



**The End Justifies The Means: Examining The Nigerian Society in The Light of Machiavellianism**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
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## DECLARATION

I, **Edozie Chukwujindu Onwunyi**, declare that:

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Edozie Chukwujindu Onwunyi

11 February 2019

## **DEDICATION**

This research work is dedicated to the glory of God, who made it possible. By His grace and mercies the entire study was conceived, begun and successfully completed.

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My deepest gratitude goes to my wife, Ukamaka, and our children, Ifunanya, Uzochukwu, Chisom, Chibuiké and Akachukwu, who manifested great love and made tremendous sacrifices to make sure that I realize this dream.

## ABSTRACT

From the sentiments espoused by Machiavelli in *The Prince*, it is clear that he believed that politics and conventional morality cannot go together. For him, acquiring power and retaining power is the objective of politics, and should as such be the uppermost or ultimate concern of anyone engaging in politics. Being that since Nigeria gained its political independence in 1960, Nigerian politicians have consciously and overtly pursued the business of politics as if the primary goal of politics is the acquisition and sustenance of power by any necessary means, many scholars and observers of the Nigerian society have described the Nigerian political scene as a classic case of Machiavelli's political philosophy as articulated in *The Prince*.

This thesis then focuses on the proposition that the Nigerian political scene presents a classic case of Machiavelli's political philosophy as articulated in *The Prince*. The choice of this area of research is informed by the need to provide a co-ordinated response to the myriad of challenges confronting Nigeria as a nation, as many believe that the seeming playing of politics in the Machiavellian way by Nigerian political elites is partly responsible for the socio-political and economic problems in the country. Consequently, the underlying argument of this thesis is that Nigerian politics can be seen to be characterized by the guiding principle "the end justifies the means" articulated by Machiavelli in *The Prince*.

Key to the argument is the examination of the Nigerian political scene, Machiavelli's ideas in *The Prince*, the Italian society of his time, the circumstances surrounding his writing of *The Prince*, as well as the various interpretations of the book. Notwithstanding that Machiavelli and the ideas he expressed in *The Prince* are interpreted in various ways by various scholars, it is generally believed that the ideas cannot be isolated from the political situation of his city-state, Florence, and Italy back then. Though Florence or Italy of Machiavelli's era is quite different in culture and civilization from contemporary Nigeria, findings from the thesis indicate that the two political situations are similar in terms of human nature, lack of national cohesion, and application of violence and cruelty in socio-political activities. Also, many Nigerian politicians and even citizens at large consciously or unconsciously practicalize Machiavelli's views in *The Prince* and there exists some form of connection between practising such ideas and the present political problems confronting Nigeria as a nation.

In response to the findings, the thesis concludes with some practical suggestions on how Nigeria may get over its political problems, which among others include the need for change of structure of the Nigerian federation and mentality on the part of all Nigerian citizens.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In 1993, Omoregbe argued that “Nigerian politicians have followed Machiavelli in removing morality from politics and in thinking that the best way to be successful in politics is to use immoral means” (Omoregbe, 1993: 30). Thirteen years later, Okorie observed that “since Nigeria gained its political independence, Nigerian politicians have consciously and overtly pursued the business of politics in a more or less Machiavellian manner. They have assumed that the primary goal of politics is the acquisition and sustenance of power with whatever means they deem necessary” (Okorie: 2006: 7). Shortly afterwards, Oladele noted that “the Machiavellian inclinations of many Nigerian politicians today have made political power to be unshareable, zero sum, and have smacked of a military terminology of mobilization, rabid response and elimination to the extent that the dividing line between politics and crime has become very obscure, if not non-existent” (Oladele, 2007).

Eight years later, Oyekunle suggested that “the interpretation of politics in the Machiavellian way, its adoption and practice by Nigerian political elites stand as the root cause of political corruption in the country” (Oyekunle, 2015: 178). For him, “fifty four years after independence, Nigeria is still underdeveloped. The nation lacks focus and seems to be operating in a political and ideological vacuum” (Oyekunle, 2015: 183). The simple reason for this, he notes, “is not because the nation lacks the natural resources and human resources that can enhance development, but because of leadership’s exemplification of Machiavellian politics, which encourages them to exercise power without any moral consideration” (Oyekunle, 2015: 183).

In the light of the above, the aim of this thesis is to explore the proposition that the Nigerian political scene presents a classic case of Machiavelli’s political philosophy as articulated in *The Prince*. This implies that there is a striking similarity between the ideas posited by Machiavelli in *The Prince* and political events in Nigeria. The choice of this topic is informed by the need to provide a co-ordinated response to the multiplicity of challenges confronting Nigeria as a nation. At the time Nigeria obtained independence in 1960, the country was entering a period of rapid

social and economic change, and many people were quite optimistic about its future. Few people would have imagined the reality of what the country is passing through now after over 50 years of independence. The country now witnesses rising rate of poverty, polarization, restiveness and unemployment. Vulnerability is increasing every day, and the hospitals, universities and colleges are ill-equipped. The necessary infrastructure that should make life worth living for the citizens, such as the constant supply of electricity, good road networks, potable drinking water and shelter are for the privileged few. With an economy that has remained underdeveloped and dependent on external influences and changes in the international market, it is not surprising that the country for some years now has been in economic recession. According to Agyoko and Tsuwa “Nigeria is today an economic disaster characterized by mismanagement, surplus drainage and transfer” (Nwanego, Tsuwa & Jega, 2013: 164).

Reporting on the Nigerian situation, the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics in its 2012 annual report, stated that the number of jobless Nigerians, made up of mostly youths has risen to 20.3 million (NBS: 2012). In her Convocation Lecture delivered at the University of Nigeria Nsukka on 18th January 2013, entitled *Education and Development in Nigeria*, Ezekwesili remarked that the population of the poor in Nigeria grew from 17.3 million in 1980, 34.5 million in 1985, 39.2 million in 1992, 67.1 million in 1996, to 68.7 million in 2004, and 112.47 million in 2010 (Ezekwesili: 2013). As at the end 2016, based on United Nations estimates, the entire population of Nigeria is 189.6 million, and closely related to this rapid growth of the Nigerian population is the growing rate of unemployment, as well as the alarming and deepening level of poverty. As a result of unemployment and poverty, Nigerians are faced with all kinds of conflict, crises and violence brought about by the inordinate desire of many people contending for political power by all means. Reflecting on this, Anifowose remarked, “it is rather unfortunate that after independence, Nigeria stumbled from crisis to crisis and near disintegration, as the country witnessed a marked increase in the bitterness of party, ethnic and regional competition (Anifowose, 2011: 31).

The Machiavellian principle “the end justifies the means” derived from Machiavelli’s statement in the Chapter XVIII of *The Prince*, which says:

In the actions of all men, especially of princes, where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end. So let the prince win and maintain his state: the means will always be judged honourable, and will be praised by everyone (Bull, 1981: 101).

This statement implies that in the arena of politics, what should be uppermost in the mind of the political actor is the realization of his or her objective and not the means used in realizing the objective. Since acquiring power and retaining power is the objective (the end) of politics, for Machiavelli, acquiring power and retaining power should be the uppermost or ultimate concern of anyone engaging in politics, and not how (the means) power is acquired or maintained. By implication, once power is acquired or being maintained, whatever is being done to ensure that is justified. In other words, the prince's concern should be achieving the security and prosperity of the state, regardless of the means of achieving it.

From the sentiments espoused in *The Prince*, it would seem that Machiavelli believed that politics and conventional morality do not go together. He believed from experiences he had acquired over time in the field of politics that any politician who would be successful in politics must be skillful in the art of deception. For him, princes who “have achieved great things have been those who have given their word lightly, who have known how to trick men with their cunning, and who in the end have overcome those abiding by honest principles” (Bull, 1981: 99). Therefore, he concludes thus:

The gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done learns the way to self-destruction rather than self-preservation. The fact is that a man who wants to act virtuously in every way necessarily comes to grief among many who are not virtuous. Therefore if a prince wants to maintain his rule he must learn how not to be virtuous, and make use of this or not according to need (Chapter XV. Bull, 1981: 90 – 91).

Consequently, he introduces a new kind of morality quite different from conventional morality – a morality of expedience which allows for variations in conduct when necessary. This thesis will show that this kind of morality appears to find adherents among many Nigerian politicians and even citizens at large, and will also examine the connection between adherence to this kind of

morality and the political problems confronting Nigeria as a nation after over 50 years of independence.

There is no gainsaying the fact that corruption is a major threat to the political cum economic advancement of Nigeria as a nation. It “has become more rampant since 1999” because politicians see political power “as instrument for the accumulation of wealth” (Elekwa, Eme and Okonkwo, 2009: 215). The general political view in Nigeria at the moment seems to be “to the victor would belong not only the spoils of office, but potentially permanent, that is, indefinite control over the most significant means of acquiring wealth and social prestige” (Anifowose, 2011: 39). Consequently, as the victors in political offices continue to enjoy their spoils of office to the detriment of those regarded as vanquished, there appears to be a feeling of frustration on the part of those neglected or side-lined, and this has led to aggression in virtually all parts of the country. In the North, there is the menace of *Boko Haram*; in the West, there is the Oodua People’s Congress (OPC) aggression; in the South, there is the Niger Delta militancy; and in the East, there is the renewed agitation for a sovereign state of Biafra.

Reflecting on the ten years of democracy in Nigeria (1999 – 2009), Oguejiofor drew the attention of the public to what may be considered as adherence to this Machiavellian idea, that the end justifies the means, in the Nigerian political scene. He said:

Our ten years of democracy has witnessed elections where paid party representatives of small parties take money to sign on bogus election results against their very own parties. We have seen several situations where elections never took place at all in whole states, and still governors were confirmed by courts of law after litigation (Chiegboka *et al*, 2009: 22).

He believed that “the level of corruption in Nigeria has reached such an alarming state that if it persists at that level, it is well-nigh impossible to obtain functional democracy in the country” (Chiegboka *et al*, 2009: 22), and concluded with a note of warning that “unless the level of corruption is drastically reduced in the polity, there is a very slim hope that Nigerian democracy will deliver the expected results” (Chiegboka *et al*, 2009: 27). For Nwaokorie, based on the high level of corruption, politically motivated killings, fetish practices, lies and deceits, character assassination, electoral violence and thuggery in Nigerian politics, the general impression in the

country is that politics is a dirty game (Nwaokorie: 2015). Consequently, a good number of Nigerians shy away from active politics, arguing that with the state of affairs in the Nigerian democracy they cannot differentiate between the military junta and civilian administration (Nwaokorie: 2015).

As part of the principle that the end justifies the means, Machiavelli advocates the use of violence in politics. In support of this view on politics, he submits that:

The nature of people is variable, and whilst it is easy to persuade them, it is difficult to fix them in that persuasion. And thus it is necessary to take such measures that, when they believe no longer, it may be possible to make them believe by force (*The Prince*, Chapter VI, translated by W. K. Marriot: 25)

It is noticeable that all elections in Nigeria since independence in 1960 have been characterized by violence, thuggery, use of force, and intimidation of all kinds by security agents and party agents. Election violence and thuggery contributed largely to the fall of Nigeria's First Republic in 1966 and partly to the fall of the Second Republic in 1983. This is attested to by the events (which will be presented in details in Chapter Five of this study) that culminated in the first military coup in Nigeria which took place on the night of 14th – 15th January 1966, and the events (which will also be presented in details in Chapter Five of this study) that led to the overthrow of the Second Republic by the military on 31st December 1983. Even the 1998/1999 elections which ushered in the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria were characterized by wide-scale irregularities and violence. According to Ezeigbo, “soldiers were used to intimidate innocent voters”, while observers witnessed “ballot stuffing and other pre-meditated political violence geared at perpetrating fraud to pave the way for the PDP candidates” (Ezeigbo, 2007: 297).

Analysing the 2003 and 2007 elections, Agubamah noted thus:

On the whole, the assessment of the 2003 elections reflected malpractice all over. In states like Rivers and Ogun, the votes cast were more than the voters registered....Like the 2003 elections, the 2007 witnessed various dimensions of malpractices. Accusing fingers in this regard pointed to the then President, Olusegun Obasango. Accusations were rife that he was manipulating the electoral environment in favour of his party PDP (Agubamah, 2009: 471).

Reflecting on the above, one thing is clear: the fact that all the political irregularities taking place in Nigeria are committed for a purpose – to secure political benefits. Such actions may be regarded in the light of conventional morality as immoral and wrong, but for Machiavelli they are morally and necessarily right because of the benefits they bring to those committing them. While it will be very difficult to ascertain whether those replicating Machiavellian ideas in Nigeria are aware of the contents of *The Prince* or not, it is interesting to note that the virus of political violence seems to have become endemic in the nature of many Nigerian politicians and non-politicians. Arguably, this culture of violence may not be separated from the rising wave of terrorism, ethnic violence, militancy, aggression and restiveness being witnessed at the moment all over the country. According to Anifowose, what makes violence of particular interest to Nigeria as a nation “is not the fact of the violence itself – common enough in all parts of Nigeria – but the frequency of its occurrence as a means to secure political objectives by contenders of political power (Anifowose, 2011: 31).

Little wonder, therefore, that the culture of violence has penetrated even the most unlikely of all places, the Christian circle. Instances of this are the leadership crises which have for years torn apart the following Nigerian Churches: – Assemblies of God Church, Cherubim and Seraphim Church, Celestial Church of Christ and Christ Apostolic Church. Many a time, these crises have resulted in violent clashes between contending factions. Lamenting this ugly development among Nigerian Christian politicians and Christian leaders who are naturally supposed to be non-violent, Ugwueye notes:

Many Christians together with their leaders appear more vicious today than they were before sanctimonious religious rituals became the order of the day. It could be noticed clearly that Christian religion is gradually becoming an alibi or hypocritical garb, particularly for people in power (Chiegboka, Nwadigwe & Umezinwa, ed. 2009: 256).

In the context of the ends justifying the means, *The Prince* sets out the idea that changing one’s opinions when doing so will be beneficial to one is not a manifestation of hypocrisy but following the demands of necessity. This attitude seems to be characteristic of Nigerian politics. A typical example of this is the hypocrisy of the present All Progressives Congress (APC) government in Nigeria on the issue of fuel subsidy and pump price. In January 2012, when the People’s

Democratic Party (PDP) led government of President Goodluck Jonathan removed petroleum subsidy and increased fuel pump price from N87.50 to N141.00 per litre, the APC leaders, then in opposition, said all kinds of derogatory things against the former president and his party (PDP), instigating the Labour Unions and the masses to embark on indefinite strikes and protests which forced the then government to immediately reverse that decision. Understanding the effect of the price of petroleum products on the standard of living of the masses, the main promise of the APC during the 2015 electioneering campaign was the reduction of the price of petroleum products. But on assumption of power, courtesy of the 2015 election which their candidate, Muhamadu Buhari, won, primarily because of the CHANGE they dangled before Nigerians, in less than one year, instead of fulfilling their campaign promise of reducing the price of petroleum products, they did the same thing which they condemned in 2012, this time increasing the fuel pump price from N87.50 to N143.00 per litre.

Hypocritically, the APC leaders who in 2016 had commended President Buhari for his action, which they claimed portrayed his love for the country, were the same people that vilified former president, Goodluck Jonathan, in 2012, when he did the same thing. Commenting on the matter, Uranta said, “it is unfathomable that a government that came in with promises to make life better for the people have now worsened the alleged woes” (*Independent Newspaper*, 13th May 2016, anchored by Temidayo Akinsuyi under the caption *NNSG Decries FG’s Increase in Fuel Pump Price*). Lamenting the hypocrisy of the ruling party, Momodu remarked thus:

They told us during the electioneering season that there was nothing like fuel subsidy and that all the subsidy claims were actually a way of settling the super-rich friends of the then government. They told us then that the pump price of petrol should not cost more than N40,00 per litre. Their candidate Muhammadu Buhari led the charge, dismissing the fuel subsidy as a ruse and lie. He declared emphatically that there was nothing like subsidy...It was therefore curious that in the first few months of President Muhammadu Buhari in office, he shelled out nearly N500 billion to marketers as subsidy (*This Day Newspaper*, 20th May 2016, under the caption *APC, Buhari and Fuel Price Hike*).

Describing President Buhari and leaders of his party as hypocrites, Fayose remarked:

The reality is that these people lied to Nigerians. They made promises they knew they won’t fulfill just to get to power. Now they are showing Nigerians their true colours. They

are showing Nigerians that they have come to punish them with hardship (Premium Times Newspaper, 12th May 2016, under the caption, *Fuel Price Hike: Buhari, a 'Hypocrite, Liar'*).

Speaking on the matter over two years after leaving office, former Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan, said “I am surprised that those who attacked me over N87 pump price are silent now that it is N143... Those who criticized my administration are not talking again now that the global crude oil is about 53 dollars per barrel and the pump price of petrol is N143” (*The Cable Newspaper* of 19th October 2017 under the heading, *Jonathan: I'm surprised That Those Who Attacked me Over N87 Pump Price are Silent Now it is N143*).

