

Evaluation of Machiavelli Prince, Elite Activities and Their Influence on Policy Process in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

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Abstract

For more than six decades, the Nigerian basket of achievements has not recorded an appreciable outcome. This is despite its unparalleled endowment in human capital and mineral resources. This work posits that Machiavellianism which champions the cause of political expediency above morality and the use of deceit or manipulation in statecraft is at the centre of the problem. Adopting secondary data and content analysis as methods of data collection and analysis, the study observed that over the years, the glorification of deception, craft and shrewdness as essential tools in the governance of a state has had a direct negative bearing on the Nigerian state thereby making the virtuous pursuit of the common good unrealizable. It was discovered that due to the excessive craze for political power and its retention at all costs, Nigerian politician stops at nothing including engaging in all kinds of impunity to see this desired goal realized. This has made decent leadership in Nigeria very elusive while the triumph of desperation is the order of the day. In the final submission, the study concludes that since philosophy seeks the ideal always, politics in Nigeria should be seen as that which provides the best of ends and not as a "do or die" affair and a means of exploitation of the commonwealth. It therefore recommends the strengthening of the spread of the philosophic life, deepening of Nigeria's civic education curriculum, sensitization of the people and moral regeneration as panaceas for the growth of democratic values and good governance in Nigeria.

Keywords: Elite, Machiavelli, Prince Theory, Policy Process

Introduction

Capitalism has left an indelible landmark of contradictions in the 21st century with rising conflicts and war of terror taking varied new dimensions each day. It has insidiously extolled its inanity to the struggle to perpetuate class antagonism, shrouded in anarchism and terrorism in the governance of people and the economy. Incognito to the portents of its mischief, capitalism has unleashed untold terror and suffering to mankind; and when juxtaposed to the annals of development, it betrays the very principles of equality, justice, fairness and assured sustained subsistence of the population and its transformation. This capitalist contradiction manifested in the anguish expressed by President George W. Bush of the United States when he tautologically tortes that every nation in every region of the world now has a decision to make either you are with us or you are with the terrorist (Adeleke, 2004:p. 15).

The Bosnian podium exacerbated the contradictions of American capitalism and its clandestine entrenchment of war in terror. Bush admitted that the contradiction of capitalism was largely responsible for the endless attacks his country has witnessed, and they have unleashed in the struggle to protect capitalism. This was demonstrated when he declared that: The deliberate and deadly attacks that were carried out against our country were more than acts of terror (Nwolise, 2005, p. 231). It does portends that these deadly attacks which were more than acts of terror were unleashed because of the unmitigated evil arising from the American policing of global governance through entrenched propaganda of liberal democracy which ensued liberal political independence, anchored on capitalism. Most nations that ascribed to liberal democracy have toed American-style governance. A declaration of war on terror is synonymous with acceptance of the crisis of the capitalist system, with American capitalism embarking on new structural and policy changes to contain new offensive means of capitalism that were "redefined and championed both by the United States and the world's security system (Adeleke, 2004; Nwolise, 2005).

The declared terrorist war in North Korea, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and other countries was amplified because of the perceived Al-Qaeda network, whose helmsman was trained and couched in the embers of American capitalism. The imperial status of American capitalism would rather see these states identified above as the axis of evil, an epitome that characterized the choirmaster and chief priest of capitalism to sing songs of war and wage capitalist massive attacks on hapless masses of people in Afghanistan. Topping the Taliban government is a matter of moral suasion, which capitalism ought to question its quest for solitude since the bulk of mankind is united to forge common parlance in dismantling the ills entrenched by capitalism and its contradictions.

In recent times we have equally seen the absence of ethical values and high levels of deception and falsehood being used by the world superpowers, especially the United States of America and Great Britain for continuous domination of world politics. This growing phenomenon was aptly captured by Joseph Rotblat in his article Ethics and Politics where he asserts that "nothing demonstrates more vividly the absence of ethical values in the conduct of world affairs, and the loss of trust in our in our political leaders, than the recent events that have led to the Iraq war" Nwolise (2005).

It is interesting to note that before Machiavelli rulers and princes had always found the need to use immoral means like `the art of cruelty, falsehood, and killings to gain and retain political power and in so doing they had to suffer the problem of guilt and moral qualms (Cassier, 1969; Grant, 1997). But with the introduction of the concept of Machiavellianism which emphasizes the relegation of morality in politics, leaders and rulers now saw the adoption of immoral tactics as not only a rule but also a necessary tool in political mechanization. What was a simple matter of fact, with all weaknesses and inconsistencies pertaining, even in the evil, to accidental and contingent things has become after Machiavelli a matter of rights, with all the firmness and steadiness proper to necessary things. In other words, political leaders have come to accept the Machiavellian approach as a necessary rule (condition sine qua non) rather than an option for the attainment and preservation of political power (Mansfield, 1996; Anglo, 2005). The counsel by Machiavelli to intending rulers in his book has been both misconstrued and misapplied by succeeding statesmen. There is no doubt that men like Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler, Babangida and Abacha of Nigeria, Bush and Blair of the United States of America and Britain, have come to adopt some of the recommendations of Machiavelli. For instance, Adolph Hitler was said to

have made the following comments concerning the idea in "The Prince" "Hitler had read and reread The Prince of the Great Florentine.

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Machiavelli highlighted power as an essential ingredient of politics. To his moral code of individual prescribed by the church cannot provide guidelines to the ruler and a ruler must remember that whatever brings success is due to power. For acquiring political power he can use any type of Means. He said politics is a constant power struggle. All politics is power. For Machiavelli absolute state was the End; and for this means was power. He said the sole aim of the "Prince" was to make the country strong and united, establish peace and order and expel foreign invaders. To achieve this end any means would be satisfactory. Therefore, the central theme of Machiavelli's political idea is power (Ochulor, et al, 2003).

