

Political Ethics in Political Communication: The Road Not Taken by Nigeria's Political Elites of the Fourth Republic.

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Abstract:

The practice of political ethics is a phenomenon that is somewhat alien to Nigeria's political elites of the fourth republic. Oftentimes, we either read on our national dailies or watch acts of politicians on national television that are not geared towards the Benthamite common good of the Nigerian citizens; but, geared towards their material interests and that of their cronies. Unfortunately, these unethical acts are communicated whether verbally or otherwise to the Nigerian public unremittingly; thus, instilling in them, and unconsciously so, the wrong way of political behaviour. This study however, analysed statements and speeches of some political elites and other power brokers in the country, using the tool of Critical Discourse Analyses (CDA). Thus, it is the hypothesis of this study that if the Nigerian security agencies continues to look the other way in the face of these teeming unethical and loathsome statements, political ethics and morality in our political communications would be completely eroded from our national lives. The methodology of data collection is primarily documentary, as secondary sources of data were used for the study. Qualitative descriptive method was adopted through the use of content analysis of the reviewed literature. The study, therefore recommends that there should be prompt prosecution of unethical and inciteful statements of politicians within our polity to deter uncircumspect speakers. This would in no small measure drastically reduce all forms of unethical, immoral and reckless comments; reset the average Nigerian behavioural pattern and attitude in relation to politics and political communication; and finally, instil in them the moral inclination and drive to promote the political common good of the ordinary Nigerian.

Keywords: Political Ethics, Political Communication, Common Good, Political Elite, CDA.

Introduction

Many scholars who will pick up this article to read, especially those of the department of political science, might not be too comfortable with the notion and term, *political ethics* because in their opinion, it is just a contradiction. In fact, some could strongly argue that all is fair in politics whether it is abusive or immoral, it doesn't matter because it is all part of the game. After all, the end justifies the means. But it doesn't have to be. Getting what one seeks through politics irrespective of how it is got, is what has bedevilled the idea of politics, not just in Nigeria but in other parts of the world. This notion of politics, I must add should be revisited. It was however, foisted on Africans through colonialism and is still being preached today through imperialism championed by Western scholars in their writings (game theory). Some African scholars may have unknowingly joined their European counterparts to echo these following statements about how undesirable it is to have politics and ethics in one room.

“There are many men of principle in both parties in America, but there is no party of principle.”
Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859)

“Morality in politics means naivety and naivety is dangerous: it underestimates difficulties and conflicts, it prefers not to believe in cruelty or wrath.”

"Even worse, in political matters, ethical considerations can but compound problems, worsen processes, derail policies; they are rarely part of solutions.”

“Morality has nothing to do with politics.”

“Ethics and politics are poor bedfellows.”

But there are quite some opposite perception and thinking that predated the imperialistic ones outlined above.

“When the ruler of a country is just and good, the ministers become just and good,... the people become just and good.” Anguttara Nikaya from the Indian Code of Manu known as the Kautilya's Arthashastra.

“Within his realm, the king should act in accordance with the rules. [...] When a king is addicted to vices stemming from pleasure, he is cut off from law and wealth, but when he is addicted to those arising from wrath, he is cut off from his very life.” Code of Manu, ch.VII, 32, 46.

This study is however, primarily concerned with the way actions of Nigerian politicians (whether in deeds or in words) are communicated to the citizens with often negative connotations, hence causing some kind of psychological abuse, with a tendency to create an unconscious political behavioural pattern in them. For now, this study is particularly concerned with the choice of language of the Nigerian political elites of the Fourth Republic; whether consciously or unconsciously, as it relates to their political communications. These political communications, to put it mildly, is highly unethical and morally damaging to the psyche of the citizenry. Some of these political communications, apparently bereft of ethics have had serious tendencies to incite violence and violent behaviours across the country, especially before, during and after election

periods. In other occasions, they manifest as hate speeches which could have devastating outcomes in our political lives.

Nigerian political elites of the fourth republic more often than not seem highly unnerved with their damaging political statements and speechifyings, irrespective of what the outcome might be. The only outcome anticipated by them is the attainment of their desired political interest at the expense of the common good of the citizens. One crucial reason why they are highly unperturbed by their actions is because no consequence within the ambit of the law, is anticipated. This is so because of institutional passivity and docility. With this brief introduction, let's now look at some of the concepts used in this study for proper clarification.