In the light of the above brief overview of the Nigerian political situation, one can have a glimpse of the resonances between Machiavelli's ideas in *The Prince* and activities of Nigerian politicians and non politicians. This is just a prelude to the overall argument of this thesis that there is a striking similarity between the postulations of Machiavelli in his book, *The Prince*, and the political actions of many Nigerian politicians and citizens more generally. I will therefore argue that through the lens of Machiavelli's central idea – that the end justifies the means – the similarity between Nigeria's political situation and ideas in *The Prince* could be seen.

## **1.2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

This study, as hinted above, intends to show how Nigerian politics can be seen to be characterized by the guiding principle “the end justifies the means” articulated in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. By implication, this study is not set out to explain Nigerian politics from the ambit of Machiavellianism but to draw attention to the perceived similarities in both. This is important to note given the historical, cultural and institutional differences between 16th century Italian society in which Machiavelli lived and present-day Nigerian society. It is equally necessary to state this fact in view of the numerous literature that explained Nigerian politics from the standpoint of historical cum indigenous perspectives, coupled with the ongoing arguments by proponents of decoloniality against the privileging of western theories over African or indigenous theories and their call to reverse the tendency to explain African issues from Western narratives or perspectives.

### 1.3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

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

Just as Nnabugwu believes that political domination is the real motive behind political activities (Nnabugwu, 2012: 46), Robertson points out that "politics is ultimately the exercise of power (Robertson, 1993: 393-394). Little wonder that the central focus of *power theory* is "how groups or persons dominate, get their own way or are able to pursue their own interests in societies" (Allison in McLean and McMillan, ed, 2003: 431). Central to power theory is the belief that power relations and exercise of power are endemic to all human interactions and the notion that human beings cannot exist together in a society without pursuing their personal interests. The implication of the above is that though power is a quality of the social system, it cannot be attributed to anyone but has to be acquired and then exercised. Because of the privileges of being in power, acquisition and exercise of power may sometimes involve conflict, as seen in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. However, the acquisition and use of power do not involve conflict all the time.

The import of the above is that this theoretical framework is a modern version of the Hobbesian dictum that mankind is inclined to perpetual and restless desire for power after power, which only ceases in death – a view upheld by Michel (1949) who argues that "he who has acquired power will always endeavour to consolidate it and extend it (Nnabugwu: 47). This is because, as Robertson rightly points out, "politics is ultimately the exercise of power and power is often typically characterized as self-interest oriented (Robertson, 1993: 393 – 394). This means that in

most cases formal decisions are made in the interest of the power holders, without regard to the interest of the ordinary people.

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

#### **1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is purely theoretical, both in scope and orientation. To justify its topic and achieve the objective for embarking on it, it will be based on library researches and political events in Nigeria from independence to the present democratic dispensation. My data will be collected from books, journals, articles, newspapers and magazines, in addition to information surfed from the internet and numerous events in Nigeria's political space. All data collected will be critically analysed and applied towards achieving the desired object of the study. This implies that great care will be taken to strictly analyse and apply all collected data towards justifying the overall argument of the study.

Due to the nature of this work, there is no particular philosophical tool that can do justice without the help of others. Therefore, this research will involve various philosophical methods to analyze the data that will be collected. All the collected data concerning Machiavelli and his writings will be subjected to conceptual analysis and language analysis. Conceptual analysis is an activity in which concepts, their characteristics and relations to other concepts are clarified (Nuopponen:

2010). It is aimed at clarifying conceptual and terminological problems, and is a good option to this research work I am undertaking. Recent advocates of conceptual analysis include George Bealer, David Chalmers, Frank Jackson and David Lewis (Lawrence and Margolis: 2003).

Language, according to Oxford Dictionary of Current English, is “the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use words in an agreed way” (Thompson, 1995:764). Analysis is a process of dismantling or separating into constituent elements in order to study the nature, function and meaning (Online English Dictionary). In other words, it is “the examination and identification of the constituents of a complex whole and their relationship with one another” (New Penguin English Dictionary, 2001:45). Going by the above definitions, language analysis involves identifying the author, the audience, the type and purpose of the language, the method and technique of the language, the tone of the language and the emphasis of the language. This research will therefore use both methods of analyses to analyse the philosophical concepts and language of Machiavelli in *The Prince*.

The data collected with regards to the Italian society of Machiavelli’s time and the social, political and economic lifestyles of Nigerians will be analyzed through the philosophical approach of hermeneutic phenomenology or phenomenological hermeneutics, which emanated from the writings of Martin Heidegger (1889 – 1976), a disciple of Husserl. Hermeneutics is the theory or philosophy of the interpretation of meaning (Bleicher: 1980). It is the art of interpretation originally used for the interpretation of scripture and other difficult texts and dates back to the ancient Greek philosophers (Rutt, 2006: 1), and involves articulation and clarification of issues in order to make what is unclear clear, sensible and understandable. Phenomenology, as a discipline, is a focus on people’s perception of the world in which they live and what it means to them (Langdridge, 2007: 4). In other words, it is to give attention to people’s lived experience (Langdridge, 2007: 4). When applied to research, phenomenology is the study of phenomena: their nature and meanings. The focus is on the way things appear to our experience or in our consciousness (Finlay: 2009).

Therefore, hermeneutic phenomenology involves focusing on subjective experience of individuals and groups. It is an attempt to unveil the world as experienced by the subjects through their life and world stories (Kafle, 2011:186). This school of phenomenology believes that interpretations are all we have, and that description itself is an interpretive process. According to Heidegger

(1976), all phenomena, be they social, physical or metaphysical constitute a social actor's 'Being-in-the-world' and are, thereby, the potential subjects of interpretation and understanding. Thus, with this school of phenomenology (phenomenological hermeneutics) Machiavelli's time and the social, political and economic lifestyles of Nigerians will be analysed.

As I conclude this general introduction of this study, I wish to reiterate the fact that the overall argument of this study is that there is a striking similarity between the postulations of Machiavelli in his book, *The Prince*, and the practices of many Nigerian politicians and citizens more generally. I will thus argue that through the lens of Machiavelli's central idea – the end justifies the means – the similarity between Nigeria's political situation and ideas in *The Prince* could be seen. To embark on this journey of research, I deem it necessary to first analyse *The Prince* and the many interpretations of the views expressed in it. Therefore, it is to this aspect of the thesis I now turn.

## **1.5. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY**

Chapter One presents a general introduction to the study, covering the highlights of the state of affairs in Nigeria, statement of the research problem and structure of the study.

Chapter Two presents the book, *The Prince*, by Machiavelli, and the reactions and interpretations of various scholars and philosophers on the book.

Chapter Three deals with the comparative analysis of the happenings in the time of Machiavelli and happenings in the present-day Nigerian society.

Chapter Four contains the critique of the ideas in *The Prince* and their relationship with the state of affairs in Nigeria.

Chapter Five examines Machiavellianism in the light of the socio-political lifestyles of many Nigerians from independence (1960) to return to the present democratic dispensation (1999).

Chapter Six examines Machiavellianism in the light of the socio-political lifestyles of many Nigerians in the present democratic dispensation, that is, 1999 - till date.

In Chapter Seven, the concluding chapter, there is a critical evaluation of the research work, clarifying perceived misconceptions leading to the findings and making some political cum moral recommendations for Nigerians.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **EXPLANATION AND ANALYSIS OF *THE PRINCE***

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

According to Nnabugwu, the ideas expressed in *The Prince* “mean different things to different persons” (Nnabugwu, 2012: 12). Some commentators, such as Russell, Nwoko and Omoregbe, hold that Machiavelli’s *The Prince* divorces morality from politics. This means that for Machiavelli, morality has no place in politics. On the other hand, scholars such as Gilbert, Lerner,

Croce, and Villari argue that Machiavelli introduces a new kind of morality different from conventional morality, which is expedient morality. On their view, Machiavelli presents a utilitarian argument in which acquiring and maintaining power is seen as the greatest good and therefore, anything can be done which will result in achieving this good.

In the previous chapter, which serves as the general introduction of this research work, I mentioned among other things, the objective of this study – which is to show that there is remarkable similarity between the practices of many Nigerian politicians and ordinary citizens and the ideas expressed by Machiavelli in *The Prince*. In this chapter, an overview of *The Prince*, a number of interpretations of various scholars of the views expressed in the book and issues surrounding its writing will be presented.

## **2.2 OVERVIEW OF *THE PRINCE***

*The Prince* (Italian: *Il Principe*) is a 16th century political treatise written by an Italian diplomat and political theorist Niccolò Machiavelli (born on 3rd May 1469 in Florence, Italy, and died on 22nd June 1527 in Florence at the age of 58). During Machiavelli's life, the Italian peninsula was a scene of intense political conflict involving the dominant city-states – Florence, Milan, Venice and Naples, as well as the Papacy, France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire. Each city state tried to protect itself by playing the larger powers off against each other, resulting in massive political intrigue, blackmail and violence. According to Rebhorn, “*The Prince* can be read as a series of responses to the crises Machiavelli was living through, to the personal crises he experienced when the Florentine republic fell in 1512, and to the larger crises involving Italian and international politics, the theoretical conception of the state, and the vision of the ruler” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXI). Although a correspondence version of the book appears to have been distributed in 1513, using a Latin title, *De Principatibus* (*About Principalities*), the printed version was published in 1532, five years after the death of Machiavelli. The manuscript was written in the vernacular Italian rather than in Latin, in accordance with the popular practice at that time, which began with the publication of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and other works of Renaissance literature. The first English translation appeared in 1640 (Bull, 1984: 9).

From statements in *The Prince*, Machiavelli composed it to be a practical guide for ruling. The book was originally written for presentation to Giuliano de' Medici, the ruler of Florence, but upon his death in 1516, Machiavelli dedicated it to his successor, Lorenzo de' Medici. Machiavelli

wanted to impart to the prince the knowledge of “actions of great men, acquired through long experience of contemporary affairs and extended reading in antiquity” (Adams, 1992: 3). Scholars believe that Lorenzo did not read the book when it was given to him because he was hostile to Machiavelli, whom he saw as a republican opponent of the Medici rule. In terms of its subject matter, *The Prince* is a treatise on how to acquire and how to retain power. The descriptions within *The Prince* point to the fact that the aims of princes, such as glory and survival, can justify the use of any means to achieve those ends. Commenting on Machiavelli’s ideas in *The Prince*, Nwoko makes it clear that for Machiavelli, “the good and protection of the state should command any means to achieve that, not minding justice and injustice or the good and bad involved” (Nwoko, 1988: 62). This implies that for Machiavelli, “one is free to destroy even the family of the existing prince provided he has the intention of securing and seizing power” (Edwards, 1967: 119 – 120).

One of the driving themes of *The Prince* is Machiavelli’s idea of human nature. This idea runs through the book and is to a large extent responsible for the political behaviour he advises the prince to follow. According to him, human nature is variable. It is easy to persuade men of something, but difficult to keep them in that persuasion. Therefore one must arrange matters so that when they no longer believe, they can be made to believe by force (Bull, 1981: 52). In Machiavelli’s mind,

Men are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, they shun danger and are greedy for profit; while you treat them well, they are yours. They would shed their blood for you, risk their property, their lives and that of their children, so long as danger is remote; but when you are in danger they turn against you...Men worry less about injuring one who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared. They break the bond of love when it is to their advantage to do so, but punishment really puts great fear into them... However, there is need for justice on the part of the prince. He should be prudent enough to evaluate distribution, punishment and reward, and decide when obligations are rewarding. His prudence consists in his ability to assess correctly the situation of things in the state. He should be ready to reward someone that accomplishes something exceptional...and men that do things that increase the prosperity of the state... On the other hand, he should punish those working against the state in a way that everybody should know and fear the implications of doing that (Bull, 1981: 96-123).

Because of the selfish and untrustworthy nature of human beings, only the shrewdest and craftiest individuals could succeed in governance, and violence and cruelty are to be applied where and when necessary. Because men love at their own pleasure and fear at the pleasure of a prince (Bull, 1981: 98), it is far better for a prince to be feared than loved (Bull, 1981:96). Machiavelli commends Agathocles and Oliverotto who out of nothing rose through violence and cruel means to become princes (Bull, 1981: 65 – 66) and demonstrates that Moses, Romulus, Theseus and Cyrus achieved political greatness through their exceptional prowess and use of arms and force (Bull, 1981: 50 – 52). He insists that unarmed men who do not use force, such as Girolamo Savonarola, will always have great difficulty in achieving their ends and will always end up being grieved by their institutions (Bull, 1981: 52).

He believes that any person that wants to act in accordance with the conventional idea of virtue necessarily comes to grief among so many who are not virtuous. Therefore, if a prince wants to maintain his rule, he must learn how not to be (conventionally) virtuous (Bull, 1981: 91). According to him, some of the things that appear to be virtues, in the conventional sense of the word, will ruin the prince if he practices them, while some of the things that appear to be vices conventionally will bring him security and prosperity (Bull, 1981: 92). This is because from his observations, princes who have achieved great things are those who do not honour their word but know how to trick men with their cunning and how to overcome those abiding with honest principles. In view of the above, he concludes that there are two ways of fighting: by law or by force. The first way, he says, is for men, while the second is for beasts. For a prince to succeed in his governance, he must know how to make use of both ways (Bull, 1981: 99). Therefore, a prudent prince, he argues, must do anything possible to win and maintain his state because the means will always be judged honourable by people (Bull, 1981: 101).

For Machiavelli, military prowess is a great virtue. He recommends as examples of virtuous individuals, Francesco Sforza and Cesare Borgia who preserved their kingdoms using what he calls “the right means”, that is, great prowess (Bull, 1981: 54). For him, might is right. This implies that a prince must have no other object or thought, nor acquire skill in anything except war, its organization and discipline. This is important because the first way for a prince to lose his state is to think more of pleasures and neglect the art of war (Bull, 1981: 87). When a prince is campaigning with his soldiers and is in command of a large army, he does not need to worry about

having a reputation for cruelty, but must use even inhumane cruelty, just like Hannibal used, to ensure that his soldiers fear and respect him (Bull, 1981: 97). He should not be like Scipio, who because of his excessive leniency allowed his soldiers more license which in the end led to mutiny against him (Bull, 1981: 98). This implies that if a prince wants to do something, especially for the good of the state, he does not need to mind whether what he wants to do is conventionally seen as right or wrong. The good of the state must be uppermost in his mind.

It is this contrast between conventional and expedient morality that has given rise to the controversy which surrounds the book. In 1559, it was banned by the then Pope and the Council of Trent in 1564 confirmed the Inquisition's decree to destroy all Machiavelli's works, a status in which they remained until 1890 (Vujadinovic, 2013: 44). It is also this contrast that mostly defines people's perception of Machiavelli. According to Skinner, "Machiavelli died 500 years ago, but his name lives on as a byword for cunning, duplicity, and the exercise of bad faith in political affairs" (Skinner, 1981: 1).

In contrast, some scholars maintain that *The Prince* is one of the first works of modern political science, in which the way things are in the world is taken to be more important than any teaching on the way things should be. For Machiavelli, "the gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done learns the way to self-destruction rather than self-preservation" (Bull, 1984: 91). Machiavelli's views on human nature and his advice regarding how a prince should act certainly announced a dramatic break with previous political doctrines anchored in moral and religious systems of thought, as did the main theme of the book, that "political action cannot be kept within the limits of morality" (Adams, 1992: 152).

Machiavelli himself seemed to be perfectly well aware when he was writing *The Prince* that "he was plunging into a highly controversial subject" (Gilbert, 1939: 451). He appeared to foresee what would follow the "new route" he was taking, considering these first few statements he made in Chapter XV:

I know the subject has been treated frequently before, and I fear people will think me rash for trying to do so again, especially since I intend to differ in this discussion from what others have said. But since I intend to write something useful to an understanding reader, it seemed better to go after the real truth of the matter than to repeat what people have imagined. A great many men have imagined states and princedoms such as nobody ever

saw or knew in the real world, and there's such a difference between the way we really live and the way we ought to live (Adams, 1992: 42).

While initially ignored, *The Prince* has indeed courted much controversy and given rise to many interpretations for over four centuries. Berlin suggests that “apart from a cloud of subsidiary views and glosses, there exists, even now, over a score of leading theories of how to interpret *The Prince*” (Berlin, 1992: 206). While I agree with Berlin's statement on the sheer number of interpretations of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, I will, for the purpose of this study, restrict my analysis to the six areas which, for me, are the major perspectives in the interpretations of the book. They are the interpretations in the perspectives of: morality, satire, political science, nationalism, job-seeking, and conspiracy.

### **2.3. ANALYSIS OF VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF *THE PRINCE***

#### **Interpreting *The Prince* in the Moral Perspective**

Any reader of Machiavelli's *The Prince* will no doubt see that it addresses serious moral issues. It is therefore not a surprise that many regard it as a moral treatise. There are two interpretations to be analyzed here – the interpretation of those who see *The Prince* in the light of conventional morality and those who see it as introducing a new kind of morality.

The first interpretation I wish to examine is that of those who see *The Prince* from the perspective of conventional morality, and so argue that it represents immorality. In other words, they hold that the ideas in it are unacceptable because they run totally contrary to the conventional assumptions of morality. Hitherto, political theories were formulated in the light of conventional morality, and political actions were urged to follow the principles of conventional morality. It was popular at Machiavelli's time for political guides called “mirrors for princes” or “mirrors of princes” to be presented as gifts to rulers. These guides usually exhorted them to act in accordance with Christian morality, behave well, be kind, and do good deeds in order to prosper. But Machiavelli's *The Prince* instead told them to act “good” or “bad” as demanded by circumstances. In view of his knowledge that leaders naturally aimed at attracting glory and honour for themselves, instead of encouraging them to rule with the popular Christian ethical ideals or moral goals, Machiavelli prescribed for them the use of deception, treachery and cruelty in their politics.