From the sentiments espoused by Machiavelli in The Prince, it is clear that he believed that politics and conventional morality cannot go together. For him, acquiring power and retaining

power is the objective of politics, and should as such be the uppermost or ultimate concern of anyone engaging in politics. Being that since Nigeria gained its political independence in 1960, Nigerian politicians have consciously and overtly pursued the business of politics as if the primary goal of politics is the acquisition and sustenance of power by any necessary means, many scholars and observers of the Nigerian society have described the Nigerian political scene as a classic case of Machiavelli's political philosophy as articulated in *The Prince*.

This study focuses on the proposition that the Nigerian political scene presents a classic case of Machiavelli's political philosophy as articulated in *The Prince*. The choice of this area of study is informed by the need to provide a coordinated response to the myriad of challenges confronting Nigeria as a nation, as many believe that the seeming playing of politics in the Machiavellian way by Nigerian political elites is partly responsible for the socio-political and economic problems in the country. Consequently, the underlying argument of this study is that Nigerian politics can be seen to be characterized by the guiding principle "the end justifies the means" articulated by Machiavelli in *The Prince*. Key to the argument is the examination of the Nigerian political scene, Machiavelli's ideas in *The Prince*, the Italian society of his time, the circumstances surrounding his writing of *The Prince*, as well as the various interpretations of the book. Notwithstanding that Machiavelli and the ideas he expressed in *The Prince* are interpreted in various ways by various scholars, it is generally believed that the ideas cannot be isolated from the political situation of his city-state, Florence, and Italy back then. Though Florence or Italy of Machiavelli's era is quite different in culture and civilization from contemporary Nigeria, findings from the study indicate that the two political situations are similar in terms of human nature, lack of national cohesion, and application of violence and cruelty in socio-political activities. Also, many Nigerian politicians and even citizens at large consciously or unconsciously practicalize Machiavelli's views in *The Prince* and there exists some form of connection between practising such ideas and the present political problems confronting Nigeria as a nation.

This study is not a mere speculative venture. It is geared towards reawakening the conscience of the people especially the political rulers on how to curb the ills in politics especially in Nigeria. This study also presents us with the intricacies of politics devoid of morality as well as proffering recommendations towards the way forward. It seeks ways of de-emphasizing the obsession with power, fame and wealth, thus restoring the value of man as a moral and intelligent being who should take responsibility for every one of his actions. The work will also help the larger society to recognize that impunity in governance does more harm than good. Hence, the an imperative need to avoid all forms of impunities and sharp practices in the quest for the acquisition and retention of political offices and positions. In response to the findings, the study concludes with some practical suggestions on how Nigeria may get over its political problems, which among others include the need for a change of structure of the Nigerian federation and mentality on the part of all Nigerian citizens.

Conceptual clarification

Elite

The concept of 'elites' is based on the notion that every society holds a ruling minority, a group that controls and disputes the most important power sources. Not only do elites dispute power (reaching different levels of conflict and violence), but new elites also enter the game through

different mechanisms of elite recruitment. Thus, the core of elite theory relies on explaining elite behaviour, elite interaction, elite transformation and, ultimately, the connection between those instances and state outcomes (Dogan and Higley, 1998; Higley and Burton, 2006). In political science and sociology, elite theory is a theory of the state that seeks to describe and explain power relationships in contemporary society. The theory posits that a small minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and policy-planning networks, holds the most power this power is independent of democratic elections. Through positions in corporations or on corporate boards, and influence over policy-planning networks through the financial support of foundations or positions with think tanks or policy-discussion groups, members of the "elite" exert significant power over corporate and government decisions. An example of this belief is in the Forbes magazine article (published in December 2009 entitled- The World's Most Powerful People, in which Forbes purported to list the 67 most powerful people in the world, assigning one "slot" for each 100,000,000 of the human population

The basic characteristics of this theory are that power is concentrated, the elites are unified, the non-elites are diverged and powerless, the elite's interests are unified due to common backgrounds and positions and the defining characteristic of power is institutional position. Elite theory opposes pluralism, a tradition that assumes that all individuals, or at least the multitude of social groups, have equal power and balance each other out in contributing to democratic political outcomes representing the emergent, aggregate will of society. (Dye, 2004)

It is the psychological traits or characteristics of elites which separate them from the masses (Pareto, 2014). He classified elites into two types – those with the power or traits of 'lions' who use force to gain or retain power like military dictators and those who have the traits of a 'fox' using cunning and guile to get their way. While this classical elite theory is often criticized for its simplicity. Elite theory stands in opposition to pluralism in suggesting that democracy is a utopian ideal. It also challenges any theories which argue the state acts as an autonomous institution. Elite theory's origins lie most clearly in the writings of Gaetano Mosca (1858- 1941), Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923), and Robert Michels (1876-1936). Mosca emphasized how tiny minorities out-organize and outwit large majorities, adding that "political classes" – Mosca's term for political elites – usually have "a certain material, intellectual, or even moral superiority" over those they govern (1923/1939, 51).

Pareto postulated that in a society with truly unrestricted social mobility, elites would consist of the most talented and deserving individuals; but in actual societies, elites are those most adept at using the two modes of political rule, force and persuasion, and who usually enjoy important advantages such as inherited wealth and family connections. Pareto sketched alternating types of governing elites, which he likened, following Machiavelli, to lions and foxes. Michels rooted elites ("oligarchies") in the need of large organizations for leaders and experts to operate efficiently; as these individuals gain control of funds, information flows, promotions, and other aspects of organizational functioning. Power becomes concentrated in their hands (Higley, 2010).

Schumpeter's Contribution to Elitism

If the views and arguments of Mosca, Pareto and Weber were accepted, then democracy explained in terms of government by the people, will be unreal and idealistic the problem reconciling elitism with democratic legitimacy has been resolved by the economist Joseph

Schumpeter. Schumpeter applied an economic approach to the problem of democratic legitimacy. He argued that elitism would be legitimated in a democracy by a political market composed of political parties and rival elites. The people were involved in the appropriate decision-making process. This model of Schumpeter was taken to its logical conclusion in Downs's economic theory of democracy (Downs, 1957).

