

PURPOSEFUL SOCIO-RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP: A PARADIGM FOR A WORLD ORDER IN NIGERIA.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Historically, there has been a huge interaction and evidential force thriving in the sociology of people's religiosity and politics. This corollary borders strongly on the forms, quality and purpose of leadership. This nexus has been an intriguing exercise both within the society and academic circle. Leadership being one of the social institutions has remained an age long reality with a sustained and evolving universal phenomenon. The concept of world order has been primarily associated with the Peace of Westphalia negotiated in 1648 at the end of the Thirty Years War and treated as the beginning of the modern world. Similarly, Nigeria got her political independence in 1960 and seven years later plunged into nearly three years avoidable blood bath. The war was reportedly ended but since then, the country has been battling series of protracted instabilities. This is an unbiased investigation into the history of world order, the state of Nigeria socio economic and political reality and their attendant challenges. Adopting the human relations /transformational theories, the study also tries to analyze the social, economic, religious and moral implications of purposeful leadership on the building of a virile, fair, firm and harmonious Nigerian nation where strong bond, general development, principles of solidarity, sustainability, peace and brotherhood and the desired world order.

Keyword: Purposeful, paradigm, leadership, world order,

INTRODUCTION

The history of humanity is replete with accounts of crises and attempts at handling and avoiding the crises. Hence, with the formation of the League of Nations after the First World War, the then United States President, Woodrow Wilson employed the phrase 'world order' to chart a fresh orderliness in the world. Similarly in Nigeria, precisely after her independence in 1960 and less than seven years later, the country was engulfed in an avoidable three years civil war. At the purported end of the war, General Yakubu Gowon's military government put in place Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (3Rs) policy to erase the scars of war but the agenda was either poorly pursued or unexecuted. Subsequently, both the military and civilian

regimes seem to be competing on which should create more poverty, injustice and bad governance than others and the end result is that the socioeconomic life of Nigeria is being stifled. Undoubtedly, it has led to heating up of Nigerian system with agitations and counter agitations as well as other forms instabilities thereby making the country a scary society. The issues became deadlier when in 1999 some group of politicians churned out the agitation for the implementation of Sharia in Nigeria leading to thousands of poor people losing their lives and property of unquantifiable costs. Simultaneously, kidnapping and other vices took a wilder dimension beginning from the Niger Delta. Other ethnic national militant movements sprouted in the likes of EGBESU boys, OPC (Oodua Peoples' Congress), MOSOP (Movement for the survival of the Ogoni people), (NDPVF) Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force, MASSOB (Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra), Arewa Youth Forum, Coalition of Northern (Youth) Groups, later the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and MAFO (Movement against Fulani Occupation). Lately, there appears another horrible and mindless invasion and destruction of farm lands, raping and murderous bloodletting of defenceless and innocent people by the killer herdsmen with some pockets of reprisals in some places. Amidst all these, many people still hold the view that the only trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian name, land, climate, water, air or anything else concerning Nigerian except leadership. The phrase 'world order' may sound strange in the light of opposite realities across the world and especially Nigeria but the submission of Iweh (1987) suffices when he argues that leadership is to a society what an eye is to the human (p.20). Therefore, this study is enthused by the premise that no nation can grow above the quality of its leadership hence seeks to analyze the place of purposeful social, religious and political leadership in mitigating the problems confronting and trying destabilize Nigeria as a country.

CLARIFICATIONS OF SOME TERMS

Religious leadership involves guiding and supporting a faith community in spiritual practices and moral decisions, often drawing on sacred texts and traditions. Religious leaders are typically characterized by their deep commitment, empathy and ability to inspire others in their spiritual and moral journey.

Political leadership refers to individual(s) in position(s) of power and the broader political structures they operate within, exploring aspects such as decision-making, influence and the impact on societal change.

Social leadership is a relatively new concept that refers to the emotional and empathetic leadership style of leaders who focus on connection, collaboration and communication. This type of leadership understands the importance of building strong relationships and creating a positive atmosphere. Social leaders do not rely on their position or title to get things done rather they use their emotional intelligence and people skills to influence others.

