

POWER AND GOOD GOVERNANCE: OBSERVATIONS FROM NIGERIA

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Abstract:

In recent times, the terms ‘power’, ‘governance’ and ‘good governance’ are bandied around conferences, symposia and literary works that seek for solution to the multifaceted problems of modern life. This has become necessary, and perhaps expedient because while in some climes people legitimately struggle for power to rule, others in different regions usurp it through undemocratic means (by military coups); and others still, while hiding under democracy, unleash terror on the citizenry and/or political opponents in order to accomplish their personalized agenda unhindered. Today, Nigeria is ranked low in the committee of democratic nations because of lack of good governance: there is massive corruption, political turbulence, decline in economic productivity, and overall social discontent sometimes orchestrated by the activities of ethnic militia. The spate of violence and crimes has created an alarming sense of insecurity, such that people no longer trust on the powers of their government for protection. This paper has looked at the use of power by Nigerian political actors, especially during the democratic dispensation, and found that the flagrant disregard for the rule of law (abuse of power) has been the bane to good governance. It discovered that bad governance which is increasingly linked to corrupt ‘use of power’ is the root cause of social glitches within the nation.

Keywords:

good governance • power to rule • corruption • political turbulence • rule of law • social glitches

Introduction

The issues of power, legitimacy, and governance are central to the organization of modern life. Currently, the root of every prosperous civic group/society is established on the precincts of legitimate acquisition of power and good governance. This is, by no means, to trivialize their historical potency in the social lives of our forebears. On the contrary, ancient literature is replete with political vibes for good governance. Plato's works, especially *The Laws*, for instance, present a lucid account of the concern for a 'perfect community' and the 'ideal individual' within it. Buoyed by the realization that the ideal guardian trained in moral philosophy is in short supply in the real world, Plato set out, in *The Laws*, to establish the foundation for a stable and just society in the 'rule of law'. Nonetheless, even though both the ancient and medieval generations likewise grappled with the problems of power and good governance, it was never in the magnitude and dimensions of the modern era.

The modern age was a time of technology, of industrialization, of mass production, mass communication, and mass entertainment. It was a time of the rise of nationalism and the struggle for the division of large empires into smaller compact units with independent leaderships. With these came also a rise in theories and ideologies relating to the acquisition and use of power. The sophistication in modern technology ushered in a complex flurry of problem-solving strategies. While some legitimately acquired power for good governance, others seized it by force through revolutions; and others still, following the political overtures of Machiavelli's (1532) *The Prince*, unleashed terror on the citizenry and/or opponents in order to unobstructedly accomplish their selfish goals.

The analyses of power and good governance in Nigeria's short democratic history is inundated with indices of corruption, political turbulence, decline in economic productivity, and overall social discontent sometimes orchestrated by the activities of ethnic militia. The spate of violence and crime is creating an alarming sense of insecurity, such that people no longer trust in the powers of their government for protection, but commonly resort to self-help. This, of course, is a recipe for anarchy and civil disorder. In this paper, we shall attempt to establish a positive correlation between bad use of power by Nigeria's political gladiators and

a myriad of social glitches in the country. But to do that, we must first of all understand what power is.

What is Power?

There are perhaps only few terms in English language, the meaning of which could be extended, by nuanced step, as that of power. Power is understood within the context of social sciences, physics and mathematics; it is found in computing, sports and games, film, music, etc. As depicting the 'ability, force, and energy to be, have or realize a thing' (Iroegbu, 2000: 160-161), power is in everything. It determines everything. The man *Ikedi* (a personal name which literally means 'there is power') exists because he has power 'to be'; he has an energizing force. But when that power or force ceases to be, he goes out of existence. When he has enormous power (powerful/strong), he can exert great physical or mental strength to accomplish enormous things. But if he has little or no power, he achieves little or nothing (Ogbujah, 2006). This is perhaps, why Microsoft Encarta (2009) defines power as the 'ability, strength, and capacity to do something'. The extent of one's achievements depends on the level of power one possesses.

From the socio-political perspective, power is seen as the ability to influence or control the behaviour of others; the political control of a country, exercised by its government or leader. Every modern state / organization operates according to a definite structure of governance, with identifiable persons saddled with the responsibility of leadership. Whichever form the government takes, it presupposes the existence of a group with the powers to exercise control and influence on others and their actions.