Lasswell's and Mills' Contribution to Elitism

"The study of politics is the study of influence and the influential....The influential are those who get the most of what there is to getThose who get the most are elite, the rest are mass " (Lasswell, 1936) Different skill groups had emerged from class struggle in the democracy. (Laswell, 1936). This skill group included those skills in the use of violence such as military and police elite. However, none of the three elite types is reliably conducive to even this limited form of democracy.

The most common political situation of disunited elites has the basic feature of institutional instability. The circumstances in which disunited elites become ideologically or consensually united are unlikely to appeal to people with democratic sentiments. An ideologically united elite does not allow competitive politics, and where it exists meaningful actions motivated by democratic sentiments are nearly impossible. The basic settlements in which a few consensually united elites originated historically had as their principal features substantial elite autonomy from mass pressures together with the sacrifice of deeply held political principles for which opposing elites and their supporters had long stood. Position of their rapidly changing workforces than in the inability of these workforces to employ large parts of swollen and mostly young non-elite populations.

The illustrative point, in any case, is that non-elite configurations, sketched here as distinct workforce compositions and concomitant mixes of orientations toward elites, rule out certain elite actions and political outcomes at different stages in socioeconomic development, but they do not determine what elites will do and what political outcomes they will produce. Thus, early in socioeconomic development, non-elites tend toward a hostile view of power exercises by elites, and their impoverished situations give non-elites little reason to fear a general levelling of existing hierarchies. If elites are exceptionally incompetent or unlucky, a collapse of government authority that triggers a levelling revolution is possible. However, elites may circumvent this by couching effective appeals for non-elite support in terms of religious and other traditional beliefs. In socioeconomic development's industrial stage, a shift to fascist rule is possible, although entrenched elites may circumvent it by holding elections in which levelling forces simply lack sufficient numbers to prevail.

Classical elitism and the law of the small number

The core of classical elitism is the notion of elite inevitability. Classical elitists used the inevitability of elite rule as a premise to counter-argue with political liberalism and Marxism. They claimed that both democracy (as the government of the people or demos) and socialism (as a classless regime) were impossible outcomes because society is necessarily elite-driven. In the elitist view, elites could only be substituted by another set of elites, meaning that the majority is necessarily ruled by a minority. This notion was expressed in Pareto's (1935) law of elite circulation, in Mosca's (1939) notion of political class and Michels' (2009) iron law of

oligarchy. The principle or law of elite circulation holds that elites alternate in power as a result of either peaceful or violent competition.

Another interesting fact is that the first reception of elitism outside of Europe was not overall positive. During the first half of the 20th century, and even afterwards, many scholars considered elitism to be anti-democratic because of notions such as the law of the small number. Indeed, Pareto, Mosca and Michels were not good examples of democrats of their time, but there is nothing anti-democratic about elite theory per se unless one considers realism and democracy as incompatible notions (Sartori, 1987). In current political sociology and political science, one of the main purposes of elite theory relies on finding the causes of democratic rule, thus admitting democracy and, implicitly, prizing it.

Public Policy

A policy is a purposive course of action taken or adopted by those in power in pursuit of certain goals or objectives (Sapru, 2012). For decisions or policy-making by individuals and groups, no single framework can explain everything (Mill, 1963). Contribution to decision or policy analysis invariably overlaps and interacts. One focus serves as a critique of another. Policy is a plan of action, usually based on certain principles and decided on by a body or individual, designed to administer, manage and control access to resources.

Mlekwa (1976) defines public policy as "official statements determining the plan of action or what a government wants to do. It is therefore what government chooses to do or not to do. Public policy is the integrated courses and programs of action that the government has set and the framework or guide it has designed to direct actions and practices in certain problem areas (Ikelebge, 1996). Public policy is simply governmental action and programs of action towards solving societal problems.

More generally, it involves all that goes on from when the need and desire for a policy was articulated to its formation, enactment, implementation, performance and impact. The policy process in Nigeria could be described from the perspective consisting of several activities and interactions between the environment which generate demands, the political process in Nigeria could be described from the perspective consisting of several activities and interactions between the environment which generate demands, the political system or more accurately the conversion process which converts and translates demands and preferences into policy output and the implementation system which converts and translates demands and preferences into policy output and the implementation system which consists of implementation agencies and activities. The stages in the policy process could be seen as policy formulation, implementation and policy outcome.

Policy Making

This is and can be a tortuous process of problem determination, goals determination and clarification, generation of alternatives, data gathering, political bargaining and choice (Ikelegbe, 1996, p.31). It should be emphasized here that policymaking is not an act, but a culmination of an entire process within a given condition or environment and circumstances. It can simply be seen as the act or process of converting a policy into reality and enforcing a policy.

Machiavelli's Conception of the Prince

It is interesting to note that Machiavelli's political thought is centred on his counsel to the prince or a ruler to acquire or retain political power. This kind of thought has come to be tagged "Machiavellianism". It has become a common cliché associated with any government that operates without sufficient moral scruples. Despite some practical usefulness of this theory, a lot of unsavoury attacks have been directed at this political thought. This will be discussed later on in this study, but be it as it may, it is clear that Machiavelli intended to show the importance of having one omnipotent legislator to weld together the disintegrating units that makeup Italy. This legislator must be above the law and outside morality to conveniently and successfully carry out his task of unification, consolidation and influence. To be able to do this, the prince must freely use the tools of perfidy, cruelty, murder and any other means acceptable and expedient for the achievement of his objectives. He says that the use of force is indispensable but the prince should act in such a way that "when the act accuses him the result will excuse him" (Cassier, 1969). It is the end that justifies the means. Machiavelli's prince is supposed to be the perfect embodiment of shrewdness and self-control. The prince is advised to make his virtues and vices appear good.

