A PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE OF *IGNOCENTRIC* SEARCH FOR POLITICAL MESSIAH IN NIGERIA

Cyril-Mary Pius OLATUNJI, PhD
Department of Philosophy, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko

Abstract
Many of the philosophers of African politics who have argued that the political challenges of Nigeria, and of Africa as a whole are as a result of the impunity and corruption of post-independence Nigeria leaders also give the impression that the people of Nigeria are mere innocent victims because in their arguments all the ills of the Nigerian state exist only because the country have not experienced or discovered an honest and capable political leader. The scholars argue to the effect that all that Nigeria can do is simply to hope for the ascendance of a Messiah, who being an honest, capable and patriotic leader will on his own volition become committed to the cause of reversing the situation in order to turn around all the ills of the nation. Employing the examples of two prominent scholars of African politics (Chinua Achebe and Larry Diamond) the paper employs the epistemological rigor of analysis and logic to examine and make a critique of the underlying assumptions of the scholars and identifies the theoretical flaws of believing that political representatives are substantively political leaders, that Nigerians are helpless victims who on their own are incapable of reversing the situation and that Nigeria should hope for a political saviour who will turn around all the social and political ills of Nigeria on his own accord.
Keywords: Ignocence, Messianism, Epistemology, Democracy, Nigeria

Introduction

This paper should have been titled Negative Messianism and Immaculate Misconception on Political Office Holders in the Practice of the Democratic Governance in Nigerian. Doing so, of course would have made the title appear too long and most likely uninteresting. The title of this paper in sum is a description of a naive misconceptions and misrepresentations of the present and historical sources of the state of democracy as a political system of governance and economy in Nigeria.

The concept *Ignocence* is etymologically derived from a combination of ignorance and innocence. It simply refers to ignorance based innocence or innocence based on ignorance. In Cyril-Mary P. Olatunji, Oluwasegunota F. O. Bolarinwa and Aduke Williams (2014, 33-52) *ignocence* represents a political attitude in which citizenry see themselves as innocent of the political challenges of their state either because they have been made to think that way or because they are ignorant of their position as the vanguard of the democratic system. The paper (33-52) explains further how a naive consciousness of the damage caused by the state of mind and attitude of the people could further destroy the democratic system through violent

revolution. Worst still, the paper opines that disgruntled element who had earlier been dispossessed of power and access to state politics could team up with external and internal forces, based on the ignorance of the people to begin and sustain violent revolution or terrorism as a means of vendetta rather than reconstruction.

It should also be noted that this paper does not intend mainly to investigate or analyse theological issues regarding *messianism*. It only borrows and applies the theologically related concept to explain how the citizenry could become apathetic to their own political (democratic) process simply because they think that a political regime will come to rescue them from whatever problem in which they find themselves. Specifically in this paper, *messianism* stands primarily as an extension of what Iweriebor (1997, 118) describes as a nostalgia for a new beginning and belief in Messianic rescue that have bedevilled the Nigerian political consciousness. By so doing, the paper compares the general thinking of Nigerians represented by the thinking of scholars who have made suggestions on how to remake Nigeria and bring its people out of their challenging situations. In sum, Messianic expectation as applied in this paper refers to the belief that Nigerians will wake up one day to experience God-sent "leader(s)" who in contrast with all previous political officeholders that Nigeria ever experienced will right all the social wrongs of the nations.

Immaculate Conception on the other hand is the underlying philosophical assumptions of scholars that the culprit takes all the blame while the acquitted person takes all the praises *ab initio*. That is, if you are innocent in the present case, it is because you have always been innocent and perhaps will continue to be innocent hereafter. If on the other hand, you are found to be a criminal today, it is because you have always been a criminal ever before and will remain so *ad infinitum*.

To carry out the promises of the paper, it merges the application of logic with a moderate historical analysis. It is done by providing a few historical information where required, while subjecting the analyses and positions of the selected philosophers of African politics to the critical test of logic. It must be noted however that reference to Mazrui (a historian) and Diamond (a political scientist by profession) as philosophers does not represent an overestimation of their professional nuances. Rather, it represents the understanding and theoretical foundation of this paper that a philosopher could be anyone in any field or disciple who questions the theoretical assumptions even in his or her own field.

In the process of carrying out the assumptions of the paper as an intellectual investigation in the field of philosophy, providing empirical facts is arguably, not given priority. In the same vein, questioning the assumptions of previous scholars is also of higher importance than making prescriptions on how to solve problems. In sum, the paper considers the available literature on the issue, including those as late as Olufemi Taiwo's [Africa Must be Modern: a Manifesto, 2014] and those as early or even earlier than Ibekwe Chinweizu's [The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers and the African Elite, 1975]. However, special attention will be accorded those authored by the selected scholars namely, Achebe and Diamond,

whose positions are of epistemological importance to this paper. This paper pursues the proposal that following some prescribed political rituals alone will endow Nigeria with the opportunity of a political messiah who will ascend the political throne to rescue the country from its political ill is theoretically faulty and unviable. Alternatively, it pursues the theoretical position that Nigeria will overcome many of its social, economic and political challenges, when and only when Nigerians themselves are prepared to perform their democratic responsibilities.