Paradigm: It is a word that comes up often in the academic, scientific and business spheres. When the term paradigm is used, it implies changing how a person or people think, a standard, set of ideas, a model of something or a very clear and typical example of something.

World Order: The defining framework for the world order has been primarily associated with the Peace of Westphalia negotiated in 1648 at the end of the thirty years war. Grinin (2013) believes that the thirty years war was the legacy of the sixteenth-century European tradition of religious wars. It introduced two new foreign policy principles which later would be actively employed by the politicians and they are the maintenance of the international “balance of power” through supporting the weaker coalition against the stronger one and the priority of national interests. The search for the origins of the world order leads back to the ancient times. Arguably, it can be deduced that the political order had already existed in the Western world for some centuries before then. The international order could be traced to when the European order transformed into the global scene. Even prior to the European order, strong orders could be found in other regions of the world system especially the Pax Roman ideology. The world order shall be prescriptively referred to as the preferred arrangement of power and authority that is associated with the realization of such values as peace, economic growth and equity, human rights and environmental quality and sustainability.

Contextually, the tripartite nature of leadership is adopted because even though they seem to appear differently, they have influential roles in the Nigerian system. Religious leaders are almost worshipped, political leaders are followed and social leaders are loved therefore the work seeks to explore the influential roles of these leaders in setting and championing a new idea, new philosophy and ethos that will reshape, refigure and remodel the citizens with social values that will ameliorate the sorry state of Nigeria and turn her into a country where harmony and unity rule.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS:

HUMAN RELATIONS/TRANSFORMATIONAL THEORIES

The study employs the Human Relations Theory developed in reaction against the formal tradition of classical models by Mary Parker Follet (1968-1933). She believes that the fundamental problem in all organizations is in developing and maintaining dynamic and harmonious relationships. Koontz and Weihrich (1980) assert that this theory posits that conflict is “not necessarily a wasteful outbreak of incompatibilities but a normal process by which socially valuable differences register themselves for enrichment of all concerned”. From the same theory, Fayol develops some useful principles that characterized successful administration and general management which can be applied to any organization including leadership and government (p.46). Charry (2012) posits that it helps leaders motivate and inspire people by making them see the importance and higher good of the task, focusing on the performance of the people and seeing each person fulfill his or her potential (p.19). Similarly, these theories are adopted in this work because Lamb (2013) argues that it is a theory that focuses on the connections formed between leaders and followers. In these theories, leadership is the process by which a person engages with others and is able to “create a connection” that will result in increased motivation and morality on both followers and leaders. It demands that leaders should possess certain qualities such as confidence, extroversion and clearly stated values so as to be able to motivate followers. Leaders in this category often have high ethical and moral standards.

BRIEF HISTORY OF NIGERIA

Nigeria has variously been described and defined by many people depending on world views of the people. For instance, Abiola (1984) states that between the eleventh century and the European colonial conquest in the nineteenth century, the area known as Nigeria today was homes of sophisticated kingdoms and societies. But Britain declared Lagos a colony in 1861 and 1906, the colony of Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria which included the former Niger Coast Protectorates that were hitherto administered separately were merged to form the Southern Protectorates (p.153). Adigwe (1979) said that the Sokoto Caliphate was conquered in 1903 and after the conquests the British were able to create the Northern Nigerian protectorate. From January 1914 amalgamated both the Southern and Northern protectorates (p.170). Nigeria was granted independence on 1st October, 1960 under a constitution that provided for a parliamentary system of government. However, the Military came on the scene on 15th January 1966, when Major

Nzeogwu and five other majors staged a coup-d'état that claimed the several lives. Uwechue (2003) said that the coup of 1966, later turned sour and with this and other factors such as counter coup, massacring of the Igbo people in the north and Gowon's inability to abide by the Aburi Accord, late General Ojukwu declared the independence of Biafra and the Nigerian civil war ensued (p.401). It ended in bitter and bloody in the defeat of Biafra in 1970.