Conceptual Clarification

Political Communication

Olayiwola (1991) in his thesis titled: "Political Communication in Nigeria" defines the term as the subset of communicatory activity considered political by *virtue of the consequences, actual and potential, that it has for the functioning of the political system*. It is also used as a process in which informational and persuasive messages are transmitted from the political institutions of society through the mass media to the citizenry to whom they are ultimately accountable.

Oyebode (2014) opines that Political communication is simply defined as dissemination of information about how people and government relate to foster understanding and peace in a society.

Also, Diedong (2013) defined "political communication" as a category of communication that includes a large proportion of all deliberative and hortatory activities that take place outside of the household.

Olayiwola (2015) defined political communication as a sub-field of Political Science and Communication that deals with the production, dissemination, procession and effects of information, through the mass media of communication; like the Newspaper Press, Radio, Television, Social Media, Ora-media and interpersonally within a political context.

From the above definitions, we can deduce that political communication as a tool used by political elites to get their messages across to the citizens through the mass media has consequences either actual or potential for the functioning of the political system. The consequences here could either be good or bad depending on the tone, text, and even the subliminal meaning the messages may be conveying to the citizens.

Political Ethics:

Before we attempt a conceptual clarification of the term political ethics, it is very pertinent to first understand what ethics is. By ethics, we mean those moral values and virtues imbibed by a people (whether taught or observed) which delineates and sets good standard of behaviour in a society for orderly conduct and common good of the people. But when the behaviour of a people projects bad morals, then we could say that they are unethical. These values also have certain

stipulated standards of right and wrong, good and bad, prescribing what humans ought to do in any given circumstance or regarding any expected code of conduct in any area of life and existence. Ethics is usually seen in terms of rights, obligations, benefits to society, fairness, and specific virtues that are needed to maintain sanity in any field. Ethical standards include virtues of honesty, compassion, and loyalty. (Uzuegbunam et al, 2015). In the views of Laudon, Traver & Laudon, 1996) presuppose that ethics are moral standards that help guide behaviour, actions, and choices, grounded in the notion of responsibility (as free moral agents, individuals, organisations, and societies are responsible for the actions that they take) and accountability (individuals, organisations, and society should be held accountable to others for the consequences of their actions).

Political ethics are imbibed norms and virtues expressed through the actions and inactions of the political elites, whether verbal or otherwise, that ought to promote the common good of the entire populace and not for personalised, factionalised or sectionalised interest. They are those attitudinal disposition of the political class that should convey certain behaviour that are not inimical to societal wellbeing and socio-political development. The political elites (rightly or wrongly) are models who are emulated in the society by younger generations of would-be politicians. In view of this, they ought to be circumspect with their political statements and speechifyings all the time, in order not to pass on bad morals and standards of political behaviour to the younger generations and the wider society. To be sure, one could say that the opposite of political ethics is political rascality which has been conceptualised as the discharge of political responsibilities in such a way that political actions are driven by personal interest rather than collective common good. It is a kind of politics characterized by crass opportunism, individualism, and personalized rule. Political rascality is broadly anti-people. Rather than focus on the promotion of collective interest through socio-economic and political advancement, political rascality is concerned with the building of personality cult and the quest for primitive accumulation at the expense of the vast powerless majority. It is short-sighted, superficial, pedestrian, and ideologically deficient in content and context. Political rascality spawns devastating consequences. It is alienating and incapable of engineering efficient and effective institutions. It also trivializes popular participation in the formulation and implementation of decisions and the discharge of responsibilities. (Osumah, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a Tool of Analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been theorised as a critical tool of linguistic analysis. It apparently has its origin from the critical school theory, birthed at the Frankfurt School of Social Research. “Critical theory is defined as a research perspective, which has basically a critical attitude towards society” (Langer, 1998, p.3). Since then, the works of scholars like Fairclough, van Dijk, and Wodak have remained very prominent and largely influential in the diagnosis and analysis of languages, including text and talk, which this study will dwell more on.

It is instructive to note that these three widely acknowledged proponents of CDA seldom dealt with the issue of how political communications (text and talk) have had behavioural influences on people and society. Let's examine this by looking at what they have theorised.