Because Machiavelli's (1964; 1961) ideas as presented in *The Prince* centre on the acquisition and maintenance of power, this study which is aimed at showing the similarity between Machiavellianism and the political practices of Nigerian politicians and non-politicians alike will be anchored on the theory of power as posited by Makodi Biereenu Nnabugwu. Nnabugwu describes power as "the ability of 'A' to make 'B' do something 'B' would not ordinarily choose to do" or "the ability of a person to fulfill his desires or achieve his objective (Nnabugwu, 2012: 46). This aligns with Weber's definition of power as the chance of men to realize their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action" (Weber in Marshall, Gordon, 1998). The import of the above is that power is measured by one's ability to implant in people's mind interests that are contrary to their good (Lukes: 1974), and connotes three things: capacity to make decisions, set agenda and control thought (Lukes: 1974).

Machiavelli's Philosophy on Statecraft

Machiavelli's philosophy on statecraft is in the form of a suggestion to the Prince. These suggestions include but are not limited to the following:

- i. Machiavelli elaborates on the doctrine of *Raison D'Etat*: this means "Reason of state" which implies actions and policies promoting the safety and security of the state. Because the state must preserve itself before it promotes the welfare of its people. For preserving and safeguarding itself all means adopted by the state are justified by Machiavelli. According to him in politics, one is guided by the harsh realities of political life which is a struggle for power and survival. The actions of the state must be judged only based on *Raison D'Etat* (Machiavelli, 1986). i.e. independent, self-sufficient, well-ordered and well-maintained state. Prince should give priority to power. Morality and ethics have different spheres. It cannot be mingled with the reason of the state. Self-sufficiency of the state means the state will have its army, a strong and unified/ government, unity and integrity among the people and a solid economic foundation.
- ii. The end justifies the Means: this is a very famous statement of Machiavelli in which he justified the "Reason of state". This statement still enjoys intellectual debates as to the position of Machiavelli about a peaceful state (Machiavelli, 1970). This study would not be properly presented should this statement end to justify the means-fail to appear. He

assumed that the state is the highest form of human association. As such, it is to be worshipped like a deity even by sacrificing the individual. A ruler must remember that whatever brings success and power is virtuous even cunningness, shrewdness is justified. He may use instruments of lie, conspiracy, killings, etc. for the state. Thus he observed;

I will even venture to say that (the virtues) damage a prince who possesses and always observes them, but if he seems to have them, they are useful. I mean that he should seem compassionate, trustworthy, humane, honest, religious, and be so; but yet he should have his mind so trained that when it is necessary not to practice these virtues, he can change to the opposite and do it skillfully. It is to be understood that a Prince, especially a new Prince cannot observe all the things because he is often obliged, if he wishes to maintain government, to act contrary to faith, contrary to charity, contrary to humanity contrary to religion (Machiavelli, 1965).

He said absolute morality is neither possible nor desirable in politics. E.g. a corrupt state cannot be reformed without a heavy dose of violence. Politics is the most precarious game. It can never be played in a decent and orderly manner. The state has some primary objectives and responsibilities like the protection of life, maintenance of law and order and looking after the well-being of its members. Hence state must have adequate means at its disposal.

- iii. Prince must combine the qualities of a lion and a fox: The imitation of the fox (cunningness, foresight) will enable him to visualize his goal and means to achieve it while the imitation of the lion will give him the necessary strength and force to achieve that goal. A fox might have shrewdness and prudence of a fox would be reckless. Hence a ruler who wants to be very successful must combine in himself the qualities of both fox and lion. He must possess the bravery of the lion and cunningness of the fox, physical force is necessary when there is anarchy and indiscipline. But law and morality are essential to check the selfishness of people and to generate civic virtues (Machiavelli, 1986).
- iv. Use of double standard of politics: This implies one for the ruler and another for his subjects. Machiavelli (1964) said morality is not necessary for the ruler. He is the creator of law and morality hence the price is above both. A ruler has the primary duty of preserving the state. For this purpose, he may use instruments of lie, conspiracy, killing massacre etc (Subrata and Sushila, 2011). Because absolute morality is neither possible nor desirable in politics, he insisted that morality is essential for people. Only moral citizens willingly obey the laws of the state and sacrifice their lives for their nation. It cultivates a civic sense and patriotic spirit
- v. Maintain a strong army: He recommended constant military preparedness for the preservation of the state. Prince should organize a strong army to meet any internal and external threat to his power. A strong and regular army was a must for a state for its defence. The state should try to build up its own independent, regular and faithful army. Such an army should consist of its citizens and be prepared not only to defend its national borders but also to expand. The citizens must be trained for army service and there should be compulsory military training for all able persons (Machiavelli, 1961).
- vi. Prince should win popularity and council with wise: The Prince should try to win popularity, goodwill and affection of his people. He should keep his subjects materially contented by not taking them for granted.

Comparative Analysis of the Two Political Situations

An observation of African leadership style and political land scale reveals a replica of the Machiavellian Prince who should pretend to be good to access the political power in the state; and Nietzschean Superman who has killed the idea of God and thereby reinvented the Master Morality as against the slave morality that embodies the concepts of love, compassion and human sympathy.

I begin this comparative section with this important question: What was the political situation of Florence and Italy in the time of Machiavelli? Cassier captures the situation in Florence thus:

Florence was in constant ferment. The various wards and districts were in political conflict with one another; the rich and the poor were often at each other's throats; the various families gathered and broke up into factions; the guilds and trades were politically active; and because they were all crowded together in a tight little town behind walls, the Florentines were subject to gusty rumours and surges of passion that sent them raging through the streets to howl or hammer at the high towers and massive palazzo within which lay hidden their heroes or hated enemies of the moment (Cassier, (1969: IX).

