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CHAPTER ONE

THE NIGERIANISATION OF DEMOCRACY: WHAT TO DO TO MAKE IT WORK!

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Chapter Summary

The dominance of the liberal democratic orthodoxy within the political cosmos has become a truism. With the fall of communism, a way has been paved for the triumphalism of democracy, making it politically fashionable these days for nations to embrace liberal democratic tenets. Countries now gravitate to the liberal democratic system because of its endogenous allurements of popular rule and the omnibus of freedoms it promises patron nations. However, in Nigeria, with over a decade of democratic praxis, the citizens are still full of Weltschmerz because of a kaleidoscope of ethnic agitation, civil, political and religious unrests and others which point to a democracy yet to reflect the yearnings of the people. The call for Nigerianising this democracy has become urgent and imperative. However, in this chapter, the focus has been on examining the issues that must be addressed and their implications before democracy can be successfully Nigerianised. The call for more reforms, allowing for greater inclusion of the people, has become a desideratum to keep the ship of state sailing smoothly for the benefit of all stakeholders.

1.1 Introduction

Nigeria just celebrated its 53rd anniversary as a nation-state. Generally, there was a deep climate of Weltschmerz that characterised the mood of the nation. Complex insecurity, infrastructural challenges, a boiling political ecosystem, a challenged economy and distended chagrin with the political leadership across the governance continuum have been noticeable in the body polity. Regardless of witnessing the longest period as a democracy, the very divisive issues that have long haunted the Nigerian state and which have hamstrung efforts made at national integration and economic development (Onifade & Imhonopi, 2013) seem to be growing in fiercer dimensions. While some of the challenges the country faces are not peculiar to Nigeria but may be a manifestation of global discontent and upheaval which might have found their way by osmosis into the country, it appears that Nigeria's crises may be self-inflicted (Imhonopi & Urim, 2012). Furthermore, one wonders whether the existing hard-won

democracy the way it is presently practised can deliver the needed social goods to a now impatient mass of citizens.

Nowadays, all over the world, it has become politically fashionable to embrace liberal democratic orthodoxy. Countries gravitate to the allurements that are endogenous to the liberal democratic system. Furthermore, democracy seems to be instantiated by the richest countries in the world, with few exceptions, who are all functional democratic states offering their citizens freedoms in the choice of the political leadership and to exercise sizeable control over the state (Mueller, 2009). Because these attributes are wanting in many poor countries, democracy promises to guarantee all these and more if these states embrace it. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989 and in the Soviet Union two years later also strengthened the triumphalism of democracy over its bitterest rival, creating a unipolar political universe and further tipping democracy as the choice form of government for all nations of the world. According to Imhonopi & Urim (2012), since then, democracy has rapidly expanded throughout the world with presence in over 120 countries where citizens choose their leaders in free and fair, multiparty elections, while many others are still struggling to achieve democracy. They further argue that as a credit to democracy, people of every religious persuasion, whether Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and others, aspire to live in free and democratic societies where their human, social, political, economic and other rights are indefeasible and not just items that some ruler or council doles out to them subject to the latter's whims and caprices.

Irrespective of the dominance of liberal democracy within the political cosmos and its avowed benefits, the experience of democracy in some countries, including Nigeria, has been less gratifying. Commenting on the Russian democracy, Muller (2009) observed that under President Vladimir Putin, Russian newspapers and television stations that were independent and sometimes critical of the state were closed down; political demonstrations against the government were brutally suppressed; persons deemed a threat to the government were imprisoned on trumped-up charges; government critics mysteriously disappeared or were assassinated and yet Putin soared in his ratings right up until he exchanged his role as president for the post of prime minister. Muller also observed that although prosperity has visited Singapore, the country has not been able to grow a democratic culture in line with liberal democratic tenets. While China has embraced liberal economic ethos, it appears shy or even unwilling to capitulate to the lures of liberal democratic orthodoxy. Same goes for many

