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OPPOSITION PARTIES, POWER ALTERNATION AND VENDETTA POLITICS IN NIGERIA: A KALEIDOSCOPIC VIEW

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ABSTRACT

The thrust of this paper revolves around a critical examination of the place of opposition parties in Nigerian politics, the budding phenomenon of political power alternation, with a dismal reality of vendetta politics emerging. This becomes very crucial as democracy without a virile opposition party has been explained as autocracy. So, to talk of absence of virile opposition parties in a democratic polity as Nigeria is to signal a sense of political retrogression or at any rate, ossification. But it is not just the presence of opposition parties that satisfies the standards of global democracy; what really matters is whether these parties are muzzled or whipped into subordination. This becomes worse when an incumbent party loses power and finds itself in the opposition bracket; a situation of mass defection from that party to the now ruling party becomes commonplace simply because of the fear of retributional or vendetta actions often meted out on those 'on the other side'. In undertaking this study, the research deployed the Social Disorganization Theory and the Exploratory design methodology. In the final analysis, the research established that vendetta politics will not only weaken opposition parties in Nigeria and gradually make the polity a serial one-party state but would make political power contestations a do-or-die matrix. Therefore, the study recommended legal protection of members of opposition parties, the depersonalization of anti-corruption agencies so that they remain truly independent of any form of political interference.

Keywords: Democracy, Kaleidoscopic View, Opposition Parties, Power Alternation, Vendetta Politics

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that opposition party politics and political power alternation are fundamental to the consolidation of democracy, globally. Also, it is indubitable that when there is the possibility for an incumbent party to lose re-election and for power to be taken over by another political leader or party through credible processes of the ballot box, there will be undoubtedly heightened sense of seriousness in relations to the task of leadership and the entire gamut of governance (Idowu and Mimiko, 2020).

This is because politicians and indeed political leaders often need to be made to know that the power that they or their parties have been entrusted with is not eternal and so transferable. This is one of the major ways by which they can be made to perform or act responsively to the yearnings of their people.

It is for this reason that major progressive democracies like the United States of America and the United Kingdom maintain two or more strong political parties that could succeed each other. This is what makes politics in these climes a serious business and governance becomes veritably instrumental to development. There is a healthy competition between the parties to deliver the best levels of performance to the people so as to be able to win re-election. When incumbents fail to perform, citizens pass a vote of no-confidence in them and in the next election or through the weapon of recall which is well-developed in these polities they are shown the way out (Izu, 2021). Hearing from the fate of these incumbents, the succeeding leader and party will therefore resist all temptations to misrule or misgovern.

Also, in these democracies, citizens' mandate is respected, and everything that relates to election - ballot papers, ballot boxes, election result sheets, election officers, and the actual election - is held as sacred so that thuggery, hooliganism, rigging, ballot stuffing or other forms of irregularities in the polls are considered shameful and treasonable acts. In these societies both politicians and their supporters conduct politics in the most decorous, polite and productive manner - not being characterized by scenarios and incidents of anomy, thievery and betrayal (Izu & Jacob, 2011).

In the above light, politics which is actually meant for the best categories of citizens, the crème dela crème, those who have attained the noble plane of enlightenment and consciousness, the politic, that is the civil or polite, is played or conducted without disturbing public peace, or inflicting untold uncertainty on the people. This is why during elections public holidays are not declared and during electioneering campaigns roads are not unnecessarily blocked and large-scale military deployment is not witnessed in these advanced democracies.

But when opposition politics or power alternation is essentially interpreted, either by body language, words of mouth or actual action, as leadership by vengeance to carry out retribution or revenge on personal foes or perceived political enemies, its essence becomes increasingly but steadily defeated. When the ability to defeat incumbents is wrongly seen as avenue to intimidate, punish and discredit the electorally ousted incumbents, the whole joy that should attend the transference of political power from one political party to another, which derives from the fact that man likes variety and motion, evaporates, or at any rate, ossifies and dies (Ernest & Okoli, 2014; Izu, 2022).

Leadership by vengeance or vendetta politics is gradually being cultivated in the Nigerian political field and this is dangerous, because, in the final analysis, it is development which is supposed to be the only gain the people derive from politics that suffers.