The use of power need not involve force or the threat of force. It could be by swaying people's judgments and emotions using subtle inspirational or inducement means. This is the persuasive aspect of power. Even though much of modern expressions of power in third world countries, and as depicted daily in the unfortunate terror and counter-terror activities inundating our daily news are harsh and brutal, experience has shown that the use of 'soft tactics' like collaboration, socializing, humour, etc., has proved to be more effective in influencing people and getting things done than the 'hard tactics'. In many circumstances, especially in the West, the

fear of social exclusion can be a much stronger motivator in obeying laws than some form of corporal punishment. But this might not necessarily be true for people of the East or sub-Sahara Africa. So, for administrative efficiency, the particular power tactics to be administered in a given situation should be dependent on the group situation (Falbo & Peplau, 1980), the personality and gender of actors (Bradko and Butkovic, 2007), and on the tradition and disposition of the people to be influenced. A one-size-fits-it-all power tactic could be a recipe for disaster.

In political parlance, the terms ‘power’, ‘authority’, and ‘legitimacy’ have often been conflated surreptitiously, giving the impression that one can adequately pass off for the other. Obviously, the terms share certain similarities, but to identify them one for another without qualifications would amount to gross parody. The illustration below throws some light on this.

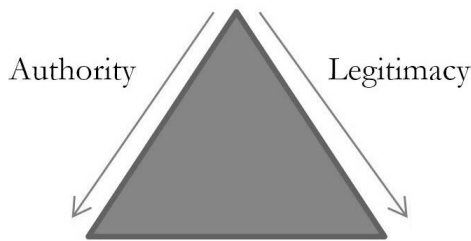


Image 1: The Triangular Fulcrum of Influence

The diagram above shows that ‘power’ is the base from which authority and legitimacy sprang. While authority is the right an individual possesses to enforce control, or official permission to do something, legitimacy is the lawful backing to the control the individual exercises. Now, someone may have authority to perform a particular job, but still requires some form of power to achieve it. For instance, a Police officer may have the authority to detain people for unlawful behaviour, but does he always have the physical power to do it? Does he have the *power* to arrest a high profile politician say in UK or US or Nigeria for petty larceny?

Legitimacy, on the other hand, is a subjective term, since there is not a universal criterion for determining which actions are legitimate or not. With its roots in the Latin *lex*, from which we derive the concepts - legal and legitimate, it means something lawful. We know that every

nation is governed with particular laws, and what is lawful in one state may not necessarily be lawful in another. Legitimate power therefore, is formal authority delegated to a holder of the position within a state or an organization. Outside the state / organization, actions emanating from such power might be adjudged illegitimate. Thus, while authority depends on power, and legitimacy – on the acceptance of power, some form of authority is also derived from legitimacy. Though not exactly the same, these three concepts are seemingly inseparable since they are often intertwined in practical terms: legitimacy and authority cannot exist without some form of power.

As Ogbujah (2006) noted elsewhere, every situation is a situation of power: power to rule, make money, dominate others politically, intellectually, physically, and sexually; win in competitions and conflicts, etc. There is physical power, as in the force of the body or material objects, as well as spiritual power, as in intellectual, psychological or emotional activities. Considered in itself, power has no moral value. This is because it can be used either for good or evil. The ethical standing of any action does not depend on the existence of the power that brings it forth, but on the use of the power. The bad use of power, ‘ab-use’ (abuse) in governance is what brings anarchy and disorder in civic life.

Legitimate Power and Good Governance

The art of governance is as old as human history. From the ancient, through to the medieval and the modern times, wherever people aggregated to live and interact with each other, there had been some sort of structures of governance. Governance, according to UNESCAP (2009) is both the process of making decisions and the procedure by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). It could be at the micro level as in families, villages and some informal groups; or at the macro as in county, state, national, international or corporate governance. Indeed, every situation is a situation that demands governance. In order to properly evaluate governance within a state therefore, we would need to accurately appraise the formal and informal actors and structures, including the ruling powers, political parties, the military, religious bodies, the media, financial institutions, international donors, etc., which are all involved in decision-making and implementation processes.

The idea of 'good governance' even though fluid in applicability, is lately used for comparing effective economic or political bodies with unviable ones (Khan, 2004). Whatever be the criteria for measurement, the emphasis is on governing bodies to meet the needs and legitimate demands of the masses within a state or organization without discriminations. Of recent, many scholars use Western democratic principles to set standards for good governance. This is all the more easy to see as Agere (2000) observed because the definition of good governance promotes many ideas that closely align with effective democratic governance such as accountability, rule of law, peaceful resolution of conflicts, and decentralization.