From the above description, it is clear that the time of Machiavelli was a worrisome one for people like him who wanted to see a city and nation in peace and unity, without internal and external distractions. Unfortunately, the whole of Italy was then in political turbulence. It was a very tumultuous era characterized by popes waging acquisitive wars against Italian city-states, as well as incessant battles for regional supremacy and control among France, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, and Switzerland. This resulted in the frequent rising and falling of Italian people and cities from power, the constant changing of political and military alliances, the proliferation of mercenary armies, and the rise and fall of many short-lived governments. The situation was so chaotic, that for Florence, which had no natural protection, a big army or strong military tradition, things were very difficult. It was in this confusing situation that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*, wherein he set out his views on how Florence and Italy could be salvaged from the chaotic and deplorable condition they were in.

Though Florence or Italy of Machiavelli's era is quite different in culture and civilization from contemporary Nigeria, a closer look, as I have noted earlier, reveals that there is some degree of resemblance between how things have been happening in the Nigerian society and what one can

grasp from The Prince about Florence and Italy. To explore this position, let us look at these areas: 1. Human Nature 2. Lack of National Cohesion 3. Violence and Cruelty.

Both Machiavelli and Nietzsche separated politics and morality contrary to the efforts of early political thinkers to ground politics on morality. Both Plato and Aristotle attempted to provide a viable social order for the polity advancing the need for a just society whose end will be the good of the people. They set out to provide a society that would promote harmonious peaceful co-existence among its people.

Machiavelli who wrote from the background of his days has been misinterpreted and wrongly applied by African leaders whether directly or indirectly.

A prince...must have no other object or thought, nor acquire skill in anything, except war, its organization, and its discipline. The art of war is all that is expected of a ruler....The first way to lose your state is to neglect the art of war; the first way to win a state is to be skilled in the art of war (Machiavelli, 1961:47)

The fight for the State's power of governance by the different political parties in Africa is conducted in the manner of Machiavelli's art of war. The statements such as the 'do or die' election credited to the former president of the Fourth Republic in Nigeria, between 1999 to 2007, is nothing but a statement emanating from a disciple of Machiavellian Prince and Nietzschean Superman who has no regard for the people.

So he must never let his thoughts stray from military exercises, which he must pursue more vigorously in peace than in war. These exercises can be both physical and mental. A wise prince must observe these rules; he must never take things easy in times of peace, but rather use the latter assiduously, to be able to reap the profit in times of adversity (Machiavelli, 1961:47, 49)

This is the basis of warfare conception of politics in Africa. We do not intend to indict Machiavelli for our negative and warfare conception of politics in the continent but rather to analyse our politics in line with Machiavelli's immoral stipulations for political leaders.

From Machiavelli's point of view, the ends justify the means. He argues that the main purpose of politics is the cruel possession of political power not giving cognizance to the method or means of attaining political authority.

The present decade of democratic governance in several African states attests to the Machiavellian crude and rude pursuit of political authority as the ultimate goal of politics. Contrary to Machiavelli and his African disciples' practices, the ultimate goal of politics is rendering service to the citizens whose consent is germane to the realization of the democratic processes. But at present, the consent of the people is less important in the political processes in most African states.

With these styles of leadership discussed above, the African societies returned to the Hobbessian jungle where man begins to prey on his fellow man in the bid of self-survival. The people became disconnected from the state given the nefarious activities of these unethical, Machiavellian political leaders. This kind of leadership style proposes individualism as against the African disposition to communalism which is a system characterised by the idea of brotherhood and oneness. The individualistic nature of this leadership style deliberately led to the disconnection between the people and their elected leaders who wedge the State's power of governance.

This scholar underscores this perfectly.

The people of Nigeria either do not understand the sanctified institution of the State nor do they have any commitment to it. The Modern Nigerian state and its socio-economic formation lack an organic relation with the traditions of the people. It has not vibrantly integrated individuals, groups and institutions in such a way as to create polity expressing the aspiration of the people (Dukor, 1991:62)

This non-integration of the people into the state, in most African countries, led to the total separation of the people from the state, with everyone seeking to survive on his/her own.

Theoretical Framework

The elite group consists of not only of prestigious and "established" leaders – top politicians, important businessmen, high-level civil servants, senior military officers – but also, in varying degrees in different societies, relatively transitory and less individually known leaders of mass organizations such as trade unions, important voluntary associations, and politically consequential mass movements. "Counter-elites" are subsumed by this definition because they have the organized capacity, although perhaps mainly through negation, to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially. It is important to stress that this is a limited and specifically political definition of elites. It is restricted to persons who are at the top of the pyramid or pyramids of political, economic, and social power (Putnam, 1976). It does not consider all those in a society who enjoy high occupational, educational, or cultural statuses to be elites in a political sense. Meaningfully democratic institutions and practices depend upon the type of elite that a society has. No type of elite is compatible with the full democratic ideal, and only one of the three types is reasonably compatible with the stable democratic politics that are practised in Western countries and a few others today.

Assumptions of Elite Theory

1. The theory posits that a small minority, consisting of members of the economic elite and policy-planning networks, holds the most power and this power is independent of democratic elections. The elite theory of policy process is based on the proposition that power is concentrated in the hands of a few elites.

2. Policy making, according to elite theory, is a process which works to the advantage of these elites. The theory holds that in the real world, there are those at the top with power and the mass (at the down) without power.
3. The theory also contends that the elite, whose members share common values and have more money, education and power, governs the masses who are apathetic and ill-informed about public policy.
4. In an environment which is characterized by apathy and information distortion, elites inform mass opinion on policy issues more than mass influence elite opinion.
5. Top-down Policymaking, argues that U.S. public policy does not result from the "demands of the people", but rather from elite consensus found in Washington, D.C.-based non-profit foundations, think tanks, special-interest groups, and prominent lobbying and law firms. (Dye, 2004).
6. Elites are persons occupying the top of powerful organizations and movements, thus capable of affecting political outcomes both substantially and regularly.
7. Elites dispute power, meaning that they may find more antagonism among themselves than among the lower classes. For instance, a workers' strike, from the elite theory's perspective, would imply a conflict between union leaders (labour elites) and corporate elites. Even a socialist revolution would be seen as a case of elite circulation, where elites are overturned by other elites. The example of a workers' strike brings up the subject of elite sectors. Elites in complex societies are not a homogeneous group, nor share the same amount of power.
8. Elite aims first at powerful institutions and then at the main positions within those institutions. Several elite surveys follow this sampling strategy to achieve a significant sample size. Another operationalization of the concept of elites relies on reputation, thus targeting those perceived as leaders by others. Another method of elite sampling targets decision-makers within a circumscribed political event, for instance, the passing of a bill in Congress or the making of a given policy.
9. New elitists propose a typology of elite configuration: elites could be (a) disunited, (b) consensually united or (c) ideologically united. Consensual unity is associated with stable democracies, while elite disunity is associated with unstable democracies and authoritarian regimes. Ideological unity relates to totalitarian regimes, adopting Linz's (2000) typology, where elites legitimize and submit to a highly centralized ideological command.
10. Elite theory maintains its great advantage of doing macro-theory while operating with a small-group/personal level of conceptualization (Marcus, 1983, apud Higley et al., 1990). This advantage results in a very close relationship between theory and empirical research. In sum, elite theory worries about the state, without reifying the state.