The British Sociolinguist, Fairclough (1995) defines CDA in this manner: *"By critical discourse analysis I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony".* (pp. 132-3). By this, he saw language expressions as a social process that sometimes demonstrates power relations and struggle for power of different elements of the society and how it has secured dominance and hegemony of political elites on other groups and the general public.

Similarly, van Dijk (2003: 352, cited in Iyabode, 2016) was more apt in his description of CDA as *"a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality"*

In van Dijk's view, political discourse within any political milieu deals with power projections especially as it relates to how languages are formed, communicated and expressed during negotiations. Social relations, domination and hegemony within this environment is determined by the use of certain linguistics that perpetuates a particular social order in favour of a particular class to the detriment of the other. This notion however, brings us to the issue of the underlying interest inherent in the use of the choice of such languages. Jank (1997, cited in Iyabode, 2016) delineates CDA in this manner:

"Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. All social practice are tied to specific historical contexts and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested and different interests are served. It is the questions pertaining to interests - How is the text positioned or positioning? Whose interests are served by this positioning? Whose interests are negated? What are the consequences of this positioning? - that relate discourse to relations of power. Where analysis seeks to understand how discourse is implicated in relations of power, it is called critical discourse analysis"

A critical addition to the delineation of CDA by Jank is the question of interest, especially as it relates to its preservation and perpetuation of same by a particular class; and the contest and repudiation of this interest by another. The above scholars' literature on CDA so far reviewed, primarily dwelt on power relations and struggle between and among various classes or groups in the society; which has inadvertently worsen and deepen social inequality in societies.

With regard to Nigerian political environment, language influences are very peculiar in various respects. Political communications among various politicians and power brokers in Nigeria do not only project power and power struggle but more devastatingly, influences the behaviour, mindset and psyche of the general public negatively. The rhetorics used at times often corrupts

and instills bad political behaviour in the would-be politician of the future. As we shall see from the selected speeches, statements and comments of some high profile politicians or other power brokers in the country, it is very evident that the negative impact is seen in the lives of young and burgeoning politicians in the country. Especially in the aspect of currying ethnic favours, violent conflict and demonstrations before, during and after major elections; thus leading to senseless killings and needless loss of lives. Thus, CDA, as theorised by Fairclough, van Dijk, and Jank scarcely took account of the devastating behavioural influences and pattern that political communication (text and talk) could create and propagate among various individuals and different elements of the society, as is evident in the Nigerian political space.

Consequently, critical discourse analysis as a theory of linguistic analysis seeks to unearth the subliminal, surreptitious and hideous meanings of rhetorics employed by political elite and other power brokers with the intent to perpetuate their interest; and to instill and propagate a particular political behaviour, whether consciously or unconsciously, that would serve such interest. Another aspect CDA examines, is the unintended consequences the reckless use of language might engender. An unremitting recurrence of this, abuses the mindset and orientation of the public and their perception of public office or positions of authority; hence, setting bad precedence of unethical conduct, in deeds and in words. In light of the above, we shall proceed to having a critical discourse analysis of some selected speeches and comments of some political elites and its attendant consequences on people and society, much later. We shall also examine how politically ethical or unethical, these comments and statements could be; and what their inherent psychological disturbance and violent consequences are.

Analyses of Some Unethical Political Communication Amongst Nigeria's Political Elites

The main texts analysed are text highlights of: Chief Olusegun Obasanjo's pre-2007 elections campaign speech. General Muhammadu Buhari post-2011 general elections speech Chief John Odiegie-Oyegun pre-Osun State 2014 governorship election speech President Goodluck Jonathan 2011/2015 campaign promise.

Chief Olusegun Obasanjo:

'... this election is a do or die affair for me and the PDP. This election is a matter of life and death for the PDP and Nigeria'. (Daily Trust, 12 February, 2007 in a political campaign rally at Abeokuta, Ogun State).

