

From Military Rule to Civil Rule: A Political Economy of Gerontocratic Metamorphosis in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper investigates a recurring factor of military dominance in Nigeria politics. It explores the role of the military in Nigeria which captures the safeguarding of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of state. It goes beyond to probe into the nature of leadership Nigeria has been subjected to since the intervention of military in the politics of the state. This kind of leadership is one where after a protracted domination of the polity through forceful emergence; stages a comeback in a civilian form seeking to recapture power in a most bizarre manner with its attendant militocracy. It is against that backdrop that the study employs class theory as its framework to capture the formative influence that provoked the spirit of metamorphosis from military to civilian. This finds expression in their kleptocratic appetite to suffocate the economic endowments of the state. It therefore, discovers that as a result of their involvement in politics couple with military orientation that has not been diluted in any form, it has continued to heat up the polity and elicits unending desire to reverse the state to the stone-age where the employment of force betrays democratic values. It thus, calls on all sectors of the state to rise in defence of democracy and the promotion of good governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Military Rule, Militocracy, Psycho-logicism, Leadership, Gerontocracy.

1.1 Introduction

The history of Leadership in Nigeria is one marked by extreme domination and continuous struggles for the maintenance and sustenance of power. This has really permeated into the political lives of Nigerian that politics is today perceived as a do-or-die affair that an exit from power is considered as a terrible condition that its outcome remains unknown. This has drawn so many into embarking on multiple variations of political arithmetic while in office to sponsor policies that will provide them with a toga of protection when they are out for possible come back. This has to a large extent reduced the character of the state to a mere rumble and created an air of confusion within the system. Once you are in, you are in and there is nothing worse than practical exit from power. No retirement, no room for younger generations, instead a prevalence and extension of the poverty of the masses is advanced and sustained within the polity.

Right from the era of nationalism through independence and military dictatorship with civilian punctuations, the people of Nigeria have not for one day heaved a sigh of relief in terms of good leadership (Okafor and Okafor, 2015). Worse still is the protracted military ruler-ship which started since first military coup of 1966 headed by Major Kaduna Nzeogwu. Its purpose could not be fulfilled and chains abuses and interventions of the military into politics complicated the process of development. Their involvement in national politics has thrown the system into a quasi-comatose that every remedial attempts end up becoming a new quagmire for the system. This explains why they pride in the prevailing reversals of democracy within the regions of Africa and West Africa in particular. This could be attributed to weighty and gross inhuman treatment meted on the system in the colonial days and extended in the military era. It has deeply created structural weakness, inefficiency of political institutions and lack of national integrity.

Subsequently, the desire for a change in the style of administration emerged and was lauded by the evolving process of globalization which preaches liberal democracy with its attendant capitalist paraphernalia. This made military rule anachronistic and the desire to extend political relevance became paramount within the military circle. Thus, it became the harbinger of military metamorphosis in Africa politics. In Nigeria, General Abacha was the first military head of state that conceived the idea, nurtured it with the then five existing political parties in Nigeria lauding their trumpets for his sole emergence (Momodu, 1997). He could not live to have his brain child ideology snowball him into reality. Since 1999, democratic appetite started driving Nigeria with its own character and political formation. It evolved a brand of leadership that propelled all the retired soldiers to stage a comeback to politics. This time, it is the contest of the elders flooding the political space with looted state treasuries meant for development of which they systematically avoided. It became a deviation from military rule to gerontocracy with its prevailing military mentality otherwise known as militocracy. In our recent experience, President Buhari is up to keep the process going of which other past heads of state and some retired military and para-military officers are all out to partake in.

Consequently, it dampens the hope and future of the state where professionals trained to kill, fight, maim and oppress are out en masse to seek for political offices. This is a very crucial point many people, especially military apologists miss when they began to argue that since army officers in the west, like General De Gaulle, went on to become great political leaders, army officers in Africa could not do the same. The fact that military rule in Africa, from Liberia to Togo, Nigeria to Congo, have largely been unmitigated disasters, seems to escape their attention. This mixed situation could be compared to a historical event where the Belgian army officer in charge of training the local military was disobeying orders from Lumumba. Lumumba asked him if he could disobey orders from his Prime Minister in Belgium and he said no. In his inquisitive mind to understand why he was disobeying his orders, the Belgian officer told him that the Congo was not Belgium where things are done differently, implying that they are indeed two worlds apart (Osigwe, 2005). The question is this, why is Africans style of leadership viewed in negativity, yet seat-tightism remains a disturbing practice ravaging most states in Africa.