In a bid to checkmate excessive borrowing of irresponsible governments and to streamline guidelines for lending funds, key world donors and international financial bodies, like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, now base their aids and loans on the condition that recipients undertake reforms that will guarantee good governance. In one of her policy statements, the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2005) declared that "promoting good governance in all its aspects, including by ensuring the rule of law, improving the efficiency and accountability of the public sector, and tackling corruption, are essential elements of a framework within which economies can prosper." These are not altogether different from the eight qualities already outlined by the UN as characteristics of good governance, namely: participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, responsive, transparent, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and following the rule of law. This is illustrated in Image. 2 above.

According to the UN, good governance assures that corruption is reduced to the barest level, the views of the minorities are taken into account and the aspirations of the weak/those at the fringe of the society are incorporated in decision-making. Even though the literature review of Rocha Menocal (2011) provides inconclusive evidence on the link between democracy and good governance, there seems to be consensus in literary works about the close link between bad governance and corruption, which in itself is a recipe for social unrest.

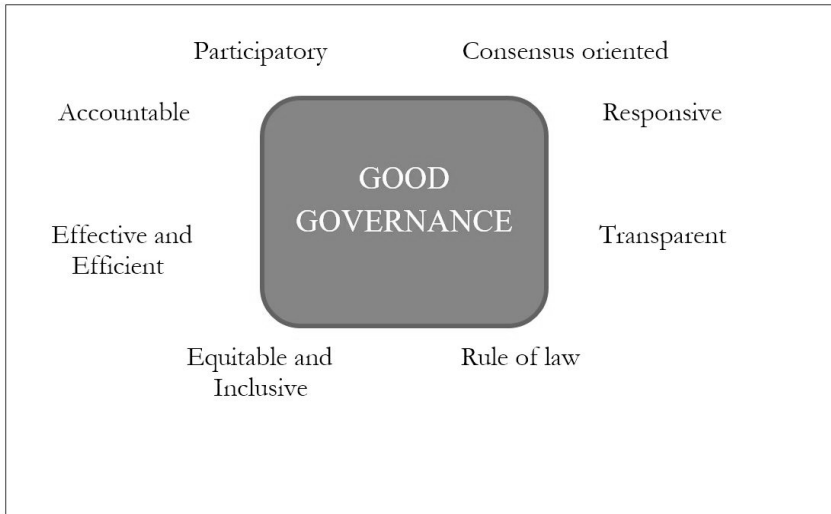


Image 2. Characteristics of Good Governance
(Adapted from the UNESCAP, 2009)

With these laid bare, it becomes easy to view the existing connection between legitimate power and good governance. As depicting the rightfulness of a regime or political party to exist or to govern, legitimacy is what confers authority to a government. Without legitimacy, a government would lose its power to make binding decisions over citizens and subjects, the citizens, for the most part, would not feel obligated to recognize the powers of its agents, and the entire society would be in danger of sliding on a slippery slope to anarchy. Illegitimate governments do not feel accountable to the people because they were neither elected nor accepted, but merely tolerated by the people. Their powers are not recognized but endured, just as we may not recognize the authority of a bully, but are forced to submit to his power.

Legitimacy comes from particular laws of a state, and particular laws are binding only as a result of their acceptability by the collective will of the people. When individuals within a society recognize the authority and power of a leader, they somewhat legitimize it. We legitimize power and authority by submitting to their agents. But when, for instance, we experience incidents of brutality, say from government

agents, we challenge the *legitimacy* of their actions through protests. Thus, legitimization streamlines the reciprocal expectations in the governance process whereby both the leaders and the led are constantly striving to fulfill their respective obligations, with the leaders pushing for good governance in order not to lose legitimacy. Moreover, only leaders with legitimate powers can receive aids and procure loans from international donors and global financial institutions in times of economic downturn. Consequently, it is safe to concede that the correlation between legitimate power and good governance assumes a positive outlook.

Power and Control in Nigeria's Democracy

All over the world, and in every strata of power display, people with power have always strove to control others. There seems to be an overwhelming acceptance among power brokers of the *prerogative principle* which indicates that the partner with more power can make and break the rules. Powerful people can violate norms, break relational rules, and manage interactions without as much penalty as powerless people; they can initiate conversations, change topics, interrupt others, and end discussions more easily than less powerful people (Guerrero and Peter, 2011:267-271). This holds sway in all climes. But the severity and tact with which these qualities are displayed could be the difference between failed and intact relationships.