Middle-Eastern countries who, although prosperous, are not anyway near role models for democratic ideals. In Nigeria, the embracement of democracy, especially from the dawn of the Fourth Republic which commenced on May 29, 1999, is yet to yield the much vaunted dividends considering that this same democracy was hard-won, costing Nigeria the deaths of many of its finest political and civil society gladiators. Although the authors of this chapter contend that the elements of democracy such as the rule of law, constitutionalism, human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of movement, freedom of the press, transparent and periodic electoral process, majority rule and minority rights, equality among citizens, individual and collective freedom, separation of powers, civil liberties generally, and universal adult suffrage, among others, make democracy more attractive and legitimate than many moribund and existing systems of government which lack these vital ingredients, there is still the need to Nigerianise the present colour and content of the country's democratic practice so as to achieve the yearnings of its people. This is the focus of this chapter; examining the issues that need to be addressed and their implications for Nigeria to grow its own brand of democracy acceptable to its mosaic citizenry.

Definition

Emeritus Princeton historian Bernard Lewis was correct when he argued that the term democracy was often misused (Lewis, 1996). According to him, democracy had turned up in surprising places—the Spain of General Franco, the Greece of the colonels, the Pakistan of the generals, the Eastern Europe of the commissars—usually prefaced by some qualifying adjective such as "guided," "basic," "organic," "popular," or the like, which serves to dilute, deflect, or even reverse the meaning of the word. Prah (2007) lent a voice to this view when he asserted that dictatorships dressed up as democracies through corrupted elections abounded in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and more. He observed that some were ex-military states where military regimes had come into power through the barrel of a gun and then after a stint, abandoned the military fatigues for *mufti* and contest so-called open and free elections which are often gross travesties of democratic methods combined with vote-rigging, bribery and all the rest of it. He mentioned that such regimes have existed (and some still do) in Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Sudan, Congo-Brazzaville, Liberia, Guinea and in many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa who wear the toga of democratic ideals but operate self-perpetuating Caesaro-Bonapartist regimes. Nevertheless, as Oke (2010) postulates, democracy generally involves the opportunity for

citizens to participate in decision making in the political process and it repudiates arbitrariness and authoritarianism, while extolling the consent of the governed and protecting human personality and values (Ake 1991). Democracy whether liberal, African or modern includes fundamental recognition of popular sovereignty, equal opportunity for all, majority rule, representativeness, minority rights, right of choice between alternative programmes, popular consultation, consensus on fundamental issues and more essentially periodic elections (Oke, 2005). Thus, the concept of democracy provides all adult citizens the opportunity to participate in decision making and in the political process in the state.

2.2 Elements of Democratic Governance

According to Imhonopi & Urim (2011), the following are critical attributes of democratic governance and they are as follows:

One, **citizens' rights**: in a democracy every citizen has certain basic rights that the state cannot take away from them. These rights are internationally recognised and guaranteed and include the right to freedom of beliefs and thought, right to seek different sources of information and ideas, right of association, and to form and join organisations of their own choice, including trade unions; right to assemble and to protest government actions, right to life and other rights as enshrined in the United Nations Human Rights charter. However, citizens have an obligation to exercise these rights peacefully, with respect for the law and for the rights of others.

Two, **separation of powers and judicial independence**: this advocates that the institutions of the state, for instance, the judiciary, legislature and executive are to be independent of each other and to check and balance the actions and excesses of each other. This requires that power be separated so that the head of government and his ministers do not have the power to make the law or to interfere in court cases. In a democracy, the executive branch implements policies and programmes, administers the national budget, and conducts national affairs. It may also propose laws, but only the parliament may enact legislation, including the budget. Only the courts can decide the guilt or innocence of individuals charged with a crime, and only the higher courts can determine whether a law or a government action or policy is constitutional. In a democratic context where these dichotomies play out well, no one institution becomes power drunk as to trample on the rights of the citizens. The judiciary, especially, is expected to be independent so as to be able to checkmate the excesses of the legislative and executive arms of government.

Three, **constitutionalism**: a democracy promotes the dominance of the constitution over and above any individual or institution. When any law violates the provisions of the constitution, such a law is deemed ultra vires to the extent that it has violated the constitution. This can also be extended to the form of government in place whether unitary, confederal or a federal system. In a democracy, no one unit of government dominates the others. Each unit is guided by the provisions of the constitution.