This paper is subdivided into seven parts. Part one introduces the thrust of the paper; part two undertakes conceptual interrogation; part three examines the adopted theoretical framework; in part four, the research materials and methods are discussed; part five engages in thorough discussion and analysis of findings; part six concludes while part seven puts forward some plausible recommendations for further research and policy action.

CONCEPTUAL INTERROGATION

Political Parties and Opposition Political Parties

In liberal democracies across the world political parties are cardinal. They are the lubricants of the wheels of the electoral process without which multiparty democracies cannot survive and be sustained. This becomes more inconvertible in democracies that exist within federal systems in which heterogeneity is one of the most important defining emblems, a condition which curry the inevitability of power sharing and zoning, so as to foster some minimal degree of deradicalization by accommodation (Ake, 2001)

Having said that, political parties which are described as 'a versatile tool of modern politics first emerged in American political equation far back in the early part of the 19th century; and by the 1820s there were well-organized parties. The American Democratic Party which can trace its roots to that time (precisely 1828) is the oldest political party in the world. The oldest party in the United Kingdom is the Conservative Party (CP) which was formed in 1834 from the Tory Party. The African National Congress (ANC) is the oldest in Africa; it was formed in 1912. The first party ever-established in Nigeria was the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) and was formed in 1923 as an offshoot of the elective principle entrenched in the 1922 Hugh Clifford Colonial Constitution, while the first party to be formed in Ghana (formerly Gold Coast), the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), was formed in 1947 (Izu & Jacob, 2011).

Countdown to the 2023 general elections in Nigeria, four out of the numerous political parties stand out – these are the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the Labour Party (LP), the All Progressives Congress (APC), and the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP).

Thus, because of its multifaceted essence and viability in modern politics, political party has been defined in several congruous ways ranging from being an ideological association of the rulers and the ruled, to being a clearly organized group of people with defined interests and policy thrust whose main aim is to win an election, retain political power or control the government.

In the view of Edmund Burke, a political party is a body of men united for promoting, by their joint endeavors, the national interest upon some particular principle in which they all agreed. To this end, it is seen 'as a group of citizens, more or less organized, who act as a political unit to control the government and carry out their general policies'. This means that a political party is a group of men bonded together to pursue certain principles. Shively (1999:112) in his own right puts it this way: "a political party is a group of officials or would-be officials who are linked with a sizable group of citizens into an organization; a chief object of this organization is to ensure that its officials attain power or are maintained in power".

A political party in the above light, can be viewed as a mass of compatible compatriots who consider their possible overseeing the state power as inevitable. Centrally, political parties are oriented toward the acquisition of state power and the direction of state policy. This is the basic ingredient that differentiates them from pressure groups.

Furthermore, political parties help to galvanize supports from a rather divergent mass of the citizens and use such supports to stabilize the state in terms of control, management and policy drive. In the same vein, political parties are instrumentally or institutionally oriented toward mobilizing and socializing for the overall objective of controlling the state.

There are different types of political parties. Some of these are caucus, mass, charismatic, religious and broker parties. Caucus or elite parties are parties made up of men and women of influence and affluence. The mass or populist parties are those which derive largely their support from the ordinary citizens. Usually what they do not have in terms of influence and affluence they tend to make up with their massive number. Broker parties are parties that have elements of both the caucus and the mass parties fused into one big conundrum. Religious or sectarian parties are aimed at promoting or protecting the interests or ideals of the faithful of a given religion. Charismatic parties are parties formed and promoted by charismatic personalities who may or may not be affluent.

Now, let us try to discuss opposition political parties. In every liberal democracy all the existing political parties cannot be in power at the same time. Only one can be while others stay in opposition. The opposition parties then take up a shadow posture whereby they pry into and thoroughly scrutinize policies, programmes and projects of the ruling party so as to put it on its toes. This means that both the ruling and opposition parties are strategic to the survival of democracy. Since democracy is all about marshalling out programmes and policies that deliberately enhance the living conditions of the demos, the volks or the people, it then follows that the people are the ones who determine the continuity or discontinuity of a party in power. The battle is thus a struggle between incumbents and opposition parties. As incumbents fight to stay relevant and true to their manifestoes, opposition parties strive to discredit and demonize these manifestoes and programmes thereby currying support to themselves in anticipation of the next election when they hope to oust the incumbents from power.