Nigeria and the Conditions for Democracy
Scholars have testified to the fact that the current situation of Nigeria like those of many other African states is already bad enough. Ali Mazrui (1979, 70-71) speaks of the paradox of a rich Africa inhabited by underprivileged Africans. Guy Martin (2000) also says that the political scene of Africa is characterized by irregularities of various sorts. The descriptions of Africa by these scholars match the state of Nigeria and Nigerians. These, given the testimony of scholars, include poverty, Piracy, economic depression, kidnapping, intertribal clashes, inter/intra-community violence, religious fundamentalism, corruption, political instability, armed robbery, terrorism.

Although the list is inexhaustible, some scholars have tried to summarise the problems as economic depression, some are of the opinion that political instability explains all. It only depends on each scholar's theoretical disposition. Let us assume that both could be right. If left on its own, according to Moses Oke (2006, 332-343), things have inherent natural tendency to become worse. The problems confronting Nigeria are multifaceted. We are however more interested in examining the political sphere. More so, regardless of theoretical inclinations, many scholars, as shall be discussed shortly, put the blames at the doorstep of political leaders whom it is believed are and should take decisions both on political, social and economic issues of the nation.

In an effort to arrest the situation from its naturally adopted course to become worse, scholars have made suggestions in varying fashions. While some such as George Ayittey (1999, 29-30) have tried to trace the root of the problems before prescribing their therapies others like Walter Idada1 and S.O. Uhunmwuangho (2012, 49-54), believe that it could be fruitless to try to solve problems by first apportioning blames regarding how the challenges came about. We shall return to this shortly.

For the purpose of clarity, it is necessary to understand the political and economic systems in practice in Nigeria. Nigeria adopted democracy at independence. Although there have been numerous military interludes at intervals and the democratic system prior to political independence was arguably too limited to be considered democratic in the strict sense of the term, the political system of governance that the country had wanted is arguably democracy. Some people who have ruled as heads of state and military administrators during military rules have also returned as political representatives under the democratic systems. Therefore, the post-independence context of Nigeria has blurred proper distinction, demarcation

and characterisation of individual regimes and administrative styles of each ruler, ruling party and regime in Nigeria. That notwithstanding, there is the need to identify the basic or minimum requirements for a consolidated democracy. By requirement it actually means both indicators and facilitators. That is, the sufficient and necessary expectations of a reliably working democracy.

There have been numerous suggestions such as those given by larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino (2004, 20-31); Idowu Awopetu (2007, 22-25), and there is no point rehearsing the list here. However, some scholars agree that any reliable and well functioning democracy requires the existence of certain qualities. These include tolerance towards, and creative involvement in the political process; political awareness; freedom of the press; the free flow of information; sovereignty in the people through their ability to influence the decisions of their government, or to change it; regular free and fair elections that underpin the legitimacy of government, and the safeguards of social justice; minority rights; equal access to justice; gender equality; child rights, and human rights (AWOPETU 2007, 22-25). The various outlines could be summed up in the following requirements:

Democracy as a system of government differs from other systems of government not only by the fact that it is a polyarchy, but more significantly by the fact that it is a government of the people in the hands of the people to protect the interests of the people for their own benefits. It implies that the people have the pride of place in democracy. That is, a good democracy provides opportunity for people to pursue their self-interests under different ideological camps called parties, and the available opportunities should be as a result of the interests an aspiration of the people. Hence as a government of the people for the people and by the people (EPSTEIN 2011, 819-826), then the nearer the decision making is to the people in a system the closer the system is to democracy. Generally, there are two kinds of democracy. The first is the Athenian or direct democracy which gives room for popular participation and the second, is the representative democracy which is only an adulterated form of the first for the purpose of convenience. By implication, the more the elements of popular participation in a system, the closer it is to the ideals of democracy (*Compare* SCHUMPETER, 1942:268-69; LIPSET 1959:71, HOFFMAN and GRAHAM, 2006:113-15 and DEWEY, SCHNEIROV and FERNANDEZ 2014: 179-180, HOOK 1939:31-46, BUSIA 1971:162, and HELD 2009: 211).

Whatever the outcome of the foregoing analysis, the fact however, is that a democratic society is a necessary condition for the smooth running of any democratic system. By democratic society, it means a society with cultural inclinations for respect for the freedom and right of individuals as well as resistance to intimidation. Critical among these are the rights of and tolerance for differing opinion, especially in the case of children and women.

In sum, we have established the fact that Nigeria is in the practice of democracy. Given the testimony of existing literature, the democracy in Nigeria is unconsolidated and the country, though rich in resources, counts as one of the poor

countries of the world. In addition, we have established the most important and distinguishing features of democracy which includes the following:

   a. It must be a citizen-driven polyarchy with vox-based legitimacy for each of its regimes.
   b. It must be a well functioning (uninterrupted) system (structure and infrastructure) regardless of whether it is the direct or the representative form.
   c. The democratic culture of tolerance and the will to resist infringement must be the foundation upon which it must be built.

