounds of *geroncratic* kakistocracy and offered hope through many of his Political Leadership maxims thus: shut and cut down cost of Governance (our government has been marred with irrational and mindless spending), move the nation from consumption to production (our government borrows to squandered incurring debt), borrow for developmental growth (nothing is wrong with borrowing, but borrowing for what?), Promote the *Culture of saving* (stop sharing and start saving which is very critical) and Invest in infrastructure and education (investors are like bees going where there is honey). And the greatest of these maxims is his socio-economic political agenda to

move the nation from consumption to production. Consumerism rather productivity has dwarfed economically and crippled socio-politically this great giant of Africa.

Peter Obi on YouTube at *The Platform 2016 on Developing Nigeria Pt 3* likened Nigerian leadership to where *lunatics took over the asylum*. According to him, Nigeria has everything but lacks leadership. Everything can be destroyed by poor leadership. Poor leadership can destroy everything. Poor leadership is always informed within the contemporary gerontocratic kakistocracy. That is why according to Peter Obi, *what we face today in Nigeria is the cumulative effect of leadership failure over the years*. We need Youths in politics and polity of Nigeria. The youths are not too young to run. However, as a result of gerontocratic and kakistoratic leadership inherent in Nigerian polity, there is this prevailing idea of gerontophobia. Many Youths are then tagged *too young to run*. Because of years of bad leadership some of the youths even think that things are done anyhow. This is because *aru gbaa afo*. The youths should stop celebrating criminality with corrupt the gerontocratic kakistocractic leaders. The youths should know that these leaders are toying with their future. Peter Obi made a succinctclarion call to the youths to *take back your country...its your future that they are toying with. You have no other country except this one*.

Youths in Politics: Peter Obi Example!

Mr. Peter Obi (CON) was born on July 1961 in the commercial city of Onitsha, Anambra State in Nigeria. He obtained his first degree in philosophy from the University of Nigeria Nsukka and also an *Almunus* of some of the best business schools in the world. He has made tremendous success in the corporate world and he became a two-term Governor of Anambra State between 2006 and 2014 which was borne out of the desire to serve his people. According to Uche, C. (2017) Mr. Peter Obi portrays “essential qualities like frugality, humility, integrity, self efficacy and good management skills”. Mr. Peter Obi had effective administrative leadership style which addressed the social problems of NDI ANAMBRA. Udeh et al states that Obi rose to the challenges in the state and in eight years proved that once there is a will anything can be accomplished.

Peter Obi frontally confronted corruption with his political maxim from consumption to production and indeed cut down the cost of governance. Mr. Peter Obi never played a kind of politics that used extractive political institutions to support and cement those who where exploiting government resources. Mr. Peter Obi demonstrated that the hallmark of effective administrative leadership is the ability and courage to identify and harness available human and material resources or assets to fulfil its mission, role or mandate. Northous asserts that leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. It is a practice whereby an individual uses a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Good leaders are made and not necessarily born. If you have the craving and will for power you can become an effective leader. Leadership is an art so it can be learnt. Jago (1982) opines that good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study education, training and experience. It also means inspiring others to pursue a vision within the set parameters, to the extent that it

becomes a shared effort, a shared vision and a shared success. Such are the desired and expected visionary leader. Good leadership naturally be-gets good follower-ship.

According to Graig (2005) leadership is defined as a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organizational goals. Transformational leadership is inward looking and conscious of the benefits that its society can derive from the international environment. A good leader is that individual that is futuristic in his thought. He maximizes scarce resources and accomplishes great result with them. As an effective leader, he has a good financial intelligence and was very prudent and frugal in spending in other to avoid mortgaging the future of the next generation after you.

Effective administrative leadership style must be geared towards understanding the problems of the people and mapping out strategies to solve them. Effective leadership can only be possible if it takes cognizance of the youths. It is disheartening that young people who make up about 70% of the population of this great nation are relegated to the background in political matters. The reigning mentality and practice of *gerontophobia* as a result of *gerontocracy* in our polity presents a country without functional realizable plan for her youth, her ironic future leaders by implications. Our youths possess the innovative ideas needed to move the country to greater heights and they need to be groomed on how to channel their energy towards productivity. Certain leadership posts demand experience and old-age. Old-age has to do with Chronological age as well as experience backed up with knowledge.