Therefore, it is on that note that this study will critically probe into the second missionary journey of the military in Nigerian politics in a gerontocratic manner and style. It queries the rationale behind their come back. What become of the youths who were branded leaders of tomorrow? Should they wait till they get to sixties or septuagenarian brackets before they will be given room to inject their new and dynamic ideas or obsolete ones as we witness today? Should there be a generational jump because elderly people have refused to vacate political offices? Thus, this study will examine the nature of the military, their massive moments with practical examples and the formative influence that engineered the emergence of this elderly people's government.

1.2 Conceptual Exposition

Our primary knowledge on military rule is based on our experiences of the various military administrations and experiences Nigeria has undergone. Remove 'rule' from the first variable of our focus and you will have 'military', which by ocular perception and in common parlance entails the specialists in the use of ammunitions for the essence of warfare. In accordance to that Ake (1996:13) perceive the military as the specialists of warfare. To that extent, it would be stating the obvious to argue that military rule is a rule championed by warfare specialists. It is by practically a government superintended by military personnel. The chronological account of their involvement in Nigerian politics is enough to provide us with a clear picture of what military rule purports. Since the independence of Nigeria, it has been the military all that way. Their stay in power provides us with a convincing podium that it is a government where uniformed men that are trained to secure the state decide to withdraw themselves from their oath of office in order to reap the bountiful economic endowment of the state. They have struggled with these throughout their stay in office and beyond. It defined the sudden adjustment to change to civilian and contest for elective position thereby setting another standard for a new form of governance where old people control the mainstream of the state and extend their dominance. That is known as gerontocracy - Government by the elders. The worrying situation that surrounds the desire of this study anchors so much on the fact that the desire to perpetuate highhandedness and wholesale defalcation. If not what can explain the constant military intervention in Nigerian politics over the years? Now that military rule is considered obsolete, in a bid to extent their reign collectively metamorphosed into civilian candidate to stage a bizarre come back under a feigned democratic toga. These groups right from the military takeover of state power have continued to wield absolute power and have been deciding the political direction of the state. They are the potential God fathers of the present day Nigeria with their network of authority spread all over the nooks and crannies of the state. It is based on the above assumption that this study seeks to employ class analysis as its framework. The essence is very visible, that a group got themselves together and decide to hold the state to ransom, dictating and deciding the political future of the state having retired and claim not to be tired. The major proponents of the theory include Karl Marx, Hegel, Feuerbach, Lenin, Nkrumah etc. In their views, they submit that class is assumed to be a bane for political domination. It looks at the division within the state that is provoked by socio-political and economic factor where you have the bourgeois (representing the haves) and the proletariats (representing the have nots – the masses). It exposes that reason why a set of retired military men have hijacked the state only for them to be the major decider in terms of resource allocation and distribution against other populace within the state till date.

2.1 A Chronological Account of Leadership in Nigeria

Virtually all West African countries have experienced military intervention at one time or another. The first military coup in West Africa took place in Togo on January 13, 1963, in which President Sylvanus Olympio was assassinated, followed by those of Benin Republic on November 1965; the Central African Republic (C.A.R) , Burkina Faso and Ghana in 1966, and so on (Oyediran, 1979).

Nigeria suffered its first military coup in January 15th, 1966 which was spearheaded by Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzogwu (Ojo, 1973). The second military coup which removed General Aguiyi Ironsi's (1966) six months military government and which brought Lt. Colonel Yakubu Gowon to power occurred on July 26, 1966. On July 29, 1975, exactly nine years, the then General Yakubu Gowon was removed from office while attending the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) meeting in Kampala, Uganda, via a military coup, which made Brigadier Ramat Murtala Mohammed (1975-1976) (later General) Head of State. General Mohammed was assassinated after 200 days in office in an abortive military coup spear-headed by Lt. Col. Buka Sukar Dimka on February 13, 1976. The unsuccessful coup and the assassination of General Murtala Mohammed brought General Olusegun Obasanjo (1976-1979) to power (Oyediran, 1979).