Gowon's administration was knocked out of office after series of allegations such as corruption and inability to announce a realistic time for Civilian hand-over. Awosefo (2005) avers that Murtala Mohammed and his group took over the government but was short lived as through a bloody coup of 13th February, 1976 that claimed his life brought in his Second in-Command General Obasanjo, who completed his programme of Civilian rule that later produced Shehu Shagari as the president in 1979 but the administration was knocked out through a coup by Major Gen. Muhammad Buhari on 31st December 1983. The same Buhari's regime was on 27th August 1985 overthrown through a bloodless coup that later produced Ibrahim Babangida as a military ruler. He continued until in 1993, when he bowed to public pressure after the annulment of the widely-talked about June 12th 1993 election believed to have been won by late M.K.O Abiola. He inaugurated the Interim National Government headed by Shonekan and in his word "stepped aside". But on 17th November 1993, late General Sani Abacha forced Shonekan to resign and he took over government (pp.143-144). Abacha died in office on 8th June, 1998. Adamolekun (1999) confirms that Abdulsalami Abubakar, who handed over to a Civilian rule under Olusegun Obasanjo, on 29th May, 1999 took over after Abacha's death (p.24).

Nigeria re-attained civilian rule on 29th May 1999, when it elected Olusegun Obasanjo who after eight years handed over to Umar Yar'adua on 29th May, 2007. After prolonged illness, Yar'adua died on 5th May 2010. Then with the "doctrine of necessity" as propounded by the National Assembly, the Acting President, Goodluck Jonathan who acted as Vice President before then was on 6th May 2010, sworn in as the replacement for the late Yar'adua. Jonathan picked Namadi Sambo, the former Governor of Kaduna State to be his deputy until in 2015 when they vacated offices for General Mohammad Buhari (rtd) and Prof. Yemi Osinbajo respectively. General Mohammad Buhari (rtd) and Prof. Yemi Osinbajo have been succeeded in May 2023 by Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Kashim Shettimma. It can be summed that between 1914 and 1946, the country operated on the Southern and Northern Protectorate basis. With the arrival of Richard's Constitution in 1946 up to 1967, the country was grouped on the regional basis while between

1967 and 2011, the country has been divided into six geopolitical zones, thirty-six states and seven hundred and seventy-four local government areas.

LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA: AN ANALYSIS

In Nigeria, several leadership styles have been experimented and these include: parliamentary, military dictatorship, interim and democratic systems yet the country still wobbles with the questions of leadership. Many reasons can be attributed to this challenge and they include: **Colonial Misadventures:** The British colonial administrators' ethnic policy and the regional autonomy reinforced the division of the three regions- a factor which contributed to ethno-regional character of governance in Nigeria. Majority of Nigerians started seeing themselves from the lens of ethnic loyalty.

Flawed Leadership Recruitment Processes: This is arguably the bane of all the problems confronting Nigeria. The horrible and flawed model through which Nigerian leaders are recruited is disheartening to the sound minded ones. The medium seem so institutionally skewed for the mediocrities that those who have the competence, capacity and capability hardly get into positions. These processes are taken over by rapacious cartels that can be regarded as "political bandits" who are usually referred to as either "godfathers or cabals. These political bourgeoisies are ready to spend anything just to secure the offices for their stogies. One of the consequential fallouts of this malady is that they have succeeded in compromising all the social institutions just to achieve and maintain their clandestine and nefarious desires. Nigeria has digitalized some of her modes of payments and taxations but has not digitalized her electoral system simply because politicians use the wobbling electoral system to corruptly impose themselves on the people. Until the fight against electoral corruption is fought head on, Nigeria will never make any meaningful progress. A sanitized electoral system is capable of building strong public institutions that can checkmate impunity and fight other forms of corruption.

"Na My (Our) Turn to Rule" or Born to Rule Mentality: Another problem with Nigerian leader has to do with, "Na my (our) turn to rule" or born to mentality. Most times the only reason some political aspirants advance for their aspirations in Nigeria is that "it is their turn or born to rule" and nothing more. This mentality of "turn by turn" has really affected Nigerian system that people who cannot lead or manage a household, family and ward are made public leaders and because leadership determines results, Nigeria has consistently been paying dearly for it.

