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NIGERIAN POLITICAL LEADERS AND THEIR PERSONAL AMBITIONS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, a critical analysis of the complex relationship and aspirations among political leaders in Nigeria is carried out. It adopts a critical stance towards exploring the aspirations, dreams and wishes of individuals inclined towards Nigerian politics. This study covers major events as historical backdrop that have influenced on desire for outcome improvement, policy making, and governance. The study assesses complex associations of aspirations for the leadership and wider political issues, with the subsequent impact on democratization, peace building and the social-economic development in Nigerian. With this view we understand the purely personal character of Nigeria's politics bringing it in line with general discussions concerning better governing the state and creating a single nation. The paper points out that political leadership in a government is critical when it comes to anti-corruption measures which form the basis of the whole system. It asserts that the competent anti-corruption top management is both essential for proper functioning of any government and core part of the state's legality. This type of leadership offers avenue for popular participation in governance which is key to sustaining healthy political system. However, there is also a mixed bag of studies available in the literature about how political elites perform. Other studies show that they did something good; however, there are a number of contradictory studies. As such, this paper argues that such agencies in Nigeria's political sphere should be nonpartisan and should promote economic diversification, embrace a value change to the public good, and drop "patron-client" politics from a perspective of political science.

Keywords Nigeria, Political Leaders, Personal Ambitions.

1. 0 Introduction

Political cartography in Nigeria is complex since it is formed by multi-ethnos groups and fine historical shades, which include change from authoritarian government to democratic one. In democratic rule in which they gained their independence from Great Britain since then have been rule by both civilian and military authorities. The country has been under the control of the military for more than fifty-six years which accounts for a considerable part of its history. To start with, the advent of fourth republic following the restoration of normal government in 1999 gave rise to fears about likelihood of insubordination by the army. The departure of military from its traditional role of prevention of subversions and protection of the state's territorial integrity raised question as to the involvement of the same in politics (Egbo, 2001). As stated in Egbo (2001), Nwosu and Ofoegbu, they are some prerequisites that must be present before the military can get involved in politics. This involves, among other things, excessive involvement of the military institution in state politics, supreme interests of armed forces above others, as well as creating respective state departments according to military conceptions. It claims that due to corruption, ineffectiveness and unwillingness on part of civilians, it has to get involved in military matters. This essay will look into the connections

between the individual goals of Nigerian politicians and how it affects policies making, governance, and society in Nigeria as a whole.

This paper discusses leadership as a form of indicators in the country's attempt at making democratic approaches in favour of development at national level. In every society, it is crucial for people to appreciate what their leaders want to attain so that they can cope with the changing nature of politics in a particular country. Nigeria has undergone major political transformations owing to multiparty arrangement and the termination of military governance in 1999. We must know why we should do so considering the challenges of corruption, social-economic injustices, ethnicity and interreligious conflicts. Knowing the personal aspirations of political leaders will enable us to guess on the policies they will put into motion, the company they will keep, and their overall approach to leadership. With this in mind, we can evaluate the implications of leadership on democracy, national peace, and social economies development. By associating the above observations with political science theories we gain better insights into complexities surrounding decision making processes in Nigeria as far as governance is concerned.

1.1 Historical Context

A Evolution of Political Ambitions in Nigeria

Nigeria's politics have deep roots in history, culture and socio-economics and pave the way for mega-political ventures. During colonial times, customary institutions were the basis for political power, with local chiefs ruling their areas. This promoted the culture of local oriented and regional minded leader. Colonialism also marked a different approach towards political aspirations. Some local chiefs had to involve themselves in the national administration since they could not override local customs as a result of their exposure to the indirect effect of British colonies. After gaining independence from the British in 1960, Nigerians envisioned a "bright future". However, between 1970 – 1990 Nigeria's stability as well as its international standing suffered tremendously with coup regimes, slow economic progress, The persistent problem commonly known as "the national question," which has been at the heart of Nigeria's multiple dilemmas since the 1960s, arises following the rise of a nationalist movement. Despite being crucial to the struggle for independence, this movement had impediments on national unity because the 1950s constitution emphasized on both regional and federal aspects. The internal competition in the federation, coupled with some ethnic groups dictating their agenda hindered nation building. There were ethnic minorities in each region contesting the authority of the dominant ethnic groups thereby creating an array of disuniting identities, which did not permit the formation of one unifying Nigerian national identity. With politics changing along with time, it is necessary to overcome these old issues in order to make a nation as one with wealth.