This depiction vividly typifies the Nigerian political class. Right from independence from British colonial rule in 1960, the political landscape of Nigeria has been one of brutish display of power and control. The actors' indulgence with intolerance, lack of fair play and a flagrant disregard for the rule of law brought about political instability that led to the first military coup barely six years afterwards. Ever since then, it has been a sorry story of coups and counter coups; rigged elections followed by violence and litigations, and even of (dis)honourable members fighting with each other at the floor of the legislative chambers. The tactlessness and severity with which political elites exhibit control over state resources and/or their opponents is so ludicrous that even a scrupulously docile populace would be impelled to resist. So, we have in Nigeria, a brazen display of impunity in power exchanges by political office holders, on one hand, and an active resistance by the masses through all forms of self-help activities, on another.

The failure of the first republic (as it is called), the atrocities that led to the Biafran / Nigerian war, and the eventual failure of Biafra in the secession bid are all attributable to the problem of power control. The politicians' crave to subdue and control more territories either to massage their futile ego or for economic reasons snowballed into a repertoire of actions that have kept the progress of Nigeria on her knees. In his 1953 speech before the caucus of his political party, the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (popularly called Zik) cautioned on the grave consequences if the Northern region were to secede from the Nigerian colony. His speech read in parts thus:

“Let me take this opportunity to warn those who are making a mountain out of the molehill of the constitutional crisis to be more restrained and constructive. The dissemination of lies abroad; the publishing of flamboyant headlines about secessionist plans, and the goading of empty-headed careerists with gaseous ideas about their own importance in the scheme of things in the North is being overdone in certain quarters. I feel that these quarters must be held responsible for any breach between the North and South, which nature had indissolubly united in a political, social and economic marriage of convenience. In my personal opinion, there is no sense in the North breaking away or the East or the West breaking away; it would be better if all the regions would address themselves to the task of crystallizing common nationality, irrespective of the extraneous influences at work.”

Much as this might sound ideal and patriotic, it did not take cognizance of the real problems inherent in religious and cultural acrimonies between the north and the south at the time. Without fear of incurring the wrath of Zik's vituperating apologists, it is not difficult to identify, I dare to say, the selfish drive behind the speech and the frustration of someone whose future coast was to be delimited. Zik wanted to rule the most populous black nation in the world, and secession of the North will probably be followed by that of the West, leaving a tiny East under him. This would have been too small to fulfill his ambition as a *Supremo*, controlling the most populous black nation in the world. Otherwise, how can one explain his description of a colonial contraption as an 'indissoluble union which nature had formed'? Of course, he eventually became the first president of the country, but his miscalculations were among the triggers that paved way for present day political quagmire.

Nonetheless, with the discovery of oil in the south in 1956, and the handover of key political positions to the North by the British at

independence, the language of northern elites began to swivel. Even though Zik was the (ceremonial) President, the real power of governance was with Tafawa Balewa – the Prime Minister. They, who wanted to secede then, became entrenched in activities to expand their powers. Twelve days after independence in 1960, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto, in addressing his people said:

“This New Nation called Nigeria, should be an estate of our great grandfather, Uthman Dan Fodio. We must ruthlessly prevent a change of power. We use the minorities in the North as willing tools, and the South, as conquered territory and never allow them to rule over us, and never allow them to have control over their future.”

A few years later, it was reported of Mallam Bala Garuba – one of the leading Northern elites, as saying:

“The conquest to the sea is now in sight. When our god-sent Ahmadu Bello said some years ago that our conquest will reach the sea shores of Nigeria, some idiots in the South were doubting its possibilities. Today have we not reached the sea? Lagos is reached. It remains Port-Harcourt. It must be conquered and taken.”

Such were the mindsets with which the actors of the first republic plied their trade. While Azikiwe was basking in the euphoria of being the first indigenous President of the black race, the Ahmadu Bellos were busy viciously consolidating and expanding their power frontiers - a situation which precipitated political turmoil and the eventual fall of the regime.

The second republic was greeted with much enthusiasm after thirteen years of vicious military rule. Against the backdrop of the much-trumpeted mantra that ‘the worst civilian rule is better than the best military rule’, people’s elation was so high that they let loose their guards, while the politicians took every advantage that came their way. The massive rigging at the 1979 elections was followed with a ludicrous judgement by the apex court on the contest of the results (Makinde, 2012). Once again, in order to grab power to control, all forms of corrupt practices were rampant both at the executive and the judiciary; a trend which exponentially marred the subsequent 1983 general elections.