Power Alternation

The phenomenon of political power alternation is new to the body politic of Nigeria. It is novel because if you take a look at the political history of Nigeria right from the time the country attained political independence till this fourth republic it has been a very elusive practice. In the 1959 general elections or better still, parliamentary election, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) pulled the majority of seats up to the tune of 134 out of the 312 seats in the House of Representatives. Of course, the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroun (NCNC) won 81 seats while the Action Group (AG) clinched 73 seats (Adigwe, 1979). The NPC had to form a coalition with other five political parties and independents to be able to get

the required number of seats to form the government. Its seats then amounted to 148. This figure was still inadequate to form the government, so it had to team up with the NCNC to form a broad-based government in which the NPC produced the Prime Minister while the NCNC was given the slot of Ceremonial President. But as a result of personality clashes between Tafawa Balewa as Prime Minister and Nnamdi Azikiwe as Ceremonial President the political romance between NPC and NCNC was short-lived and prior to the 1964 general elections two new alliances emerged, significantly dominated by the NPC and the NCNC – the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) was led by the NPC while the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) was led by the NCNC. The same way, only the NNA could not form the government at the center, and so there had to be a merger; thus no power alternation, the same set of leaders.

In the second republic, new set of political parties were formed – Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) and Peoples Redemption Party (PRP). In the 1979 general elections, the NPN won the majority votes to clinched the position of the Executive President and control the National Assembly. Countdown to the 1983 general elections an additional party was formed, the Nigeria Advance Party (NAP), yet no party was able to unseat the NPN. Again, no power alternation (Izu, 2021; Olamosu, 2008).

Also, there was no power alternation in Nigeria's third republic because essentially it was aborted by the 1993 presidential election annulment by the Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida-led military regime.

In the current fourth republic one party dominated the political landscape for 16 years. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) which ruled from 1999 to 2015 until a hybrid opposition party that was formed in 2013, the All Progressives Congress (APC) that unseated it by defeating the incumbent president, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan; and the party is still in power today.

Vendetta Politics

Vendetta politics, retributional politics or leadership by vengeance is a form of politics in which political power is used to punish, witch-hunt, molest, arrest, malign, incarcerate or marginalize one's political enemies without recourse to rule of law, good conscience and moral justice. It is true that politics generally is a game of interest, that means it is a game of camps. However, when political power has been captured what should follow is governance, delivering the dividends of democracy to the people, and not incriminating or recriminating people in the other camps.

For instance, when in 2015 President Muhammadu Buhari was quoted to have said that "constituencies that gave me 97% cannot in all honesty be treated equally…with constituencies that gave me 5%" (Pointblanknews, 2015; Vanguard News, 2017), that was no doubt a signal of leadership by vengeance.

It may be instructive to understand what politics entails so as to truly situate vendetta politics in its proper contest.

Politics is war as far as the Nigerian clime is concerned, and this war is with bloodshed, as against what Mao Zedong postulated when he said politics is "war without bloodshed". It is war because it is often undertaking by actors who approach it with a *do-or-die* or *survival of the fittest* spirit that ultimately gives them the sense of entitlement to capture political power in order to lord over their political enemies.

This form of politics to Ake (2001) is destructive and commotion-ridden as it essentially presents "itself as an apparatus of violence" and fosters a political scenario in which politicians gather "…compliance on coercion rather than authority". This brand of politics characterized by "the crude mechanics of opposing forces driven by the calculus of power…hardly encourages moderation and compromise (Ake, 2001).

To this end, politics cannot simply be seen in the thinking of Ihechukwu (2007) as "the art of winning and exercising power", but as "…the determination of two exclusive claims to power" (Ake, 2001) comparable to an atavistic exercise which itself is an irrational militaristic venture aimed at endlessly extending one's territorial or pecuniary boundaries.

To be sure, it should be noted here that politics as war should not only be seen in the light of military take-over of the reins of government, or the bellicose raids of counter-coupists and mutineers but should be considered in the occasion in which supposed civilians and democrats engage in gross electoral subversion of the political process through the conspiratorial stage-management of political inputs and outputs. Practical experiences in Nigeria have shown that the gruesome and near-totalistic clash of civilian politicians (especially those who are called godfathers) during electioneering activities is not devoid of the exchange of gun-powders and the abundant use of weapons of real war. That is, destructive weapons are often wielded by these benighted political gladiators to suppress popular uprising and cause perpetual terror in the camp of discontent *demos*.