1.3 Determinants of Current Political Endeavors: Sociological, regional and international challenges influence power politics in political parties which are at the core of fashioning current aspirations of contemporary Nigerian politics. However, the delicate interplay of hurdles such as national growth, integration and personal interests occurs in a very sophisticated context. However, it is vital to understand that the political route towards Nigeria's aspirations has never been direct and straightforward. This represents how political ambitions have evolved from an age where politicians leaned on traditional structures for independence, military dominance, and contemporary governance concepts die. Such

sensitivity provides a well-informed overview of current Nigerian policy concerns and their underlying causes. The experience of examining carefully into the historical political conflicts that have taken place in Nigeria becomes very important to the current politicians whose expectations concerning the ambition, vision, leadership and determination must be realized. Their engagements with the political scene forever shape their own personal goals and that of national politics. Political personal aspirations include personal objectives of every politician and aim at the manipulation with political environment, getting an office or high position. They usually invoke a variety of motives such as will or need to achieve their respective aspirations towards self-development at an individual level or professional promotion. It is important to comprehend how history interacts with intentions in the complex matrix that is modern day politics in Nigeria.

Key aspects of political personal ambition include:

A. Power Dynamics within Political Parties

Individuals who aspire to hold influential positions in local, regional, and national government structures are closely associated with the pursuit of political power. Different perspectives on the relationship between politics, power, and authority make it difficult to define power and authority precisely in political science. Politicians frequently follow a career path that involves moving up the political ladder to take on increasingly significant positions over time. Achieving particular policy goals or societal shifts, such as aspirations to carry out reforms, launch projects, or deal with important issues, can be considered personal. Leaders could strive for distinction and honors, such as medals or a positive historical record. Politicians with high ambitions desire the power to control the government and formulate policies, as well as a substantial voice in decision-making procedures. Although some believe that personal goals are self-serving, many politicians see them as a way to advance society and serve the public interest. In democratic systems, where candidates vie for elected offices based on their qualifications, policies, and level of public support, political personal ambition is deeply ingrained. (Okorodudu, 2019).

B. Socio-economic Factors

Socioeconomic factors play a major role in shaping the political aspirations of individuals in Nigeria. Because they want to use legislation to further their own interests, business executives and entrepreneurs frequently have political aspirations. Level of education also affects access to political opportunities because better educated individuals typically project an image of being capable leaders. Political ambitions are influenced by social class and opportunities for advancement. All legislators are typically in favor of laws that improve social justice and representation while attending to the needs of the constituents they serve. Economic stability and growth are promoted when personal objectives align with political platforms and financial interests. A small number of politicians work to address issues of wealth redistribution, economic empowerment, and poverty alleviation. Two more important factors are community development and public service. To comprehend the implications of policies and the motivations of political leaders in Nigeria, one must grasp the ways in which socioeconomic factors influence individual aspirations in the country.

C. Regional and Ethnic Considerations

The ethno-regional interests play a great role in determining individual aspirations in the Nigerian politics. As they tend toward ethnic identities, these qualities encourage people to

build communities and support representation in politicians. The existing political atmosphere of Nigeria is affected by historical disparities of power and wealth in different regions. Politicians can also try to keep their dominating positions in some areas by grabbing the political or financial resources involved with advancing their regions' development. In this case, they can come together and forge alliances and ethnics and unite for the same purposes. Personal objectives might entail promoting special wants and desires of a certain tribe leading to proposals on such issues as culture conservation, resource allocation and representation. Similarly, leaders can use their ethnic identity towards fostering unity and togetherness amongst the people they serve. This explains why there must be a great understanding of these components for one to clearly comprehend dynamics of Nigerian leadership (P.L. Ogugua, & I.C. Ogugua, 2015).