Four, **executive powers**: in presidential democracies, the government is headed by a directly elected president, who is also the ceremonial head of state. In parliamentary democracies, the government is headed by a prime minister and his cabinet, who must enjoy the confidence of parliament, while a president or king acts as the ceremonial head of state. In this case, the prime minister and his cabinet are responsible for the day-to-day administration of government through the ministries while the presidency holds the position of head of state, and has the power to nominate the prime minister, to veto legislation, and to make or approve certain judicial and governmental appointments. By partially dividing executive authority, this intermediate system may help prevent the abuse of power.

Five, **power and legitimacy belong to the people**: in a democracy, political leaders are chosen by the people in regular, free, and fair elections and citizens have a choice between different candidates and parties who want the power to govern. The people can also criticise and replace their elected leaders and representatives if they do not perform well because the people are sovereign and government is based on their will. Elected representatives at the national and local levels must therefore listen to the people and be responsive to their needs.

Six, **popular participation**: citizens have an obligation to become informed about public issues, to monitor the conduct of their leaders and representatives, and to express their own opinions. Participation also involves voting in elections, debating issues, attending community meetings, becoming involved in private, voluntary organisations and membership civic meetings, and even protesting. However, political participation in a democracy must be peaceful, respectful of the law, and tolerant of the differing views of other individuals and groups.

Seven, **rule of law and due process of law**: democracy is a system of rule by laws, not individuals. This rule of law protects the rights of citizens, maintains order, and limits the power of government. Citizens are also equal under the law and no one may be discriminated against on the basis of their race, religion, ethnic group, or gender. No one may be arrested, imprisoned, or exiled arbitrarily. No one may be denied their freedom without a fair and public

hearing by an impartial court and no one may be taxed or prosecuted except by a law established in advance. In addition, just because someone is accused of a crime does not mean that he loses his rights. Anyone arrested is presumed innocent until proven guilty. A person's guilt must be proved in a court of law, through a fair, speedy, and public trial. In a democracy, a person accused of a crime has the right to know the charges against him, to remain silent, to have legal representation, to participate in his defence, and to question witnesses for the prosecution. No person who is acquitted of a crime may be tried again on that charge. No one, under any circumstances, may ever be subjected to torture, or to cruel and inhuman treatment. No one may be imprisoned or have their property seized without legal justification. Other elements of a genuine democratic tradition include equality among citizens, majority rule and minority rights, free and fair periodic elections, civil liberties, political participation, and universal suffrage, among others.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study leans heavily on the conflict theory for its theoretical postulations. Drawing inspiration from the magnum opera of Karl Marx's ratiocinations, this study contends that the Nigerianisation of democracy in Nigeria has to come from demands made from the people. This is because the dominant class satiated by its present octopusal control of the state and its resources will resist any form of demands that might tilt the present governance and resource schematic. The thrust of the conflict theory provides a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical stance toward existing social arrangements, and a political programme of revolution or, at least, reform (Marx, 1971). Conflict theory contends that within society are two classes that are antagonistic to each other because of their differing social classes and interests. The bourgeoisie, who are also the owners of capital, and proletariat, who are workers and whose only property is their labour time, which they have to sell to the capitalists, are locked in an eternal vice-like competition for access to resources and state control. However, the economic substructure which the Bourgeoisie controls gives them, as it were, eternal dominance over the control of the state and the ill-earned prerogative to determine resource allocation. Concomitantly, the control of the economic base also affords the bourgeoisie elements to dominate the political and other state institutions where they replicate their interests and desires at the detriment of the mass of the people. To free itself, Marx advocates revolution or, in the least, a reform of some sort. Since the present democratic practice in Nigeria has failed to take into cognizance the peculiarities of the mosaic of ethnic

nationalities that make up modern Nigeria and the political leadership has refused to let up its hegemony of the state and its resources, to make the democratic system work, efforts must be put in place to demand its Nigerianisation. As a fillip, the recent calls for national conference from David Mark, the President of the Senate, and even from Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, an upshot of the fractionalisation of the dominant class and a concession to the longed-for demands of the people, show that with more vociferousness, the people can succeed in designing a new brand of democracy that reflects the very idiosyncracies that make up the Nigerian peoples. Thus, the people are encouraged to lead this vanguard for the remaking of Nigeria's democracy.