It is this sad state that Ekeocha (2003:21) captures when he submits that:

> The use of naked power becomes the only instrument for maintaining social order. When the state assumes this character, it de-personalizes its authority because the individual calling the shots has ceased to be human. The state begins to die gradually until it completely rots away.

The nature of this political power in the perception of Tocqueville (1955) cannot "…bring glory and wellbeing to humanity". To him:

> Power without glory is hollow and without meaning. The glorious nature of power is in the sense that the exercise connotes the positive traits which power must seek to acquire. Power in all its manifestations should be acquired and exercised with restraints; power without restraints lead to anarchy, chaos and disorder.

In this regard, the conduct of political activities and the entire exercise of political power contestation and acquisition:

> must have meaning to the extent that it offers succour to the people. This entails a form of new covenant with the people. This new covenant will become a bond through which the citizens seek a renewal; a renewal that will reassure them by removing the cynicism in their thought system (Ekeocha, 2003:22)

In vendetta politics, rather than political power giving succour to the people, it looks for enemies of the ruling class to hound and hunt down. Power becomes misplaced as those calling the shot have become power-drunk and irremediable. When this happens, primordialism, prebendalism and parochialism systematically take the front burner, and together they wantonly produce a political system that is calamitous, uncertain and unsustainable.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The adopted theory for this research paper is the social disorganization theory. The theory was developed by the Chicago School and its central argument revolves around the position that crime committal or proclivity or susceptibility is locational in nature. This means that a person's propensity to commit crime or engage in any form of anti-social behaviour is directly predicated on the nature and character of the social environment or location he finds himself at any given material time. This indicates that when a person leaves a given environment that is crime or violence-engendering to another environment that is more pristine or sublime or crime-mitigating, he automatically leaves bad behaviour and embraces good habits. This theory was developed by the Chicago School in the early 20th century to explain certain sociological deviant tendencies and manifestations.

This study has adopted this theory to explain the dismal and highly suspect practice of politicians in Nigeria to engage in the localization of bad political behaviour by making politicians who are not within their fold to look like the sinners while they are they saints, and vice versa. This practice has also seen politicians who were being investigated by the anti-corruption bodies freed or exonerated when they cross-carpet to the incumbent or ruling party. To this end, a politician's political party location becomes a

determinant in knowing whether he is corrupt, loyal, responsible or not; and indeed, the conduct becomes destructive to the democratic process as gradually it is making opposition politicians to be wary of opposition politics, thus making Nigeria to steadily slide into a serial one-party state and *ipso facto* an autocratic state. It is in this light that this theory becomes applicable to this study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research design used for the purpose of data collection and analysis is the exploratory design. This design is oriented towards examining a new area or subject-matter of research. This is so because vendetta or retributional politics is an evolving reality in Nigeria's polity. In this case, the research depends on the authors' analytical prowess to peruse some newspapers, journals, magazines and other official publications and extract relevant explanations to buttress, substantiate or corroborate extant positions in the area of the current discourse. The method is thus qualitative in nature.

DISCUSSIONS

The notion of leadership by vengeance or *levenism* is rooted in the unmitigated bitterness of the hearts, inclination to bellicosity and profane lust to see others suffer - none of these is an attribute of a person who should govern others, they are animalistic tendencies that even animals are being tamed to get rid of (Izu, 2021; Ereke & Okoli, 2014). Lions, hippopotamus, rhinos, crocodiles, hyenas, snakes, tigers and other naturally deadly animals have been successfully tamed to discard these bestial excesses of untended forests and grasslands. Leaders who manifest these proclivities therefore are simply revealing that before they won their party tickets to stand for elections and before they were made helmsmen, they had not been tamed either by education, occupation, circumstances of life, religion, family reputation or by other community norms and values (Ekeocha, 2003).

Leadership by vengeance manifests in diverse ways: selective war on corruption, marginalization in political appointments, detention without trial, declaring perceived political enemies guilty without taking them to court, media character assassination, inclusion in official budgets with deliberate refusal to release funding because particular areas or peoples are involved, infliction of fear or raw intimidation, creation of cracks and hiccups in parties of political rivals, rude seizure of property, disrespect for judgements that exonerate *innocent* enemies and outright imprisonment - often after a normal court processes and procedures have been perverted (Agunbiade, 2007).

Leadership by vengeance is a rising menace in Nigeria, a ruthless political malady that if not checked or check-mated on time could ruin the exercise of consolidation of democracy in the country.