D. International Influences

International considerations shape Nigerian leaders' individual interests, revealing how global politics is not isolated. The objectives mostly conform to world economic patterns that include drawing in foreign investments and promoting partnerships with other nations. Besides, they strive to take an active part in international diplomatic relations, form alliances, correlate their aspirations with world thinking trends, handle global problems such as climate issues, medical crises, and security menaces, obtain foreign investments, and involve in humanistic activities. Their goal is not only related to overcoming internal barriers, but also navigating through the world politics while exploiting the relations with other states in order to advance their objectives. Appreciating the effect of the international influences on Nigerian politics helps in knowing what drives the actions and plans of the political leaders.

1.4 Challenges and Controversies

Without missing words, that a nation's degree of governance and political stability are influenced by the kind of leadership that exists there. According to Nnabuife (2010), a system cannot succeed unless there is leadership present. Everything is impacted by leadership because, through the application of sound administration, it has demonstrated its significance in the success or failure of countries or organizations (Ogudiga, 2010). But it is crucial to note that the leadership issue in Nigerian politics was a sign of years of military rule gone awry. Nigeria requires a focus on development, which should lead to political stability and be ingrained in the country's leadership style. In actuality, the leadership is preoccupied with acquiring and acquiring private property in the Nigerian state. Power, however, has value in addition to being realized through coercion, manipulation, control, and deception. In essence, power is equivalent to the capacity of one man that can be translated either as developing oneself on a personal level or pulling advantages out from other people's capacities. Therefore, as far as the former is concerned, power has developmental and extractive dimensions while the latter consists of an empirical component. However, it should always be remembered that should the word power refer to the capacities then the capacities of man are greater than those of the animals. Furthermore, man is expected to benefit himself and his society by putting the given powers into operation in order to live an ennobled life. It also serves as an evaluative postulate because, even in the absence of other value premises, human thought processes and language always include an evaluative element in any statement that describes it. The second discusses man's need and how he satisfies it by controlling others.

A. Conflicts Arising from Personal Ambitions: Personal ambitions in Nigerian politics are a significant challenge, causing internal competition, fractionation, and unethical campaign practices. These goals may result in unequal resource distribution, corruption, and animosity among devoted followers. Ethnic and regional divides can be used by politicians to further their own goals by creating a "us versus them" mentality and escalating interethnic hostilities. Regional and ethnic considerations may lead to disputes over control of economic resources, hindering economic development and exacerbating regional disparities. Leaders may clash over policy priorities, resulting in legislative gridlock and undermining effective governance. These conflicts also contribute to public disillusionment with the political process, as citizens witness power struggles and self-serving actions, eroded trust in political institutions and leaders. Addressing these conflicts requires fostering a political culture that prioritizes the common good over individual interests, strengthening political institutions, enhancing transparency, and promoting ethical conduct (Langer, A. I. 2010)..

B. Public Perception and Reactions to Leaders' Ambitions

Public perception and reactions to leaders' ambitions in Nigerian politics are crucial for governance, public trust, and the democratic process. Public perception is influenced by perceived transparency and accountability of political leaders. Leaders who prioritize national interests, development goals, and the well-being of the populace receive positive public reception. Conversely, leaders who advance personal agendas may face criticism. Public reactions can range from skepticism to condemnation. Leaders who effectively communicate their ambitions and demonstrate alignment with public interest can shape positive perceptions. Inclusive leadership styles and diverse voices in decision-making are more favorable. Ambitions perceived as promoting exclusivity or favoritism can generate public dissatisfaction.

An important factor in influencing how the general public views the goals of leaders is media coverage. During elections, perceptions can affect voter behavior and serve as a catalyst for public mobilization and activism. The trust the Public have in political processes is essential to a functioning democracy, and unfavorable opinions can threaten these values. In Nigerian politics, navigating public perception and responses to leaders' aspirations is a difficult task (Campus, D. (2010). Social Media plays a very significant role in shaping public perception of leaders' ambitions. Perceptions can fuel public mobilization and activism, and influence voter behavior during elections. A healthy democracy relies on public confidence in political processes, and negative perceptions can undermine these principles. Navigating public perception and reactions to leaders' ambitions is a complex challenge in Nigerian politics (Campus, D. (2010).