The above statement clearly reeks of desperation and thus politically immoral and unethical. As a high-profile power broker in the country, the former president's statement has the potential of inciting the public. It is simply unstatesmanlike. The phrase *'do or die,' 'life and death'* creates both a conscious and an unconscious feeling of survival at whatever cost in the followers' psyche. A statement like this charge the atmosphere and prepares it for action at the slightest provocation. Violent demonstrations and conflict at the behest of the power broker, is usually inevitable. The fundamental question to ask is: on whose interest was the statement made? This is typically in line with Jank's view of CDA where he quipped: *'Whose interests are served by this positioning? Whose interests are negated? What are the consequences of this positioning?'*

In this power projection, the only interest to be served is that of the power broker-the former president and that of his party. Those whose interest are negated are that of the followers who more often than not pay the ultimate price of this power relation with their lives should violent conflict breaks as a result of the statement. More fundamentally is the army of ignorant budding politician who admires this power broker and intend to pattern their political career, ideology and communication in the same manner. Recall that this politician in question before his bowing out of office nearly truncated our constitutional democracy by making insidious moves to amend the constitution in order to favour his third term agenda. Should he has succeeded, political sons under him would adopt his methods of undermining the rule of law and constitutional processes to get what they want.

Goodluck Ebele Jonathan:

"The issue of public asset declaration is a matter of personal principle. That is the way I see it, and I don't give a damn about it, even if you criticise me from heaven. When I was the Vice President , that matter came up, and I told the former President (late Musa Yar'adua) let's not start something that would make us play into the hands of people and create an anomalous situation in the country" (**Vanguard Newspaper: In a third media chat with journalists in Aso villa, Abuja**)

The gaffe in the former president's statement in a third media chat he granted to journalists is imbued in the phrase: ***'I don't give a damn about it'***. The following text: ***'even if you criticise me from heaven'*** reveals a tone of frustration. To the audience and Nigerians at large, the president has subliminally communicated to all that there is nothing anyone can do about the situation. Meaning, he has foreclosed the matter, his mind was made up.

To be fair to the former president, the law is very clear with regard to the issue of asset declaration. Section 140 of the constitution provides: *'the person elected to the office of the President shall not begin to perform the functions of that office until he has declared his assets and liabilities as prescribed in this Constitution...'* The constitution never charged any president to declare his assets *publicly* as most Nigerians have demanded of the president. The call for public declaration of asset was borne out of goodwill by Nigerians who earnestly wants the country to rid itself of corruption and corrupt elements in public offices. The former president, as a father of the nation, should not have dismissed the call with a tone of high-handedness: *'I don't give a damn about it'*. This is clearly unpresidential. Rather, he could have courteously replied the journalists by making them understand that what Nigerians want him to do is plainly unconstitutional; hence, his reason for not declaring his assets and liabilities publicly.

To the political illiterate, the uninformed and undiscerning would-be politician in the polity, it is both an enactment and an endorsement of a culture of impunity. It could erroneously create in the minds of other politicians that what one does with political power is a matter of principle and is unquestioned.

General Muhammadu Buhari/Goodluck Ebele Jonathan:

'God willing, by 2015, something will happen. They either conduct a free and fair election or they go in a very disgraceful way. If what happened in 2011 (alleged rigging) should again happen in 2015, by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood.' (The punch, 9 April, 2014, General Muhammadu Buhari in a meeting with party members in Kaduna, Kaduna State.).

'My ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian'. (Former president Jonathan's statement repeated in adverts severally on Nigerian Television Authority).

There is no politically unethical statement that have ever heated the polity more in the fourth republic than that communicated by the incumbent president in events leading up to the last election, that eventually brought him to office. Having contested three times and lost, the 2015 presidential election appeared to have been waded into with desperation. The phrase: *'...by the grace of God, the dog and the baboon would all be soaked in blood.'* This statement reveals the inner personality of the power broker as blood thirsty and vampiric. Using the CDA as a tool of analyses, it further reveals that the addresser wants to wrest power by all means available, especially through the most violent. As a power broker who has large followers and admirers, the statement is a call to arms with the clear intent to spill blood of any who would stand in his way to power. In light of the fact that the speaker eventually won the election of 2015, the followers may have been influenced or made to believe that the threat of the outbreak violence should he have lost, was largely instrumental to the victory of their power broker. This has definitely bred some bad political behaviour in the followers and younger generations who are avid admirers of the president. Infact, the current assymetric farmer-herders clashes in some part of the country where the herders have killed hundreds, if not thousands of members of their host communities, is a vicious manifestation of this. Hence, one could say that the brazenness with which the herders go about in their killings and sacking of communities and villages in the country is a strong resonance of the statement made by their former patron before the election of 2015.