General Obasanjo who continued with the policies of General Mohammed, handed power over to an elected civilian on October 1, 1979, after 13 years of military interregnum. The civilian administration that followed was under President Shehu Shagari (1979-1983). The civilian government which people thought has brought respite from frequent military coups was swept out of power on December 31, 1983 by Major-General Muhammadu Buhari-led junta (1983-1985). Major-General Muhammadu Buhari was overthrown on August 27, 1985 in another military coup which brought his former Chief of Army Staff, Major-General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (1985-1993) to power, who adopted the title of President instead of the usual Head of State, associated with military government. The military rule of General Sani Abacha (1993-1998) came into power following within three months of exit of General Ibrahim Babangida, following the short-lived Interim National Government of Dr. Ernest Shonekan (August-November, 1993), and then, General Abdulsalami Abubakar (1998-1999) succeeded General Sani Abacha on June 8, 1998, after the death of General Sani Abacha (Chikendu, 2003). He was able to hand over power to an elected civilian government headed by President Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) on May 29, 1999. And on May 29, 2007, President Olusegun Obasanjo handed over power to yet, another democratically elected civilian, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua (2007-2012). This period was dubbed "a new political era" by some public commentators for some reasons. One of such reasons was that Nigeria got it right for the first time; a successful civilian to civilian democratic change of power and authority since independence. Unfortunately, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, died on May 5, 2010 and was succeeded by Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, on the May 6, 2010 whose administration lasted from 2010 to 2015 and lastly is Muhammadu Buhari, who just took over power from Ebele Jonathan in 2015. Thus, since May 29, 1999, Nigeria has been ruled by civilian administrations. Thus, from Nigeria's independence to December 1999, civilians ruled from 1960-1966, 1979-1983, August to November 1993, and since May 1999 till present, making a total of approximately 20 years. In contrast, by May 1999, the military had ruled Nigeria for approximately thirty years. So far, that is the chronological account of military regimes and civilian administrations in Nigeria since 1960 (Chiamogu and Okafor, 2014).

2.2 The Formative Influence of Militocracy in Nigeria

This section of the study is conceived to address the pressing issue of political dynamism of which Nigerian state can hardly rid itself out of. Right from the inception of this study, the pendulum of our research has continued to revolve around military and its subsequent evolution of elderly government otherwise known as gerontocracy. Here, we shall be looking at the formative influence of militocracy in Nigeria. This could easily be analysed from three perspectives: colonial influence, personality influence and post personality influence.

Colonial influence: The genesis of military mentality is to be found in the colonial enterprise. It is obvious that colonialism could not have succeeded in Africa without the use of force or military might by the colonizers to kill, maim, subdue the colonized, and kept them subdued while their resources, including human resources, were systematically plundered. The worst was that the colonizers did not consider Africans as being fully human and treated them accordingly. This form of mentality got its head up at the emergence of military rule where everything is pursued with force. To that extent, the idea of governing the masses with force came alive. A voyage on the style of leadership conducted by series of political office holders reflect and define them as an institution of discipline and professionals who are undemocratic in their approach to social issues.

In the west states, the military takes orders from the civilian rulers and its primary task is to protect them and all the citizens, as well as protecting their territorial integrity; in Africa, they did the exact opposite. In other words, the military institution that was introduced into Africa was primarily meant to be an instrument of oppression. It is in this context that we have to understand what the Belgian general told Lumumba. Africa, in their mentality, was a conquered territory and was treated as such. The tragedy is that after we got our "independence", that military mentality was transferred from the colonialist to the indigenous military officer (Osigwe, May 8, 2005).

Personality influence: our conception of the military influence is anchored on their personal. This has to be a toga they have assume since they came to power. They started seeing themselves as the author and finishers of administration in Nigeria. By no means have they unduly referred people outside the military world in a derogatory manner and treated them without dignity. They are branded 'bloody civilians'. It is this mentality that has continued to sustain the stereotyped line of thinking that after retirement, in the cavalier manner metamorphosed into the lords of the ring. It becomes an anathema of governance to place the military as a veritable instrument of political orderliness. It is this line of thinking that made the military to assume to be the superpowers of political future in Nigeria. This is their orientation while in office and has to a large extent extended such to the other paramilitary groups who now see themselves as demigods after the military. It is perceived as a self blown ego that lacks clarity and precise essence of their existence with its accompanying constitutional obligations.