We live in a society where leadership is equated with age and our young people are recruited as political tugs, assassins and armed with weapons during election in other to help our older generation maneuver power. Hence, the young people are considered too young for political offices, hence the slogan *too young to rule*. A society with a leadership system that is negligent about raising the young people will go into a state of comatose or extinction because there will be no one to take after them when they are done. Such a society will only be dealing with the past amidst litany of retaliations, different forms of reprisal, revenge, vengeance and settling of scores of animosity and lack of forgiveness. In total contradistinction with gerontocratic kakistocracy in our contemporary system of governance there are countries within the *third-world - countries* that have tailored their own system of governance as such. Some of the Asian dragons like UAE, Dubai and Singapore are good examples.

The Formula of Singapore's Success

Emerald.com and *Freepaper.me* maintain that "Singapore's success can be attributed to these five factors: the pragmatic leadership of the late Lee Kuan Yew and his successors; an effective public bureaucracy; effective control of corruption; reliance on the "best and brightest" citizens through investment in education and competitive compensation; and learning from other countries. *Livemint.com* explains the secret of Singapore's amazing growth under Lee Kuan Yew thus: "The most important reason was a high rate of savings, which resulted in high investment (see chart)...There is no secret ingredient. In fact, the story of the rise of East Asia is mostly a tale of higher

savings and investment rates. Lee knew this very well and the high rates for provident fund contributions he put in place in Singapore were one way of raising savings". Singapore has gone from being a third world country in the global south to a first world country in the Global north with the formula represented in the English acronym: MPH. This formula : *meritocracy, pragmatism and honesty*.

Meritocracy

Merriam-Wester on-line dictionary a system, organization, or society in which people are chosen and moved into positions of success, power, and influence on the basis of their demonstrated abilities and merit. The same dictionary defines merit as a praiseworthy quality (virtue), character or conduct deserving reward, honour, or esteem. It has to do with a person's qualities, actions, etc. regarded as indicating what the person deserves to receive. *English Dictionary of Oxford Languages* defines meritocracy government or the holding of power by people selected according to merit. Meritocracy is a society governed by people selected according to merit as well as a ruling or influential class of educated or able people. *Britannica.com* maintains that "meritocracy, political, social, or economic system in which individuals are assigned to positions of power, influence, or reward solely on the basis of their abilities and achievements and not on the basis of their social, cultural, or economic background or irrelevant personal characteristics". Through objective evaluation and defined examination people are given responsibilities of trust for others in a government by this singular system of meritocracy. Therefore, meritocracy is in total distinction with differential background with kakistocracy. It is the selection of the best. It is selection based on merit. Democracy as government of the people, by the people and for the people seems to help in selecting the best. Rather

Pragmatism

Pragmatism simply means workability. The main idea of pragmatism is that knowledge is essentially related to human practice. Pragmatism is a philosophical movement or precisely an American philosophy as well as school of thought that includes those who claim that an ideology or proposition is true if it works satisfactorily, that the meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it, and that impractical ideas are to be rejected. Pragmatism as a philosophical movement began in the United States around 1870. Charles Sanders Peirce (and his pragmatic maxim) is given credit for its development, along with later 20th-century contributors, William James and John Dewey. However, pragmatism was succinct definably explained by Chinese Leader Mr. Deng Xiaoping thus "*it doesn't matter if the cat is white or black as long as it catches the mice, it is a good cat. Once your ideology works, its acceptable*". Singapore was very pragmatic about this idea as an American concept was adopted into the dragon stronghold and it worked.

Honesty

Researches have shown that what brought most third world country down and keeps them down is corruption. Honesty is very difficult to achieve. But once achieved, other civic virtues thrive. For Singapore to uphold this mother-civic-virtue, the Prime Minister Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, has the policy of punishing the most senior office for