Thus, filled with what conventional moralists regard as attacks on the prevailing moral ideas, it did not take long for *The Prince*, and even the writer himself, to become objects of opprobrium. While the Catholics of the Counter-Reformation saw his anti-clericalism and scathing remarks against the papacy as naturally intolerable, the Protestants regarded him as the tutor of the Catholic kings, whose teaching was, for example, responsible for the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day (Bull, 1981: 9 – 10). This view of the Protestants was in response to what happened in 1572 when the Catholic leadership of France attempted to wipe out France's Protestants' population, the Huguenots. In several weeks of massacres beginning on St. Bartholomew's Day, an estimated 50,000 Huguenots were killed. Charles IX was King of France then, but as he was young (twenty-two), and not strong in character, political power in the country was in the hands of his mother, Catherine de' Medici, an Italian Catholic and a member of the family for whom Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*. She was hated as an Italian and a Medici, and for being a secretive and treacherous person. The Protestants blamed Machiavelli for the incident because they believed that Catherine in planning the massacres drew inspiration from *The Prince*. Innocent Gentillet, a Huguenot, set the ball rolling with his book *Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner contre Nicolas Machiavel* written in 1576.

The Jesuits saw Machiavelli as “the devil's partner in crime,” “a dishonourable writer and an unbeliever” (Adams, 1992: 212), and *The Prince* was called “the Devil's Catechism or the Ten Commandments Reversed” (Jensen, 1960: 88). In the introduction to Bull's version of *The Prince*, Macaulay writes: “We doubt whether any name in literary history be so generally odious as that of the man whose character and writing we now propose to consider” (Bull, 1981: 9). It is therefore understandable that Bull began the introduction to his translation with this statement:

TRADITIONALLY, *The Prince* is a book inspired by the Devil. The legend of Machiavelli's depravity was already established by the time the first English translation appeared in 1640. ...Old Nick was identified with Niccolo Machiavelli (though that name for Satan existed before Machiavelli's evil reputation reached this country), and it became as acceptable to call the Devil Machiavellian as it was to call Machiavelli diabolical (Bull, 1981:9).

One of Machiavelli's sternest critics was an Englishman, Cardinal Pole, who probably was the first person to bring the Devil into it in 1536. In his book *Apologia ad Carolum V. Caesarum* [Apologia to the Emperor Charles V], he qualified Machiavelli's method as "satanic", described him as "an enemy of humanity" and his book as "the devil's Bible which had been written by the devil's hand" (Vujadinovic, 2013: 44 – 45). Another foremost critic of Machiavellianism was William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616). Because of Machiavelli's advocacy for the use of violence, deception, cruelty and the likes for achieving desired political ends, Shakespeare labelled him "the murderous Machiavel" (Skinner, 1981: 1) and described him as a "symbol of villainy" and "an incarnate of the devil" (Nnabugwu, 2012: 13).

In his book, *Anti-Machiavel*, written in 1740, Frederick the Great referred to Machiavelli as a "monster" who with his book, which he referred to as poison, "tried to destroy humanity." He declared thus:

Machiavelli's *The Prince* is to matters of morality what Spinoza's works are to the matter of faith. Spinoza sapped the foundations of faith, stopping at nothing short of overturning the entire edifice of religion; while Machiavelli corrupted politics, and in so doing hoped to destroy the very precepts of sound morality...I venture now to take up the defense of humanity against this monster who wants to destroy it; with reason and justice I dare to oppose sophistry and crime; and I put forth these reflections on *The Prince* of Machiavelli, chapter by chapter, so that the antidote may be found immediately following the poison (Jensen, 1960: 5).

For Frederick, Machiavelli's defense of violence and cruelty shows that he had no regard for human life. Similarly, Bertrand Russell held that *The Prince* is "a handbook for gangsters" (Adams, 1992: 212), while for Leo Strauss, Machiavelli was "a teacher of evil and an evil man". According to Strauss, "violence and cruelty" as advocated in *The Prince*, are nothing but lessons in "public and private gangsterism" (Kunkell, 1995).

While conventional moralists maintain that Machiavelli is an unprincipled character who espouses immorality in *The Prince*, some commentators oppose the hostility shown to him. The sixteenth-century Flemish humanist and stoic Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), was the first to speak favourably of Machiavelli's political writings, although he saw *The Prince* as unnecessarily unscrupulous (Jensen, 1960: X - XI). His soft stance on and admiration for Machiavelli, through his work of

examining *The Prince*, were of immense help in refuting the attacks from the Church and others. As thinkers began to see Machiavelli and *The Prince* in a new light, they argued that Machiavelli's view is not immoral but rather a different kind of morality from conventional morality. Such positions maintain that his morality is expedient morality, that is, morality guided by necessity. Writing in the mid-1920s, Croce (1866 - 1952) proposed what has become a fundamental treatise on Machiavelli: that politics has an existence and morality independent of private and social life, and this autonomy is vital.

For Croce, Machiavelli “discovered the necessity and the autonomy of politics, politics which is beyond good and bad morals, which has its own laws against which it is futile to rebel, which cannot be exorcised and banished from the world with holy water” (Jensen, 1960: 13). This view is corroborated by Skinner who argues that Machiavelli's view stems from his observation of the things happening around him which show that a wise prince who wishes to maintain his power will be guided above all by the dictates of necessity. According to Skinner:

The crucial importance of this insight was first put to Machiavelli at an early stage in his diplomatic career. It was after conversing with Cardinal of Volterra in 1503, and with Pandolfo Petrucci some two years later, that he originally felt impelled to record what was later to become his central political belief: that the clue to successful statecraft lies in recognizing the forces of circumstances, accepting what necessity dictates, and harmonizing one's behavior with the times (Skinner, 1981: 43).

In a letter written to his friend, Giovan Soderini, while watching at Perugia in 1506 the progress of Julius II's campaign, Machiavelli notes:

Nature has given every man a particular talent and inspiration which controls each one of us. But the times are varied and subject to frequent change, so that those who fail to alter their ways of proceeding are bound to encounter good Fortune at one time and bad at another. The moral is obvious: if a man wishes always to enjoy good Fortune, he must be wise enough to accommodate himself to the times (Skinner, 1981: 43).

Writing *The Prince* many years later, Machiavelli conveyed the same idea in the above-cited letter to Soderini in Chapter XXV where he talks about the role of Fortune in human affairs. Skinner

argues that the revolution Machiavelli engineered in his new morality is “based on redefining the pivotal concept of *virtu*” from “any necessary connection with the cardinal and princely virtues” to the idea that the “characteristic of a truly *virtuoso* prince will be a willingness to do whatever is dictated by necessity – whether the action happens to be wicked or virtuous – in order to attain his highest ends (Skinner, 1981: 44). Lerner supports Machiavelli’s views not because they are good or praiseworthy, but because they are statements of fact. He sees his maxims as outstanding examples of political realism, undiluted by the wishes and idealism of what “ought” to be, and showing what “is”. According to him:

It is our recognition that the realities he described are realities; that men, whether in politics, in business or in private life, do not act according to their professions of virtue; that leaders in every field seek power ruthlessly and hold on to it tenaciously; that the masses who are coerced in a dictatorship have to be wooed and duped in a democracy; that deceit and ruthlessness invariably crop up in every state; and that while the art of being ruled has always been a relatively easy one, the art of ruling ourselves is monstrously difficult (Jensen, 1960: 11).

Defending Machiavelli’s new morality, some scholars believe that he did not attack the principles of morality but rather found no use for these principles when engrossed in the problems of political life. His “political experience,” they argue, had taught him that the political game never had been played without fraud, deception, treachery, and felony” (Adams, 1992: 158). For them, “he neither blamed nor recommended these things. His only concern was to find the best move – the move that wins the game (Adams, 1992: 158). Sharing this view, Villari holds that Machiavelli clearly saw that statecraft has ways and means of its own, which are not the ways and means of private morality. According to Gilbert, “he was not a conscious advocate of evil; he did not want to upset all moral value” (Gilbert, 1965: 196).

Some have argued that Machiavelli’s new morality, apart from the political realities of his time, results from his experience of human nature. According to Cassirer, his “immoralism” should not be understood in our modern sense, as he did not judge human actions from the standpoint “beyond good and evil,” but out of his “very little esteem for men” (Adams, 1992: 162). In *The Prince*, he tries to inculcate the same conviction of the deep moral perversion of men upon the minds of the

rulers of states (Adams, 1992: 163), and insists that men's natural depravity of heart cannot be cured by laws but by force (Adams, 1992: 163). Machiavelli expresses this idea thus:

The main foundations of every state, new state as well as ancient or composite ones, are good laws and good arms; and because you cannot have good laws without good arms, and where there are good arms, good laws inevitably follow, I shall not discuss laws but give my attention to arms (*The Prince*, Chapter XII, translated by George Bull, 1995: 38)

Machiavelli's new morality should also be seen from the standpoint of the need to protect the interest of the state. This is hinged on his idea that protecting the interest of the state is of paramount importance to the prince and therefore justifies any means he uses to achieve that. Meinecke's profound study of the concept of *raison d'état* in Machiavelli and in other political thinkers, published in 1924, considers Machiavelli as being the cornerstone of the modern concept of the state, and of the emergence of *Real Politik*. For him, the very essence of the development of the modern state is "the struggle for or against Machiavellianism" (Jensen, 1960: xiii). According to *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XVIII, those who point out differences between the Middle Ages and the modern world refer to Machiavelli as symbolizing such a break and as indicating an approach to politics characteristic of modern times but unknown to previous centuries (Jensen 1960: 52). This is because he turned political thought in a new direction, from the traditional idea of morally evaluating the state in terms of fulfilling its functions of promoting the common good and preserving justice to empirically investigating how the state could use its power to maintain law and order (Honderich, 2005: 549).

Be that as it may, many scholars do not agree with the above-cited views put up in support of Machiavelli's expedient morality. Apart from attacks against Machiavelli and his book, *The Prince*, from the Church and conventional moralists, which I have dealt with earlier in this section of the study, they see it as misleading to explain away Machiavelli's disregard for conventional morality with the idea that he presents a new morality, based on expediency and his idea of human nature.

There seems to be an argument for suggesting that we cannot draw a neat line between conventional morality and the morality that is presented in *The Prince*. This is because amongst the examples of expedient morality are examples that align with conventional morality. For

instance, on the brutal cruelty and inhumanity of Agathocles, Machiavelli points out that killing fellow citizens, betraying friends, being treacherous, pitiless and irreligious can win a prince power but not glory (Bull, 1981: 63). Agathocles' countless crimes, for Machiavelli, forbid his being honoured among eminent men (Bull, 1981: 63). On leadership, he is also against the prince taking the property and women of his subjects (Bull, 1981: 97). According to him, "men sooner forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony (Bull, 1981: 97). He is also averse to the prince not conferring benefits and favours to his subjects (Bull, 1981: 66), and not providing good laws and security to his subjects (Bull, 1981: 77).

On relationship, he advises the prince to be favourably disposed to the people, even those who opposed his coming to power, because "when men receive favours from someone they expected to do them ill, they are under obligation to their benefactor" (Bull, 1995: 32). Again, he sees it as "necessary for a prince to have the friendship of the people; otherwise he has no remedy in times of adversity" (Bull, 1995: 32). For him, the best fortress that exists for a prince "is to avoid being hated by the people," because if he has fortresses and yet the people hate him, they will not save him in times of crises (Bull, 1995: 69).

Thus, one can't argue that Machiavelli's idea of morality in *The Prince* is immoral in the context of conventional morality or that it is purely expedient. Perhaps it is amoral in the sense that it is unconcerned with conventional ideas about right and wrong.

### **Interpreting *The Prince* as a Satire**

For centuries, scholars interpreted Machiavelli's *The Prince* as a work representing his shift in moral and political ideology. But as later scholars began to examine the contents of the book in relation to the circumstances surrounding its writing, they were really puzzled. Rebborn notes:

*The Prince*, is a puzzling work for many readers because we know that its creator was wedded to the notion of republican government, yet in his treatise he not only writes about what princes must do in order to gain and maintain their political positions, but he seems to identify so deeply with the figures his text celebrates that it is difficult not to think of him as supporting that sort of rule. Nevertheless, in the *Discourses*, when he states his views of the two sorts of governments, he reveals a decided preference for republicanism.

Not surprisingly, modern political thought on republican government harks back to Machiavelli's text (Rebhorn, 2003: XXX).

Considering Machiavelli's inclination towards republicanism, a lot of scholars wonder how he could write such a book which is regarded as a handbook for absolute rulers. There are indeed apparent inconsistencies between the contents of *The Prince* and the republican ideals contained in his other book, *The Discourses*. On why an ardent republican like Machiavelli should write *The Prince*, some scholars came to the conclusion that it is a brilliant satire. A satire is "a way of criticizing a person, an idea or an institution in which you use humour to show their faults or weaknesses" (Hornby, 2001: 1043). They argue that *The Prince* must have been written by Machiavelli as a satire because the advice in the book contradicts in no small measure with everything else written by Machiavelli in his other works, as well as the things known about his moral, political, and private life. The inconsistency between *The Prince* which advocates pragmatism in politics and the need for cruelty, deception and violence when necessary by the prince, and *The Discourses* which advocates republicanism, is profound. Moreover, in his plays and poetry, Machiavelli wrote a lot of satire.

One of the earliest scholars to express this view was an Italian-English jurist named Gentili. According to him, *The Prince* is actually intended to be a burlesque of despotism and tyranny rather than a guide for its promotion (Jensen, 1960: XI). Speaking to his fellow countryman on the need to reconsider the negative feelings about Machiavelli, Gentili said:

He has been much calumniated and deserves our sympathy. He was indeed a praiser of democracy (*Democratiae laudator*) and its most zealous champion. Born, educated and honoured with office in a republic, he was a supreme foe of tyrants. It was his purpose not to instruct tyrants but to reveal their secret machinations, stripping them bare before their suffering people. ...he aimed to instruct (those) people under the pretext of instructing the prince, hoping that thus his teaching might be tolerated (Mattingly, 1958: 102 - 103).

Some notable scholars holding this view are Spinoza, Rousseau, and Mattingly. They posit that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a satire, for he could not literally have meant what he said in it.

They see *The Prince* as “mirror for princes” intended to pull off the mask from the tyrannical rulers that were everywhere in Machiavelli’s era. In other words, it was intended, they argue, “to warn men of what tyrants could be and do, the better to resist them” (Adams, 1992: 208). They believe that perhaps Machiavelli “could not write openly with the two rival powers – those of the Church and of the Medici – eyeing him with equal suspicion” (Adams, 1992: 208). According to Rousseau, “Machiavelli was a proper man and a good citizen, but being attached to the court of the Medici, he could not help veiling his love of liberty in the midst of his country’s oppression” (Madison *et al*: 2010).

Other well-known scholars who believe that *The Prince* is a satire include Foscolo, Enfield, and Benner. They believe that Machiavelli used irony in identifying the worst methods and tactics in the hope that tyrants who follow his advice would get into trouble in their kingdoms. For them, he expected that the young Lorenzo de Medici, the ruler of Florence, to whom he dedicated the book, would replicate his ideas in *The Prince* and so attract the hatred of the people which will bring about uprising and end of the Medici rule in Florence.

On why Machiavelli would want the end of the Medici rule, some suggest that it would be because of his known preference for republicanism, while others see it as retaliation for their mistreatment to him. It would be a well-deserved revenge for him, and might even bring back his republican job. This is because before the return of the Medici, Machiavelli had a well-paid job from which he took good care of his family and owned many properties. But consequent upon the return of the family to the throne, he lost his diplomatic job after 14 years and suffered imprisonment and torture on the suspicion that he was one of the anti-Medici conspirators. Though he was later released from the prison, his life took a different turn after that episode of his life. Thus seeking revenge, they suggest that Machiavelli decided to pursue it indirectly knowing the consequences of attacking the Medici directly. No wonder that Pitkin describes him “as the nerd whose revenge is delivered vicariously in form of macho prose” (Pitkin, 1984). Supporting the view that *The Prince* is written for no other purpose but as a satire, Mattingly, who sees it as “just like other ‘Mirrors of Princes’ and “a diabolical burlesque of all of them” (Mattingly, 1958: 102 - 103), sarcastically argues that it would be absurd for Machiavelli to write a treatise that will help his oppressors in strengthening their grip upon power in Florence. According to him:

I suppose it is possible to imagine that a man who has seen his country enslaved, his life's work wrecked and his career with it, and has for good measure, been tortured within an inch of his life should thereupon go home and write a book intended to teach his enemies the proper way to maintain themselves...it is a little difficult for the ordinary mind to compass (Mattingly, 1958: 102).