Post-personality influence: This is eclectic in composition. The implication remains that it is a combination of colonial and personality influence. It is a kind of mentality possessed by any retired military officer. What we are trying to establish here is that with force orientation of colonial rule and their orientation going by their training as war men, it become extremely difficult to get any attitude that resembles democracy or humane from anyone of them. A look at their chronology of administrations from General Gowon, Murtala/Obasanjo, Buhari/Idiagbo, Babangida, Abacha, states nothing but highhandedness in its extreme form. Now, they have retired, their style of politics depict nothing but obstinacy and crudity to democratic issues. They have reduced politics to a war zone making it a do-or-die affair and this attitude is highly contagious that many civil politicians against the military politicians are considering it as veritable option especially, where they have potential rivals. Thus, it provokes the emergence and use of local thugs and students to ensure political victory in every election.

2.3 Military Metamorphosis in National Politics

On the attainment of political independence in 1960, the political elites, mainly composed of the former nationalist leaders, began the arduous task of nation-building in culturally heterogeneous countries, dismembered politically by the British Policies of assimilations and Divide and Rule.

However, the socio-political crisis which resulted from the efforts of the leaders in grappling with the challenges of nation-building in the states emerging from colonial rule, created an opportunity for the military to abandon their constitutional role, to embark on a purported rescue mission aimed at salvaging the ship of state from the point of precipice, occasioned by the ineptitude of the civilian leadership in the country. Thus, the first attempt by the military in Nigeria to seize power occurred in January 15, 1966. The news of the coup was received by Nigerians with wild jubilation (Oyediran, 1979). However, the euphoria which greeted military intervention in politics soon began to wane. This was because of the myriad of socio-political and economic crises that accompanied military rule in the first 13 years of their regime. Consequently, pressure was mounted on the military to hand over power to a democratically elected government and return to the barracks. This, they did on October 1st, 1979, leading to the birth of the Second Republic.

The occupation of the Presidency by civilian administration, headed by Shehu Shagari, did little to assuage the pangs of Nigerians inflicted by 13 years of military rule. The Shagari's administration was constantly accused of indiscipline, moral bankruptcy, corruption and profligacy. This was compounded by the harsh economic recession experienced in the country during that period. Thus, the inability of the Shagari's administration to tackle these problems provided a carte blanche for another military era which commenced from 31st December, 1983 and ended in 1999 (Babarinsa, 1994). The various juntas under this period were at different times accused of corruption and mismanagement. The Babangida and Abacha-led juntas were known for corrupting democracy and democratising corruption. These regimes were noted for violating human rights and brutalising the press. The \$12billion oil wind fall scandal and the June 12 Presidential Election issues, were among the major factors that saw Babangida out of power. Similarly, Abacha, with the myriads of scandal and human rights violation accompanying his regime, died mysteriously in 1998 (Momodu, 2000). With these, the stage was set for the ignominious exit of the military from the political stage of Nigeria. Thus, in 1999, the military left power with a trail of opprobrium when Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar handed over power to a democratically elected government, under Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. From the fore-going, it is obvious that Nigeria has not been fortunate when it comes to political leadership, still possessive appetite of military to continue in power remains unquenchable.

To that end, the concern of various administrations in most African states, particularly Nigeria, is about the provision of industries, social infrastructures like roads, schools, health institutions, housing, et cetera. In fact, it is the contention of Nnoli (1981:177-8), that administrations in African countries are in general, characterised by

an attempt to use the apparatus of the government to hasten socio-economic development and overcome their “backwardness”. Indeed, the intrusion of the military in the arena of politics is partly an expression of the cumulative frustrations of the citizens arising from unfulfilled rising developmental expectations. The question is, having taken power, has the military been able to fulfil these expectations? The answer to this question is a reflection of what is happening in Nigeria today, which prevails as a result of somersault in administration provoked by military involvement.

In 1983, Bamanga Tukur was the Governor of the defunct Gongola State (now Adamawa and Taraba) and 30 years later, he is today the Chairman of the ruling Party, The PDP; Dr Bello Halliru was commissioner in the Old Sokoto (now Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara) and 33 years after, later became the Minister of Defence under Jonathan’s administration, Major General David Mark (rtd) was the military Governor of Niger State in 1984 and 28 years later he served as the Senate President for two terms from 2007 to 2015; Governor Murtala Nyako was the Governor of Niger State in 1976 and 36 years later came back and became the Governor of Adamawa State in from 2007-2014; Ogbonnaya Onu was the Governor of Abia State in 1992 and 20 years after he became the National Chairman of ANPP; Gov Jonah Jang was the Governor of Benue State in 1985 and 27 years after he became the Governor of Plateau State; and Martins Elechi, the Ebonyi State Governor is over 80 years old. The PDP youth leader is 60 years of age. Between 1984 and 1986 Buhari and IBB were Nigerian heads of state and our teachers told us that we the leaders of tomorrow. Twenty-seven years later, they are still contesting for presidency and currently, Buhari is the president of Nigeria. Where is the place of the youths in Nigeria?