As earlier indicated, Iweriebor (1997) attested to the longing among Nigerians for a Messiah who will rescue them from all social, political and economic quagmires. Unfortunately, he did not explain further what exactly he meant by the concept and how it affects Nigerians. This leads to the main argument of this paper. In this regards, the positions of two prominent African scholars will be critically examined. The two scholars would qualify to be a member of George Ayittey's internalist group. Internalism here refers to a theoretical position that the social, political and economic woes of Africa are as a result the bevaviours of its political officeholders (OLATUNJI 2015). In the view of Ayittey, (1999, 29-30), the internalist school of thought is made up mostly of newly groomed independent scholars and political activists who are united by the belief that the root causes of all the political challenges of Africa are shortcomings and failures of its leaders who themselves are Africans. That is, that the African post-colonial political leaders cause the political problems of the Post-colonial Africa.

   At a first glance "internalism" appears unmistakably opposed to its supposed alternative called "externalism"; the position and belief that colonialism and their antics such as slave trade, imperialism or balkanisation have caused the post-independence challenges of Africans and Africa (BUSIA 1971, 35). The opposition is however pretentious. First, they appear oppose each other, but in actual fact they are all sides of the same coin because they are all expressions of the belief in the Newtonian conception of causation. That is, whatever happens has a cause outside of the effect. They are all expressions of the belief that Africans are irredeemably doomed in the hands of some insurmountable malevolent (colonial or postcolonial) agents. It may currently be of no significant importance to rehearse the pretention between "internalism" and "externalism" in this paper. That has earlier been outlined in "Is Africa Merely an Effect?" (OLATUNJI 2012). It may be theoretically of interest however to note that an internalist is in some sense a frustrated externalist. African scholars who offered suggestions on identifying the root of the challenges of post-colonial African states at the wake of independence were mostly externalists. They thought that they were so sure that all the ills of all the African states were caused by its colonial past. Arguably, when for several years and decades the colonial masters had been deposed and Africans themselves began to hold apex political positions and the scholars observed that things had remained the same or were getting worse, then they began, out of frustration to think either that though the

colonial masters were not good but were at least better than the Africans who took over from them or that both were equally dreadful. Ayittey testifies to this position by claiming that the internalists were new groomed scholars. Oke also mitigates the internalist position. He opines that some scholars have argued that colonialism cannot be the cause of African woes because in their opinion it is now half a century since the colonialists were stripped of political powers, but Africa is worse off than it was under the colonial rule (OKE 2006, 332-343). By implication, some of the earliest internalists were most likely externalists initially, but who out of frustration and hopelessness could not continue in that position and became converted to the new trend.

Ali Mazrui is definitely one of the first to exhibit the frustration in the foregoing discussion. He was one of the earliest African nationalist scholars to alter the trajectory of his literary criticism against African leaders, an attitude he direly paid for. As James Karioki (1974, 55-63) puts it, there is a widespread rejection of Ali Mazrui's works in spite of his objectivity and high standard of scholarship because African scholars believe that he is not committed to the aspirations of Africa of being quick to outline his criticisms against Africa and its leaders. As most of the earliest post-colonial African political philosophers would, Mazrui most probably had a very high esteem and hope that those he perceived as the political players of his time would bring about the liberated Africa of his dream, but felt disappointed when the dream was becoming farther than the sleep. Similarly, Claude Ake had blamed all the ills of Africa on the imperialist nature of colonialism and argued that "The present conditions of the third world countries is the effect of the slave trade, pillage, colonialism and unequal exchange" (AKE 1982: 153). Over time and most probably his share of the frustration, he began to question whether Africa was truly democratising (AKE, 1996a) and started to concede some blames to postcolonial African political actors. He says: in Africa, argues Ake, the elite supported democracy only as a means to power, while international agencies supported it as an asset to structural adjustment and states in Africa got trapped between (AKE, 1996b) Certain things make the arguments of the internalists that the postcolonial challenges of Africa have caused by postcolonial political officeholders appear credible at first glance. The arguments of the internalists appear logical considering the fact that Africa was exposed to only a short period of colonisation, and it has been over half a century since the wave of independence in Africa. It appears logical to say that colonialism is too short-lived to be completely responsible for the post-colonial political troubles of Africa. In addition, many other places, including Asia, America and parts of Europe, were also once colonised but they have recovered from their experiences and have become politically stable (DIAMOND 1995, 1-66). Also, South Africa, which is the last to gain its political independence, arguably is currently more politically stable than some African states such as Ethiopia and Liberia that were arguably never colonised and many others like Nigeria that had gained their political independence earlier. Given that situation, it becomes tempting to assume that the internalist position is true. Logically however, the position rather

than proving the internalists right, merely justifies the argument that colonialism is not the cause of the political challenges of any of the African states.