The general elections promised so much but delivered so little. It was not too long before people began to be disillusioned. If there was anything the 1979 General Elections clearly taught politicians in 1983, it

was that those in power could afford to ignore legitimacy arising from the constitution and the will of the people. It taught them that it didn't really matter finding out what the will of the people were, but that they can impose their own will as long as they have the power and control of the judiciary and the armed forces (Makinde, 2012). There was no doubt this shaky foundation of power grab in the Shagari led 'democratic' governance of the second republic would quickly collapse at the intense pressure of the military and disenchanting civil society.

The third republic came still-born. After spending about 40 billion naira of tax payers' money conducting elections that were adjudged Nigeria's freest and fairest in 1992, the then military head of state – General Ibrahim Babangida annulled the results, throwing the nation into an unprecedented political turmoil. In a bid to claim his mandate, the acclaimed winner – Moshood Abiola (a Yoruba) was jailed and later died in custody. But with concerted public pressure on the military, a new election which saw Obasanjo sworn in as the President of the fourth republic was conducted much later in 1999.

General Obasanjo's emergence brought much hope and confidence both to the locals and the international community. After fifteen years of military looting, incarcerations and sometimes assassination of dissenting voices, which led to incessant protests and strikes, assaults on oil installations, and the general collapse of social infrastructure, the people could do with anyone outside the military structure. But it was not to be. Even though power brokers used Obasanjo to assuage the Yorubas for the 1992 political debacle, they were much more interested in using one of their own to cover their dirty past. Soon, many people began to see that the victory of this ex-general at the polls did not herald the birth of democracy but an extension of military rule (Fayemi, 2003). He not only drafted military retirees into significant political offices, his leadership style as evidenced in the massacre of the people of Odi, Choba and Zaki-Biam was militaristic and apolitical (Agbese and Udogu, 2005).

A significant display of power balance between the new civilian government and the old regime came with the establishment of the Nigerian Human Rights Violence Investigations Commission (NHRVIC), popularly known as the *Oputa Panel* by President Obasanjo. He charged the commission to look into various cases of human rights abuses such

as physical and mental torture, unlawful arrests and detention, murder/assassinations, assault/battery, intimidation/harassments, communal violence and disappearances between 15th of January 1966 and 28th of May 1999, and make recommendations that would bring “complete reconciliation” to the Nigerian populace. After receiving more than 10,000 petitions, the Commission produced an eight volume report of 15,000 pages on gross human rights abuses, and recommended several political and security sector reforms as well as criminal investigations into 150 cases (Pily and Scanlon 2007). Arguably, to implement the recommendations of the Panel would be self-inflictive. With the number of retired military officers and their cronies still in political positions, Obasanjo felt that executing the recommendations would amount to threading on a risky pathway that could tilt his young regime to nose-dive into the abyss of history. Thus, to maintain his grip on power, even at the cost of subverting justice for the vast majority, he looked the other way, while his benefactors utilized their access to political decision-making machinery to circumvent the implementation of the Commission’s recommendations.

The emergence and times of President Jonathan after the death of his principal – Musa Yar’Adua are no less mired in the intrigues of power struggle. Two highpoints of criticisms against his regime are: corruption and insecurity. Having ascended the throne on the thrust of good luck, and coming from the minority group without much backing from the military oligarchs, feelings are that the apparent slowness with which he tackled these twin monsters is not merely a function of cluelessness, but a strategy to ensure he does not step on toes that could torpedo his fragile grip on power. Onwuka (2012), a brand management strategist could not agree less when he noted that Jonathan had the potential to be a great president but seemed to be too cautious not to step on toes.

Arbitrariness / Financial Rascality in Governance

One of the beauties of democracy is that it has an inbuilt mechanism by which the activities of key actors are monitored to promote efficiency. Like a football team, all the arms – executive, legislative and judiciary must work together to chart the part to development and success. In real democracies, there is no room for arbitrariness in decision making; everyone’s duty is streamlined. The organogram for leadership is so

delicately strewn that no single arm or its agent can arrogate to itself exclusive powers of governance without failing. This is perhaps, why most Western political scientists often connect good governance with democratic principles.