3.1 A Critic of Military Involvement in Nigerian Politics

There are several development efforts that could be credited to military regimes in Nigeria. However, in spite of these positive contributions to Nigeria’s development, the military also has a number of criticisms against it in relation to development issues.

In the first place, the advent of military rule, supported with increased revenue from oil led to the agricultural sector suffering a near total neglect (Dudley, 1982:115). Consequent upon this neglect, Nigeria moved from being a major exporter of cocoa, palm produce, groundnut, cotton and rubber to an importer of some of these items. Furthermore, the impact of military rule on the quality of life in the rural areas, according to Dudley (1982), can only be described as catastrophic.

Secondly, corruption which is usually one of the reasons the military often quotes to justify its intervention, has defied military solution, but has rather been aggravated by the military itself. As Dudley (1982:116) sees it;

Under military rule, with no constitutions to conciliate and no electorate to be accountable to in however weak a sense one interprets the notion of accountability- the effect of the oil boom was to covert the military decision-makers and their bureaucratic aids into a new property-owning, rentier class working in close and direct collaboration with foreign business interests with the sole aim of expropriating the surpluses derived from oil for their private and personal benefits (Dudley, 1982:116).

While the oil boom aggravated corruption, the Structural Adjustment Programme commanded it. According to Ojiakor (1997:122), the military, who themselves have become culpable has not been able to deal decisively with corruption.

Thirdly, the problem of unemployment still persists in Nigeria even after the military had promised to tackle this; one of the causes of this is that of low level of industrialisation.

Fourthly, social services appear to be the worst hit under the military. The educational sector has virtually collapsed. Pipe-borne water, regular electricity supply, good roads and housing appear to be mere dreams in spite of the policy of privatisation and commercialisation.

On the other hand, democracy which is adjudged as mature when there is periodic change of government through peaceful and orderly election, in most developing countries of the third world, the story is different. Elections are usually characterised by monumental irregularities and malpractices. The Nigerian case is even more disheartening. No election conducted in Nigeria since independence has received a ‘clean bill of health’. On the contrary, every election was marred by untoward acts of bare-faced rigging, employment of blood-thirsty thugs who brazenly and heartlessly main and kill political opponents and indulge in other forms of illicit behaviour which turns the electoral process into a grotesque and crude imitation of the universally accepted electoral norm and principle. These civilians get elected into office without a development strategy or agenda for

the country, rather, they use public funds to run their campaigns; they make an elusive use of the publicly owned media to brow-beat their political opponents, leaving them without any last resort.

3.2 An Overview of the Political Economy of Leadership in Nigeria

The political situation in Nigeria is one of a kind in that some bizarre practices are rearing their ugly head in the national scheme of things. In our introductory paragraph, we tried to present in brief what this study seeks to achieve. Thus, in this section, we will comprehensively articulate an academic position of the role of the military in and out of office. Nigeria has a peculiar problem of military metamorphosis from barracks to democratic office. It is at this point that we question this strange approach to political administration. Just six years after independence and three years after the attainment of a republic, the Nigerian political space was systematically hijacked by the military and has continued to exert undue influence on the polity till date. We wondered where they were when independence was fought and without giving the polity space to flower. They speedily took over power and plundered the state beyond what it was against their reasons for intervening in the state politics. It is on that note that Ake (1996: 13) argues that if the Nigerian experience is any guide, Africa appears to be spawning a unique historical experience, a self-absorbed political elite with no national project whatever, not even an inadequate one. They are totally absorbed in the quest for absolute and eternal power. They know only their interests. It is the only morality they have and their only religion. They hear only echoes of their own voices and see only images of themselves looming to fill every space and every consciousness. He further contends that where every leader wants absolute power, society is at war, war without end, because amidst the defeats and victories of particular battles, the underlying social dynamics remains the same. There is no development in a state of war. What there is, is regression and that is what Africa has had. There is no democracy in war. What there is, is power and the contestation for power-power supplanting rights, permitting the strong to take what they can, leaving the rest to suffer what they must. Because African society is at war, the specialists of warfare, the military, have come to dominate it. That is the objective basis of military rule in Africa.