Thus, Mattingly maintains that after writing many criticisms of monarchy and tyranny, it would be a contradiction both on the part of Machiavelli and on the part of history, as Machiavelli reported it, if *The Prince* is a description of political reality (Mattingly, 1958: 103 - 104). For him, Machiavelli in writing the book intends to either warn the Florentines of what would happen to them with the return of the Medici or to trick the Medici into a final exit from Florence. Taking this idea that *The Prince* is a satire further, Germino holds that Machiavelli was not as evil and diabolical as Strauss and others made him to be with their writings. He cited Machiavelli's exhortation to repentance written towards the end of his life and his religious views to buttress his point (Germino, 1966: 796 – 797). He opines that his “advocacy for violence and cruelty is a way of illustrating the failures of Italian rulers in a dramatic and ironic way, and as such portray the political realities of his time.” (Germino, 1966: 804). He argues that the phrase “the end justifies the means” appears to have been invented by the Jesuit writers later because of several passages where Machiavelli presents the case of “excusing” cruel and violent actions in view of their beneficial results (Germino, 1966: 804).

It was also suggested that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a cunning satire subtly aimed at making jest of the sanctimonious Christian morality, knowing very well as a close observer of the Church and the Borgia pope, that what they were preaching was not what they were doing. By mocking the lessons in Christian morality, Machiavelli, it is argued, felt he was mocking the hypocrisy of the Church. This is hinged on his belief that the moral stand of the Church was responsible for the Italians' loss of civic spirit, just as the Church's temporal interests were preventing Italian unity. The purpose of government, Machiavelli opines, should be more of preparing people to become upstanding citizens of the world who are ready to work, fight and die for their earthly country, than to make them people for the city of God. Scott and Sullivan also support the view that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a satire that will highlight the Church's moral flaws and so discredit the Church. According to them, Machiavelli is “perhaps the first truly modern thinker.” He wrote *The*

*Prince*, they argue, with the ultimate aim of getting rid of the papacy, thinking that the Church was dividing Italians and that destroying the Church would bring about the unification of Italy under a republic (Scott & Sullivan, 1994:887). For them, he dedicated the book to Lorenzo because at that time, being the ruler of Florentine, he is in the best position to carry out his aim of writing the book, that is, the “elimination of the papacy” (Scott & Sullivan, 1994: 888). Moreover, they see the final chapter of *The Prince* with its anti-papacy rhetoric as added proof of Machiavelli’s desire to get rid of the papacy *once* and for all (Scott & Sullivan, 1994: 887).

However, as convincing as the view of Mattingly and other scholars who interpret Machiavelli’s *The Prince* as a satire seems to be, there are other scholars who reject their view. For this group of people, Machiavelli was a realist, a historian and keen observer of human behaviour, and as such shouldn’t have wanted the overthrow of the Medici, after seeing what happened from 1494 when the Medici family which had controlled the politics of Florence for a century was driven out of the city and the Florentine Republic was established. The successor, Girolamo Savoranola, a Dominican monk, was charismatic, but it didn’t take long for his strident, ideologically rigid theocracy to become more oppressive than the ousted Medici rule. Consequently, he too was overthrown (and subsequently executed) in 1498, after which Machiavelli was installed in the newly elected city government as Head of the Second Chancery and secretary to the governing council that directed foreign affairs and defense. These scholars argue that being somebody who treasured order and stability, Machiavelli would prefer the Medici rule to another round of civil unrest, as he wouldn’t want to see a repeat of the conflict and disorder that took place from 1494 – 1498 in Florence.

Secondly, they argue, Machiavelli knew that it would not be easy to replace the Medici, who came back to Florence in 1512 with the backing of the Catholic Church, and that in the event of any crisis, the Catholic Church could easily replace Lorenzo with another member of his family or even with someone from a different family who may even be a worse ruler. Thirdly, it is argued that Machiavelli was realistic and purposeful in everything he wrote in *The Prince*. Inasmuch as he was a strident proponent of republican government, he believed that republics grew from principalities. Historically, the Roman republic grew out of the expulsion of the Tarquinian kings, and there is no doubt that Machiavelli envisioned a similar course for modern Italy, considering that his masterpiece on republics, *The Discourses*, took the form of a meditation on the first ten

books of Livy's history of Rome. From his exhortation at the end of *The Prince*, some scholars argue, it is clear that Machiavelli imagined a powerful prince who would unite the Italian peninsula by conquest. And he seemed to believe that if a prince could bring good laws and stability to a united Italy, a republic would grow out of that as it did for the ancient Romans. Therefore, for them, Machiavelli was not the enemy of the Medici, as Mattingly and others suggest, but viewed the principedom as a necessary foundation towards the evolution of a republic.

Fourthly, it is argued that whatever grudges Machiavelli had for the Medici was not comparable to his love for Florence and his desire to get back to the government. This is attested to by the dozens of job-seeking letters he wrote to his friends, Vetorri and Guicciardini, especially the one he wrote to Vettori on 10th December 1513 begging for assistance whatsoever in getting him a government job. Part of the letter reads thus:

I have discussed this little study of mine with Filippo and whether or not it would be a good idea to present it [to Giuliano], and if it were a good idea, whether I should take it myself or should send it to you ... I am wasting away and cannot continue on like this much longer without becoming contemptible because of my poverty. Besides there is my desire that these Medici princes should begin to engage my services, even if they should start out by having me roll along a stone (Skinner, 1981: 54).

From the above-cited letter written by Machiavelli himself, it is clear that *The Prince* is not a satire but Machiavelli's earnest treatise containing all he knows about acquisition and maintenance of a stable principedom.

Fifthly, the argument that Machiavelli wrote to subtly make jest of the sanctimonious Christian morality is problematic, considering that he portrays the fact that his purpose of writing *The Prince* is not to contradict conventional morality, but to show that it should not be strictly followed if the prince wants to succeed in his principedom. This idea, which is believed in by "Benedetto Croce and followed to some extent by Chabod, Russo and others" is that "Machiavelli did not deny the validity of Christian morality, and did not pretend that a crime committed by political necessity was any less a crime. Rather, he discovered that this morality simply did not hold in political affairs, and that any policy based on the assumption that it did, would end in disaster (Adams,

1992: 212). Thus, he should not have held such view and then turn around to blame the Church for practicing what he preached.

Finally, there is the argument that if actually Machiavelli intends *The Prince* to be a satire, he would have made it available to the public and not make it a private tract to Lorenzo de Medici. According to Dietz, “Machiavelli could not be writing a book for republicans, because he never intended that they read it....in this case we find no evidence that Machiavelli did or attempted to do anything with the treatise but send it to Francesco Vettori, his contact in the Medici Palace” (Dietz, 1986: 779). She also objects to the idea of the book being a satire because to believe that is to take lightly Machiavelli’s desire, as he points out in Chapter XV of *The Prince*, to “reconstitute the political world”. For her, Machiavelli “wishes to reveal reality, not ridicule it” (Dietz, 1986: 780).

### **Interpreting *The Prince* as a Work of Political Science**

From the ideas posited in *The Prince* by Machiavelli, especially in the last chapter where he calls for the redemption of Italy from the barbarians who have desolated her, many believe that he was deeply concerned with the political events of Florence and Italy of his time. To liberate Italy from influence of foreign governments, Machiavelli argues that a strong indigenous government is necessary, even if it is absolutist. Therefore, he sees the Medici family as divinely favoured and positioned to be used for the liberation that Italy desperately needed and concludes the treatise by issuing a passionate call for Lorenzo to rise to this divine challenge of realizing Italian unity and bringing an end to their foreign domination. This is why some scholars maintain that he embarked on *The Prince* with the hope that it will put things in order.

And surely, to put things in order, he stipulates in *The Prince*, from his knowledge of ancient history and observations of the political events of his time, what has turned out to become a turning point in the history of political theories. Thus, on the strength of the stipulations in the book, many view it as a work of science and consider Machiavelli as the father of modern political science. To understand properly this interpretation, there is need to explain the meaning of political science. Political science is described as “an examination of past and present events to derive general rules of political behaviour; a rejection of priori principles” (Femia, 2004: 140). This implies that political science has to do with studying the past and present workings of government and politics

in a way that will involve offering of theories that will explain and predict political events. Going by this description, for something to be a political science, it has to be based on provable facts and backed by empirical evidence. In line with this description, many scholars see Machiavelli's *The Prince* as the first major work of modern political science, because it is the first treatise in modern era to address politics from the standpoint of realism rather than idealism.

For such scholars, Machiavelli is referred to as the symbol of the break in the pattern of political philosophy between the middle ages and the modern world and as a pointer to a new approach to politics characteristic of modern times but unknown to previous centuries (*Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. XVIII, 1964: 52). This is due to the fact that he changed the direction of political thought, from the traditional idea of morally evaluating the state in terms of fulfilling its functions of promoting the common good and preserving justice to empirically investigating how the state could use its power to maintain law and order (Honderich, 2005: 549). Agreeing that *The Prince* is scientific, Herbert Butterfield (1900 – 1979), in his book, *The Statecraft of Machiavelli*, holds that Machiavelli was a teacher of political theory who wanted to promote “a more scientific statecraft” and effect change in the way politics operated in his day (Butterfield, 1940: 16). For him, “through Machiavelli the concrete political discussions of a diplomatic dispatch or a ministerial paper were turned into the accumulated wisdom of the printed book and organized into a new science” (Butterfield, 1940: 20). He concluded that *The Prince* “is essentially a treatise on new principalities” (Butterfield, 1940: 21).

In a similar vein, Ernst Cassirer (1874 – 1945) opines that “Machiavelli approached the formulation of political theory in the same way in which a physician describes the symptoms of a certain illness” (Jensen, 1960: XII). According to him, “many modern writers have been prevented from seeing Machiavelli's *The Prince* in its true light because they began with a study of Machiavelli's life, hoping to find therefrom the clue to his theory of politics.” (Jensen, 1960: XII). *The Prince*, he argues, “is neither a moral or an immoral book: it is simply a technical book. In a technical book we do not seek for rules of ethical conduct, of good and evil. It is enough if we are told what is useful or useless. Every word in *The Prince* must be read and interpreted in this way” (Cassirer, 1946: 153). Supporting Cassirer's interpretation, Leonardo Olschki, born in Verona, Italy, in 1885, adds another dimension to it with his analysis of Machiavelli's scientific methods, showing that to a far greater extent than any of his contemporaries (even those popularly associated

with the beginnings of science, like Da Vinci and Galileo) “Machiavelli possessed a detached, impartial, scientific mind”. According to him, “just like Galileo, by his attitudes and method, laid the foundations of natural science, so Machiavelli, by a similar approach to man and his institutions, founded the science of politics” (Jensen, 1960: XIII).

To show that Machiavelli’s work can be classified as scientific, Butterfield referred to it as “the science of statecraft.” He argues that although Machiavelli was not the first to invent “statecraft” or a group of rules a government should follow, he does have the “distinction of being the first person to write down his statecraft in a book” (Butterfield, 1962: 20). He opines that Machiavelli’s *The Prince* belongs to the category of those “writings which began the science of politics as we know it today” (Butterfield, 1962: 20). Kain believes that Machiavelli’s approach to leadership can be seen from the angle of science because in “all his counsels to the prince, the good of the state comes before personal feelings” (Kain, 1995: 35). That is to say that the prince must set aside his personal feelings and do only what the situation demands for the good of the state. This objective approach to political problems, he maintains, can be classified as scientific, thereby making Machiavelli “one of the forerunners of modern political thought” (Kain, 1995: 35). One can thus understand why Cassirer, Renaudet, Olschki and Hannock describe him as a “cold technician, ethically and politically uncommitted, an objective analyst of politics, a morally neutral scientist” (Adams, 1992: 209).

There is no doubt that Machiavelli’s book, *The Prince*, made contributions to modern political science. According to Berlin, Machiavelli’s *The Prince* brings into light the age old conflicts all politicians face, which is “the necessity of sometimes having to make agonizing choices between incompatible alternatives in public and private life.” (Berlin, 1997: 79). He opines that Machiavelli did a great service to political leaders by candidly facing the realities of political life. By “bringing out into the open this necessary evil for the greater good dilemma, he simplified what leaders often experienced and struggled with” (Berlin, 1997: 79). In her own thinking, Dietz says that Machiavelli actually contributed to political science, but his contributions have been skewed because of the misconception about *The Prince*. According to her, “realism is generally considered a necessary first move in the effort to make the study of politics scientific, and when political scientists turn to the history of ideas, they tend to acknowledge Machiavelli as the champion of realism (Dietz, 1986: 777).

Additionally, some argue that the final chapter of *The Prince* is a reflection of Machiavelli's scientific mind. Having critically observed and analyzed the foreign powers that have terrorized the various Italian city states, Machiavelli realized that in order to defeat these foreign powers, the city states had to unite under one strong ruler. He sees Lorenzo (and his family) to whom he dedicates the book as the saviour that Italy needs, urges him to fulfill the redemptive work God has placed on his shoulders, and even offers him strategic military tactics on how the coming battle would be fought and won. It is thus understandable that Bacon describes Machiavelli as a "supreme realist and avoider of utopian fantasies" (Adams, 1992: 210) and Fichte sees him as "a man of deep insight into deep real historical (or super-historical) forces that mould men and transform their morality" (Adams, 1992: 209). Thus out of Machiavelli's deep insight, he foresees a regenerated Italy standing strong under a strong leadership. This is based on his thinking that "regeneration can be best organized by a prince, but when he feels that civic virtue has been restored, he should retire" (Hale, 1961: 175). By "civic" virtue, Machiavelli means republicanism.

The contribution of Machiavelli to political science cannot be exhausted without mentioning the concept of *raison d'état*, which assumed a new dimension with *The Prince*. According to Meinecke, "the state certainly existed in the middle ages but it did not rank supreme. Law was set above it; and it was a means for enforcing the law (Downton & Hart, 1971: 403). But with Machiavelli's *The Prince* the supreme purpose of the state was brought to the fore and it was natural for the state to break away from all moral and legal encumbrances, as well as the feeling that ruthless *raison d'état* is a "sin against God and divine standards, a sin against the sanctity and inviolability of the law of the good old times" (Downton & Hart, 1971: 405). Reflecting on this, Cassirer notes, "With Machiavelli we stand at the gate of modern world. The desired end is attained; the state has won its full autonomy.... The sharp knife of Machiavelli's thought has cut off all the threads by which in former generations the state was fastened to the organic whole of human existence (Adams, 1992: 155). Thus, with Machiavelli ideas in *The Prince*, the state becomes paramount, and this implies that its well-being and stability should be protected by the government by all means.

However, while there appear to be overwhelming evidences, as shown above, to indicate that Machiavelli's *The Prince* is scientific, many scholars think otherwise. Kraft makes a very revealing expose of Machiavelli's "objectivity," showing that his "scientific" and "detached" methods were

as unscientific and prejudiced as those of his contemporaries. For him, “Machiavelli did not observe the facts closely and his deductions were, in many cases, illogical.” Arguing that Machiavelli appears “to be as much a poet as a scientist” he concludes that if he “must continue to be considered a political scientist it is a very sad commentary on the current state of political science” (Jensen, 1960: XIII). In the same vein, Plamenatz thinks it misleading to call Machiavelli a political scientist. He argues that Machiavelli’s “indifference when he speaks of government, to the destiny of man or God’s purposes for the ‘most excellent’ of His creatures, is not enough to make a political scientist of him” (Plamenatz, 1963: 3). For him:

A writer on politics is not scientific merely because he is interested in facts rather than ideals, and rests his advice on what he takes to be facts. He is scientific only if he uses suitable methods to establish what the facts are, what men actually do want and what experience has *shown* to be the most effective way of getting it. (Plamenatz, 1963: 3).

Again, critics of *The Prince* argue that Machiavelli did not really possess the “detached, impartial, scientific mind” as touted by proponents of scientific interpretation, in view of the numerous contradictions in it. Firstly, in his idea of human nature, there are many contradictory statements. In Chapter III, where he talks about mixed principalities, he says that “men are very ready to change their ruler when they believe that they can better their condition, and this belief leads them to take up arms against him” (Skinner & Price, 1988: 6). This means that men should not be trusted because they are naturally self-interested and rebellious. But in Chapter XVIII, where he talks about how rulers should keep their promises, he says “men are so naive, and so much dominated by immediate needs, that a skillful deceiver always finds plenty of people who will let themselves be deceived (Skinner & Price, 1988: 62). The former sentence indicates that men are naturally selfish and so difficult to be governed while the latter implies that men are so simple and are easily governed. Such contradictions make the work unscientific as science is noted for accuracy of facts. Again, in Chapter III, he says that “men should either be caressed or crushed; because they can avenge slight injuries, but not those that are severe. Hence, any injury done to a man must be such that there is no need to fear his revenge” (Skinner & Price, 1988: 9). In Chapter XIX, where he talks about how contempt and hatred should be avoided, he says that “a ruler will effectively protect himself from danger if he avoids incurring hatred and contempt, and keeps the people satisfied with him (Skinner & Price, 1988: 64). This is another contradiction.