In another breadth, Jonathan's statement was both sportsmanlike and statesmanlike. It is one that can be said to have acknowledged the sanctity of human life; devoid of any violent ingredient and honourable. As an incumbent in this part of the world where the coercive means of a state is unilaterally deployed wherever and whenever against any political opponent, he chose not to insinuate the power wields at the time, as evident in his statement. The line of the speech ordinarily instills in the common man the will power and freedom to choose who to elect, without having to deal with any psychological threat of violence against him or any other person after performing his civic duty. Simply put, the statement erased any air or threat of violence that could follow after a major election such as the one of 2015.

To be sure, the reason for the political tranquility in the country after the election was solely attributed to the former president's honouring of his statement that no ambition of his is worth the blood of any Nigerian. Though some of his kinsmen and other party faithfuls wanted him to act otherwise, but he stuck to his guns. On the other hand, the question one might ask is: would president Buhari have stuck to his guns also by painting the country red with blood of Nigerian citizens should he have lost the 2015 election? The answer can be deduced in the light of recent events in the country between the farmers and the herders.

Senator Buruji Kashamu

'I don't go to the beach, and now, I will go and hire OPC, may be like 40. I will load them (in my vehicle), because the day we meet, one has to kill one. That is for sure! One has to kill one because I am not ready to go anywhere. Before that happens, maybe about three, four or five people will die before am extradited'. (Monday Punch, 30 January, 2017. Senator Kashamu in an interaction with judiciary correspondence of different media houses).

Before we delve into an analyses of this statement by the above Senator, it is important to let the reader know what led to the statement. Senator Kashamu, a lawmaker representing Ogun East senatorial district has been accused of drug trafficking in the United States (US) and has been asked repeatedly to come and clear his name for the sake of justice and fair hearing. But he has refused, citing the 1986 amendment of the United States Foreign Assistance Act, known as the Mansfield Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act. The law stated among other things:

“Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no officer or employee of the United States may engage or participate in any direct police arrest action in any foreign country with respect to narcotics control efforts. No such officer or employee may interrogate or be present during the interrogation of any United States person arrested in any foreign country with respect to narcotics control efforts without the written consent of such person.”

In strict compliance with the rule of law, series of extradition requests have been made concerning him being brought 'forcefully' to the United States. This senator has however forgot that the honourable and ethical thing to do is to turn himself and subject himself to judicial processes in order to prove his innocence and fundamentally, clear his name. To corroborate this fact, the Judge handling his extradition case, Judge Posner comments on the need for the senator to prove his innocence. His statement on the matter was captured by the online newspaper, Sahara Reporters:

Last year, Judge Richard Posner of the Chicago Court of Appeal 7th Circuit quoted the US Justice Department as saying that the prospects of the senator's extradition had improved. It added that if it is proved that the senator was the ringleader of the heroin cartel, he could face up to life should he end up in jail for and challenged him to come to Chicago to prove his innocence in court. (Monday, Sahara Reporters July, 10 2017).

Instead of obliging the Court with his presence, he threatened to kill anyone who would enforce extradition orders against him in a statement which the Punch Newspaper quoted as saying: *“About three, four or five people will die before I'm extradited”* (Monday Punch, 30 January, 2017). When he denied it, the Punch told other journalists and the public that it was at an interaction that was held with about nine judiciary correspondents from different media houses. (Monday PremiumTimes, 30 January, 2017). Here is the full statement from the Punch newspaper, for better comprehension on why he said people would die.

Analyses

The phrase: *'I don't go to the beach, and now, I will go and hire OPC, may be like 40'*. The subliminal meaning here is that the beach is usually an open place with little or no form of hindrance for any such extradition to take place. The addresser, having repudiated any call to go and present himself before the US court is prepared to protect himself through thugs, as to want to hire as many as 40. The reason for his action at the time, to secure his protection and prevent any attempt to abduct him, was because the controllers of the state's security apparatus are somewhat indifferent about his extradition to the US. As a result they are not willing to give him full security and maximum protection. Recall that the embattled Senator belongs to the People's Democratic Party (PDP); where as the party in power is the All Progressive Congress (APC). May be if he were to be with the ruling party the story would have been different.