4.1 Nigerianising Democracy: A Quest That Must Be Met

As Lewis (2006) opined, even though Nigeria's 1999 transition to civilian government arose out of a long and turbulent period of military rule and failed democratic experiments, the long-awaited "democracy dividends" have remained a holy grail that is being sought by the Nigerian people. Lewis suggested that these democracy dividends are expected to expand political liberties, improve the performance of government, encourage accountability among leaders, and revive the ailing economy but have remained a mirage. As Imhonopi & Urim (2011) argue, to Nigerianise democracy in the country, there are issues to be considered. This is because since 1999 when the Fourth Republic was midwived, Nigerians are yet to reach their democratic aspirations as a people. It is therefore the argument of the authors that until Nigerians begin to enjoy the returns that should accrue from the state adoption of liberal democratic rule, any attempt to develop a homegrown democracy may not in any way change the fortunes of the people for the better. As a matter of fact, as Lewis (2006) observed, analysts, commentators and average citizens have expressed deep concerns about political violence, corruption, ethnicity, religious intolerance, ineffective government, irresponsive leaders, and economic deprivation as some of the problems plaguing democratic governance in Nigeria. These issues will be considered piecemeal.

4.2 Burning Social Issues Before Nigerianising Democracy in the Country

While the authors do not discredit efforts to Nigerianise Nigeria's democracy or condemn actors that are pushing this present advocacy, there are urgent issues that need to be addressed, otherwise their implications may throw up negative outcomes for the Nigerian state. These include:

First, corruption and poor value systems. The issue of state and official corruption has become not only worrisome but very nauseating. It is laughable that the presidency itself plays possum to this every worrisome matter since the First Citizen has argued vehemently in different fora that corruption is not the major problem facing Nigeria. However, corruption is attributable to the fall in value systems in the country. Where political actors and managers of the state entrusted with the management of the national vault dip their hands into it and steal the country blind, this has become a sore point in the socioeconomic development and political history of Nigeria. Recently, many political office holders have been levelled with corruption charges of having stolen billions of naira and dollars from the state treasury to further their personal interests. Starting from the local government to the federal level, these instances abound. Cases involving former Speakers of the House of Representatives, their deputies and former ministers, are a few examples of the gross violation of the people's trust, and an exhibition of unbridled greed and stupefying kleptomania perpetrated by these political thespians. In his scholarly paper, *Corruption and National Development*, Aluko (2008) recognised the impediment corruption has posed to national development in Nigeria. For the revered scholar, he not only equated the level of Nigeria's economic development with the prevalent corruption in place, but also identified disobedience to laws and to constituted authority by especially the political and economic managers of the state, political and electoral corruption, moral corruption, and financial corruption as some of the manifestations of the vicious grip of corruption in the country. Furthermore, according to him, Nigeria has only made marginal progress in fighting corruption as evidenced by the perception of the Transparency International in 2006 where from being the 5th most corrupt country in 1998, the most corrupt in 2001, the 2nd most corrupt in 2003, to the 6th most corrupt in 2006, Nigeria has only experienced slow improvements in the eradication of corruption in the country (Aluko, 2008). Thus, even with the adoption of democratic practice, Nigeria has not fared well in reducing the incidences and impact of corruption in the polity.

Second, ethnic violence and intolerance. In his very astute analysis of the impact of ethnicity on the consolidation of democracy in Nigeria, Azeez (2009) lamented about the negative impact ethnicity has had on the national integration, cohesion and democratic development efforts of the country. In fact, Azeez supports the view of Otite (1990) that the ethnic virus has been the chief catalyst of social crisis and political instability in Nigeria; and that ethnicity has been perceived in general as a major obstacle to the overall politico-economic development of

the country. Thus until the political and ruling classes answer the ethnicity question, the present morass of ethnic violence and intolerance may remain convoluted for a long time to come.