any trace of corruption in his or her ministry. *Merriam-webster Online Dictionary* defines honesty as an adherence to the facts, or fairness and straightforwardness of conduct. Honesty has to do with integrity, probity, truthfulness and veracity as they mean uprightness of character or action. Webster's Encyclopaedic Edition defines honesty as the character of being honest. And honest, however, it maintains, is fair and candid in dealing with others: true, just, upright, trustworthy, virtuous, free from fraud, equitable, fair. Honesty is a direct reflection of your inner character as well as our inner being. It is realistic ideals and idea in tandem with reality at display. Honesty is the attitude and practice of speaking the truth and living truthfully. A popular maxim has it that *honesty is the best policy* in life as it guarantees integrity, builds trust, assures of one's loyalty, restores and strengthens courage. Wikipedia summarily defines honesty or truthfulness as "a facet of moral character that connotes positive and virtuous attributes such as integrity, truthfulness, straightforwardness, including straightforwardness of conduct (earnestness), along with the absence of lying, cheating, theft, etc" William Shakespeare, in Act 3, Scene 5 of *All's Well that Ends Well* described honesty as an attribute people leave behind when he wrote that *no legacy is so rich as honesty*. Tolstoy maintains that honesty was revolutionary because "no feats of heroism are needed to achieve the greatest and most important changes in the existence of humanity.... it is only needful that each individual should say what he really feels or thinks, or at least that he should not say what he does not think." William Wollaston, an enlightenment philosopher, in *The Religion of Nature Delineated*, maintains that *all religion ultimately reduces to ethics and all ethics reduces to honesty*.

Evaluation of Nigeria Polity

The area known as Nigeria began to come under British control in 1861 and was made a British colony in 1914. Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and became a republic in 1963. Nnamdi Azikiwe became Governor-General on 16 November 1960, with Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as Prime Minister, and became the first Nigerian named to the Privy Council of the United Kingdom. When Nigeria became a Republic in 1963, he was its first President. In both posts, Azikiwe's role was largely ceremonial. In heat of these thriving political era, Nigeria was merely surviving in the midst of nationalities dissenting and disengaging voices that were suppressed. However, that lingering ethnic strife soon led to military coups and the most civil war.

However, one of the enduring event in the history of Nigerian as a country of nations is the Nigerian-Biafran civil war or rightly regarded the 1967 massacre of the Igbos. It is estimated that during the civil war more than one million people died in the battle, as a result of ethnic cleansing referred as that *civil war*, or because of starvation claiming the vast majority of lives. After the war, bank accounts owned by Biafrans were seized and a Nigerian panel resolved to give every Igbo person with an account in Nigerian Bank only 20 pounds. This is history, a painful one at that. The book, *The Biafran Story*, is a 1969 non-fiction book by Frederick Forsyth about the Nigerian Civil War (1967–70) in which Biafra unsuccessfully attempted to secede from Nigeria. *The Biafra Story* was originally written by Frederick Forsyth who has been working as a correspondent for the BBC Africa Service in Enugu but he quitted the job and left

for Biafra after becoming "so disgusted" with the BBC's "lies and distortions". The revised edition of the book was published in 1977 under the title *The Making of an African Legend: The Biafran Story*. Another work was that of Chinua Achebe's *There Was a Country*. It is a personal history of Biafra by the literary icon Chinua Achebe. Its like telling the story of Nigerian-Biafran civil war from the horse's mouth.

The sad story of 1967 starting with the first coup and the murder of northern Nigerian leaders that led to the pogroms in which decades of thousands of Igbo living in the north in the Gen Emeka Ojukwu declaration for the south-eastern region's secession from a country in which Ndigbo "felt unwanted" was not necessary if the needed intervention was respected. The war broke out and was waged by Nigerian Federal General Yakubu Gowon and was heavily supported by the UK government whose interest was in our oil. It was the crudest war as Biafrans fought Britain with partially empty hand for good three years even though her engineers in their ingenuity tried to make something like the infamous *Ogbunigwe* (Ojukwu Bucket Bomb). The war in the expressions of Achebe was out of cheer ignorance in the midst of their ego-driven policies. Even though there was this pronouncement of *no victor, no vanquished*; even though Ndigbo were reintegrated into Nigerian society, but they are still faced with vagaries of marginalization and all forms of economic discrimination as every Igbo man, no matter what you have in the bank then was offered £20 flat fee as well as those wanting to convert their Biafran currency into Nigerian Naira amidst other policies of abandoned properties. Yet Ndigbo are true Nigerians in every sense of the word and in every part of Nigeria till date. Achebe's book looks forward for a better Nigeria where justice, fair play, good governance, productive spirit will replace corruption, religious bigotry, good leadership and spirit of consumerism. The coup ushered in the military and military groups ruled the country from 1966 to 1979 and from 1983 to 1999. 1979-1983 saw the emergence of 2nd republic with Shehu Shagari as President. Military came back having tasted power and never wished to leave. Between 1999 and now we are enjoying the 3rd republic mixed with the worst system of government in the name of democracy and for Fela Anikulapo Kuti, it is Democrazy.