However, the Nigerian experience seems to defy all rules of democracy. In all the periods the military gave way for the civilians, the story has been that of arbitrariness in decision making, neglect of the rule of law, and financial rascality. If we focus our gaze to this longest stretch of civilian rule since 1999, the experience is as disheartening as it elicits anger. The eight years of ‘emperor’ Obasanjo marked the highpoint of impunity in governance. Having been the beneficiary of people’s long resistance to military brigandage, General Obasanjo understood the significance of the moment, and he uttered words and made promises that matched the occasion at his rise to power. Knowing that Nigerians were very religious people, he dragged the name of God into all his programmes, and emphasized on work, prayer and faith in God as the only catalysts for rescuing the nation from the catalogue of man-made problems (WestAfricaReview.com). And to show his seriousness, he quickly dismantled the military hierarchy and retired all military officers who had previously held political positions; established the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to fight corruption; and set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to assuage the pains of those who had been brutalized under the military, among others. With these, he gained the confidence of the people, and was able to consolidate his grip on power at all fronts.

Once consolidated, Obasanjo used the presidential powers ruthlessly. Like a colossus, he virtually had his way in almost everything by blackmailing the other arms of government into submission. His decisions were like decrees that crushed every obstacle on their way. Within the space of four years, he engineered the removal of three Senate Presidents who didn’t allow themselves be used as toys in his hands. His chief of Staff- Chris Ubah allegedly organized the kidnap of a sitting governor of Anambra – Chris Ngige for refusing to path with certain percentage of the State’s treasury, without reprimands. He compromised the Police, the Judiciary, the Legislature, and the various institutions set up to fight corruption, and

used same to witch-hunt his detractors. So, when the then Police boss - Sunday Ehindoro eventually fell out with him, it was easy for Obasanjo to nail him down in jail.

The brutality of President Obasanjo's administration cannot fully be referenced without allusions to high profile murders, politically motivated assassinations and extra judicial killings at his time. Up till today, there are unanswered questions about the murder of Bola Ige, (a sitting Minister of justice and Attorney General of the Federation), party chieftains like Chief Marshal Harry, Chuba Okadigbo (one of the deposed Senate Presidents), Aminosoari Dikibo, and Funsho Williams. There are also the cases of Alabi Hassan-Olajokun, a financier of the Alliance for Democracy in the western states; Dr Ayodeji Daramola, a governorship aspirant in Ekiti State; the activist pilot, Jerry Agbeyegbe; the fiery journalist, Godwin Agbroko; Andrew Agom, a member of the PDP Board of Trustees; Jesse Aruku, a governorship aspirant in Plateau State; Ahmed Pategi, PDP Chairman in Kwara State, Ogbonnaya Uche, ANPP senatorial candidate for Orlu and many more (Ogundamisi, 2012). None of these murder cases was resolved till today. But one thing is common among all; the killers left no one in doubt as to their motive, namely: to send a message of warning to others within the system committed to serious democratic principles.

Obasanjo's obsession with power and lawlessness was also evidenced in using the military to massacre whole communities like Odi, Choba and Zaki Biam where the actions of a handful of people upset his regime. Just in 2014, the Odi community was awarded a damage of fifteen billion naira by the supreme court for Obasanjo's atrocities in the land. These acts of ruthlessness were systematically orchestrated to create around him an aura of invincibility which in itself opened the channel to financial rascality. Having become impregnable, it was easy to pander with the nation's resources.

A report by El-Ghude (2007) noted that under Obasanjo's watch, the sum of N400bn of oil revenue, which led him into a running battle with Ghali Na'abba – the then Speaker of House of Representatives, did not enter the federation account; the sum of N300bn got missing during the tenure of Obaseki (GMD-NNPC); over N400bn meant for repair and construction of roads under Anenih's leadership at Works and Housing ministry were not properly accounted for; the N7bn library projects;

the scandal of over \$360 million Abuja stadium for which World Bank Director, Mark Tomlinson accused the government of operating without “an economic sense of criteria”, is there for all to see; the wasting of the sum of \$16 billion on electricity / power sector with virtually nothing to show for it, etc., are but tiny examples of how his democratic government used the privilege of power to loot the nation’s treasury.

But the worst was yet to come. In his obdurate and self-serving quest to perpetuate himself in office, Obasanjo sought to use his party’s political might to change the constitution of the country to grant him another four year term. This was welcomed by corrupt and narcissistic governors and legislators who by the same token would have been given a leeway for an extended stint on power. But when the former chairman of his party – Chief Audu Ogbe saw the treachery in Obasanjo’s plan to perpetuate his grip on power through the third term agenda, he resigned from his post and sent a note of caution to Obasanjo saying:

“Hitler was a civilian dictator who burnt the parliament and blamed Jews for arson. He then enacted a law that law makers should only sit in a building built with German money. He knew there was no parliament to check him. He eventually became a maximum leader. Nigeria is already moving towards that degeneration and will not allow that to happen.”