C. Impact on Governance, Stability, and National Development

Leaders' ambitions significantly impact Nigeria's governance, stability, and national development. They shape the quality of governance, with goals that prioritize public welfare, inclusivity, and long-term development contributing positively. Conversely, ambitions driven by self-interest, corruption, and nepotism undermine governance effectiveness and hinder the government's capacity to address pressing issues. Leaders' ambitions also contribute to the establishment of governance structures, social cohesion, conflict resolution, economic stability, human development, and environmental sustainability. Post-independence Nigeria faces challenges in leadership and governance, including corruption,

power struggles, and the complexity of executive-legislature relations. To address these issues, the paper recommends enlightenment programs, collaborative efforts of the executive and legislature cannot be an effective oversight function, on trying to preserving the independence of the judiciary. The fight against corruption should go beyond rhetoric and political propaganda, and capital punishment for corruption-related offenses is urged.

Free and fair elections, an independent election management body, and punitive measures for election malpractice are recommended. The selection and election of leaders should prioritize probity and accountability, with transparent screening methods to exclude those with tendencies to corrupt the electoral process. Deepening democratic principles, adherence to the rule of law, respect for human rights, and protecting lives and properties are also essential for democratic consolidation. The collaboration of the executive and legislature is highly recommended in order to maintain the quality of the judiciary and uphold the supremacy of the constitution.

1.5 Media's Role

The media's role in shaping and reporting political leaders' ambitions is instrumental in influencing public opinion, promoting transparency, and fostering an informed citizenry. The dynamics of media influence underscore the critical relationship between journalism and the health of democratic processes. Media outlets frame stories by promote or condemn certain aspects of political leaders' ambitions over others. The framing of news can shape how the public interprets and evaluates the motivations and goals of political figures. Media coverage often contributes to the construction of political personalities. The way leaders are portrayed whether positively or negatively influences public opinion, impacting how their ambitions are perceived. The presence of media bias can significantly influence the narrative surrounding political leaders (Altheide, D.L. & Snow, R.P. 1979). Biased reporting, whether real or perceived, can shape public attitudes and contribute to polarization. During times of political crises or controversies, the media acts as an agent and as an eye opener in shaping public understanding. How the media presents, communicates and interprets a particular leader' ambitions to the public through the media can determine the extent of the public trust and belief in the leader. Social media platforms have become powerful tools for shaping political narratives. Leaders' ambitions can quickly gain traction or face opposition through social media, amplifying their impact on public perception. Investigative journalism delves into the details of political leaders' ambitions, uncovering potential controversies or hidden agendas. Such reporting can have a profound impact on public trust and the legitimacy of leaders.

The media's editorial viewpoints and assessments play a part in shaping how political leaders present their goals. These editorials have the key to people's perceptions about a leader and the way that political figures are generally portrayed. Generally speaking, public relations and political communication refer to a range of actions intended to further civic and political objectives. Executive politicians and officials typically implement this kind of controlled communication to disseminate information, elucidate and advance public policy, cultivate a reputation, and uphold social ties, and so on. Increased professionalization has been one of the noticeable trends in political and government communication in recent decades. Professionalization in the area of political, and more especially, government communication, can be understood as the development of more appropriate organizational structures and

practices to effectively use the media apply campaigning strategies, provide better management in the relationship between the media and political coordination of publicity campaigns (Negrine et al., 2007). Political professionalism recommends hiring specialists in the field who charge for their services on a free market basis (Mancini, 1999). Constant control over communications channels has become essential to administration of constant media turmoil, growing Internet connectedness, openness, and interactivity. Consequently, in the era of social media, Marland and associates see a growing centralization of government communication. To enforce "conformity within the organization and projecting a cohesive outward-facing image," for instance, political elites employ a particular branding approach in their media coverage and messengers (Marland et al., 2017). The writers claim that a master brand, coherent communications and message simplicity are the characteristics of this strategy.