Docile, Intimidated and Wounded Masses: This has more to do with material and an intellectual form of poverty and it is compounded by intimidations that wounded populace hence the eruption of large docile citizens. Alechenu, Ihuoma, Nwogu and Isenyo (2020) state that the country is voted the global headquarters of poverty (p.9). This is despite the fact that the country is richly blessed with immeasurable natural material and human resources. Poverty, injustice and bad governance have seemed to have been *weaponised* by the politicians who have literally become law unto themselves and thereby carrying out massive exploitations against the people.

Compromised Security System: The Nigerian security apparatus seems to be working optimally when it comes to protecting the wealthy and politically exposed individuals and their properties. Another areas of their prowess, formidability and astuteness comes when they want to harass, extort, intimidate and even kill armless and poor Nigerians while kidnappers, bandits and killer herdsmen (rated the fourth most dangerous terrorists in the world) carry out their nefarious activities unchallenged.

Wobbling Public Services: The country continues to suffer monumental infrastructural deficits that range from epileptic power supply and near mortuary as health centers among others. Majority of the social amenities are largely built on the radio and television stations. It took the arrival of coronavirus for the former secretary to the Nigerian government, Boss Mustapha, according to Iroanusi (2020) to have confessed that he never knew that Nigerian health system was in such “a bad state” (p.8). The Nigerian politicians and privileged public office holders will not feel the shambolic state of the Nigerian health system because they trot US, Europe and Dubai with their families and cohorts to treat ordinary malaria while the poor masses they claim to be serving are abandoned to their fates.

Weakened Judiciary: The judiciary has been largely at the whims and caprices of the Nigerian political lords. The wealthy and politically exposed individuals usually hire the services of the best lawyers and through them delay justice and often buy it at the highest amount. In Nigeria, a politician will boldly demand that he be declared a winner of an election he knew he lost and confidently ask his opponents to go to court. This is because he is confident of buying judgment from the court. Nigeria can only lay claim to judicial system without justice system.

Culture of an Official Spurred Favouritism: There is a culture of an official spurred favouritism. While it is natural to be emotional with one's relative, friends and acquaintances but not when public/general interest is at stake. Official spurred favouritism manifests in virtually every sector

of the Nigerian life. For instance, the much hyped fight against corruption lost its acceptability among many Nigerians. In the build up to the 2019 Senate presidential election, many analysts projected Senator Danjuma Goje to head the Nigerian Senate. But on 6th June, 2019, immediately after he had a meeting with President Buhari, he publicly withdrew from the race and Adebulu (2019) states that the corruption case of twenty- five billion naira filed against him at the Court of Appeal in Jos was subsequently withdrawn by the attorney general of the federation, Abubakar Malami (SAN).

The Mismanaged State Responses to Critical National Issues: Historically, this has posed great problem to leadership in Nigeria and the security agencies have been repeatedly blamed for the escalation of violence in Nigeria. Kukah (2010) affirms that the extra judicial killing of the Boko Haram sect leader , Yusuf Mohammed emboldened the sect who has grown to be the greatest problem of Nigeria (p.10). Ismail (2012) said that the former governor of Yobe state, Bukar Abba Ibrahim posited that the metamorphosis of Boko Haram from a “dawah” to an arms-bearing sect was partly caused by security agencies which approached the situation with disastrous consequences especially with the extra judicial killing of Yusuf Mohammed which raised the movement to its broader multifaceted prism as political, social and economic monsters. The security agencies serially mismanaged the crisis from the outset, and in the process pushed the movement to the extreme end of the spectrum (p.9). Until the seeming relatively doused tension in the Southeast escalated, many international agencies like Amnesty International have roundly chided the manner and measures through which the security agencies reacted to the protests of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and these state miscalculated responses embolden the violent aspect of their movement. Nigerian rulers need to understand that bullet forces alone do not end an ideology but superior idea does.