Indeed, Nigerians did not allow that to happen. With the intervention of the Media, the Masses, and trustworthy Legislators, the third term agenda of Obasanjo was defeated at the floor of the chambers of the National Assembly, and Nigeria was rid of yet another person in the gallery of rogues who did not want to leave office willingly after their terms of office ended.

Early in the administration of President Jonathan, the reports of corruption that emerged were mind-blowing. Perhaps, not many people took it seriously when it was reported by *Punch* that over N5 trillion in government funds were stolen through fraud, embezzlement and theft (Adeyemo, 2012). But today, we know better: the arms fraud, the maritime scandal, the NNPC financial debacle, etc., are but clear signs of a government deeply entrenched in corruption. Even though the various amounts bandied by the new administration make it difficult to get at the accurate figures, conservative estimates put it at tens of billions of dollars stolen. It is a brutal display of power.

If the searchlight is beamed on other levels of governance, the discovery would not be any different. Of course, a corrupt head cannot bear a sound body. The governors of thirty six states seemed to be on a race for the most corrupt administrator. From Orji Uzo Kalu in the East to Yerima in the North; from James Ibori in the South to Tinibu in the West, they were all engrossed in revelry with unaccounted resource (oil) nature afforded. Instead of uplifting the impoverished lives of their people, they reveled in using public funds for their private business – home and abroad. While there were no cottage industries to provide some basic needs, they built complex factories overseas from tax payers' money; while the nation's refineries could not meet the local demands, warranting Nigeria's daily importation of refined crude products, they built refineries abroad with stolen public funds. And to cover their tracks, they hoodwink the legislature into making self-serving laws, and induce the judiciary into granting frivolous injunctions. Without the recent disclosure of AIT, perhaps no one would have known that the former governor – Armed Tinibu has bought over almost half of Lagos State.

Up till now, only three former governors - DSP Alameyeseigha, Joshua Dariye and James Ibori have been arrested, tried and imprisoned for corruption, and all as a result of the help of the United Kingdom's Metropolitan Police (Lamorde, 2015). After conducting thorough investigations into their affairs, the former anti-graft czar - Nuhu Ribadu had then said that more than 23 Governors were found to have corruptly abused power, personalized their state treasuries and enriched themselves and were therefore liable to face prosecution. He was constrained in moving in to prosecute them because the 1999 constitution gave them immunity against being dragged to any law court for civil or criminal breaches. Today, nine years after, virtually all the indicted governors are walking free. So, when in March 2015, Lamorde (the then anti-graft czar) said the agency was waiting for the immunity of some corrupt governors to expire in order to swing into action, every curious mind definitely took his statement with a pinch of salt.

Abuse of Impeachment Processes

'Power', according to Lord Acton, 'corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. To check the trend of the corruption of power,

democratic institutions have an in-built mechanism by which implicated officers are removed from the system—termed impeachment. Impeachment thus, is the process of removing elected public office holders operating outside the boundaries of their powers. This is provided for in sections 143 and 188 of the extant law (1999 Constitution) regarding the President, his Vice; the Governors and their Deputies. The intent of this aspect of the constitution is modeled after the American system which in its 240 years of democratic experience has utilized it only thirteen times. All over the world where this provision exists, it is always guarded jealously to avoid political instability. It is merely used as a last option when every other avenue would have been exhausted, save in Nigeria.

The spate of impeachment of governors in Nigeria has shown not only the arbitrariness in the use of power, but the level of financial rascality of her leaders. Aside from Balarabe Musa of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) in Old Kaduna State who was impeached by a House dominated by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in 1979, most of the impeachment saga occurred during the autocratic reign of Obasanjo. Under his watch between 2005 and 2007, no fewer than five governors were impeached by their State Houses of Assembly without appropriate recourse to constitutional provisions. Joshua Dariye of Plateau State was impeached by eight lawmakers in a 24-man House of Assembly; Rasheed Ladoja, lost his seat when a handful of lawmakers abandoned the Assembly Complex and went to the D'Rovans Hotel somewhere in Ibadan, to get him impeached without making up the lawfully demanded two third majority of the House; he "supervised" the illegal impeachment of Ayodele Fayose of Ekiti in order to strip him of immunity, and immediately declared a manhunt on him; he summoned the lawmakers in Bayelsa state for a meeting in Lagos and as they returned to the state, they were guided from the Port Harcourt International Airport to the House of Assembly Complex – Amaranta, where they sat for less than one hour and got the governor - Alamieyeseigha impeached (Abia, 2014).