Their involvement in politics has consequently and drastically drowned the state into a state of comatose leaving every sector in shambles and unkempt, promoting mediocrity and savage against their all announced motive of emergence. The first military coup was the chord that invited military to power and they saw the massive wealth of the state and since then refused to vacate power; instead a neo-strategy was designed. The essence is to perpetuate their stay when the world is evolving a new practice that finds expression in liberal democracy, thus, resorting to ex-military gerontocrats. The essence is to continue to advance the course of relevance in the scheme of things directly or indirectly. Today, they are god-fathers and direct participants. In their militocratic values, dispositions and orientations, they have continued to shrink the political space and somersault the democratic process. It finds clearer explanation on the fact that too much premium was placed on state power and people are going about it in a Machiavellian unscrupulousness (Ake, 1996). If Africa should continue to run the state with military mentality, its implications remains that no meaningful progress will be attained especially, in Nigeria where such mentality is rooted in the social lives of the power holders. It has openly invited perpetual fear and complications among the citizens that there is a total lack of confidence in the leadership of the state.

This has thus, made it obvious for a new form of leadership to emerge in Nigeria. Just as our earlier submission presents, it is a type of government where elders rule. The situation in Nigeria leaves nothing but a complex milieu that lauds various forms of political metamorphosis and ends up committing the Nigerian political space in hands of the elders. This has taken forms like a retirement from the military and graduating onto a level where they will continue to exert their political authority on the subjects they once governed with force. It gave express invitation to the emergence of mediocre to become decision makers of the state; some emanated from park to government (late Adedibu), while others evolved from nothingness to political God-fathers (Achebe, 2009). It owes largely to the fact that they have one or two links in the presidency. The implication remains that these style of emergence has to a large extent truncated the essence of democratization in Nigeria. Therefore, taking a holistic cognisance of the above argument Ake (1996: 6) notes that

one of the most remarkable features of democratization in Africa is that it is totally indifferent to the character of the state. Democratic elections are being held to determine who will exercise the powers of the state with no questions asked about the character of the state as if it has no implications for democracy. But its implications are so serious that elections in Africa give the voter only a choice between oppressors. This is hardly surprising since Africa largely retains the colonial state structure which is inherently anti-democratic, being the repressive apparatus of an occupying power.

An end in one takes them to another level. A situation where after been a military Head of State for several years with destructive style of leadership and despicable administrative record came back and drowned the same state a second time into doldrums of development. It informed and promoted a situation where one left a seat of presidency after eight years of terrible leadership, came back to become the Chairman of same party Board of Trustee (BOT). This is a man who emerged from a military gulag after suffering “psycho-logicism” (without a reasonable intellectual logic). One begins to wonder what becomes of such state where such grotesque situation that has no historical similarity or any contemporary companion prevails. It leaves more questions than answers on its composition bearing in mind that many competent cues of intellectuals and sound minds are scattered everywhere within the geo-polity, yet their services are never sought for. With that, it shows electoral processes have increasingly become catalysts of instability – with divisive electoral laws (often based on the winner-takes-all principle) and polarised political and party systems (often based on ethnic or geographical cleavages) frequently triggering post-electoral violent protests. This is made potentially more dangerous by the fact that gerontocratic African rulers, in power for decades... eager to extend their grip further, preside over an ever-younger population that has very few economic and political prospects (Okafor and Okafor, 2015).

This day, the activities of these men have earned the Nigerian polity an image that no country in the world would like be part of. It deepened the crisis of the state that its problem becomes endemic, multifarious and intractable. ‘Man know man syndrome’ becomes the in-thing. The use of technocrats which is bane of most countries’ successes is terribly debased in Nigeria. Instead, what you have is creativity in the act of plundering the treasury of the state, bastardizing the laws and constitution and making of kings and political office holders to their family members, friends, praise singers and relations just like Ibeanu (2012) calls them.