In Chapter IX, where he talks about the civil principality, he says that “it is necessary for a ruler to have the people well disposed towards him; otherwise, in difficult times he will find himself in desperate straits” (Skinner & Price, 1988: 36). But it appears that he forgot the above-cited view in Chapter XVIII, where he says that a ruler “cannot always act in ways considered good because, in order to maintain his power, he is often forced to act treacherously, ruthlessly or inhumanely, and disregard the precepts of religion” (Skinner & Price, 188: 32). He also appears to forget the consequences of hatred and contempt, as he notes in Chapter XIX, when he declared in Chapter XVII that “it is much safer to be feared than loved” (Skinner & Price, 1988: 59). Moreover, Machiavelli’s account on Cesare Borgia, called the Duke Valentino, is conflicting and contradictory that some people think that *The Prince* is unscientific. On Borgia, Machiavelli says “I do not know what better precepts to offer to a new ruler than to cite his actions as a pattern” (Skinner & Price, 1988: 23). If Borgia is the ultimate example of a man of *virtu*, as Machiavelli wants us to believe in Chapter VII, and it is with *virtu* that Fortune is controlled, how come Borgia couldn’t overcome Fortune with his *virtu*? Many question Machiavelli’s astuteness in writing *The Prince* seeing that his favourite example, Cesare Borgia, contradicts everything he says in the book.

Firstly, Machiavelli says of Borgia immediately after setting him as an example for new rulers “although his efforts were in the end unsuccessful, he should not be blamed, because it resulted from extraordinary bad luck” (Skinner & Price, 1988: 23). By “bad luck”, Machiavelli, undoubtedly, means the death of Borgia’s father, Pope Alexander VI, and his ill health. Finally, he says of the same Borgia “he can be criticised only with regard to the election of Pope Julius, in which he made a bad choice.... The Duke, then, blundered in this election, and it was the cause of his final downfall” (Skinner & Price, 1988: 29). Thus, just like other points cited above, Machiavelli’s account of Cesare Borgia has some contradictions. These contradictions make Machiavelli either not truly accurate in his observations or writing just to realize whatever purpose he has in mind for the book. If science is based on accuracy of facts, some scholars opine, Machiavelli’s *The Prince* is not one.

### **Interpreting *The Prince* as a Theory of Nationalism**

Until the end of seventeenth century, every positive perception raised by some scholars regarding Machiavelli was “overshadowed by the deep impression made by the teachings of *The Prince* – to

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a diabolical guide for princes, prescribing lies, treachery and cruelty” (Baron, 1961: 218). The use that a few great intellects like Bacon (1561 – 1626) and Bodin (1530 – 1596) made of *The Discourses* did not change the fact that Machiavelli was usually known only as the author of *The Prince* (Baron, 1961: 218). It was with the first heralds of the Enlightenment, such as Spinoza (1623 – 1677) and Rousseau (1712 – 1778) that the idea came into being that since Machiavelli in *The Discourses* shows himself an ardent republican and teacher of political freedom, and since he suffered the loss of his job and punishment when the Medici was restored to power, he cannot have offered to help the Medici with the advice he presented in *The Prince*. In view of the above, rising to Machiavelli’s defense, they argue that his ideas have been oversimplified and vilified, and insisted that it is unfair to define his political thoughts solely from the contents of *The Prince*. According to Baron, it was “these reinterpretations of the author of *The Prince* from the perspective of the republican *Discourses*” which started “from the time of the first heralds of the Enlightenment, like Spinoza, to Rousseau and to the late eighteenth century when the introduction to Machiavelli’s complete works was published in Florence in 1782” that “dislodged the notion of the diabolical counselor of despots” (Baron, 1961: 218).

Consequent upon this dislodging of the “diabolical counselor of despots” hung upon Machiavelli for over two centuries, the views he expressed in *The Prince* began to have new meanings to many who study it. And from these new meanings came the suggestion by some thinkers that the book was written for specific circumstances of Italian history. From Algarotti (1712 – 1764) to Herder (1744 – 1803) to Alfieri (1749 – 1803), to Hegel (1770 – 1831), to Fichte (1762 1814), Ranke (1795 – 1886) and Macaulay (1800 – 1859), “the reasoning ran that *The Prince* was written at a moment when only power and cool ‘reason of state’ could save Italy from foreign domination; that the key to the work was the impassioned appeal in the last chapter for national liberation through the ‘new prince’” (Baron, 1961: 219). For Algarotti and Alfieri, “Machiavelli was a passionate patriot who saw in Cesare Borgia the man who, if he had lived, might have liberated Italy from the barbarous French and Spaniards and Austrians who were trampling on her and had reduced her to misery and poverty, decadence and chaos” (Adams, 1992: 208). Alfieri, in his work, *Del principe e delle lettere* (1796) lauds the divine genius of Machiavelli and refers to him as the only philosopher Italy could claim (Jensen, 1960: XI).

For Herder, Machiavelli is “above all, a marvelous mirror of his age, a man sensitive to the contours of his time, who faithfully described what others did not admit or recognize,” while for Hegel, he is the man of genius who saw the need for uniting a chaotic collection of small and feeble principalities into a coherent whole” (Adams, 1992: 209). “However obsolete his precepts” are, Hegel insists, “he understood something more important – the demands of his own age – that the hour had struck for the birth of the modern, centralized, political state” (Adams, 1992: 209). Thus, the common position of those holding this view is that “Machiavelli is an Italian patriot speaking above all to his own generation, and if not solely to the Florentines, at any rate only to Italians” and must be “judged solely, or at least mainly, in terms of his historical context” (Adams, 1992: 209). To this end, Ranke and Macaulay advocated for a better understanding of the life and condition in Renaissance Italy before judging Machiavelli harshly. They believed that Machiavelli’s thought and writings were the direct reflection of his environment and that he therefore wrote primarily as a “mirror of the times” (Jensen, 1960: XII). That is why Macaulay sees him as a “political pragmatist and a patriot who cared most of all for the independence of Florence, and acclaimed any form of rule that would ensure it” (Adams, 1992: 210).

This view gained considerable strength in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and was further strengthened by “the selection by L. A. Burd in 1891, which insists that Machiavelli was only speaking for his own time and locality, the Italians, and that taken out of context he becomes distorted and meaningless” (Jensen, 1960: xii). Also, Chabod sees the development of Machiavelli’s thought as a reflection of, and a response to, the actual political and social conditions and events of his time. For him “*The Prince* is at once a synthesis and a condemnation of two centuries of Italian history; and far more than its supposed immorality” (Jensen, 1960: 52). Similarly, for Koenig, Machiavelli is not “a tough-minded cynic at all, but an aesthete seeking to escape from the chaotic and squalid world of the decadent Italy of his time” (Adams, 1992: 210). In concert with Koenig and others listed above, Villari (1827 – 1917) believes that Machiavelli was not that bad as some critics painted him to be, but was influenced by the age in which he lived. According to him, Machiavelli came into the world at a moment when political corruption was general throughout Europe, but more predominantly in Italy than elsewhere. It was a period of criminality and misdeeds, blind and ungoverned passion, unbridled calculation and political cunning, full of cruelty and devoid of scruples (Jensen, 1960: 17). He was influenced to adopt his

political cum moral views by circumstances of his time, as well as his desire for the regeneration of Italy.

Like Villari, De Sanctis (1817 – 1883), who witnessed the final unification of Italy, praised Machiavelli as one of Italy's noblest patriots, who was devoted to country, reason, intelligence and to manliness. To Machiavelli, he insists, country was a divinity, superior even to morality and law. So for one's fatherland, anything was lawful, and actions which in private life are crimes become magnanimous when done for the sake of country. "Reason of State" and "Public Welfare" were the common banners by which this right of the fatherland was considered superior to all other rights (Jensen, 1960: 23). This view is also held by Lodge (1895 – 1935) who believes in Machiavelli's unqualified nationalism. For him, Machiavelli wrote "to a particular prince in peculiar and special circumstances and for his guidance to a definite objective"; the objective being the liberation of Italy from the foreigners (Jensen, 1960: XI). This is because at the time Machiavelli wrote, Italy was torn and divided. In the words of Machiavelli, Italians were:

More enslaved than the Hebrews, more oppressed than the Persians, more widely scattered than the Athenians; leaderless, lawless, crushed, despoiled, torn, overrun; she had to have endured every kind of desolation (Bull, 1995: 81).

It is therefore not surprising that Rebhorn agrees that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* to a people in despondency. According to him:

Machiavelli was writing *The Prince* for an Italy in crisis, an Italy that needed a strong leader to create a powerful state, in effect a re-created Rome, that would be able to resist, and perhaps even conquer the "barbarians," as the Italians dubbed them, who had been invading their country for the past twenty years. Perhaps, Machiavelli would have wanted such a ruler to turn this new Rome into a republic eventually (Rebhorn, 2003: XXXI).

Viroli shares a similar sentiment. For him, *The Prince* is a theory of political redemption and liberty, motivated by Machiavelli's love for his country, and born out of his desire to usher in a new era where the various city states of Italy would cease their warring with one another, and unite into a single state that will be better able to defend itself from foreign powers. In line with the above view, Meinecke opines that it is certainly true that the "contents of the technical chapters of *The Prince* can arouse the feeling that Machiavelli is only watching out for the personal advantage

of the prince. But if all his writings are treated as a whole, one sees that Machiavelli's central idea is the regeneration of a fallen people by means of the *virtu* of a tyrant, and by means of the leveraging power of all the measures dictated by *necessita*" (Downton & Hart, 1971: 417). This view is equally supported by Kain. According to him, Machiavelli had "good intentions and was completely selfless in writing *The Prince*. His aim is the good of Florence, the good of Italy, the common good. He hoped his advice would be useful in helping the Italians secure freedom from foreign domination" (Kain, 1995: 36).

In the light of the above, one may agree that with modern biographical research that the Machiavelli of former times, the "murderous" Machiavelli of the Elizabethan drama, has completely disappeared, and Machiavelli is seen as he really was, as an honest and upright man, a fervent patriot, a conscientious servant of his country, a loyal friend, and a man devoted to his wife and children (Jensen, 1960: 63).

However, despite the seemingly convincing arguments that *The Prince* is a nationalist theory, some scholars oppose the view. They are not comfortable with the suggestion that Machiavelli was in fact a good Italian and passionate patriot, trying to secure freedom for his Florentine city-state and other city-states of Italy. Sereni objected to any idea suggesting Machiavelli's patriotism to Florence and Italy. For him, *The Prince* is a "fantasy indeed but of a bitterly frustrated man and its dedication is a desperate plea of a victim of a severe and constant misfortune" (Adams, 1992: 210). This view is corroborated by Machiavelli's letter to his friend, Francesco Vettori, in 1513 after he had wrongly been imprisoned and tortured for being part of the conspiracy against the Medici family. In the letter, Machiavelli describes his loneliness and paucity of funds since his release from prison, and expresses a desire to get a job to make ends meet. Supporting Sereni's view, Plamenatz remarks that Machiavelli wrote only what he thought would "please the Medici and induce them to employ him in affairs of state" (Plamenatz, 1963: 13). He insists that if Machiavelli "had been a courtier by temperament, he would have written, to attract the favour of the Medici, a very different book from *The Prince*" (Plamenatz, 1963: 13). These, no doubt, have raised problems concerning Machiavelli's nationalistic spirit, character, motives and convictions.

On Machiavelli's call at the last chapter of *The Prince* for the liberation of Italy from the barbarians, which is the strongest point of reference for interpreting the book in the perspective of nationalism, some scholars regard that exhortation "as subsequent addition" or "a piece of oratory

tacked on to justify by means of a noble invocation the sorry facts affirmed in all the other chapters of the treatise” (Adams, 1992: 192). According to Gilbert:

An exact reading of the last chapter of *The Prince* shows that Machiavelli considers only a temporary alliance of the existing Italian rulers and city-states in order to get rid of the *oltramontani*. Moreover, this last chapter of *The Prince* is now believed to be a rhetorical exhortation which he added later to the text of the treatise. It did not belong to the original text of *The Prince* and it cannot be regarded as the end for which the previous parts of the treatise were designed (Gilbert, 1965: 183).

He argues that from the famous correspondence between Machiavelli and Vettori from the years 1513 – 1514, which were the time he was writing *The Prince*, Machiavelli did not suggest any awareness of “living at the beginning of a new era of power competition” (Gilbert, 1965: 183) and insists that “despite his knowledge of the larger European states Machiavelli did not despair of the future of the city-state” because he knew that “the situation of Florence, although serious, was not hopeless” (Gilbert, 1965: 183 – 184). Also Dietz repudiates the idea that Machiavelli is a Florentine patriot and that he wrote *The Prince* to his own generation with the hope of uniting the small and feeble Italian city states into a coherent whole under a virtuous ruler. This, according to her, cannot be true because:

In Machiavelli’s famous tract to Lorenzo de Medici we find no defense of the Florentine Republic, no call for popular liberty, no praise of republican Rome. Far from denouncing tyranny, as would any bold republican, Machiavelli appears to content himself with forging the absolute and ruthless power of an autocrat. How, then, is it possible to hail him as a defender of liberty, self-government and civic *virtu*, when these appear to be the very values he teaches the Medici protégé to subvert (Dietz, 1986: 778).

Dietz also rejects the suggestion that *The Prince* is an advice book for the virtuoso ruler who will lay the foundation from which the Italian republic will emerge. For her, that is unlikely because Machiavelli in the book “gives no specific advice concerning the foundation or republican institutions.” Indeed, he does not deal with republics at all” but rather concentrates on “developing Lorenzo’s knowledge of historical examples and his appreciation of deceit and violence” (Dietz, 1986: 780). Moreover, Dietz thinks that Machiavelli knowing very well, as a Florentine, the

personalities of the Medici princes – Giuliano (a man of little ambition, with lack of aptitude for dealings with Florentine affairs) and Lorenzo (an unapproachable autocrat with Spanish pretensions) knows that they are not the kind of people that would relinquish their power after creating the conditions for a new republic (Dietz, 1986: 780 – 781).

### **Interpreting *The Prince* as a Job-Seeking Treatise**

In 1810, a letter by Machiavelli was discovered in which he reveals that he wrote *The Prince* in order to endear himself to the ruling Medici family. The family was restored to the throne of Florence in 1512, after losing it in 1494 through mass revolt championed by a Dominican friar and preacher, Girolamo Savonarola. When the Savonarola regime collapsed four years later, in 1498, Machiavelli was installed into the newly elected republican government, where he was appointed Head of the Second Chancery and secretary to the governing council that was charged with directing foreign affairs. He held the position until the return of the Medici to power in 1512.

One of the various interpretations of Machiavelli's treatise, *The Prince*, is that of some scholars who opine that the book was written by Machiavelli to attract the favour of the Medici prince from whom he wants a job. This is hinged on the argument by these scholars that Machiavelli, being a die-hard republican wouldn't have written such a manual prescribing cruelty, deception and violence for princes if not for some personal gains. This interpretation is buttressed by facts within the treatise and also circumstances surrounding its composition. The first fact within the book that is used for this interpretation is its dedication to the reigning Medici prince. Part of Machiavelli's dedicatory letter to Lorenzo de' Medici reads thus:

Those who wish to be viewed with favour by a ruler usually approach him with things from among their possessions that are very dear to them, or with things that they expect will please him.... Wishing myself to offer Your Magnificence some token of my devotion to you, I have not found among my belongings anything that I hold more dear or valuable than my knowledge of the conduct of great men, learned through long experience of modern affairs, and continual study of ancient history.... And if Your Magnificence, from the heights of your exalted position, should sometimes deign to glance towards these lowly places, you will see how much I am unjustly oppressed by great and cruel misfortune (Skinner & Price, 1988: 3 – 4).

Originally, Machiavelli wanted to dedicate *The Prince* to Giuliano de' Medici, but he died before the completion of the book, thereby making him to dedicate the book to Giuliano's nephew Lorenzo de' Medici who took over the leadership of Florentine after Giuliano. Ruffo-Fiore opines that Machiavelli dedicates the book to Giuliano as a way of "thanking him because he released him from prison" (Ruffo-Fiore, 1990: 30). For Kain, Machiavelli uses the dedication to Lorenzo as a means of currying the favour of Lorenzo so that he will appoint him to be a political adviser in his government (Kain, 1995: 37). This view is even supported by the way in which Machiavelli pens the dedication. With his usual confidence, he expresses therein that his views are of exceptional value because of the long experience of modern affairs he has gained over the years and the theoretical mastery of statecraft he has acquired through his continual study of ancient history.

The second fact inside *The Prince* to support the job-seeking interpretation is what seems like desperate pleading by Machiavelli in his statement in Chapter XX that "princes, especially new princes, have found men who were suspect at the start of their rule more loyal and more useful than those who, at the start, were their trusted friends" (Bull, 1995: 68). He even cites as example, to buttress his argument, Pandolfo Petrucci, ruler of Siena who "governed his state more with the support of those who had been suspect than with that of the others" and concludes thus:

A prince will never have difficulty in winning over those who were initially his enemies, when they are such that they need someone to lean upon. And they are all the more forced to serve him loyally inasmuch as they realize that it is necessary for them to wipe out with their actions the bad opinion he had formed of them; and so the prince finds them more useful than those who feel themselves so secure in his service that they neglect his interests (Bull, 1995: 68).

According to Skinner, Machiavelli's main concern "was of course to make it clear to the Medici that he was a man worth employing, an expert whom it would be foolish to overlook" (Skinner, 1981: 26). It is thus not out of place that Godman sees Machiavelli as a "sycophant who solicits his republican soul for aristocratic patronage" (Lukes, 2001: 561). To "Florentines near to Machiavelli personally, his life and work had seemed to have two faces. According to Busini, an anti-Medici republican,... 'Machiavelli was a most extraordinary lover of liberty', but wrote the

*Prince* to teach duke Lorenzo de' Medici how to rob the rich of their wealth and the ordinary citizens of their freedom, and later in his life accepted a pension from the head of the Medici family, Pope Clement VII, for writing his *Florentine History*" (Baron, 1961: 217). This corroborates the view of the restorers of the short-lived Florentine republic that Machiavelli was "a venal and treacherous toady, anxious to serve any master, who had unsuccessfully tried to flatter the Medici in the hope of gaining their favour." (Adams, 1992: 211).