In similar circumstances, the Anambra state house of assembly met with representatives of president Obasanjo in Asaba, Delta State on the 1st of November 2006. Under heavy security, the house members arrived Awka at 5:00 AM the next day, and immediately began sitting on the report of a panel of investigation set up to investigate the governor. After about

an hour's deliberation on the 2nd of November 2006, they impeached the governor, Peter Obi.

Under the Jonathan administration, the impunity in removing political opponents receded but did not stop. On March 28th 2013, the Imo State Deputy Governor, Sir Jude Agbaso, was impeached; in July 2014, it was the turn of Murtala Nyako - Governor of Adamawa state; in the same month Governor Tanko Al-Makura of Nassarawa state survived an impeachment attempt. The abuse of this process was again displayed when in June 2014, six lawmakers in a House of thirty two (32) members attempted to impeach governor Rotimi Amaechi of Rivers State. On February 27, 2015 the Ebonyi State House of Assembly served an impeachment notice on Governor Martin Elechi; and on June 2, 2015, two days to the expiration of the tenure of an APC dominated Ekiti house of Assembly, the lawmakers were hell-bent on impeaching Governor Ayo Fayose of PDP. The list could go on and on.

Oftentimes, the reason given for such impeachments by the house members is "gross misconduct". But since the enabling law in section 188(11) is not explicit enough about what amounts to 'gross misconduct', reckless and self-serving legislatures have harped on this to impeach governors on frivolous grounds. It is truly worrisome that in Nigeria, politicians employ the instrument of impeachment to settle political scores. This proviso which was intended to be used to discipline errant officers in order to bring about good governance has been grossly abused by irritant lawmakers who stop at nothing in their hatchet jobs.

Final Remarks

There is a possibility, in a piece of this nature, to misconstrue that a soft landing is giving to the Jonathan administration from the corrupt use of power. This is not so, as information regarding his tenure are gradually surfacing. Moreover, the incidences of impeachments – failed or successful, orchestrated by lawmakers of his then ruling party, testify to the contrary. Recently, former President Jonathan has been viciously vilified particularly for high level of insecurity and corruption in the land. His inability to stop the violence from the terrorist group - Boko Haram, and the failure to rescue the more than 200 Chibok girls abducted over two years ago present him as a clueless leader who didn't know how to use

power to bring about good governance. More so, the spate of unabated high-level corruption of government functionaries recently revealed by the Buhari administration makes a travesty of his claims to zero-tolerance to corruption.

The sluggish start of the new administration of President Buhari has not given anyone much to cheer for either. In spite of his anti-corruption mantra (which of course, is common for new administrations in Nigeria) and huge public outcry, Mr. Buhari went on to give ministerial portfolios to two former governors – Raji Fashola and Rotimi Amaechi who had been accused of massive corruption in their states. Again, his use of the Directorate for State Security (DSS) to harass and intimidate political opponents, and his disobedience of the orders of courts of competent jurisdiction are but clear signs of a despot who uses power not for good governance, but to achieve his selfish ends.

Power in the sense of energy is something good, because without it life would be atrophied. In its socio-political parlance, it enjoys ethical neutrality even though it could be legitimate or illegitimate. Legitimacy is a function of law and right procedure, while ethics pertains to right or wrong, good or bad. The ethical standing of power depends on its use. Even though *abuses non tollit usum* – ‘abuse does not remove the use’, the bad use of power by Nigeria’s political actors and the resulting dehumanization of the populace, seem to have generated, among the locals, negative perception for power.

By jettisoning the rule of law, the administration of President Obasanjo destroyed the ethics of democracy and brought in impunity. Through his amnesty programme, Musa Yar’dua surreptitiously empowered ex-militants, and the tens of millions of jobless law abiding youths began to see the value in insurgency; and by treating the terrorists with kith-gloves, Jonathan allowed a radical group that fought policemen with guns, bows and arrows in 2009 to metamorphose into a deadly monster with allegiance to ISIS. In these years of democratic rule, our politicians have not used the state powers for good governance. Echoing the words of Akuta, a social commentator, I emphasize that the only gain Nigerians have got in the past seventeen years of democracy is simply that we have had a civilian regime. Besides, it has not been truly civilian in the true sense of it.

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