For instance, on the count of ex-President Muhammadu Buhari's anticorruption war, Senator Shehu Sani, a chieftain of the APC, asserted that: "when it comes to fighting corruption in the National Assembly and the Judiciary and in the larger Nigerian sector, the President uses insecticide, but when it comes to fighting corruption within the Presidency, they use deodorants." This was said in 2017.

This is by no means an attempt to downplay any ingenious war on the corruption monster where it exists; what is being canvassed here is that morality teaches that there should either be zero-tolerance, total battle against corruption or no war at all. And Nigerians should be wary of media trial of purportedly corrupt persons – if any government has such strong cases against certain individuals, the appropriate judicial or court proceedings should be allowed to take its full course. This is the only way the anti-corruption war can make any sense to Nigerians and the international community. Political power must be used in defence of the state, not some selective sentiments or parochial orderings.

This is because political power, irrespective of which party or political leader wields it at the moment, is fundamentally meant to do the same thing: destroy poverty, hunger, diseases, high mortality and morbidity rate, unemployment, insanity and general socio-economic backwardness thereby improving on the processes of acquiring and consolidating political power.

The essence of political power, especially in the eyes of those who issue the mandate to rule - the people - has never been to haunt and hound personal enemies; it is primarily for citizens improvement and if this is not the case, it becomes useless, or at any rate, counterproductive.

If power alternation or opposition politics must be sustained in Nigerian democracy then the malady of leadership by vengeance which has within it, intimidation, retribution, retaliation, bitterness, wilful deprivation, marginalization and protection of political friends who are stinkingly corrupt or perverse, must be consciously exterminated now that it is beginning to rear its heed (Ekeocha, 2003).

Nigerians have suffered too much battery, haemorrhage, denials, and oppression. The leaders who are looked up to must not add the heinousness of leadership by vengeance to this already parlous and extremely invidious chronicle of pains and hellish situations, situations which in essence have reflected the prostrate state of Nigeria.

But a major factor which fuels leadership by vengeance is the thought that election rigging is possible to the end that the peoples' voices only echo, but do not make any real impact to stop incumbent political leaders from being re-elected. If the political leaders believe, or even if it is truly possible, to return to power irrespective of their past *mis*governance then they could afford to engage in this *retributional* style of leadership. It is therefore the duty of all citizens and the collectivity of civil society to resist the wanton debauchery of the balloting process by moving against treacherous incumbents or treasonable opposition leaders. Political power is not the birthright or eternal possession of any one political leader or group or region – it belongs to the collectivity of the citizens who form the strongest force in democracies (Izu and Jacob, 2011).

For what is worth, it is important to note, though portentously, that the bleeding of Nigeria has already started affecting the statistical records of the entire African continent and its peoples. This is not unconnected with the fact that Nigeria is expected to serve as the trigger for the continent's development and beacon of hope to its citizens.

Therefore, any ailing or bleeding condition naturally infirms the entire black race resident on the continent and beyond. This is also because when a Nigerian is sick at least more than twenty Africans are sick and when the Nigerian is healthy that same number of Africans or more will be healthy.

In this case, Nigeria's doom is Africa's doom and Nigeria's boom is Africa's boom. Nigeria can therefore not afford to perpetually skid off its tracks, it cannot afford to be sick for one day anymore the same way America, Britain, Russia, China, France, Israel, United Arab Emirate, among others, cannot contemplate being sick or sleepy for a moment (Nduka, 2006; Izu, 2023).

The official records of Africa's misfortunes are heart-rending, but what is more heart-rending is the fact that Nigeria is at the center of the misfortunes. There is a reason why this country is made the largest and biggest – in human and natural resources - black nation on earth. It is to act as an inspiration or even instigation for development spiritedness, actualization and sustenance across the African continent.

If development continues to be on the reverse or arrested in Africa (Nduka, 2006) because of Nigeria's bleeding condition now necessitated by leadership by vengeance then the blood and toils of those African-Americans who made frantic effort to inspire the consciousness of the continent's emancipation would have been in vain. Edward Wilmot Blyden, W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Sylvester William, among others, are African-Americans who contributed in one way or the other to the emancipation of the black race and acted as inspiration to the continent's foremost nationalist leaders through their various Pan African congresses, conferences and meetings (Izu, 2022).