'I will load them (in my vehicle), because the day we meet, one has to kill one. That is for sure! One has to kill one because I am not ready to go anywhere'. This is clearly a declaration of war on whoever that would attempt to extradite him. Loading them in the vehicle also presupposes that they would be armed to the teeth at all times, and that is for sure. *'One has to kill one because am not ready to go anywhere'* indicates a marksman tactics in war. Finally, *'before that happens, maybe about three, four or five people will die...'* shows that the death of Nigerians in the course of the action meant nothing to the senator of the federal republic of Nigeria. All these, extremely depicts the dearth of political ethics and morality in the society, with its attendant grave influence on the citizens.

Though he remains a PDP member, he never criticizes the current administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. In fact, he openly supports the administration in his bid the keep the Federal Government on his side and to continue to be in the good books of the “no nonsense” president.

Senator Danjuma Goje

'I advise Fashola to remember that he is now a minister and should behave like a minister. He is not a governor, and this National Assembly is not Lagos State House of Assembly... If his job is too much for him because the ministries are too big for him and he cannot adjust, then he should do the honourable thing and resign...For now, I will cease fire and watch how the House of Representatives will handle it. If it is well handled there, then we leave it with them; if the House is not satisfied and they pass it to us, then we take, it over' (Guardian newspaper July 6, 2017)

This is another case of both a political unethical statement and policy that is directed and intended for selfish interest. A quick background with regard to what led to the above statement will be needful. Here is a case of a self-serving senator whose decoded statement through the instrumentality of CDA have made rubbish of what the English philosopher and classical legal jurist and reformer (Jeremy Bentham) said about law, policy and legislation: *“the greatest happiness for the greatest number is the foundation for morals and legislation.”* (1748-1832). But this power broker representing Gombe Central, who is also the Senate Committee Chairman on Appropriation, seem to vehemently disagree totally with the English sage. During the appropriation and budgeting process of 2017, the senator tinkered with the budget presented by the Minister of Power, Works and Housing presented to the National Assembly. He supplanted certain project that would be of more benefit to Nigerians nationwide with his parochial constituency project. This action did not go down well with the honourable minister as he

demanding for a quick reversal of what was in the budget *ab initio*. His insistence, led to trade of words between him and the senator. Instead of the senator to realize his mistakes and gaffe in his action, just like an ethical and virtuous individual would do. Rather, he decided to throw tantrums and to deride the honourable minister with above the statement that was credited to him.

When the minister read this statement on the dailies, he decided to bring to the fore what has been going on covertly with the budget processes in the National Assembly. He responded thus:

I think first that the language is unparliamentary and therefore not deserving of a reply...It was regrettable that the Senate Committee Chairman on Appropriation, would seek to trivialize the issues raised about the unilateral slashing of the budgetary allocation to key national infrastructure by the National Assembly. In this context, it is left for Nigerians to then decide whether budgeting for constituency roads is more patriotic than budgeting to complete the Kano-Maiduguri Road that connects 5 states, the Lagos-Ibadan road that connects 3 states and helps to move food, imported goods and fuel across the country; or the 2nd Niger Bridge that connects the East and West geopolitical zones of at least 11 states together. I will also leave Nigerians to judge whether it is more patriotic to budget for the Mambilla Power Project that will contribute to more power across Nigeria or reduce the budget to build street lights in legislative constituencies. (Channels Television, July 7, 2017; Friday Guardian, July 7, 2017).

Following the verbal tradeoff between the two power brokers, it is safe to say that the senator's priorities were misplaced; they are self-seeking, self-serving and self-centered. We know from past experiences that most constituency projects have been diverted or abandoned by senators or house of representative members of the National Assembly for personal gains.

Senator Dino Melaye

"Look this is not Bourdillon (referring to the famous Lagos residence of Mrs Tinubu's politician husband). I will beat you up...impregnate you and nothing will happen." (PremiumTimes, July 16, 2016 on the Floor of the Senate).

This speaker needs no introduction. However, for the sake of clarity, he is a senator representing unfortunately, the good people of Kogi West Senatorial District. To quickly summarize the inglorious unethical personality of this senator, we shall examine the statement he made on the floor of the National Assembly where he threatened to rape a fellow female senator right there on the hallowed chamber. In fact, the statement desecrated the hallowed chamber with its stench, so malodorous, oozing to high heavens. Regardless of what the provocation was, the senator should have comported himself and at least be civil and honourable with his statement. That is why they are called "distinguished senators" of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. But there was nothing honourable and distinguished about the statement. Rather, it was one of the most, if not the most dishonourable comments ever made since the emergence of the National Assembly since independence.