Just as Nnabugwu believes that political domination is the real motive behind political activities (Nnabugwu, 2012: 46), Robertson points out that "politics is ultimately the exercise of power (Robertson, 1993: 393-394). Little wonder that the central focus of power theory is "how groups or persons dominate, get their way or can pursue their interests in societies" (Allison in McLean and McMillan, ed, 2003: 431). Central to power theory is the belief that power relations and exercise of power are endemic to all human interactions and the notion that human beings cannot exist together in a society without pursuing their interests. The implication of the above is that though power is a quality of the social system, it cannot be attributed to anyone but has to be

acquired and then exercised. Because of the privileges of being in power, the acquisition and exercise of power may sometimes involve conflict, as seen in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. However, the acquisition and use of power do not involve conflict all the time.

The import of the above is that this theoretical framework is a modern version of the Hobbesian dictum that mankind is inclined to the perpetual and restless desire for power after power, which only ceases in death a view upheld by Michel (1949) who argues that "he who has acquired power will always endeavour to consolidate it and extend it (Nnabugwu: 2012. This is because, as Robertson rightly points out, "politics is ultimately the exercise of power and power is often typically characterized as self-interest oriented (Robertson, 1993: 393 – 394). This means that in most cases formal decisions are made in the interest of the power holders, without regard to the interest of the ordinary people.

On the strength of the above-noted highlights, one can see that power theory is both descriptive and prescriptive. It is descriptive in the sense that it deals with issues surrounding power, such as the meaning of power, and how it is being acquired and utilized, as well as abused. Secondly, it is descriptive in that it is derived from experience. This implies that it involves empirical investigation and can therefore be suitably used in examining the behaviour of Nigerian politicians and non-politicians alike in the light of Machiavelli's political cum ethical views as outlined in *The Prince*. Thirdly, it is descriptive because it is comparative and can be appropriately used in comparing two situations of similar characteristics, such as Machiavelli's Florence or Italian society and present-day Nigerian society. It is also prescriptive because it gives guidelines or rules to be followed to achieve a particular goal or objective. Such rules and guidelines often arise from experience, observation, or commonly made errors. As such, it can be properly used to examine and pass judgment on Machiavellian ideas in *The Prince* and the political practices of Nigerian politicians and ordinary citizens. Therefore, it is understandable why power theory is chosen to be used to underpin this study

Analysis of Machiavelli's Prince Theory, Elite Activities and Their Influence on Policy Process in Nigeria's Fourth Republic

Taking into cognizance the supremacy of the dominant class, which is the class in control of the state and the economy, the tendency is that such a class decides for the country the line of development it may wish for itself that suits its political, economic and cultural interests irrespective of the interests of the majority of the people whose exploitation and disadvantage were taken for granted. Hence, this was what constituted the basis of the 'democratic thoughts' of the dominant class, which was what gave rise to the anti-democratic attitudes of the dominant class. Historically Nigeria gained political independence from Great Britain in the year 1960. Forty-six years later, Nigeria is still trying to shape its political future, but a major handicap to this task is largely the rulership problem. A lot of factors have been advanced for this and one of such is the attitude of Nigerian politicians towards the idea of power and wealth. According to Lloyd in the book *Nigerian Politics and military rule*, the problem with Nigerian politics is not just about hostility fanned by ethnic group differences but largely from competition between people for power and wealth. In particular, the idea of power I believe is a very central issue in politics since it plays a major role in determining the mode of distributing societal wealth. Thus the concept of power becomes an indispensable tool in the field of governance. The great Florentine political writer Niccolo Machiavelli also perceived this and placed so much emphasis

on the need to preserve power in every political endeavour. Politics in Nigeria since independence have equally tolled this same line, which I would describe as a more or less Machiavellian style.

There is no denying that Nigeria's political system is not democratic. The majority of Nigerians' aspirations are at odds with the type of shift that has been occurring since 1999. This is true notwithstanding the barrage of literature asserting: transition to democracy in Nigeria,' 'democratization of Nigeria' democratic consolidating in Nigeria', etc. Some experts are now even referring to the Nigerian situation as being "stuck in transition to democracy" with the manifestation of the inconsistencies in the Nigerian political process becoming more glaring, some scholars are now even characterizing the Nigerian situation as 'trapped in transition to democracy' (Shola, 2010). The argument here is that none of these descriptions of the Nigerian political system are accurate. What is it, then, is the question? Specifically, what is happening in Nigeria? The transition of Nigeria into a full-fledged plutocracy is the answer (Eskor, 2010). A plutocratic form of government **government of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich**. Indeed, it is possible to add that Nigeria is currently experiencing primitive plutocracy, which combines plutocratic rule with a system of primitive accumulation in the economy. This differs from the plutocracy experienced by some modern capitalist countries of the West.