Secondly, Africa is a continent alleged by some historians to have peopled the world for several centuries and they sometimes regarded as the cradle of humankind (BEN-JOCHANNAN 1971, 5-64). In spite of the several centuries of humankind and human societies on the continent of Africa, it is still difficult to match the rate and quality of social evolution in Africa with its long history? Why were the African people unable to stage a joint resistance against the colonial invasion in the first place? Why was the level of social cooperation among African communities still low at the time of the colonial invasion? Why were places like Europe, which perhaps were peopled much later than Africa, able to put up such unity of purpose as to colonise Africa, while Africa was unable? These, perhaps, are some of the reasons why some scholars have opted for the internalist thesis (UNEKE, 2010, 111-128). Though the questions may have made the internalist thesis attractive, they do not offer any conclusive justification for internalism as a theory in the explanation of the social and political problems confronting many Africa states today.

With specific reference to Nigeria, Chinua Achebe and Larry Diamond are prominent among those who hold the internalist positions. While Achebe is a Nigerian, Diamond is not. Both of them have had reasons to theorise on the social and political situation of Nigeria. Achebe writes as a literary scholar and as a specialist in the field of African literature arts of international repute, and Diamond is a social scientist with specialisation in democratic political science studies. He has served and written as specialist for various governmental and non-governmental institutions around the world.

In [Things Fall Apart], Achebe tries to support his explanation of the political problems of Africa. Though he was referring specifically to Nigeria, he indirectly refers to Africa as a whole. According to Achebe, the trouble with Nigeria, as with many other African nations, is situated in a failure of leadership resulting from incompetence as well as the moral and psychological weaknesses of its leaders (AYITTEY 1999 29). Although he has tried to give some share of the blame to other external forces in *The Trouble with Nigeria* (ACHEBE 1984) and in *The Anthill of Savanah,* (ACHEBE 1997), which for most part are his main writings that deal with politics. In those literatures, he probably was conscious that he was discussing politics and as a result, his consciousness and political alertness could influence his position. However his positions even in other writings that appear to be less politics related and where he was less conscious of politics have betrayed his mindset as a consistent internalist. A good example of this is his position in [Things Fall Apart].

Giving an analysis of the character of Okonkwo in Achebe's [Things Fall Apart] might also help one to understand Achebe's position regarding the political crisis of Africa. Okonkwo's life was dominated by the fear of failure and weakness. The fear was far more intimate and deeper than the fear of the gods and the malevolent natural and supernatural forces. Okonkwo's fear was a deep-rooted fear

of being or becoming like Nnoka, his father. He hated to be, or to be seen as, anything his weak father loved or stood for. Comparing Okonkwo with the post-colonial political leaders of Africa, it implies that the political leaders of post-colonial Africa have become authoritarians and tyrants, because they want to be radically different from their pre-colonial and colonial predecessors who could not resist external invasion. By implication, therefore, the actions of the post-colonial African leaders, like those of Okonkwo, have led the African nation into despair like the case of Umuofia. In a naive reaction to the weaknesses of their pre-colonial ancestors and predecessors, as in the case of Okonkwo to his father in Umuofia, the post-colonial African leaders have made political choices and acted in a manner that has resulted in the political instability found in Africa today.

It could be true that the inability of Okonkwo to manage his reaction against the weaknesses of his father has brought hullaballoo and despair to Umuofia. Is it not also possible that if Okonkwo's father had not been the weakling that he was, Okonkwo would not have had reasons to fear being a weak leader? If anyone must give a causal explanation to the problems of Umuofia, to what extent can one exonerate the laziness and the phlegmatic nature of Nnoka, the father of Okonkwo? This interpretation justifies Mackeka's interpretation of another literature titled A Man of the People by Achebe. According to Mackeka (2014, 14-18), "Achebe (sic) introduces a paradigm shift from the culture of blame shifting which characterises most polemics (defending by attacking) against colonialism towards a culture of internal focus." A simplistic interpretation of [Things Fall Apart] would conceive Achebe as indirectly attacking the colonial intruders, but a careful study of his other literatures will expose his literary intent.

In another instance and as noted, Achebe puts it succinctly that the problem with Nigeria is neither land, climate or the scarcity or excess of any resources. According to him, the root of all the social and political challenges from which the country suffer is leadership. He states that the quagmires of Nigeria emerge from the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the challenges of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership (ACHEBE 1984, 1). He argues that:

> a leader's no-nonsense reputation might induce a favourable climate but in order to effect lasting change it must be followed up with a radical programme of social and economic re-organisation or at least a well-conceived and consistent agenda of reform which Nigeria stood and stands, in dire need of.