With the telescopic look of CDA, the phrase: *'look this is not Bourdillon'*, referring to the residence of the former governor of Lagos State, Tinubu amply suggests that the speaker

recognises that he has no control or that his sphere of influence and authority is inconsequential at the place referred to; or more broadly, Lagos as a whole. But that he has absolute control in the territory where the statement was made- the floor of the Senate; hence, the adjoining statement: *'I will beat you up...impregnate you and nothing will happen'*. The choice of words here speaks of a power broker who sees himself as a school headmaster, a primal overload and an absolute and totalitarian ruler who has ultimate control over his subject including their lives; and of course, answers to no one.

Apparently, thinking on what he had just said as perhaps having not done enough harm, he further stated rather condescendingly that he would not actually do that because it would be like being with 'a dried-up Bonga (dry fish)'. He added: *"I would rather be with a more robust and beautiful woman like (senator) Stella Oduah,"* (Sahara Reporters July 13, 2016)

What a morally bankrupt statement! The newspaper further went on to say that if not for the timely intervention of other senators, this unfortunate power broker would have physically assaulted the female senator. The senators were said to have prevailed on him to take it easy and let peace reign. It is very clear that this senator has over time proved to have a problem with women, with his volatile marriages the source of juicy gossip in the media in recent years because of reported abuse allegations against him. His first wife reported that he had repeatedly beaten her when she was pregnant, and later posted photos online to show the public how abusive the senator had been to her.

David Babachir Lawal:

"Who is the presidency?" (In retort to reporters who demanded his reaction concerning the news of his suspension by the presidency)

The former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Babachir Lawal needs a bit of introduction. Shortly after he was made SGF, his company (Rholavison Engineering Limited) was awarded a grass cutting contract under the Presidential Initiative on the North East (PINE), an intervention agency under his office. This is clearly a case of conflict of interest, which is at variance with our laws. It was this same conflict of interest that led to the resignation of a former minister of power, Batholomew Nnaji during the privatisation of the power sector. But in the case of Babachir Lawal, he did not only have a conflict of interest situation, his was company was also awarded a contract to clear invasive plants in North East of Yobe State of an outrageous sum of over N200m; and he did collect kickbacks amounting to N450m from companies that got contract from PINE.

In light of the above, the Senate committee set up to look into the matter indicted him and his company and made recommendation to the president. Consequently, he was suspended from the office of SGF by the presidency. But when accosted by State house correspondent of his suspension, his response of "who is the presidency" is rhetoric that needs some analysis. There are several reasons that could have prompted such remark from him. One of such that is very evident is the way and manner in which the president has handled corrupt cases of those who are close to him. For instance, when the Senate presented a report indicting the SGF, he set up a committee chaired by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation. This

committee came up with their own report clearing the SGF of all charges and allegation, insisting on the integrity of their man. The action of the presidency was seen as terrible and this prompted the famous statement made by Senator Shehu Sani who quipped: "“When it comes to fighting corruption in the National Assembly and the Judiciary and in the larger Nigerian sectors, the President uses insecticide, but when it comes to fighting corruption within the Presidency, they use deodorants,”

But in fairness to him, he was in a meeting with Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo when Femi Adesina, presidential spokesman, announced his suspension pending investigations into the award of contracts under the Presidential Initiative on the North East (PINE). Now, if the Vice President was already privy to his suspension, he did not tell him. Thus, he was as shocked as anyone could be in such a situation. But as a responsible leader and potential mentor, he should have applied caution with the way he responded to the correspondents. Irrespective of the fact that he occupied a very strategic position in the presidency as SGF, he should have applied the brakes in how the manner he spoke. But as Thisday Newspapers (April, 2017) puts it: "The problem with privileged people in government, holding political appointments, however, is that they often get carried away. They forget that they are mere agents, exercising delegated authority. The illusion of power and the delusion of agents constitute one of the major threats in the corridors of power".

His statement was in no small measure an insult to the entire gamut of the presidency that includes the President himself, the Vice President and all the human and non-human resources there of. The statement also reeks of pride, arrogance and impudence. This is a very corruptible seed that may have been sown in our polity. Once more, his retortion to State house correspondents has been explained in Thisday Newspaper, in this manner: " “who will dare take such a decision behind my back? I am the Presidency and I have just held a meeting with the VP. You reporters don’t know anything. You are telling the Presidency that the Presidency has suspended him from office?”