Third, masked elite rule and domination. As Prah (2007) contended, Marxists and Anarchists, from Marx himself to Bakunin, have rejected what they call “bourgeois democracy” as an undesirable expression of a narrow class-based system of rule. While the Marxists have preferred the “dictatorship of the proletariat” and the “withering away” of the state, the Anarchists want the “abolition” of the state because of what they felt was an elite or class domination of the state. This thinking found a willing affinity in more sober and seriously academic arguments of the works of political theorists like Robert Michels’ *Iron Law of Oligarchy*, Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca’s differing theories of the elite where they concluded that political rule and government are always by minorities, while democracy, considered the rule of the majority, was for them, a tantalising mirage and a myth. This rather hard-line posture is justified when Nigeria’s democratic practice is put under a critical lens. There has been a recycle of former military czars, their cronies, members of their families and their sympathisers in governance from 1999 till date with no recourse to the use of the intelligence that many technocrats and smart Nigerians possess and which could improve the quality of governance. This has resulted in a government of mediocrities, political jobbers and aristocrats. Without widening the political space and increasing citizen participation in governance, Nigeria’s democracy may succeed in widening the gulf between the electorate and the elected officials of the state.

Fourth, resource misappropriation, misallocation and expropriation. The present democratic dispensation has not favoured the right allocation of resources to priority areas like energy, poverty alleviation, mass housing projects, education, small business development, inter alia. When projects that are meant for the people are awarded, the contractors who are fronts for the political actors in the country over-invoice the contracts but underperform. In most cases, the political and dominant class has continued to make policies, create conduit pipes and respectable covers for facilitating the expropriation of stolen funds to overseas accounts where these funds are lodged and round-tripped to Nigeria to further entrench and promote the socio-political and economic interests of this class. By controlling the economic substructure through legitimate and illegitimate means, the dominant class, masked as advocates of democracy, has limited citizen participation in governance and has sustained the culture of elite rule in its different hues and guises.

Fifth, political and election violence. Nigeria has continued to face political and election violence, rigging, ballot-snatching, assassination of politicians by opponents and recently politically motivated bomb blasts, even after over a decade of unbroken democratic governance. According to Joseph (2010), quoting from Niall Ferguson, the Harvard University historian, there are three thresholds that countries seeking to establish consolidated democracies must cross: (1) the non-violent resolution of political competition; (2) the acceptance of alternation in power, and (3) the supremacy of the rule of law. According to Joseph, despite Nigeria's shortcomings, Nigeria has one of the best judicial systems and legal professions in Africa, where although the protection of rights and liberties is never certain, their abuse can be vigorously contested and redress often achieved. However, Nigeria has failed in the area of enjoying the non-violent resolution of political competition and the acceptance of alternation in power because of the hubris of political actors from some sections of the country for the control of the levers of power and political hegemony. The 2011 post-election violence in the northern part of the country that trailed the much-avowed free-and-fair election as attested to by domestic and international observers is a reminder of the recalcitrance and arrogance of the political class to be sportsmanlike in defeat. Therefore, resolving this crisis should become a priority for the state and its managers before any attempt is made to Nigerianise democracy in the country.

Sixth, the expensive democratic project. Today, Nigeria's democracy is considered the most expensive project in the democratic family of states (Imhonopi & Urim, 2012). The duplication of ministerial portfolios, the multiplicity of functions, the bloated perquisites of office enjoyed by the political class and the presidential system, patterned after the United States, all seem to work against the development aspirations of the Nigerian people. Nigerians are becoming poorer by the day, while the political and dominant classes are consolidating their control of the economic substructure, a scenario that represents a sad metaphor of an isolated island of prosperity in a sea of poverty.

Seventh, militarisation of government and subjugation of the popular will. Nigeria's democratic project has continued to promote stratocratic ideals of oppression of dissent voices, intolerance of the opposition, fiat in place of due process and the rule of law, and governance that does not derive from the people but from godfathers. This situation does not promote the

ideals of democratic governance in the style of the West and will frustrate genuine efforts to Nigerianise Nigeria's democracy until these aberrations are removed.

Lastly, sustained tradition of human rights violation. Unlike those writers who have insisted that the principles of African customary law have helped in understanding and advancing human rights in Africa (Ibhawoh, 2000; Morgan-Forster, 2004), however, since such claims that human rights norms operated in pre-colonial socio-political African settings are not reflected in contemporary practice, it would be incorrect to say that Nigeria or Africa has a tradition of human rights protection. This may not be farther from the truth as evidence abounds in Nigeria regarding the violation of human rights of citizens at will by the political and military elite at the slightest of offences. Police brutality is also rife in the country with several extra-judicial killings and torture perpetrated by "officers in uniform." The situation may have slightly improved during this democratic era, however, many incidents still point to the brutality and cruelty of public office holders towards Nigerian citizens.