It must be mentioned at this juncture, that this paper does not specifically intend to debate on whether any set of people are responsible for the problems of Nigeria or not. For most part, that has been attended to in Olatunji (2012). In that paper, the logical implications of the statement being true that some external forces are responsible for the challenges of Nigeria have been attended to in another paper. The question of whether political office holders qualify to be called leaders or not have also been examined in another paper (OLATUNJI and OKE 2014). This paper

therefore examines one of the implications of the attitude of scholars accepting and propagating the belief that political office holders are leaders and are consequently responsible for the problems and/or the solutions to the current challenging situations of Nigeria.

Like Achebe, Larry Diamond is one of the staunch internalist. Diamond (1988, 1995, 20-37) acknowledges that almost all the "third world" nations that have recently gained their independence, have attempted governing themselves through Western style democratic institutions and have experienced political failures. In spite of the uniformity of this failure, Diamond does not see any link between the alleged causal factors. Rather, as it is characteristic of the internalists, Diamond attributes different causal factors to the political crises in different African states. He attributes political conflicts in Nigeria to ethnicity or tribal sentiments and corruption among the political leaders, while human rights violations, poor democratic functioning, social inequality, among others, were said to be the causes of the political problems in other post-colonial African states (DIAMOND 1995, 1-66). Like Achebe, in other publication, Diamond (1991, 73-85) attributes the situation in Africa altogether as that of institutional defect as a result of leadership failure.

In "Nigeria's Federal Democracy: will it survive?" Diamond (2002) agrees that Democracy is the only option available for the survival of Nigeria. Diamond though was careful not to out rightly advocate federalism or any form of government. Nevertheless, he says the federal government should act as the arbiter of justice and national moderator to avoid misuse and abuse of power at the regional, state and local government levels. In that piece, he argues that the democracy should be arranged in a fashion that makes the central government less attractive and with less interference from the federal government in local affairs of states and local governments. In his opinion much of the problems would have been avoided if Nigerians could behave responsibly and with restrain. To do so however, government, according to him, should provide the required incentives such as making the central government less attractive through some institutional and constitutional provisions.

By implication, Diamond means to say that the federal government of Nigeria should hold ward chairpersons responsible and accountable. Unfortunately however, Diamond does not specify how the people would identify whether or not to support the federal government. He assumes that the federal government will always be right. There is nothing in Diamond's articulation to guarantee that the situation of Nigeria will necessarily improve once the political system is arranged in a manner that makes the central government less attractive. Although, he could be correct to think that such arrangement could help to discourage politicians from seeing the federal seats as opportunities and venues for embezzlement and misappropriation of national resources. However, Diamond has not specified how the same crop of people could be prevented from shifting their base from the federal to state or local government levels. He has not also specified how the situation could be prevented

from becoming chaotic and a free-for-all scrambling if the central government becomes less attractive.

In effect, Diamond expects the emergence of an honest and effective regime, institutions and political actors who on their own decision will summon interest and courage to summon all the moral and epistemological courage required to right all the social and political ills of Nigerian democratic system. Although, his position keeps changing from time to time, whatever be his future view, he currently opines that:

> If the crucial functions of regulating conduct and administering elections cannot be entrusted to the ultimate authority of the politicians, there is in Nigeria an alternative authority, the military. There is no inherent reason why it cannot be employed to check the abuse of power by civilians while they are governing, rather than having continually to put an end to their abuses and clean up their mess by overthrowing them. (DIAMOND 1984)

In this regard, Diamond seems to agree that politicians need to be put under check. However, he does not believe in the ability of Nigerians to carry out the task as their counterparts in other parts of the globe are capable of doing. He believes that such a crucial responsibility should be given to some special set of people such as the military, and perhaps, the international community. It may be noted however that Diamond remembers the history of military interventions in government in Nigeria. Perhaps too he is familiar with the story of the level of corruption perpetuated by them. It becomes strange that the same category of people have been recommended by Diamond to ensure the smooth running of democracy and to hold the politicians accountable. Diamond does not even specify who should employ the military. He does not tell us what happens when a bad politician employs the corrupt military. It is also questionable that a corrupt politician will employ anyone, let alone the military who was once corrupt (let us assume that the situation has changed) to check the politician's own abuse of power or office.

Generally, there are a large number of factors identified by the internalists as the causes of the political problems confronting the democratic project in Africa. They are far more numerous than have been identified in the externalist camp. The factors identified by the internalists include, but are not limited to, corrupt leadership, incompetent leadership, ethnicity, mixture of traditionalism or pseudo-republicanism, economic backwardness, nepotism and god-fatherism, self-perpetuation in office, weak civil society, human rights violation, electoral violence and malpractice, social and distributive injustice, and political paranoia. As in the case of the externalists, the internalists factors are united by the fact that they are blamed on the political leaders and the elite. Like the externalists, the internalists believe that events must have causes and that all events, including human and social ones, must be explained in the manner of the Newtonian physics. Unlike the externalists, however, the internalists propose no specific order in which the sub-factors affect each other. That is, what

one scholar considers as having caused, the other is said to have been caused by the same thing by another. For instance, in Mulinge and Lesetedi (1998,15-28), corruption causes poverty, ethnicity and ethnic conflicts, whereas in Mngomezulu (2008), ethnicity and self-perpetuation in office has caused ethnic conflicts, poverty, corruption and all the other economic and political problems of Africa. Ultimately however, many of them agree that the post-colonial leaders are responsible for the social and political challenges of African states. The numbers of those who accept the postcolonial internal leadership origin of the problems notwithstanding, all of them agree that the solution to the problems lie solely with the political officeholders whom they refer to as political leaders.