The list of past Nigerian *Presidents* save few former *Heads of States* show litany of old leaders, a form of gerontocracy that has culminated into gerontophobia. The list depicts a display kakistos. We must note that old age being a blessing is very specific. In the Igbo socio-political affairs, for example, the eldest in age has a designated position that is sustained and he or she remains in such particular post even as ceremonial head. However, there is a capable youth that seconds him or her to support him officially. However their positions of authority, youthfulness is needed as against old age. One of such positions that demands youthfulness is the Presidency. Its disheartening that with 109 years as a country we are yet to get it right in regard to governance. 109 years as a country, we still believe that the youth are too young to rule. After 109 years of *There is a country* and 63 years after independence we are yet to get it right with governance in the midst of the existing leadership of kakistocracy and gerontocracy. After years of existing as a country of nations pivoted on *unity in diversity*, many unhealthy policies like quota system, federal character, federalism,

e.t.c. continue to highlight the obvious gaps of nationalities through the ethnic lines and tribal boundaries inherent in Nigerian socio-geopolitical affairs.

Conclusion

Nigeria was wrongly birthed and named as such. Existing as a country of nations with much lauded unity in diversity would have been the best thing to have happened to her in the comity of other nations. In addition to some of these socio-economic cum political brouhaha and national integration quagmire, right leadership engagement problem smears her national existence and growth as well as blurs her developmental innuendoes. Unfortunately gerontophobic kakistocracy has lately added to the litany of Nigeria leadership-woes.

Jude I. Onebunne, PhD

Department of Philosophy
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
juno.anyi@gmail.com
ORCID iD: 0000-0002-89956097

References

Aribidesi Usman & Toyin Falola, *Geography and Society*. Published on-line by Cambridge University Press: 01 July 2019.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/yoruba-from-prehistory-to-the-present/geography-and-society/CC682B3D24A7A9648C018BABC1E2EDEA>

Achebe, C (1983). *The Troubles with Nigeria*. Enugu, Fourth dimensions publishers.

Corruptio optimi pessima. Merriam-Webster.com Dictinoary, Merriam-Webster,
<https://www.merriam.webster.com/dictionary/corruptio%20optimi%20pessima>.
Accessed 16 Jun. 2023

Cornell.edu <https://www.law.cornell.edu> › wex › corruption

Emerald.com.<https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/PAP-06-2018-002/full/html>. Retrieved 18/06/2023.

Fafowora, D (2013). The aftermath of 1914 amalgamation, retrieved September 26, 2019. <https://thenationonlineng.net/aftermath-of-the-1914-amalgamation/>

Freepaper.me.<https://freepaper.me/downloads/abstract/10.1108/PAP-06-2018-002>. Retrieved 18/06/2023.

Graig E.J. Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005.

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/kakistocracy#:~:text=%3A%20government%20by%20the%20worst%20people>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yoruba>. Definition of Yourba.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Fulani>

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/Documents/college-artslaw/ptr/ciforb/resources/Nigeria.pdf>

<https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>

<https://Britannica.com/google-dictionary-en/>

Jago, A G. Leadership Theory and Practice (3rd edition). Thousan Oaks, CA: Sage publications.1982

Kakistocracy. <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>

Livemint.com.<https://www.livemint.com/Money/Z7QgN9xuW2LJpG8yh9TdhP/Lee-Kuan-Yews-notsosecret-sauce-for-Singapore.html>. Retrieved 18/Webster's New World

Moltchanova, A. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9833.2007.00378.x>. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/236346566.pdf>

Merriam-webster.<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/meritocracy>

TalkAfricana on the Oldest President in Africa. <https://talkafricana.com/updated-top-10-oldest-african-presidents/>

Uche, C. Mr Peter Obi's leadership paradox. Hallmark news.com/mr-peter-obis-leadership-paradox 2017.

Uche, C. (2017). Mr Peter Obi's Leadership Paradox. Hallmarknews.com/mr-peter-obis-leadership-paradox.

Udeh, C., Okoye, J. & Oseloka, H. (2018).Policy Brief No. 42-18: Anambra State Education Rebirth-The Peter Obi Model. Retrieved from<http://www.selonnes.com/2018/02/01/anambra-stat-education-rebirth-the-peter-obi-model/>

Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition. Copyright © 2010 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. All rights reserved.06/23.

Zeitchik, S. 10 ways to define leadership. Retrieved from
<http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/2018/july/16> 2012.