They are not keen to groom a successive generation; instead, a programme of continuity is lauded. The implication is that it depicts a cloudy future for the state. None of them wants to be alive and see their children become heirs to the throne but to continue in the lines of their fathers where the “king rules forever”. Such in this modern age is conceived as a short sighted arrogance and lack of vision for the polity. Those who were born in the 1970s and 1980s were then called leaders of tomorrow, till today (2012) they are still in electoral contest with those people who savour them with ruses of the future and lies unlimited. The outcome of the contest is that the younger ones are dying while the older are advancing in age. Not long ago in United States of America, we found a situation where a father after eight years of his exit from power the son emerged to become the president of the state country. We are talking about Bush family. No African leader is looking in that direction, instead they are concerned in making their kids and relations their major cronies and kitchen cabinets or petty bourgeois just to avoid their express overtake in position. Here in Nigeria, father will be in a serious contest to out-loot the son, while the son will be trying to tore his father’s image in public (Obasanjo and Gbenga). In Nigeria, power is money and it is on that note that many of them are retiring to join politics to protect their various oil blocks that earn them billions of Naira monthly when they do nothing (Kayode, 2015: 23). These are treasures meant to be used in developing the state but they forced it to disappear into private pockets and it becomes their internal secret of a caucus. Where any of them goes contrary to the dictates of the holders of power, his chapter of disgrace will be opened and mountainous evidences of his past deed piled at the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) offices for a perpetual silencing. The case of Ibori and several others could be a case in point (SKY NEWS, April 17, 2012).

4.1 Summary and Conclusion

In sum, it is germane to capture the tune of this research study in line with the view that there is so much desire by man to dominate no matter the approach applied in wielding the diverse interests in contention. The military has spent more years in the administration of the system, twenty-eight (28) years out of fifty-three (53) years of the nation since independence, 13 years before 1979 and 15 years between 1984 to 1999. It happens that none of the products of military rule has gone on official retirement instead what we have is systematic manipulations of the political system to accommodate their come back to politics. It defiled every spirit and letters of state orderliness where the political space and power are forcefully assumed and dominated. The style and pattern of their emergence leave one to pounder in continuum on what becomes the motive behind their massive involvement in politics. The worst is that at their retirement, they tend to possess an unquenchable drive to conquer and control the state just as they live in the barrack. The chronology of their politics appetite that saw many of them who are old and still claim relevance within the political space portend great danger to democracy that preaches freedom and right against their background that understands nothing other than the language of force. With their anachronistic and bizarre orientations as both old men and retired force men, the experiences we have had in their style of leadership is enough to conclude that the metamorphosis of the retired military men into elder-rulers in the Nigerian democratic dispensation has practically sentenced the state into a political Armageddon. The examples of Obasanjo’s administration and some of military turned state governors laud the

preposterous and crude manner that drive their style of leadership in Nigeria, where everything is done undemocratic. Thus, unless the system rids itself of this odd practice of accommodating old men with military background that has unbridled appetite to rule, Nigeria will continue to waste generations of intellectuals and born leaders in their wait for a gerontocratic exit.

Thus, the outcome is that it will create a deep generational gap in terms of development. This will take a form where archaic and anachronistic ideas will continue to be relevant in the system. There will be no drive for the injection of new ideas that can turn the system around. Dreams and aspirations will be killed. They will end up copying some untested projects of the western capitalist that do not correspond with African reality and values. At the end, what they perceive as the solution to an existing problem will become the beginning of a new problem. The implication is that what they copied from others has no historical reflection in our valuing system. To that extent, the state will end up wallowing in extreme economic menace giving room for more state treasury to be looted by the elderly men in government. By extension, it is this sit tight syndrome that finds expression in the looting of state to satisfy immediate and extended needs of the holders of power, which has continued to define African states as underdeveloped with Nigeria in particular.

5.1 Recommendations

Having bared the systematic logic and style of power emergence in Nigeria which promote transformation (a transformation from retirement in Military to becoming a democratic president, governors, party leaders, board members, and ministers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria), it becomes imperative to note that they have great potency and tight hold to state power. If the state continues to play along the same old pattern relegating valid and fresh ideas to the background, it will continue to face the vicious circle of doom in all spheres of its life. It is on that note that this research seeks to recommend that:

1. There is a great need to democratize administration in Nigeria. This will take an overhaul of the pattern and style of leadership from the highest to the lowest (top to bottom approach). By this, we mean inculcating the values of democracy in Nigerian leadership by adhering strictly to the constitution of the state.
2. The polity should endeavour to provide the younger ones with new roles through which viable ideas on development that can move the state can be generated and articulated.
3. There should be a national call for a new constitution that will integrate diverse interests and strict adherence to constitution.
4. There should be a stipulated age limit for elderly involvement in politics because one day, mentally deranged ones will emerge and plunge the state far beyond salvation. The experiences of colonialism are still living with us and just little has been done and its massive effects are politically strangling the state by refusing it a breath of meaningful development.

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