During Obasanjo's time as civilian President of Nigeria, certain actions of his government seemed like practising Machiavelli's idea, which states:

It is the nature of people to be fickle; to persuade them of something is easy but to make them stand fast in that conviction is hard. Hence things must be arranged so that when they no longer believe they can be compelled to believe by force (Walker, 1975: 17)

The implication of the above is that Obasanjo's style of governance shows the application of force, just as Machiavelli advised, in certain issues where he felt that tolerance or persuasion would not bring him the desired results. He used brute force against many Nigerians and communities to the extent that many felt that the Obasanjo that ruled Nigeria from 1999 – 2007 as civilian President was in spirit and emotion the same Obasanjo that ruled Nigeria as military Head of State from 1976 – 1979.

For instance, on 20th November 1999, the Nigerian military was accused of killing hundreds of unarmed civilians and destruction of all private buildings in Odi town in Bayelsa State in retaliation for the killing of several soldiers by some armed hoodlums in the community. People accused Obasanjo's administration of ordering the massacre, though the military defended its action by saying that it was ambushed on the way to Odi. And surprisingly, the Nigerian government did not arrest or prosecute anyone in connection with the massacre.

A few months after the Odi massacre, in April and May 2000, Obasanjo's government again used repressive force in Ogoni land by deploying paramilitary Mobile Police to K-Dere village in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State because they opposed the restoration of the oil operations of Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) in the area.

Again, on 22nd – 24th October 2001, soldiers of the Nigerian Army killed over 200 unarmed civilians and destroyed homes, shops, public buildings and other properties in more than seven Tiv towns, Gbeji, Vaase, Tse-Adoor, Sankera, Anyiin, Jootar-Shitile, Abeda-Shitile, KatsinaAla, Kyado and Zaki Biam, in Benue State, North-central Nigeria. The invasion and massacre of over 200 people, including women and children, was in retaliation to what happened during the fratricidal conflict between Tiv and Jukun people, in which there was the abduction and killing through mob action of nineteen armed personnel, later identified by the Federal Government as “members of the Nigerian military on peace-keeping mission” (Wuam and Ikpanor, 2013: XII). Commenting on the incident, Wuam and Ikpanor said, “The invasion was not about justice, but a punitive one, reminiscent of what Africa's ethnic nationalities underwent at the dawn of European colonial enterprises in Africa” (Wuam and Ikpanor, 2013: XV). Once again, the Obasanjo government did not arrest or prosecute anyone for the unfortunate events.

Just as Obasanjo followed Machiavelli's idea that in politics force may be applied where persuasion seems not to work, Nigerian politicians have continued to apply force in settling political issues, especially in trying to win elections or securing political positions. With the return of democracy in 1999, many heaved a sigh of relief hoping to hear no more of brutal killings which were rampant in the dying days of military rule in Nigeria. However, the continued slaughtering of political opponents shows that many Nigerian politicians choose to apply cruelty and force where persuasion fails.

Another indicator of the resemblance between issues raised by Machiavelli in *The Prince* and the events of Obasanjo's democratic government (1999 – 2007) in Nigeria is his controversial third-term bid. I am one of those who ascribe that unnecessary attempt by Obasanjo to elongate his tenure beyond eight years as a manifestation of the human traits, which Machiavelli talked about extensively in *The Prince*. Many were surprised that Obasanjo pursued the same script of tenure elongation that he once criticized. In 1992, when the self-styled military President, General Ibrahim Babangida, was manipulating Nigerians and adopting all kinds of political tricks to sit tight in office, Obasanjo was one of those who stood against the happenings of the time. In a speech he proposed to deliver at the aborted Council of States meeting in November 1992, Obasanjo advised Babangida not to “mistake the silence of Nigerians for weakness and the sycophancy of the greedy and opportunistic people who parade the corridors of power as representatives of the people's true feelings.” He continued thus, “Nigeria needs peace and stability. It is too fragile to face another commotion. In God's good name, drag it not into one. This is the time for you to have some honourable exit (Sahara Reporters Newspaper of 16th February 2006, under the caption Obasanjo's 3rd Term Agenda and Those Behind it).

Knowing the futility of his 3rd Term bid without amendment to the 1999 Constitution which allows only two terms of four years each for Nigerian presidents and state governors, President Obasanjo sent his political strategists to lobby the National Assembly, while the governors from his political party (People's Democratic Party), already induced or coerced into supporting the idea, were asked to work on their various Houses of Assembly. Writing under the heading, Third term Agenda, One of the Greatest Evils of Obasanjo, Odumakin stated:

A thorough scrutiny of the third-term agenda of the former president would reveal that the scheme was to perpetuate his power and not just to spend another four years in office. The implications of the third-term agenda, particularly on the National Assembly where N50 million

bribes were said to have been doled out to each of the lawmakers from the presidency, to support the third-term agenda, remain one of the stains which the institution still carries till date. Another implication of the agenda was the ploy to tamper with the constitution, specifically not in the interest of the country or the people, but to perpetuate one man: Okikiolu Aremu Olusegun Obasanjo in office beyond the stipulated constitutional two terms of eight years (Odumakin, 2014: 74).

With the failure of Obasanjo's third term bid, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) presented Umaru Musa Yar'Adua as their candidate in the April 2007 Presidential election. Yar'Adua was declared the winner of the election, which was marred by voting irregularities and fraud in all parts of the country, a fact that was also declared by the domestic and international observers who monitored the election (Takirambudde: 2007). There were incidents of violence, thuggery, intimidation of political opponents, and hijacking and stuffing of ballot boxes as political parties and politicians applied Machiavellian methods to win the election, believing that "the end justifies the means". Nonetheless, Yar'Adua was sworn in on 29th May 2009 to succeed Obasanjo as the president of Nigeria, with Goodluck Jonathan as the Vice President.