Apart from the above-cited facts in *The Prince* itself which seem to indicate Machiavelli's desperation to curry the favour of the Medici family, there are dozens of job-seeking letters he wrote to his friends, Francesco Vetorri and Francesco Guicciardini, asking for their help in connecting him to the prince. The most famous of these letters is the one he wrote to Vettori, the Florentine Ambassador to the Supreme Pontiff in Rome, on 10th December 1513, which scholars use to show that Machiavelli was really desperate to return to his government job. This is the letter in which Machiavelli for the first time wrote about *The Prince*. Part of it reads thus:

I have composed a short study, *De principatibus*, in which I delve as deeply as I can into the ideas concerning this topic, discussing the definition of a principedom, the categories of principedoms, how they are acquired, how they are retained, and why they are lost...I have discussed this little study of mine with Filippo and whether or not it would be a good idea to present it [to Giuliano], and if it were a good idea, whether I should take it myself or should send it to you ... I am wasting away and cannot continue on like this much longer without becoming contemptible because of my poverty. Besides there is my desire that these Medici princes should begin to engage my services, even if they should start out by having me roll along a stone ... And through this study of mine, were it to be read, it would be evident that during the fifteen years I have been studying the art of the state I have neither slept nor fooled around, and anybody ought to be happy to utilize someone who has had so much experience at the expense of others (Atkinson & Sices, 1996: 262 – 265).

In view of the above-cited facts, Anglo believes that Machiavelli had only one intention in writing *The Prince* "to impress the Medici with his political knowledge so that they will offer him a position in their government" (Kunkell: 1995). Historically, the return of the Medici to the throne of Florence in 1512 had a serious impact on the life and career of Machiavelli. Gilbert regards him

as “the most famous victim of the restoration of the Medici rule in 1512” (Gilbert, 1965: 153). Apart from losing his job, Machiavelli, whom the Medici regarded as their enemy, found himself exiled to his small estate in Saint’ Andrea da Percusina; and for a short time, he was imprisoned and tortured, upon the accusation that he took part in anti-Medicean conspiracy. Machiavelli “himself regarded the loss of his job in the chancellery as the greatest misfortune of his life” (Gilbert, 1965: 153). Formerly a man who existed in the corridor of power, he found himself unemployed and disgraced in the countryside outside Florence. He began to write series of letters, through his friends in the government who were close to the ruling Medici family, begging the Medici rulers to engage his services and allow him to return to his beloved city. Unfortunately, his once close friend, Francesco Vettori, to whom he wrote the famous letter of 10th December 1513, appeared unwilling to help him, and his efforts to secure a job were unsuccessful until his death in 1527. In view of the above, many scholars believe that *The Prince* was written by Machiavelli in order to ingratiate himself with the new Medici prince.

Although there are seemingly convincing evidences, as highlighted above, to show that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* primarily to attract some favour from the Medicis, some scholars however say that it is unfair to accuse Machiavelli of that. For Dietz, “to read *The Prince* as a tool to curry favour is arguably to underestimate Machiavelli as a citizen and a theorist” (Dietz, 1986: 779). Inasmuch as *The Prince* runs directly contrary to his other writings where he has taken a republican stand, some scholars argue that just one book could not have endeared him to the Medicis, considering that he had been one of their already known enemies. In a similar vein, Macaulay feels that “Machiavelli’s imaginative creation of the supreme type of a new ruler is too lifelike and sincere for it to be merely the by-product of servility. When he is being ironic or resorting to flattery it is immediately apparent” (Bull, 1995: XVII). Moreover, Machiavelli in Chapter XV states explicitly his intention of writing the book – “to write something useful to an understanding reader” and “to go after the real truth of the matter than to repeat what people have imagined” (Adams, 1992: 42). This shows that his purpose of writing the book is purely political and not out of self-interest.

Furthermore, if Machiavelli wrote the book just to please the Medici and gain some favour from them, they argue, he wouldn’t have needed to add the last chapter of the book, the famous exhortation to deliver Italy from the bonds of barbarians, which many see as an integral part of the

book. For them, that last chapter is the culmination of all the ideas contained in the previous chapters, and is a testimony of Machiavelli's desire that under a virtuous prince all the small and weak Italian city-states will come together and form a strong and united nation that can stand against foreign interference.

### **Interpreting the Prince as a Conspiracy Theory**

The last interpretation to be discussed here is that of Mary Dietz (Born in 1950) who proposed that Machiavelli's *The Prince* is "a masterful act of political deception" aimed at undoing "Lorenzo de Medici by giving him advice that would jeopardize his power, hasten his overthrow, and allow for the resurgence of the Florentine republic" (Dietz, 1986: 777). She believes that the key to understanding *The Prince* lies in returning the book to its historical context, which includes: the political reality of sixteenth-century Florence, Machiavelli's other writings and political biography, his anti-Medicean sentiments, his republican convictions, and his proclivity for deception (Dietz, 1986: 777). For Dietz, all the questions raised by the various interpretations we have seen above in this section of the study can be answered only if "we remember Machiavelli's awareness of the advantages of crafty assaults" and consider that "*The Prince* is not simply about deception, but is itself an act of deception, and that this theorist of deceit is at the same time a practitioner of the very act" (Dietz, 1986: 781). She insists that "*The Prince* is a tract that in fact aims to restore a republic, though in appearance it dedicates itself to maintaining a principedom." Machiavelli's deception, she argues, "resides not in exposing princely tricks to the republicans, but in something far more crafty: he intends for a gullible and vain glorious prince to heed the duplicitous advice of *The Prince*, and thereby take actions that will jeopardize his power and bring about his demise" (Dietz, 1986: 781).

On why Machiavelli chose the way of deception which betrays his republican credentials, Dietz believes that he had no option, knowing that crafty assault could be a better option than using brute assault to dislodge an enemy like the Medici. To achieve his aim of writing the book, which is to trap the prince, according to Dietz, Machiavelli advises in the following ways:

Firstly, he "offers the prince in a formerly free state three choices: to despoil, live within or restore the freedoms of the occupied city" (Dietz, 1986: 782). Discounting the third alternative by appealing to history, Machiavelli advises the prince in Chapter III, where he talks about

“Composite Principalities,” to take the second alternative, i.e. reside in the city, if he cannot apply the first alternative, which is wasting and despoiling the country. According to Machiavelli, living within his conquered territory renders “a new possession more secure and permanent” (Bull, 1995: 8). Dietz believes that this advice is curious and contradictory to Machiavelli’s statement in Chapter V that “whoever becomes the master of a city and accustomed to freedom and does not destroy it may expect to be destroyed himself; because when there is a rebellion, such a city justifies itself by calling on the name of liberty” (Bull, 1995: 16). For Dietz, since it is easier to find and destroy a prince living within the city than one living outside, the advice is aimed at changing the residential practice of the Medici who spent much of their time in their villas outside Florence, though they maintained a palace in Florence (Dietz, 1986: 783).

Secondly, he advises the prince to be friendly with the people and to treat the nobles with suspicion. While nobles cannot be trusted, Machiavelli insists, the people can always be relied upon in times of adversity. In Chapter IX, where he talks about “The Constitutional Principality,” he tells Lorenzo to disregard the “trite proverb that he who builds on the people builds on mud.” This, he argues, is because any prince “who builds his power on the people” “will never be let down by the people; and he will be found to have established his power securely” (Bull, 1995: 32 – 33). Justifying this advice further, Machiavelli states:

A prince can never make himself safe against a hostile people: there are too many of them. He can make himself safe against the nobles, who are few... A prince must always live with the same people, but he can well do without the nobles, since he can make and unmake them every day, increasing and lowering their standard at will (Bull, 1995: 31).

Dietz believes that the advice is suspicious because since the Florentines had become accustomed to a republic, the nobles would have been in a better position to stabilize the return of the Medici and not the masses. Also the advice is the exact opposite of what the same Machiavelli said in his document to Pope Leo X “On Reforming the State of Florence,” where he tells the Pope what would have to be done if a prince wished to turn the city into a monarchy. In the said document, Machiavelli “issues warnings about trusting nobles and alienating the people” (Dietz, 1986: 784). Again, in Chapter XVI, where he talks about “Generosity and Parsimony”, he advises Lorenzo to be stingy if he wants to secure his power, as generosity will lead him to problems in the long run. Dietz again sees this advice as curious because it takes away an important element which helped

Lorenzo de' Medici, called "Lorenzo the Magnificent" (1449 – 1492) survive the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478.

Thirdly, in Chapter XX, where Machiavelli talks about "Whether fortresses and many of the other present-day expedients to which princes have recourse are useful or not" he advises the prince to arm the citizens in order to inspire trust and loyalty from them. According to him:

No new prince has ever at any time disarmed his subjects; rather, when he has found them unarmed he has always given them arms. This is because by arming your subjects you arm yourself; those who were suspect become loyal, and those who were loyal not only remain so but are changed from being merely your subjects to being your partisans. ... So, as I said, a new prince in a new principality always arms his subjects; and history is full of examples of this (Bull, 1995: 66).

As if to leave no one in doubt on the matter, Machiavelli argues that a new prince who disarms his subjects offends them and brings hatred towards himself. Curiously, his bold claim that "history is full of examples" is followed by none at all, and Dietz thinks that this is deliberate on the part of Machiavelli who is always "willing to present specific historical examples for the prince to emulate" (Dietz, 1986: 786). Moreover, he advises the prince not to build fortresses. He gives his reasons thus:

The prince who is more afraid of his own people than of foreign interference should build fortresses; but the prince who fears foreign interference more than his own people should forget about them. ... The best fortress that exists is to avoid being hated by the people. If you have fortress and yet the people hate you they will not save you; once the people have taken up arms they will never lack outside help (Bull, 1995: 69).

This idea of Machiavelli is suspicious, for Dietz, especially with Florence being a city deeply rooted in the idea of political liberty, and also with the historical fact that Lorenzo's grandfather himself disarmed the populace during his reign. She sees it as curious that Machiavelli would advise the prince to reside and move about in a city like Florence which is hostile to the idea of an autocrat, with the subjects armed, and with the prince defenceless against any rebellion as he has been advised against having a fortress. Therefore, *The Prince*, according to Dietz, is an act of

deception in itself, seeing that it advises the prince to act in a way that will ultimately lead to an outcome completely opposite to what should have resulted from the advice. And that outcome, Dietz argues, is the restoration of republicanism in Florence. Machiavelli, for her, seems to have been inspired by Junius Brutus, the “father of Roman liberty” who overthrew Roman kings by deceit, first by ingratiating himself with those in power, and then by undermining them from within (Dietz, 1986: 789 – 790). She believes that because critics have not recognized Machiavelli’s full genius of master deception in *The Prince*, his skill as a political strategist has been severely underestimated (Dietz, 1986: 778).

Fourthly, Machiavelli in his master deception, Dietz maintains, dedicates *The Prince* to Lorenzo. Because of its flattering nature, the dedication was a ploy to make Lorenzo fall into Machiavelli’s dastardly plan, which is to lure him into opprobrious actions that will lead his family to disaster (Dietz, 1986: 778). Also, for her, the last chapter of *The Prince*, Chapter XXVI, captioned “An Exhortation to Liberate Italy and Free it from the Barbarians” to a high degree is to flatter the ruling Medici family. She sees the flattery at the end of the book as the “bait” or “vista” that will definitely hook Lorenzo, and believes that Machiavelli sets him up by giving him “visions of the family’s grandeur and political immortality” (Dietz, 1986: 796). By trapping and destroying the Medici family, Dietz argues, republicanism will be established again in Florence. That is, for her, the ultimate objective of Machiavelli in writing *The Prince*. However, in the end, Machiavelli’s trap secured nothing because Lorenzo never read *The Prince* or that he read it but was not caught by its bait.

However, while Dietz’s argument that Machiavelli, eyeing the re-establishment of republicanism in Florence, wrote *The Prince* to set up and destroy the Medici family appears convincing, many scholars do not agree with it. This is because of certain circumstances around the book which conflict with Dietz’s interpretation. Langton rejects Dietz’s view by “contending that after 1512 Florence was hardly a ‘hotbed of republicanism’ and perhaps not accurately viewed as a city deeply rooted in republican tradition at all” (Langton & Dietz, 1986: 1284). Furthermore, he insists, “Machiavelli himself did not think that the old republic was worth restoring; instead, he thought that Florence would be better served by an absolute ruler who would reorganize, reform and revitalize it in order to unify Italy” (Langton & Dietz, 1986: 1284). Thus, for Langton, “on two accounts – for the city and for Machiavelli himself – republicanism becomes a dead letter, and

‘nationalism’ rises in its stead” (Langton & Dietz, 1986: 1284). The implication of Langton’s argument is that Dietz’s interpretation is not correct because there is no motive for Machiavelli to try to trap Lorenzo and his family. Again, in his famous 10th December 1513 letter to Vettori, Machiavelli refers to *The Prince* as the result of his fifteen years of studying “the art of the state”. This implies that Machiavelli wrote the letter as a “mirror for princes” handbook for Lorenzo, which was the usual practice for many thinkers of his time, and not as a trap for the prince.

Again, Machiavelli himself, in Chapter XV states his purpose of writing *The Prince*. According to him, he writes to present “things as they are in real truth, rather than as they are imagined” (Bull, 1995: 48). This implies that his purpose of writing the book was not to trap the prince but to change the existing impression that politics must be practiced in conformity with conventional idea of morality. In other words, he faithfully describes the things as they were happening in his time and gives his perceived solutions to the problems, not caring whether his solutions would clash with the conventional idea of politics and morality. For Meinecke, “this is what is peculiar to Machiavelli and at the same time constitutes the historical power of his work – the fact that he is the first person to discover the real nature of *raison d’etat*” and succeed in measuring its “heights and depths” (Downton & Hart, 1971: 417). He understands that for the prince to succeed in governance, it is necessary that he “must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man” (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1995: 54). Thus, Machiavelli’s purpose of writing was not to trap the prince, as Dietz suggests, but as Meinecke argues, to regenerate “a fallen people by means of the *virtu* of a tyrant, and by means of the leveraging power of all the measures dictated by *necessita*” (Downton & Hart, 1971: 417).

Having looked at the six key perspectives through which scholars over the centuries have interpreted Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and the force or evidences that each of the six perspectives carries, I would agree that *The Prince* is a puzzle, and I think that even Machiavelli himself did not appear to have one thing in mind as a purpose for writing the treatise. I say this because apart from historical and circumstantial evidences used by various scholars to buttress their varied perspectives, it is surprising that statements or ideas from *The Prince* itself lend credence to all these interpretations. It is clear that Machiavelli means many things to many people. According to Biagini, “today, after five hundred years of scholarly debate and not-so-scholarly polemic, he remains the subject of intense scrutiny and controversy. His writings, at times shocking but always

insightful, have generated wide range of responses” (Biagini, 2009: 2). Similarly, Butterfield believes that, “no other treatises on the art of politics have stirred the opinion of the world more than *The Prince*, provoking controversy in every generation. Bitter hatred and extravagant blame on one hand have been met by patriotic enthusiasm and lyrical praise on the other” (Butterfield, 1962: 10).

As seen in the six interpretations discussed above, Machiavelli has a long reputation of being an evil and amoral person, but this assessment of him does not go without opposition. While some view him as immoral according to their understanding of morality, others regard him as moral based on their own understanding of right and wrong actions. To some thinkers, he is a political scientist or a cunning writer, while for others he is an unflinching patriot, a desperate sycophant or a master conspirator. While some despise him, others admire him. While some desire to study him, others choose to ignore him. In spite of all these, one thing which is certain is that Machiavelli brings to the fore the real world of politics. *The Prince* presents truths that can be proved at every turn, the facts that the world of politics is different from the world of religion, and that both worlds should be understood and lived in differently.

Notwithstanding the criticisms against Machiavelli for holding this unconventional view, it is noticeable today that all around the world, people who haven’t even read or heard of his highly controversial book, *The Prince*, are behaving according his prescriptions in the book. Even those who are castigating him manifest knowingly or unknowingly many of the traits he revealed in *The Prince*. Delivering a paper at a conference celebrating the 500th anniversary of Machiavelli’s birth, Fleisher said:

There is one observation of Machiavelli that we must make that seems indisputable – Machiavelli lives. He lives today with a vitality that few other political thinkers can boast. More remarkably, he has enjoyed his vitality uninterruptedly since the sixteenth century, in contrast to Aristotle or Hobbes, Spinoza or Montesquieu. There has never been a need to revive him because he never died (Fleisher, 1972: 114 -115).

Truly, he lives in modern political science and practices, and even lives in local and international laws. In the words of Biagini,

Western concept of international law was not born in a vacuum...Machiavelli was neither a jurist nor a lawyer. Nonetheless, through his widely read thoughts on political science and politics as actually practiced, he had a significant influence on the evolution of international law. ... Whether admired or despised, he was instrumental in affecting the thinking and writing of many scholars and diplomats who succeeded him. Machiavelli and his successors inspired the philosophers and jurists who have a direct effect on the evolution of international law of nations (Biagini, 2009: 1 – 2).