Different Application of Nigerian Laws: There is a seeming different application of laws in Nigeria. The way and manner in which most of the Nigerian leaders apply the Nigerian law has left much to be desired. For example, the most horrible, dreadful and the mindless invasion and destruction of farm lands, raping and murderous bloodletting of defenceless and innocent people by the killer herdsmen (rated the fourth most dangerous terrorists in the world) in Nigeria has not been meted with the kind of unilateral proscription by the federal government just as it was done to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) whose notable reported crime at that time was street processions to protest against perceived injustice. It beats human and logical explanations how a

government that travelled outside Nigeria to arrest agitators such as Nnamdi Kanu and Sunday Igboho could not arrest a Fulani terrorist, Ado Alero who was reportedly put on the wanted list by the Nigerian police for two years even when a bounty of five million naira was placed on him. Another terrorist kingpin boldly surfaced in Zamfara state and was turbaned the Sarikin Fulani.

Parochialism, “We and Them” and Winners Take All Mentalities: The Nigerian elites do not fight or complain when they are sharing and enjoying the national cake but usually resort to ethnic and religious leanings when it did not favour them and these are seriously affecting leadership in Nigeria. It seems that Section 14 subsection 3 of the 1999 Nigerian Constitution foresee these dangers and then makes it clear that the composition of the federal government or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to protect national unity, also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies. However, in flagrant abuse of this noble provision, Nigerian successive political actors seem to be promoting injustice in clear perversion of the quota system and federal character principles in appointments into key offices in Nigeria. The impunity appears much evident with the administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari and almost being carried on by the current president. It got to a point and in a rather surprising development, a northern Muslim challenged the president on this. Umoru (2020) notes that Abubakar Umar, a retired army colonel and former military governor of Kaduna State, in a letter warned President Muhammadu Buhari that Nigeria was dangerously polarized and risked sliding into crisis because of his continued undue preference given to some sections of the country over others in the national appointments. The lopsidedness in Buhari’s appointment was more glaring in the leadership of the nation’s security services. Disturbingly, Enumah (2020) states that some leaders of socio-cultural groups and their leaders in Nigeria on Monday, June 22, 2020 dragged President Muhammadu Buhari before an Abuja Division of the Federal High Court over marginalization in his appointments from 2015. They also contended with Buhari’s decision of obtaining loans from the Islamic Development Bank, African Development Bank, the World Bank, China, Japan and Germany to the tune of \$22.7 billion (USD), purportedly for infrastructural development, only to allocate the bulk of the fund to the Northern region. They also sought the court to declare that the loan facility purportedly for infrastructural development wherein less than 1% of all the amounts is to be allocated to the South East Zone of Nigeria for specific

infrastructural development, violated section 16 (1) (a) (b) and S16 (2) (a) (b) (c) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). They prayed the court to fine the president, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), Clerk of National Assembly and the Federal Character Commission (FCC) in the suit the sum of fifty billion naira for allegedly violating provisions of the 1999 Constitution and the Federal Character Principle. Never in the recent history of Nigeria has a conglomeration of ethnic nationals jointly taken the federal government to court over marginalization and parochialism.

Religious and Denominational Triumphalism: The quests for the total Christianization or Islamization of Nigeria have fertilized Nigeria for violence. For example, Hodgkin (1960), states that the jihad of Usman dan Fodio in 1804 was “to make upon the heathen king who...make no profession of Islam, is obligatory by assent” (p.247). In the same way, Clarke and Linden (1982) said that Islamic leaders, like Gumi believed that to adopt Islam as a state religion was the answers to the problems of the contemporary Nigerian society (p.95). Kukah (1993) emphatically notes that in order to make Islam a Nigerian state religion, Gumi would employ the state structures to achieve his aim (p.132). Suleiman (2011) avers that Boko Haram terrorist group in Maiduguri initially said that their objectives were to abolish democracy and institute sharia law (p.50). Similarly, the new religious movements characterized by the Nigerian version of Pentecostalism with the kind of belief system they propagate and their aggressive type of evangelism that often aims at “winning Nigeria for Christ”, “Operation for Total Recovery of the Land” and so on have turned from conservatives into militants and they are willing to take a stand and to fight in defence of the Christian faith. Religion being an emotional driven reality has led many Nigerians to gladly die in defence of their religions and denominations but will rather allow and watch Nigeria sink. They are overtly and covertly working towards the popularization of their religions even to the detriment of Nigerian system.