At first sight, the argument of the internalists that the political office holders are the political leaders and that the political leaders determine the state of the country appear convincing for a number of reasons, among which are:

1.   It appeared obvious that many of those who took over from colonial rulers were not adequately prepared for the roles they were to perform in the post-colonial politics and governance in Africa. As Tokozile Mavis Mackeka (2014, 14-18) has interpreted Achebe as arguing using the example of Nigeria, the post-colonial African leaders lacked the mental and social experience and capacity to chart the progressive course of governance required of them (*see also* IJEWEREME AND DUNMADE 2014, 24-38). Arguing therefore that the problems of postcolonial Africa exist because those who took over from the colonial rulers were inadequately prepared would be received as nothing but the obvious. In addition, it would be accepted as truth for anyone to maintain the position that the solution to the problem is to search for honest and credible leaders.

2.   Some of the frequently cited example of good and credible leader in Africa is Nelson Mandela. Fortunately, South Africa and its neighbouring Botswana are identified as appreciable examples of working democracies in Africa (INMAN 2013, 1-38). It becomes difficult to argue that the credibility of South African democracy is not as a result of the person and leadership qualities of Nelson Mandela. How else would anyone convince a common mind that it was not the person of Mandela that determined the status of democratic practice in South Africa?

3.   One of the theories of social change is based on the influence of charismatic leaders in influencing change in society. Many national histories in the world and especially in Africa and the histories of heroes and heroines, the natural tendency to attribute national events to the heroes and heroines attached to the history of any community becomes very difficult to resist. The history of Dubai's fortune cannot begin or end without mentioning Muhammad Rashi or/and his predecessor Maktum Rashid who for most part are seen as the engineers of its socio-economic progress. The two emirs reigned supreme when the economic development of Dubai accelerated between 2003 and now. The progress of Dubai is often attributed to the strategic doggedness, especially on the part of Muhammad Rashid who has ruled from 2006 till date (RUGH 2007, 97-122). If the kings are pointed as the political leaders

who orchestrated the progress of Dubai, why should the democratic president of Nigeria not be referred to as a political leader? Comparatively, the democratic president in Nigeria is conceived as the Nigerian equivalent of the Dubai Emirs. If the Kings ruled as leaders, the president is erroneously conceived as a leader in his own right regardless of the political practice and culture in the two places under different circumstances.

4.   In the popular conceptions of Leadership, it is believed that motivation, creativity, hierarchy, good vision, influence and power among others are the constitutive elements of leadership (AXELROD 2008, 1-7, MILLER 2008, 7-11, MASCIULLI, MOLCHANOV & KNIGHT 2012). Exponents of the popular conception of leadership as an essential component and core element of multi-causal processes in any government for the purpose of producing concrete political results and which accounts for differences across and within individual nation states. These conceptions of leadership give the impression that leaders make themselves first then they help influencing the making of their societies regardless of the political systems of their societies.

5.   An objective truth is that some regimes are better than others. At least some economic indices show that some regimes perform better than others. Given infrastructural developments and improvements it is easy to see when a society is improving or otherwise. Consequently, it is easy to say that a society S performs better during the regime of *P* than during that of *K*. This kind of comparative analysis impress on us the belief not only that the head of government in regime S is better qualified than that of K or that the head of K government is more corrupt than that of S. More importantly, it can hardly ever be true that corrupt leadership has no effect on society. However, the question becomes analytically complicated when it is questioned whether corrupt heads of government cannot in some situations be responsible for higher productivity.

        Whatever the result of the foregoing analysis, there is still a need for another level of analysis. The question that leads to the analysis in question is that of who is the leader in a democratic setting? Although there are different conceptions of democracy, and some are oppose to the other. The Schumpeterian conception of democracy as an institutional arrangement for competing for votes (SCHUMPETER 1942, 250-269) seems to be in direct opposition with the Deweyan conception of democracy as a way of life or even as a moral ideal (DEWEY, 1927: 73–81, BUSIA 1971:162-172). In spite of their differences, none of them denies the crucial role of the populace, the electorate or the common people in the development and consolidation of a democracy. As earlier noted in this paper, a democracy is a system in which the people (on the basis of majority) decide and determine the trajectory of government (LORD, 2003). Expectedly, those who make broad policies in any organisation are the leaders, the specific expert who advises on specific issues are mere employees, advisers and/or technical representatives. In the same vein, the majority should be the leaders in any democracy. Their leadership quality is a function of the extent of the quality of direction they offer to their political

representatives, the quality of their responsiveness to the collective economic need of their society and extent of opportunities and tolerance offered the minority to air their views.