The question that urgently demands answers here are: what political legacy and precedent are these politicians/power brokers setting? What manner of political behaviour are these power brokers/politicians instituting in our nascent democracy? How much influence could they have on young and aspiring politicians and power brokers of tomorrow? These are the questions we shall attempt to answer in this last section the article.

Political Legacy and Precedent:

As earlier espoused, the main thrust of this article is to examine the imports or the consequences of the statements of Nigeria's politicians and other power brokers on the collective wellbeing of the citizens and society. Let's begin with the first- political legacy and precedents.

Since the return to civil rule in 1999, some Nigeria's political elites have made series of unguarded utterances in their power relations with one another and in pursuance of their interest regardless of whose ox is gored. Sadly, the Nigerian society has been the one bearing the brunt of this unethical disposition. Beginning with former president Olusegun Obasanjo in his speech while addressing the people of Ogun State, where he said that the upcoming election is a do or

die affair, and that it is also a matter of life and death. This choice of words in the view of Iyabode (2016) connotes a zero-sum statement. It has enunciated a win at all cost precedent in the psyche of emerging politicians and power brokers in the country. It thus sets a political precedent that when contesting an election, the politician should employ all manners of devious means at his disposal to win elections. This of course includes undermining the electoral process in order to emerge victorious. Today, the political elites sets such a political legacy and precedent that involves ballot box snatching, vote-buying, manipulating and inducing electoral umpires, violent intimidation of political opponents, just to mention a few. By way of illustration, the just concluded gubernatorial poll in Ekiti State of July 14, 2018 is testament to the issue of vote buying between the two top political parties that contested the election. Parties agents were seen distributing cash to voters whilst the security officers looked the other way. This unfortunate incident also featured prominently in the other governorship elections held earlier in Edo and Ondo States.

Political Behaviour:

The entrenched political behaviour is one of being bereft of ideology and a clear blueprint of what to do to improve the lot of the citizens upon assuming a position of leadership, whether elective or appointive. This is the core reason why defection, at the drop of a hat, is the order of the day in the country. There is also a brazen political behaviour of not respecting the provisions of the constitution and the rule of law with regards to politicking. Unfortunately, these are picked up by undiscerning would be politicians and power brokers. For instance, the nation's constitution frowns at the defection of a politician from one political party to another. Infact, section 68(1g) clearly inform lawmakers in the National Assembly that should they defect from the political party that brought them to office, then they must loose their seat in the House or Chamber. Although there is a proviso that if there exist a faction of the party that brought the lawmaker to the National Assembly, then he can defect to any other party. But one mind boggling question to ask is: on whose interest are these defections? To be sure, this is an alignment, realignment and dealignment of alleged political criminals who have cases to answer in court and with the nations anti-corruption agencies. Nigerians should exercise restraint in being dragged into the jubilant mood of the defectees each time they do so with the party to which they have defected. Again, the blatant disregard for the rule of law has taken new dimension with the way ministers that are appointed, not even elected defy the National Assembly's call at critical times. A critical example is the recurrent invitation of some ministers to the National Assembly to answer questions pertaining to their ministries have all been rescinded by them; despite the constitutional provision (Section 67(2)) to that effect.

Influence on aspiring Politicians and Power Brokers:

The influence of some political communications of Nigeria's political elite and power brokers on aspiring ones are very disastrous for our nascent democracy. The rate at which young Nigerians aspire to get into politics for the wrong reasons are alarmingly disturbing. Just like their role models in mainstream politics, the principles guiding their politicking is purely pecuniary and parochial. A brief interrogation of some students in our higher institution of learning reveals that most of them just want to get into politics to get their own share of the national cake, not minding the resultant damage it would cause the nation's economy. A representation of this fact

occurred sometime in July, 2017, when a Student Union Government's (SUG) president of the University of Abuja was suspended by the Student Representative Assembly (SRA) for unlawfully withdrawing several millions of naira of the Union's money. In another related development, a University of Nigeria's SUG president was impeached in absentia in October, 2017 for misappropriating the Union's fund to the tune of 4million naira, by the SRA. These are very few examples that one can lay hold on for the moment. But there are preponderant cases of such parochialism playing out in the day to day affair of young aspiring politicians in the country.

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