In view of the above, I think that the appropriate interpretation through which political events in Nigeria could be analysed and explained is that of those who interpret *The Prince* from the angle of political science. For them, *The Prince* is a work of political science because it studies past and present workings of government and politics and offers theories that explain and predict political events. Based on provable facts and empirical evidence, it presents a realistic approach or practical solution to the political challenges confronting the Italian society of Machiavelli's time. This realistic approach or practical solution is encapsulated in the idea that political actions should be guided by necessity, which is subsumed under the guiding principle that "the end justifies the means." This guiding principle means that what counts in any political action is the usefulness or benefits derived from the action. By implication, every political action is permitted if the action is necessary to achieve a desired objective. Thus, with such view as articulated in *The Prince*, the realities of political life were brought to the fore.

Notwithstanding the inconsistencies or contradictions in *The Prince* – many of which I have highlighted in this chapter – which seem to make the book unscientific, I wish to take at face value the view that the book is a work of political science. This position of mine is not necessarily because many thinkers see the book as such, neither is it because other interpretations treated above lack merit. For me, the book's break from political idealism of the middle ages, its realistic cum practical approach to the issue of politics, its exaltation of the good of the state over personal sentiments, as well as its offering of theories that explain and predict political behaviour and events are enough facts to justify its interpretation as a work of political science. Moreover, this interpretation is most pertinent to this study because whether knowingly or unknowingly many present-day Nigerian politicians and ordinary citizens manifest in their social cum political practices many of the views which Machiavelli stipulated in *The Prince*. In fact, there is a high

degree of similarity between the state of affairs in present-day Nigerian politics and the Machiavellian view that in politics “the end justifies the means”.

I am not ignorant of the fact that many would question the justification for using Machiavelli and his realist approach to expose the present-day Nigerian society, considering the historical cum cultural gap between the Italian society of Machiavelli’s time and the twenty first century Nigerian society, and given that we are in the era of decoloniality (which I mentioned earlier in the introductory chapter while stating the objective of this study) with its attendant insistence on understanding modernity in the context of a critical theory applied to ethnic or indigenous studies. Those involved in the decoloniality project argue against the belief that Europe (and later on, the United States) is the locus of epistemic enunciation, while the rest of the world are object to be described and studied from the European perspective (Mignolo: 2017). For them, Western European modes of thinking are not universal ones (Quijano, 2000: 544). Therefore, in the African perspective, they hold that African society should not be accurately understood or explained from the western theory or context but from the standpoint of African or indigenous theories. Buttressing this argument, Nhemachena notes “right from the enslavement era through to the colonial and contemporary eras, Africans have been denied their essence.... Africans have been historically dispossessed and exploited” (Nhemachena: 2018).

Be that as it may, just as I noted above, my adoption of the angle of political science as the appropriate interpretation through which political events in Nigeria could be analysed and explained is not necessarily because many thinkers see Machiavelli’s *The Prince* as such, neither is it because other interpretations treated above, including the argument of those involved in the decoloniality project, lack merit. Rather, it is because the realistic cum practical approach the angle brought to the issue of politics and its offering of theories that explain and predict political behaviour best fit into the realization of my objective for embarking on this study, which is not to use Machiavelli’s *The Prince* to explain Nigeria’s political situation but to draw attention to the similarity in both. By implication, this similarity is mainly what this study intends to explore.

## **2.4. CONCLUSION**

In concluding this chapter, I would say that it is necessary to look into the issue of the historical and cultural gap between the Italian society of Machiavelli's time and the twenty first century Nigerian society which many use to argue against the justification for examining the Nigerian society in the light of Machiavellianism. This is important, I think, as it will strengthen the overall argument of this study. To do this, I will begin with a comparative analysis of the political situation of Florence and Italy of Machiavelli's time and that of present-day Nigeria.

### **CHAPTER THREE**

## **COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MACHIAVELLIAN PERIOD WITH THE PRESENT-DAY NIGERIAN POLITICAL SITUATION**

### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter dealt with the overview of the book, *The Prince*, by Machiavelli and interpretations of various scholars on the views Machiavelli expressed in it. Following my adoption in Chapter Two, Section Three, of the position of Cassirer, Butterfield, Berlin and others who maintain that the key to understand and interpret Machiavelli's *The Prince* is seeing it from the angle of realism and political science, that is, from the angle that Machiavelli's views in *The Prince* are his practical response to the political events in his city-state, Florence, and Italy in general, this chapter is a comparative analysis of the political situation of Florence and Italy of Machiavelli's time and that of present-day Nigeria. This is to test the validity of the argument that there is striking similarity between Machiavelli's *The Prince* and the state of affairs in Nigerian politics since independence.

### **3.2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MACHIAVELLIAN PERIOD WITH THE PRESENT-DAY NIGERIAN POLITICAL SITUATION**

According to Nnabugwu, "today's Nigeria in some respects is comparable to Florence in Machiavelli's time" (Nnabugwu, 2012: 85). This implies that the present political situation of Nigeria can be compared in some respects with that of Italy and Florence during the time of Machiavelli. One may now ask this important question: What was the political situation of Florence and Italy in the time of Machiavelli? Adams captures the situation in Florence thus:

Florence was in constant ferment. The various wards and districts were in political conflict with one another; the rich and the poor were often at each other's throats; the various families gathered and broke up into factions; the guilds and trades were politically active; and because they were all crowded together in a tight little town behind walls, the Florentines were subject to gusty rumours and surges of passion that sent them raging through the streets to howl or hammer at the high towers and massive palazzo within which lay hidden their heroes or hated enemies of the moment (Adam, 1992: IX).

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

Since the views of Machiavelli in *The Prince* mirror the happenings in the Florence and Italy of his time, I wish to agree with Nnabugwu that “today’s Nigeria in some respects is comparable to Florence in Machiavelli’s time” (Nnabugwu, 2012: 85). That is to say that there is some degree of similarity between the state of affairs in Florence and Italy in the time of Machiavelli and the state of affairs in present-day Nigeria. Inasmuch as Florence and Italy of Machiavelli’s era is quite different in culture and civilization from contemporary Nigeria, a closer look at the state of affairs reveals that there is some degree of resemblance between how things have been happening in the Nigerian society and what one can grasp from *The Prince* about Florence and Italy. To explore this position, let us look at these areas:

- ❖ Human Nature
- ❖ Lack of National Cohesion
- ❖ Need for a Strong Nation
- ❖ Violence and Cruelty

1. **Human Nature:** One of the recurrent themes in Machiavelli’s treatise, *The Prince*, is his analysis of human nature. In order to formulate his advice for rulers, he mentions explicitly a number of natural traits in human beings which he came to know from his knowledge of history and his observation of events happening in his time in Italy, in general, and Florence, in particular. From his observations, Machiavelli concludes as follows about human beings:

Men are ready to change masters in the hope of bettering themselves. In this belief they take up arms against their master, but find themselves deceived when they discover by experience that instead things have got worse (Chapter III, Adams, 1992: 5).

It is the nature of people to be fickle; to persuade of something is easy but to make them stand fast in that conviction is hard. Hence things must be arranged so that when they no longer believe they can be compelled to believe by force (Chapter VI, Adams, 1992: 17)

How men live is so different from how they should live that a ruler who does not do what is generally done, but persists in doing what ought to be done, will undermine his power rather than maintain it. If a ruler who wants always to act honourably is surrounded by many unscrupulous men his downfall is inevitable (Chapter XV, Skinner and Price, 1988: 54).

A general rule about men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, fearful of danger and greedy for gain. While you serve their welfare, they are all yours, offering their blood, their belongings, their lives, and their children's lives, as we noted above – so long as the danger is remote. But when the danger is close at hand, they turn against you. Then any prince who has relied on their words and made no other preparations will come to grief. ... People are less concerned with offending a man who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared: the reason is that love is a link of obligation which men, because they are rotten, will break any time they think doing so serves to their advantage; but fear involves dread of punishment, from which they can never escape (Chapter XVII, Adams, 1992: 46).

Men are so simple of mind, and so much dominated by their immediate needs, that a deceitful man will always find plenty who are ready to be deceived (Chapter XVIII, Adams, 1992: 48).

From the above statements, one can see that, for Machiavelli, human beings are naturally selfish, greedy, stubborn, hypocritical and unreliable. They are not to be trusted because they are dangerous, deceitful and profit-driven. He believes that all that men want and care for is nothing but their personal glory and wealth, and they are so desperate about it that they can lie, cheat or do all kinds of cruel things to get what they want. Most of Machiavelli's ideas in *The Prince* are his pieces of advice to the prince on how to acquire, maintain or preserve power in the midst of people who are naturally selfish and unreliable. Believing that the problems plaguing the city of Florence

and the nation of Italy were caused by human beings out of their selfishness, greediness, hypocrisy and stubbornness, he insists that solution to the problems equally lies in a strong and capable prince who could use any necessary means to hold the nation together and make the nation self-sufficient. For him, the reason why everybody, including the religious leaders, is struggling for power, maneuvering for positions and fighting over spoils is because of human nature.

Looking at today's Nigeria, just like in Machiavelli's Florence, and Italy of his time, it is filled with individuals who exhibit the same attributes Machiavelli saw in the lives of people of his time. Nigeria today is made up of many greedy and selfish people who do all kinds of cruel and violent things in order to acquire and maintain political power. Available empirical evidences show that in today's Nigeria the struggle for political power, maneuvering for political positions and fighting over spoils of office have led many to intimidation, kidnapping or killing of political opponents. Some have entered into sorcery and ritual practices of various kinds in order to secure political positions. While one may not agree with Machiavelli that his observations about human beings, which he stated in *The Prince*, are the full truth about human nature (considering that he acknowledged in Chapter XVIII that there were actually people abiding with honest principles, whom, as he said, were always overcome by trickery and cunning men), it is a true fact that many in Nigeria are exhibiting the same pattern of behaviour Machiavelli noticed in the people of his time. There are instances of selfishness, trickery and cunning being manifested by politicians in both high and low places in order to acquire or maintain political power

A typical example of this is the position of the ruling party, the All Progressives Congress (APC), on the issue of restructuring in Nigeria which has been on the front burner of National discourse since the middle of 2016. Restructuring, in the Nigerian context, means devolving more powers and responsibilities to the component states of the federation, which will make the states to be financially independent of the Federal Government and make the Federal Government to be only in charge of issues of national concern such as foreign policy, defence and economy. This is based on the argument that rejigging the current structure of the Nigerian federation would strengthen its unity and also stabilize its democracy. It is surprising to watchers of political events in Nigeria that the same leaders of APC who were at the forefront of the call for restructuring of the Nigerian federation when they were in opposition are, now that they are in power, reluctant to bring about the restructuring they formerly called for. Instead of taking the bull by the horn as they promised

Nigerians in their campaign for votes in the 2015 elections, they now argue that those calling for restructuring are politicians who lost out in the 2015 elections. Echoing the mind of the ruling party, in his interview on *Channels Television* programme, *Sunrise*, on 29th June 2017, a prominent member of the ruling party, Governor Nasir el-Rufai of Kaduna State said that “politicians calling for restructuring were ‘opportunists’” (*Vanguard Newspaper* of 30th June 2017, anchored by Madukwe under the heading *Politicians calling for Restructuring are Opportunists – El-Rufai*). This view is corroborated by another leading member of the ruling party, Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State who “called on Nigerians to disregard calls for restructuring of the country, describing such calls as mere political deceit” (*Leadership Newspaper* of 6th July 2017, under the caption *Calls for Restructuring Mere Political Deceit – Kogi Gov.*).

**2. Lack of National Cohesion:** Another area in which the present Nigeria is comparable to Florence and Italy of Machiavelli’s time is the inability of the citizens to achieve national cohesion even after over 50 years of independence. Just as Florence and Italy of Machiavelli’s time were characterized by factional units and small states who were always at each other’s throat, Nigeria is characterized by ethnic nationalities that have always been in endless battles to outsmart each other politically and religiously. Inasmuch as Nigeria today is an independent nation the way things have been happening since independence shows that the politicians and ordinary citizens believe more in their tribes and religions than in one Nigeria. The former National Anthem, used from the country’s independence in 1960, states thus:

1. Nigeria, we hail thee

Our own dear native land

Though tribe and tongue may differ

In brotherhood we stand

Nigerians all are proud to serve

Our sovereign Motherland

2. Our flag shall be a symbol

That truth and justice reign

In peace or battle honour’d

And this we count as gain  
To hand on to our children  
A banner without stain

3. O God of all creation

Grant this our one request  
Help us to build a nation  
Where no man is oppressed  
And so with peace and plenty  
Nigeria may be blessed

The second and current National Anthem, which replaced in 1978 the first one adopted at independence, reads as follows:

1. Arise, O compatriots

Nigeria's call obey  
To serve our fatherland  
With love and strength and faith  
The labour of our heroes past  
Shall never be in vain  
To serve with heart and might  
One nation bound in freedom  
Peace and unity.

2. Oh God of creation

Direct our noble cause  
Guide our leaders right  
Help our youth the truth to know

In love and honesty to grow  
And living just and true  
Great lofty heights attain  
To build a nation where peace  
And justice shall reign.

Just like the National Anthem, the National Pledge which is recited by school children throughout Nigeria at the beginning and end of each school day goes like this:

I pledge to Nigeria, my country  
To be faithful, loyal and honest  
To serve Nigeria with all my strength  
To defend her unity  
And uphold her honour and glory  
So help me God.

The aim of making the school children sing and recite respectively the National Anthem and Pledge is to get their words internalized into their lives so that when they grow up they will abide by their words and manifest them in their social, political and economic activities. But available evidences clearly portray the fact that many politicians that sing the national anthem at public functions do that only with their mouths and not from their hearts. In other words, they are just paying lip service to both the National Anthem and Pledge. This is hinged on the fact that their political practices do not correspond with the wordings of the National Anthem and National Pledge. It is noticeable that from the country's independence in 1960 till date, the voting pattern of Nigerians most of the time portrayed tribal sentiments, showing everyone's desire to put into elective offices only people from his or her tribe or religion (Yakubu and Ali: 2017). This means that from independence to the present time, there is no sense of unity and oneness in Nigeria. This is part of the reason why *Boko Haram* and Moslem fanatics in Northern Nigerian are publicly and silently burning down churches and wiping out generations of Christians there, with what seems like tacit support of some of their state governments and religious leaders. Up till now, there is no

seriousness on the part of various states governments in the Northern part of Nigeria in arresting, prosecuting or jailing those sponsoring or taking part in the persistent religious crises occurring there. Reporting under the caption *CAN to Northern Govs: Halt the Killing Spree Now*, Igata wrote:

The Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, yesterday tasked the Northern governors to stop further killing of Christians in the area. Rising from a joint meeting of the Southern Nigeria Christian Elders' Forum and the Christian Association of Nigeria, South-East zone, the Christian leaders condemned what they called "the inhuman treatment meted out on Christians in the Northern part of Nigeria. "How can Christians be treated like cows and goats in Northern part of Nigeria with impunity while we claim that Nigeria is a secular state, the group queried, warning that "this is a sign of total Islamization of Nigeria, which is dangerous to the corporate existence of the entity called Nigeria" (*Vanguard Newspaper* of 15th June 2016).

Events in Nigeria since independence show that it is not only in the Northern part of Nigeria that people are showing apathy to the corporate existence of Nigeria. All over the country, there is one problem or the other confronting the nation. Militant youths are blowing up oil pipelines in South-South of Nigeria, in spite of the plea from the President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari, South-South leaders of thought, and other well-meaning Nigerians that they lay down their arms and dialogue with government in order to find lasting solution to their grievances. Writing on these recurrent blowing of oil pipelines in the *Daily Post* of 7th July 2016, under the heading, *Again, Niger Delta Avengers Blow Up Chevron Pipeline in Delta*, Opejobi stated:

The Niger Delta Avengers, NDA, said they blew up another oil installation belonging to Chevron Nigeria Limited in the creeks of Delta State on Wednesday night. This is coming barely 24 hours after the rampaging agitators reportedly attacked a pipeline belonging to Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC, at Eleme leading to the Nigeria Liquefied National Gas, NLNG, in Rivers State. The resurgent militant group disclosed its latest attack on a statement by its spokesman, Mudoch Agbinibo.

In the South-East of Nigeria, the agitation for Biafra has resurfaced with high intensity, with the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) currently mobilizing all indigenes of South-East and South-South of Nigeria for another secession of Biafra from Nigeria. To prove their seriousness to their cause,

they organized demonstrations in major cities of the South-East of Nigeria on Monday, May 30, 2016 to commemorate Biafra Day, i.e., the day the Biafra warlord, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu declared the independence of the aborted Republic of Biafra in 1967. In some places, the demonstration turned violent and bloody. Writing under the caption *7 Die as MASSOB Protests in Asaba*, *Vanguard* Newspaper of 30th May 2016 states thus:

No fewer than seven persons have been confirmed dead following protest by members of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) in Asaba on Monday. The Acting Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in Delta, SP Charles Muka, who confirmed this in a statement, added that the police recorded two casualties. It stated that the military arrested and brought eight members of MASSOB to the police who are now in custody in Asaba.