Another of the key concepts in the philosophy of Machiavelli that played out in the time of Yar'Adua's government in Nigeria is the concept of necessity, which he (Machiavelli) used in justifying certain actions which are violent, cruel and immoral. Necessity, for Machiavelli, means something necessary, unavoidable or requisite. It is a law-like consequence that must necessarily follow in certain situations. This is hinged on his view that the preservation or longevity of the state supersedes the traditional idea of morality and that the morality of politics is quite different from the conventional idea of morality. Though the concept of necessity was not applied in Nigeria then to justify any violent, cruel or immoral action, the primary argument was that the preservation of the state was more important than the sentiments about the protracted sickness of the president. It all began when, after a prolonged absence of President Yar'Adua in Nigeria, running into several weeks, many people began to complain about the power vacuum in the country. This led to calls from different quarters for Yar'Adua to formally transfer power to the Vice President, Jonathan Goodluck, and criticism of such calls from some people in Yar'Adua's government and members of his immediate family who felt that such calls portrayed insensitivity to the plight of the ailing president.

As provided in Section 145 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, the functions of the president would only be performed in an acting capacity by the Vice President if the President had transmitted a letter to the National Assembly informing them of his inability to discharge his presidential functions. But as it turned out, President Yar'Adua did not write to the National Assembly before leaving for treatment or in the course of his treatment, and those benefitting from his absence did not even want any change in the way things were at that time. As the calls for the transfer of power to the Vice President went on, the Supreme Court on 22nd January 2010 ruled that the Federal Executive Council (FEC) should within fourteen days decide on whether President Yar'Adua is capable of discharging the functions of his office or not, and should hear the testimony of five doctors, one of whom must be Yar'Adua's physical. Those benefitting from the power vacuum went to court and secured a ruling on 29th January 2010 indicating that Yar'Adua was not obligated to hand over power to the Vice President while he was out of the country for medical treatment.

By implication, as the controversy surrounding the prolonged absence continued, the National Assembly had to resort to an extraordinary constitutional procedure to save Nigeria from imminent collapse and what may have led to military intervention. On 9th February 2010, they adopted the “Doctrine of Necessity” and voted to have the Vice President, Jonathan Goodluck, assume full power and serve as Acting President until Yar’Adua was able to resume his duties. Jonathan agreed and assumed power as Acting President on that day. Upon Yar’Adua’s return to Nigeria on 24th February 2010, it was announced that Jonathan would remain the Acting President until the recovery of Yar’Adua. Unfortunately, Yar’Adua never recovered, but died on 5th May 2010, and was succeeded by the Vice President, Jonathan Goodluck, as the Nigerian Constitution stipulated.

Enumerating the qualities that the prince must possess to be loved by the people, Machiavelli stated thus:

A prince must be slow to take action, and must watch that he does not come to be afraid of his own shadow; his behaviour must be tempered by humanity and prudence so that over-confidence does not make him rash or excessive distrust make him unbearable (Machiavelli, 1965: 52).

If there is any president in the present democratic dispensation of Nigeria whose disposition perfectly fits into Machiavelli’s above-cited qualities for the prince, it is Good luck Jonathan. Analyzing the political disposition of Jonathan in light of the established authoritarian style of political leadership in Nigeria, many argue that Jonathan was weak (Ajani: 2016). They base their argument on the fact that unlike his predecessors, both military and civilian, he allowed social critics, journalists and political opponents to criticize him both constructively and destructively (Ochayi: 2013).

His tolerating disposition towards the opposition and the Nigerian media, as well as his religious tolerance, they maintain, enabled Boko Haram to grow and have a stranglehold on the entire North East of Nigeria. It also enabled the opposition to vilify him while in office (Adekunle: 2012) and eventually wrestle political power from him in the 2015 presidential election. It was astonishing to all that unlike the military and civilian rulers before him, he did not interfere with the electoral and judicial systems during his tenure, which is why he oversaw the conduct of two of the freest, fairest and most credible elections in the history of Nigeria, the 2011 and 2015 elections.

Machiavelli ill-advised the ruler to be using people to his advantage. This can be seen clearly when he says that a prince must not necessarily honour his words especially when they place him at a disadvantage. Because citizens have been considered largely irrelevant, their rights have been deprived in all ramifications. This will give an insight into the many reasons why citizen’s rights were deprived and denied them. Machiavellianism upholds the use of force, survival of the fittest and deceit as the rule of law. Human rights have been tampered with and violated in the present Nigerian state. The dignity of the human person has been slaughtered on the altar of power acquisition.

Summary of Major Findings

Findings from the study indicate that the two political situations are similar in terms of human nature, lack of national cohesion, and application of violence and cruelty in socio-political activities. Also, many Nigerian politicians and even citizens at large consciously or unconsciously practicalize Machiavelli's views in *The Prince* and there exists some form of connection between practising such ideas and the present political problems confronting Nigeria as a nation.

The study shows that no country that has the interest of its citizens at heart will take to Machiavellianism under any political situation. The most probable place for the survival of Machiavellianism is the Hobbesian state of nature. It is for the brutes that are devoid of conscience. Machiavellianism is a rape of human dignity. And since the strength of a nation is in the collective will of the citizenry, all hands therefore must be on deck to eradicate this menace called Machiavellianism. In conclusion, there is a need to re-direct our political thought in such a way that Nigeria will deliberately avoid Machiavellianism in all its ramifications because it is not the right way to go.

The study found out Machiavellian ideology has brought a lot of retrogression in the political, economic, social and religious growth and development of this nation. So, those who are well-trained in political matters must be allowed to rule. As Plato once said, not until philosopher kings or intellectuals are allowed to rule, there will be no best government and no peace will reign. Righteousness and good morals are the basis of good government. A brutal and deceptive beast must not be allowed to rule this country as Machiavelli had proposed.

Conclusion

The Machiavellian ideology has brought a lot of retrogression in the political, economic, social and religious growth and development of this nation. So, those who are well 185 trained in political matters must be allowed to rule. As Plato once said, not until philosopher kings or intellectuals are allowed to rule, there will be no best government and no peace will reign. Righteousness and good morals are the basis of good government. A brutal and deceptive beast must not be allowed to rule this country as Machiavelli had proposed.

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