The Social Implications of the Issues Discussed

There is a social dimension to the issues earlier discussed. One, continued corruption by the political class will lead to further erosion of societal values and the political space will continue to be cramped by mediocrities who see government as a conduit pipe to achieve their get-rich quick schemes. Two, as long as issues that aggravate ethnic violence are not addressed, Nigeria will continue to tow the line of disunity and ethnic reprisals, and warmongering will become the order of the day. Continued elite rule and dominance will breed bad blood among the people and may lead to mass revolts against the existing social structures akin to what is going on in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria and other repressive and closed societies.

Four, with continued siphoning of public funds and the abdication of the social responsibility of government, this will engender the pauperisation of the Nigerian people, and widen the gap between the haves and have-nots. Lastly, subjugation of the popular will and the violation of human rights may lead to the acquisition of militancy by the people and the increase in militant gangs set up to fight the existing establishments. Consequently, the implications of not correcting the undemocratic and anti-people practices in place portend grave danger for the continuity and unity of the Nigerian state. In fact, as Imhonopi & Urim (2013) observe, there is the emergence of a precariat class that has emerged in Nigeria brewing with terror and bile as evidenced by the recent rise of terrorist groups, kidnapping rings and militant ethnic fighters.

5.1 Recommendation and Conclusion

To evolve a democracy that wears a Nigerian face, Nigerians must form the nucleus of activities, intentions, plans, programmes and investment of government. First, government should cease to pay lip service to the issue of national integration and seriously consider initiating a referendum or a national conference where the different ethnic nationalities can converge to discuss issues important to each group and proffering solutions that further promote ethnic integration, tolerance and unity of the diverse nations that make up the polity. Although the political class has acceded to this request, this conference must be held and must aggregate the views of a major representation of Nigerians without any recourse to dominance by the elite. Second, starting from the present Goodluck Jonathan-led government down to political leaders at the state and local levels, effective frameworks like the Freedom of Information Act and other instruments and agencies like the anti-corruption agencies must all come together to beam a searchlight on the lives and activities of the Nigerian leadership such that citizens can begin to expect accountable and ethical behaviours from this class. Third, citizen participation, engagement and welfare must no longer be at the whims and caprices of the political class but must become a desideratum for the election, selection and perpetuation of leaders at all levels of government. Particularly, the government must empower the citizens, be responsible and answerable to citizens and must govern according to the interests of the people. If democracy is the government of the people, the constitution and other instruments of government must enthrone the people above the government of the day. Fourth, the independence of the judiciary, the entrenchment of the rule of law, constitutionalism, and the promotion of civil and human rights should form the cornerstone of the democratic practice in the country. Fifth, what the country requires now is human economics. This economics comes with the face, voice and hands of the people. Any economic permutation that does not translate to better standard of living for the people, improved welfare and well-being is only meant for the classroom. Nigerians' human development indices must begin to reflect purported improvements claimed to exist in the macro economy. Sixth, state and community policing is an initiative that can be considered to improve the security of lives and property in Nigeria when the details have been worked out by all stakeholders involved. Lastly, the democratic experience in the country very much favours the central government which has become all too powerful. Devolution of powers to states must therefore be encouraged to whittle down the influence of the central government with the federal structure in place.

The authors contend that with all its flaws, democracy still remains the most viable political system for the modern state. Like Prah (2007) argues, its positives outweigh its negatives. Nevertheless, while these authors support the Nigerianisation of the democratic praxis in Nigeria, reflecting the country's unique cultural and ethnic kaleidoscope, without amending the present status quo that supports undemocratic and anti-people practices as identified and discussed in this chapter, such efforts may end up complexifying the existing ethnic conflicts, mistrust and mass revolt brewing in the offing. For Nigeria not to end up a failed state as some political Cassandras have envisaged and pontificated, the political managers of the state must begin to wean themselves of false airs of invincibility and sacrosanctity and start to respect the wishes of the people in the design, deployment and administration of state resources. Government must be committed to bring the dividends of democracy to the people, and must empower and engage them as worthy stakeholders in the Nigerian project.

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