All the above enumerated factors are some of the issues affecting the leadership and by a way, deterring the development of the country.

HOW RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP CAN BE THE PARADIGM FOR A WORLD ORDER IN NIGERIA.

To achieve the world order in Nigeria, there is need to understand the purpose of leadership. Indeed Employer Content Team (2024) posits that purposeful leadership emphasizes the importance of

helping people find meaning in their lives and works. Purposeful leadership is a purpose-driven leader who excels at inspiring others to embrace shared goals. The result is a highly motivated group of people that stays committed to a vision, mission and values of an organization. The purpose of leadership is to motivate followers to achieve specific outcomes. Bhagwan and Bhushan (2007) rightly posit “get the right man in the leadership job and all your problems will be solved” (pp. 211-212). Therefore, these are some of other reasons why purposeful religious, social and political leadership can be a game change in the leadership of Nigeria.

A Purposeful Socio-Religious and Political Leadership are driven by Superior Ideas: The quality of one’s idea determines the results the person achieves. A purposeful leader is very eager to listen and apply superior idea instead of parochial and narrow minded principles that produces no good lasting results.

A Purposeful Socio-Religious and Political Leadership are Firm and Fair: Naturally, people get committed where they are treated fairly. It takes a fair and firm leader to understand and apply fairness in all things and to everybody. Fairness is the foundation of peace and unity. The level of agitations and marginalization in Nigeria is terrifying and it boils down to leadership.

A Purposeful Socio-Religious and Political Leadership Tolerate and Manage Deficiencies in Others: The diverse nature and composition of Nigeria does imply that the citizens are conditioned to have differences but the diversity should be promoted through tolerance, mutual respect and love. This accounts for why many Nigerians called out former President Buhari who once described the Igbo people as “a dot in the circle”. While he should be tolerated for speaking out his mind unlike some of his likes who are pretending about it, it shows that many Nigerian leaders do not tolerate and manage the deficiencies in others. A purposeful leader understands this and works with it.

A Purposeful Socio-Religious and Political Leadership are Motivators: They motivate the followers mostly by their character not by coercion. They lead by example not by rabbleroxing.

They Relate and Communicate Well: A purposeful leader is careful and conscious of what he/she says and does. He/she is a master of communication and his or her language is sublime. He/she needs two kinds of languages and they are inspiring and correctional.

They Believe in Accountability: Apart from the Supreme Being, every other leadership and authority is delegated. There may not be such a thing as autonomous or exclusive leadership or authority except in the developing countries where their rulers masquerade as democrats but are

actually totalitarians, autocrats and dictators. The idea of accountability helps ensure that leaders are brought to accounts over both their actions and inactions.

CONCLUSION: Nigeria is hugely and abundantly blessed with both human and material resources but her citizens because of bad leadership have continued to suffer in the midst of abundance. This has made the country a fertilizing ground for the incessant rise of crises and general instability. The agents of these social instabilities have continued to wreak havoc against the people and existence of the Nigerian state. The resultant effect has been that of a country that is drifting towards the edge of precipice except there is a purposeful leadership. This is because purpose helps create a shared sense of direction, alignment and commitment, builds sense of belonging, fosters greater tolerant atmosphere and increases persistence through challenges. In fact, purpose is often one of the main drivers and purposeful leaders are more likely to develop and maintain strong relationships with their followers. They articulate a clear, inspiring vision that resonates with others members of the society. Purpose-driven leadership creates space for alignment of goals and values between citizens and the country. When citizens understand why they should believe in a country, they work to unite and develop the country. Therefore, the country should reconsider making purposeful leadership a compulsory subject and course in all level of education in Nigeria. The culture of purposeful leadership should be tropicalized in the psyche of the citizens.

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