From the foregoing analysis, the internalists are very inaccurate to refer to democratically elected presidents in Nigeria as leaders in the first instance. Rather they are mere messengers of the people who have elected them. They hold their positions only to the extent that the people want them to be in there as technicians in particular regimes but not government. A regime is not exactly the same as government. In a government both office holders and ordinary people are equally part of a government, but the people have elected or selected those who would act and hold powers on their behalf in any particular democratic regime. This is not also the same in other political systems such as military or absolute monarchy as previously in parts of Europe (HEGEL 2004; DIAMOND 2004, AND TESCHKE 2002, 5-48).

The expected outcome of the position of scholars is that the people look forward and towards the emergence of a self-cautioned morally balanced political "leader" who on his/her own accord would turn around the Nigeria situation. This is what has been described in this paper as negative Messianism. It is the art of believing that a messiah will appear who will right all the wrongs of society. It is negative in the case of Nigeria because on the one hand the democratic system in place in Nigeria does not permit anyone to arrogate the position of leadership to political representatives in the first place. Therefore, as long as Nigeria remains in the practice of democracy it is hopeless to hope that a political Messiah will emerge among the political representatives, let alone as president, who on his/her own decide to correct all the ills of Nigeria. On the other hand, the hope for the emergence of a liberator ends up making the people apathetic while abandoning their crucial roles as vanguards and leaders in a democracy. Democracy derives etymologically from the Greek word demos, when demos means people, and the suffix *cratia,* which translates manageably as rule or government. The two ultimately translate as government in which the supreme rulership rests on the people (G. L. SABINE AND T. L. THORSON 1995, 66, R. INGLEHART 1977, R. INGLEHART 1979: 305-342. This position has earlier been defended in C. P. Olatunji and Oke (2014, 134-150) that if democracy means leadership that rests mainly on the common people, any form of democratic government in which leadership is dictated by the rich or any selected few is definitely a corruption of its original nature as Aristotle has noted (FUCHS 2000: 250-280). It is an oligarchy not a democracy. Furthermore, if we look at it from the perspectives of etymology and earliest practices in parts of Greece democracy is distinguished from other forms of governance by its intrinsic nature of conceding leadership to the common people. It would be wrong for instance to assume that the people have elected leaders. People cannot elect leaders. It is in itself an aberration if people elect leaders. Such leadership will either be resting on a very weak support or will be abused. On the one hand, it may be resting on a weak support because it is itself stronger than the authority that puts it in place. On the

other hand, it may be abused because the authority that put it in place will be in no good stand to put it under control. It is a misuse of language to conceptualise democracy as a system of government in which people determine their leaders, when by leader we mean political masters. On the contrary, the people only determine or elect their representatives who must live to the demand of their stewardship because leadership remains with the people (electorate).

Therefore, wherever the people are ignorant of their leadership role in a democracy or abandon it and their messengers become their leaders the result is that of blatant abuse of power, privilege and office by political opportunists who merely have gained undue ascendancy, and who would not stop at doing anything to ensure that authority does not meander into the hands of the people. The name Nigeria is now almost synonymous with corruption, electoral violence, poverty and terrorism. These could be mere strategies by the opportunists called leaders to entrench and perpetuate themselves and their allies to ensure that the leadership role remains stole from the rightful keepers. The only effort required is to put them at the appropriate place in the system.

This could be done in two ways: through the gun or through the thumb. The first is violent and involves violent protests, and the latter is civil. Many of the North African states such as Libya (TABIB 2014), English (BAUER and SCHWEITZER 2011), Tunisia (OTTAWAY 2013, SCHILLER 2011, 6-18) and Morocco (ARIEFF 2013, 6-7) have attempted to solve their political issues through the first means. The main advantage of the violent revolution approach is that it is capable of spontaneous, quicker and bolder result. However the method does not necessarily guarantee that the target result would authentically be achieved or last long.

Egypt and Libya have got their share of violent revolution, but the consequence of the unsettled moments on their political economy may regrettably continue for a very long time to come. One of the biggest disadvantages of this method is that rather than resulting in the target change, some group of aggrieved individuals who have been kept out of power as a result of political dynamics of a country could use the opportunity to settle their political scores or to entrench themselves. They simply hijack the processes to pronounce themselves as the long awaited messiahs.

The machinery for the achievement of the second is the ballot. What the people need to do is first to find a means to hold the political officeholders accountable even from the grassroots. That is, the people for instance should hold their Ward leaders, councillors, officeholders and representatives whom they see regularly accountable. It is understood that the ordinary people may not have access to their senators and state governors who may decide to fortify themselves with security agents and personnel or simply relocate permanently to Abuja, the federal capital city away from the constituency of the electorates that voted them. Doing so could make it difficult for the ordinary electorate to have access to their representative or governor. Although the social media provides platforms and opportunities to reduce spatial gaps and increase accessibility, it is still not advisable

or recommended that the ordinary citizenry runs after their Senators and state Governors in order to hold them responsible or accountable, except in cases of violent revolutions, which is itself recommendable only with conditions.