B. Public Awareness and Social Media's Transparency

The public's main information source about the aspirations of political leaders is the media. The media is responsible for spreading important information that influences public opinion through news stories, publications, and broadcasts. The public has access to political processes through media coverage, including how policies are formulated and political leaders make decisions. An informed public is dependent on this openness. Political leaders are held responsible for their deeds and goals by media scrutiny. Journalism is investigative, as well as political news coverage promotes an environment of openness and responsibility within the state. Public discourse and debate about political goals is promoted by media. In this way, the citizens can subject the intentions of their leaders to public scrutiny and debate on the impact these intents may have. The media acts as a watchman who observes the activities of the rulers and reveals how their dreams take shape into laws and statutes. Thus, it is vital to overlook any errors committed by authorities as well as what they say, which is crucial. Media organizations and journalists frequently act as whistleblowers, revealing unethical or corrupt activities connected to the aspirations of political leaders. This role is essential for encouraging openness and preventing power misuse. The public is informed by the media on the complexities of political issues and the aspirations of leaders through in-depth reporting. This encourages a well-informed voting population, which can exercise sound judgment. During these challenges, the role of media is to act as an avenue through which politicians communicate with the citizens. During times of crisis, it is important to keep channels of communication open as a way to control public opinion, and build trust.

However, politicians should be rated on their qualities of leadership, character as well as individual lives. Politician character traits are now critical elements of election media stories and accounts which enable people to relate with them, identify with them and attract voters' attention (Alexander, 2011). Political figures employ personalization strategies, crafting an appealing image centered around attractive personal traits and characteristics. This approach aims to capture media attention and effectively market their policies (Helms, 2012). Through social media, personalization has been heightened. Politicians are able to bypass journalists and talk direct to the people they represents such open communication allows them better latitude towards crafting such an impression. There is also an addition of another tendency which is associated to the interweaving of political personalization with media logic involving dramatization, the emphasis on conflicts, and as well as creating simplified politics. Moreover, the notional objective of a journalist of subjection which enables journalists to identify with

others while expressing comprehensible truths is equally important for making politicians closer to the people. Politicians use their private lives as a resource to craft their political identities, and personalization has helped to turn opaque and convoluted governmental procedures into journalistic products (Campus, D. 2010). "The projection of an optimal political self will often require careful attention to popular values in light of the range of possible projections, which any given politician has available to them," says Corner, (2000), emphasizing that political identity is always constructed and negotiated in relation to societal values. This is accomplished through the use of the good mediated persona. In this process, age, gender, ethnicity, appearance, class, and other characteristics unique to a certain era can all have benefits and drawbacks.

CONCLUSION

This brings together an intricate dance that the personal aspirations of Nigerian political elites make in the national destiny by confronting the wider political arena. Leaders' ambitions have changed from colonial to modern times and affected stability, governance, and national growth. Political figures are heavily affected by their backgrounds which have been shaped by various ethnic and regional tensions. However, a leader's personal ambitions extend beyond self-realization; they reverberate in political parties, socio-economic policies and external relation frameworks. The complex fabric of Nigerian politics is made up of factors like power relations among political parties, social-economic concerns, regionalism and ethnocentrism as well as global issues. However, the media in this case acts as well, shaping them and reflecting them regarding politicians' ambitions. Public opinion, education and awareness as well as openness cannot be separated from it. The media acts as a link between citizens and political trends, providing an open forum for discussion on issues like good governance, accountability, and future direction of the country. Nevertheless, such internal contradictions caused by individuals' ambitions may find their way into inter-party relationships, elections, finally affecting the government effectiveness. Nigerian democracy is often playing a fine balance between individual and collective aspirations. In other words, it becomes vital to understand what drives contemporary Nigerian politicians so that the country can move forward.

In the future it is crucial to inquire into politicians' motives, to recognize the historic forces creating them and to build society that open, democratic and future-oriented. Three pivotal factors stand out for Nigeria's future: They focus on personal ambition, good leadership, and an enlightened public. Adopting these elements provides a viable way of building good governance, peace and development policies that can make Nigeria better.

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