Kwame Nkrumah, Jomo Kenyatta, Kenneth Kaunda, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Patrice Lumumba, Nelson Mandela, Amilcar Cabral, Julius Nyerere, etc – will continue to rest in pieces until Africa, nay Nigeria, develops to the state that negroes across the universe will look up to in hope and say indeed we are no less human, we can still govern ourselves, we can still innovate, invent, discover, build, plan, and

advance in our own right. For now, there is no black nation the Negro as a race can look up to in glory, no country that stands as a fountain of hope, or a destination of succour to the black race (Okolo, 2003).

This is why the primitive and very base animalistic culture of leadership by vengeance - by which past leaders, citizens of other parties, religions, regions or creeds are held in contempt - must be stopped. It is a rapidly budding seed that has the potential of reversing the modest democratic and development gains that the country has struggled to start since 1999.

This is because leadership by vengeance is a light dimmer, a touch destroyer, a flame quencher, a bridge breaker, a promoter of nepotism, tribalism and other forms of primordial sentiments; it is a crude and rude dispenser of injustice, inequality and inequity; it kills initiatives, weakens zeal and summersaults thriving policies; it breeds fear, deepens poverty, engenders sectarianism and makes the virtues of patriotism of no effect.

Leadership by vengeance or *levenism* fertilizes cans of worm – corruption – by shielding its own perverted acolytes; enrages citizens by openly discriminating against certain segments or sectors; retards development by making state economic lifelines and assets targets of destruction and ultimately drives the country into a pariah condition.

It is instructive to state what John Kerry said about Nigeria and other nations infected with the disease and dilemma of corruption. Speaking in 2016 at the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, Kerry stated:

> There is nothing, absolutely nothing more demoralizing, disempowering to any citizen than to believe that the system is rigged against them, and the people in positions of power are…crooks who are stealing the future of their own people…corruption is a social danger because it feeds organized crime, it destroys nation states, it imperils opportunities particularly for women and girls, it facilitates environmental degradation, contributes to human trafficking and undermines whole communities; it destroys the future. Corruption is a radicalizer because it destroys fate in legitimate authority, it opens up a vacuum which allows the predators to move in, and no one knows that better than the violent extremist groups who regularly use corruption as a recruitment tool. Corruption is an opportunity destroyer because it discourages honest and accountable investments, it makes businesses more expensive to operate, it dries up the sources for local tax payers; it turns a nation's entire budget into a feeding trough for the privileged few….

John Kerry was America's Secretary of State under President Barrack Obama.

CONCLUSION

It is already well-established that prior to May 29, 1999, the history of democracy in Nigeria could be generally represented in the tragic appearance and disappearance of the *abiku child* as graphically and masterfully captured by Ben Okri (1991) in his novel, *The Famished Road*. The tragedy of the *abiku child* depicts a situation in which a child – mostly in typical Yoruba traditional cosmology of Western Nigeria - comes and goes, refusing to permanently stay to maturity, thereby leaving behind pains and sadness to those who took the burden and sacrifice to bring it into this world. This history of democracy has thus been that of a worrisome nightmare. In short, up to 1999, democracy in Nigeria was an *abiku child* and Nigerians directly or indirectly suffered from the tragedy of democratic *abikuism.*

The worrisome reality in Nigeria is that after the unremitting and indeed arduous attempts by well-meaning patriots to convince this child to stay for 16 straight years (1999-2015), it has had cause to face existential threat from some leaders, hence the hunger to stage a retreat, a situation which would have seen the country returning to the dark chambers of military malapropism. This retreat stemmed clearly from the visible manifestations of not just bad governance and a high incidence of leadership failure but what the

author has tagged leadership by vengeance. Nigeria needs to rise beyond this dismal development if the country must launch itself into the comity of serious nations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are put forward:

i. INEC and other relevant stakeholders in the election/political space like civil society organizations and international development partners and donor agencies should embark on targeted reorientation of the Nigerian political class and all ancillary political players and actors;
ii. The media must deploy their erudition and expertise in the destruction of all syndromes and symptoms of leadership by vengeance by exposing the dangers thereat and declaring those involved as threats to national harmony and cohesion;
iii. The anti-corruption agencies must act truly independently and the security agencies must put in place dispassionate mechanisms to protect members of opposition parties and those outside the ruling league at any material time.

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