When the ordinary people in political wards hold their Ward party chairpersons and councillors accountable, without much ado, the councillors will hold the local government chairpersons and state representative responsible. It is worth noting that the thinking, as implied in the suggestions of scholars that the political and economic situation of Nigeria could radically improve from top to bottom is only a mirage because the president is not likely to help check the local councillors and make them obedient to the laws. Even if there are federal rules and laws, the effectiveness of those federal laws would largely depend on the effectiveness of the local people.

These in turn will ensure that the president behaves appropriately. In Nigeria however, giving the examples of Achebe and Diamond, scholars have continually impressed it on the minds of the people that there is no solution to the corrupt nature of their leaders. Achebe and Diamond are by no means the only scholars who give that impression. All internalist scholars are guilty of it. By arguing that the postcolonial politicians are the causes of and solutions to the postcolonial shortcomings of Nigeria they give the impression that the people are perfectly innocent and are mere helpless victims of the insurmountable malevolent forces named "political leaders."

The position maintained in this paper is that politicians are not super humans. In the case of Nigeria they have only remained corrupt and insensitive to the plight of the people and would retain their impunity until such a time when the people are able to demonstrate that they have the power to put the politicians under check. The best place to begin is at least for once to device a means by which their votes could count in placing or displacing any regime. That is, to send out the signal that the people have the right and can actually change, alter or remove even the incumbent regime. Politicians can hardly continue in their impunity and self-conceit when they are aware that the people are watchful and are sensitive to their behaviour or that the people would change them for their opponents at poll in the next election. The only reason why politicians would continue to take the people for granted in a democracy is that the people still regard themselves as passive followers rather than the leaders that they are. This second method though is slow and the people seldom use it until they have frustratingly been pushed to the wall. The difficulty involved in making the majority of people see things rightly that a particular regime is actually not performing and therefore needs to be changed especially in a democratic system where everyone has the right to their opinion is a huge challenge. This is coupled with the fact that the rich corrupt politicians could use the state funds to induce the public towards seeing things their own ways. It is actually the most tedious path to take, but it is far more effective when considered from the point of view of its long term results. In addition, the change achieved through that method is usually more

reliable than the first because it would imply a sort of change rooted in the mind and will of the people themselves.

The position maintained in this paper does not in any way imply that the efficiency or moral standard of a president does not amount to anything in Nigeria. At least, some individuals and officeholders could begin to emulate the social behaviours of their president or governor or as the case may be. The point here is, there is no guarantee that such a top-bottom arrangement will go any far. Whatever achievement is made using such the top-bottom method would be superficial because it does not take root in the mentality of the people. Should there emerge another president or federal representative who decides to do otherwise, because those are not his duties or priorities, then the successes recorded by previous regimes in such direction relapses. The best way to ensure continuity is to entrust it into the hands of the people themselves.

Like in the case of the religious cases of Messianic Expectation, some previous philosopher of politics (both the indigenous and the foreign like Achebe and Diamond respectively) have raised the false hope that there will emerge a political Messiah who will save Nigeria from all its social, economic and political quagmires. Politicians have also taken advantage of the "messianic" expectation to present themselves as the "He" (saviour) who has come, only to further exploit the people or leave them worse than they met them.

It is also a misconception of democracy even though it is done *ignocently*. The people have misconceived leadership in a democratic system. As explained in Olatunji and Oke (2014, 134-150) for the people to remain passive followers is a sort of innocence based on mere ignorance of their legitimate roles, which the politicians would want to hide from the people in order to maintain the *status quo*.

Conclusion
The paper resumed, in agreement with most scholars who have taken interest in the social, political and economic situation of Nigeria, with an acknowledgement of the political instability of the democratic practice in Nigeria. That is, the paper agrees that Nigeria experiences political, economic and even social challenges. It agrees that in spite of regime changes the situation has not improved. It notes how Nigerians have had the hope that mere ascendance into the position of governance (which they have mistaken for the position of leadership) some crop of politicians would rescue the nation from its political challenges. The paper identifies the mistakes (error in thinking) committed by thinking in that manner. Therefore, the paper made a paradigm shift from the theoretical tradition of shifting blames between the colonial and postcolonial elements and forces. It simply examined one of the basic assumptions upon which literary and theoretical positions that postcolonial Nigerian leaders are the causes of the challenges that currently plague the country is erected. Employing the examples of Chinua Achebe and Larry Diamond, the paper employs the epistemological rigor of analysis and logic to argue that the two scholars have directed their criticisms in the wrong and misleading direction not merely by

identifying the political leaders of Nigeria as the cause of the woes of the country, but more importantly by attributing leadership to the wrong category of persons in a democratic system. The paper demonstrates how the country could continue to pursue mere shadows by looking in the wrong direction while their desired solutions remain distant dreams.

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