In another report of the demonstration, as it happened in Onitsha, anchored in the *This Day* Newspaper of 31st May 2016, under the heading *Dozens Killed, Several Injured as Biafra Day Rallies Turn Bloody*, the story goes in this way:

During yesterday's rally in Onitsha, Anambra State, a combined team of the military and police clashed with members of IPOB during the celebration of Biafra Day in the commercial city. The clash, *THIS DAY* checks revealed, left about 30 people dead and many injured. It was equally gathered that over 50 members of the Biafran group were arrested by the military and taken to the 302 Cantonment of the Nigerian Army in Onitsha.

In response to the activities of Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) which culminated in a violent clash between the group and the Nigerian military at Umuahia, Abia State, in September 2017, the Nigerian Government secured a court ruling through which IPOB was formally proscribed and designated a terrorist organization. Reporting on it, Soniyi, Ogunmade and Ugwu of *This Day* Newspaper stated:

A Federal High Court sitting in Abuja has proscribed the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in Nigeria, the South-East separatist group which has been agitating for the realization of the Republic of Biafra. The acting Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice Abdul Adamu Kafarati, granted the order proscribing IPOB following an application filed and moved Wednesday by the attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami (SAN). The judge granted all the prayers

brought before him by the justice minister (*This Day* Newspaper of 21st September 2017, under the heading *Court Formally Proscribes IPOB, Designates it Terrorist Organization*).

Though the proscription of IPOB and its designation as a terrorist group are seen by most observers of recent political events in Nigeria, including the United States (*Vanguard* Newspaper of 24th September 2017 under the caption, *IPOB is not a Terrorist Organization – US Govt.*), as uncalled for, many welcome the move because of the dangers posed to the unity of the Nigeria nation by the activities of IPOB, especially their activities in the six months before their proscription.

Just as there are presently insecurity situations in the Northern, Southern and Eastern parts of Nigeria, the Western part is not left out, as Oodua People's Congress (OPC), a Yoruba nationalist organization has for decades been a thorn in the flesh of both ordinary people in Lagos and other parts of Western Nigeria. Clashes between OPC and Security agents are now part of life in Western part of Nigeria, as residents in the region have become used to such clashes coming on regular basis. In one of their clashes, reported by Usman in the *Vanguard* of 28th August 2013, under the caption *5 arrested as OPC, Police clash in Lagos*, the story went thus:

Pandemonium broke out yesterday at Iju-Ishaga area of Lagos, following a clash between policemen and suspected members of the Oodua People's Congress, OPC. Trouble, as gathered started after some policemen on stop-and-search flagged down the OPC vehicle which was moving towards Agege area for an event. An eye-witness who identified himself as Timothy, said: "The policeman fired teargas canisters which choked some of the OPC members. Other still managed to flee the scene in their vehicles."

Reporting on another clash in the *Vanguard* of 31st March 2014, under the heading, *One Killed, Station Torched in Lagos, Police, OPC Clash*, Usman stated:

Pandemonium broke out, weekend, in the densely populated Ajegunle area of Lagos State, after some members of Oodua People's Congress, OPC, engaged policemen in Tolu Police Division in a gun duel over the release of a suspect. A suspected member of OPC was shot dead in the process, a passer-by hit by a stray bullet, one policeman shot and several others sustained varying degrees of injuries in the incident which paralysed commercial activities in the area. A police van was also burnt by the OPC members and part of the station torched. Their attempt to burn down the station, however, was met with resistance from the policemen.

In a clash on Tuesday, 27th April 2016, involving the OPC and some hoodlums in Agejunle area of Lagos State, one person was killed, while several others were injured. Reporting on the incident, Igbonwelundu stated that “the incident which occurred around 10pm at Arumo Street, caused panic among residents as buildings were torched by the rampaging youths” (From *The Nation* Newspaper of 27th April 2016, under the heading *One Dies, Others Injured as OPC, Hoodlums Clash in Lagos*).

From the foregoing, it is understandable that in his national broadcast on 1st October 2017 in commemoration of Nigeria’s 57th independence anniversary, the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari, lamented the lack of cohesion among the ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. He said,

Recent calls on restructuring, quite proper in a legitimate debate, have let in highly irresponsible groups to call for dismemberment of the country. We cannot and we will not allow such advocacy.

As a young Army Officer, I took part from the beginning to the end in our tragic war costing about 2 million lives, resulting in fearful destruction and untold suffering. Those who are agitating for re-run were not born in 1967 and have no idea of the horrendous consequences of the civil conflict we went through.

I am very disappointed that responsible leaders of these communities do not warn their hot-headed youths what the country went through. Those who were there should tell those who were not there the consequences of such folly (*Premium Times* Newspaper of 1st October 2017 under the caption *What Buhari told Nigerians at Independence*).

Also, few weeks after the Nigerian President’s broadcast, the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osibanjo echoed a similar sentiment on the lack of cohesion among the various tribes in the nation. Addressing a gathering of Nigerian pastors, he said,

We must also deal with tribalism, religion and other parochial tendencies. It is difficult to find national leaders today. Many Nigerians speak from a tribal perspective (*Daily Post* Newspaper of 28th October 2017, anchored by Wale Odunsi under the heading *Maina: Osinbajo Breaks Silence on Ex-Pension Boss*).

3. **Need for a Strong Nation:** A nation is a “large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory” (*Oxford Living Dictionaries*: 2017). It is, in other words, “an individual country considered together with its social and political structures” (*Collins English Dictionary*: 1979). One of the aspirations of founders of nations is usually to have a strong nation where there is economic stability and material prosperity. To this end, there is no gainsaying the fact that one of the aspirations of the founding fathers of Nigeria is to have a stable, prosperous and economically viable nation. But after 55 years of independence, the economic state of Nigeria indicates that this desire is yet to be realized.

If Nigeria will become a great nation in accordance with the aspirations of their founding fathers, there must be true federalism. True federalism denotes a situation where the states will develop at their own pace and not depend on the centre for infrastructural development and payment of workers’ salary. Presently, the way and manner in which the state governors in Nigeria run cap in hand to the Federal Government monthly for federal allocation is a mockery of federalism and caricature of democracy. The system in the country has greatly weakened the federal structure, making the state governments mere appendages of the Federal Government. What is practiced now in the name of federalism is unitary in nature, and many opine that this is because the present constitution of Nigeria, which came into effect with the return of democracy in 1999, was drafted by the military, though after consultation with political and legal elites (Amasike: 2016). In other words, the present system, they argue, is the direct result of the long years of military rule in Nigeria. This claim is based on the fact that in the First Republic (1960 – 1966) when Nigeria had regional governments, each region controlled the natural resources within its domain and developed without running to the centre for financial support. In those days, the regions were known for what they produced. For instance, Northern Region produced groundnut and exported groundnut, Western Region was known for Cocoa production, and Eastern Region was known for Palm Oil production.

But barely six months after the military take-over, in May 1966, the new Head of State, Major General J. T. U. Aguiyi Ironsi abolished the regions by decree and replaced the Federal structure by unitary system of government. Even when his successor, General Yakubu Gowon, following the counter-coup of July 1966, restored the Federal system of government, it was not practiced the way it was done in the First Republic due to the usual nature of military government. Moreover,

few months after assumption of office, Gowon issued a decree dividing Nigeria into twelve states. That act, which many saw as politically motivated, totally scattered the existing framework of the regions and changed the order of governance in the country. Now the country has 36 states and a Federal Capital, Abuja, and all these states were created under military rule. As noted above, the 1999 constitution which the country is now operating on is a product of the Military, and it is not surprising that it has some areas which have impeded the growth of federalism. Efforts to restructure the Nigerian federation and have a new constitution are being sabotaged by those favoured by the current constitution, which made the composite states of the federation to heavily depend on the Federal Government for funds.

Just as Machiavelli saw the necessity for Florence and Italy of his time to transit from political weakness to political stability, there is no doubt that Nigeria needs some change of structure and mentality on the part of all the citizens if it will grow to become a strong and united nation. There is need for the gaps of ethnic bias and self-centredness which have greatly weakened the political structure of the nation to be closed. Again, the country needs some restructuring if it will move from economic weakness to economic stability. The restructuring has to start with changing the present constitution which made mining of all minerals and exploration of all oil and gas resources in all Nigerian lands and territorial waters an exclusive preserve of the Federal Government. The present constitution should be changed or amended to give states right to exploit and explore the mineral deposits within their respective territories. If this is done, it will create the opportunity to tap into many of the untapped solid mineral resources wasting in various states of Nigeria because successive Nigerian governments jettisoned their exploration because of oil boom.

Knowing that funds for sustaining government expenditure will no longer come from outside of the state as it used to be, every state will do everything possible to develop alternative means of revenue other than oil, such as agriculture, taxation, commercial activities, etc. This will certainly promote healthy rivalry among the constituent units of the Nigerian federation and bring about rapid development of agricultural potentials of various segments of the country as it was in the First Republic when the country operated by regions. Presently the price of crude oil in the international market is on the decline, thereby reducing drastically the income of the country and the capacity of the Federal government to provide essential infrastructural facilities to the citizenry. As things stand, the states depend on the Federal Government's monthly allocation for funds to

perform government functions and pay salary of workers. Reporting on this dependence on the centre for funds, *The Nation* Newspaper of 12th June 2016, under the caption, *FG to Give Fresh Bailout to States*, stated as follows:

A fresh financial support facility is on the way for the states from the Federal Government to cushion the effect of the current economic crisis, although with stringent conditions. The scheme is designed to provide relief to the states, many of which are finding it difficult to pay their workers' salaries. The Federal government recently gave the states a bailout to enable them clear the arrear of salaries owed their workers.

As at October 2017, the Federal Government has given states bailout funds several times to enable them meet their obligations, especially payment of workers' salaries, but there is no hope in sight that things will improve for the states, unless the states have other avenues of generating enough funds to meet their obligations. Reporting on the view of the Nigerian President concerning this when he received a delegation of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, Adetayo wrote:

President Muhammadu Buhari on Tuesday lamented that despite the various interventions by the Federal Government, there were still complaints and agitations by workers over unpaid salaries and allowances by state governments. He wondered how the unpaid workers had been managing to meet their needs. ...The President told the governors that the plight of workers in the states needed urgent attention as many could hardly survive. "How can anyone go to bed and sleep soundly when workers have not been paid their salaries for months" (*Punch* Newspaper of 18th October 2017, under the caption *State Governors Demand Fresh Bailout From Buhari*).

This is where the need for a strong nation, where the principles of true federalism are firmly in place, comes to mind. When the states are given the responsibility of tapping their mineral resources, it will increase their economic viability. When the states are economically strong and viable, they will impact on their people, and when they impact on their people, many of the challenges confronting the nation, such as unemployment, prostitution and crime, restiveness and militancy will be reduced to the barest minimum. By then, the public will begin to enjoy real dividends of democracy.

4. **Violence and Cruelty:** Machiavelli's narrative in *The Prince* brought to the fore the state of affairs in both Florence and Italy of his time. The city of Florence, just like other Italian city-states,

was facing enormous challenges of how to sustain her statehood in the midst of incessant political conflict, violence and cruelty. It was a period of political turbulence, insecurity and chaos, violence and wickedness, characterized by popes and kings fighting for acquisition of territories and influence. Likewise, Nigeria, a colonial creation, is today facing some challenges of political development coming from all fronts, which include the use of violence and cruelty to acquire political power and to express ethnic or religious grievances. Available evidences point to the fact that violence and cruelty are part of social cum political lifestyle of many Nigerians. The import of this is that the current state of affairs in Nigeria is in some respects comparable to the context in which Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*. This is the reason why I think that the interpretation through which one can explain the state of affairs in Nigerian politics is that which holds that Machiavelli's *The Prince* is a realistic reflection of the state of affairs in Florence and Italy of his time. It does not in any way imply that the views canvassed by Machiavelli in *The Prince* are the only solutions to the problems confronting Florence and Italy of his time neither are they the solutions to the present problems confronting Nigeria in her quest for political development. It only means that notwithstanding the passage of about 500 years after the writing of *The Prince*, many people in Nigeria still employ violence and cruelty as means of achieving their social and political objectives.

To say that violence and cruelty have become part of the Nigerian political system is to state the obvious. Right from the early years of the existence of the country as an independent state, there has always been the abuse of the power of incumbency by the ruling party, aimed at intimidating the opposition parties and their candidates, as well as their supporters. Notably, the first Federal election in Nigeria, as an independent country, held in 1964, was characterized by ugly incidents of political thuggery and violence, electoral malpractices and chaos, leading to boycott of the election by the opposition coalition, United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) in certain parts of the country. This made the ruling coalition, Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) to have a landslide victory. Resultantly, the entire process suffered crisis of legitimacy and credibility, and everybody knew that a national crisis was imminent, as there were even talks of a possible military take-over. To avert such a development, the Prime Minister of the Federation, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, agreed to form a Government of National Unity, and also to have fresh elections in the constituencies where no effective election had taken place due to the UPGA boycott.

As if what happened in the Federal election of 1964 was a child's play, in the Western Region elections held on 11th October 1965, there were higher incidents of widespread rigging, violence, intimidation and murder of opponents and destruction of their properties, perpetrated by both the NNA and the UPGA. The follow-up events culminated into a serious political crisis, which consequently, led to chaos and complete lawlessness all over the Western Region, resulting in massive destruction of lives and properties. It was reported that during the crisis, about 1000 people lost their lives and about 5,000 houses were burnt down. It was the problems associated with the Federal election of 1964 and the 1965 Western Region election that compelled the military to strike on the night of 14th – 15th January 1966 and terminate the Nigerian First Republic. Incidentally, other elections that have taken place in Nigeria after the 1964 and 1965 elections have continued to be characterized by violence and intimidation, and sometimes kidnapping or killing of political opponents, massive rigging, and other forms of electoral irregularities. Even the 2015 General Elections, considered the freest and fairest in Nigeria's election history, had pockets of violence and intimidation of political opponents in many areas of the country.

On the above-cited similarities between events in Florence and Italy of Machiavelli's time and present-day Nigerian society, Nnabugwu believes that they "brought to the fore the challenges that often confront new or emergent states" (Nnabugwu, 2012: 89). For him, "just like Florence and indeed much of Italy or Europe in the time of Machiavelli were transiting from older order to the emergent order (Nnabugwu, 2012: 85), "Machiavelli's analysis of power and art of politics have relevance to some of the problems confronting Nigeria in her quest for political development" (Nnabugwu, 2012: 82).

### **3.3 CONCLUSION**

In view of the instances highlighted in this chapter of the study, I would conclude by agreeing with Nnabugwu that "today's Nigeria in some respects is comparable to Florence in Machiavelli's time" (Nnabugwu, 2012: 85). That is to say that there is a remarkable degree of similarity between the state of affairs in Florence and Italy in the time of Machiavelli and the state of affairs in present-day Nigeria. Inasmuch as Florence and Italy of Machiavelli's era is quite different in culture and civilization from contemporary Nigeria, there are still bases for comparison between how things were going on in Florence and Italy of Machiavellian time and how things are going on in the present-day Nigerian society.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MAJOR IDEAS OF MACHIAVELLI IN *THE PRINCE* AND THEIR APPLICATION TO THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN NIGERIA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to Okorie, Nigeria perhaps represents “the best theatre for Machiavellian politics,” given that its politics since independence has been characterized by ethnic bias, military interventions, electoral and census crisis, lack of tolerance for opposition and abuse of power of incumbency (Okorie, 2006: 33). In what seems like agreeing with Okorie, Oyekunle said, “Nigerian politicians profess to be democratic when indeed they are devoted to Machiavellian principles” (Oyekunle, 2015: 180). For him, both Nigerian military and civilian leaders,

Use both the nature of the lion and the fox as suggested by Machiavelli. The lion is known for its bravery and bestiality, while the fox is known for its shyness. In certain occasions

they act the fox by pretending to be what they are not in order to achieve their end, and in some other occasions they act the lion and so become callous to retain themselves in power (Oyekunle, 2015: 181)

In the last chapter, I did a comparative analysis of the political situation of Florence and Italy of Machiavelli's time and that of the present-day Nigeria in order to test the validity of the argument that the state of affairs in Nigerian politics is similar to the ideas in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. The result of the analysis showed that there is a remarkable degree of similarity between the state of affairs in Florence and Italy in the time of Machiavelli and the state of affairs in present-day Nigeria. As a follow-up to the findings in the last chapter, this chapter presents an analysis of the major ideas of Niccolo Machiavelli in *The Prince* and their application to the state of affairs in Nigeria. This is to ascertain the veracity of the assumption that there is a striking similarity between Machiavelli's ideas in *The Prince* and the political practices of many Nigerians. Other works of Machiavelli may be cited, for more clarification, in the course of the analysis. Ideas covered are: ends and means, virtue, fortune, necessity and human nature.

#### **4.2.1 ENDS AND MEANS**

End is the ultimate aim, goal or intention of any human action, while means is the way or manner through which the end or objective is attained, achieved or realized. The aphorism, "the end justifies the means," is Machiavelli's identifying line and the guiding principle of Machiavellianism over the centuries. In reality, the phrase did not come from Machiavelli, but emanated from the assertion in his book, *The Prince*, at the end of Chapter XVIII, where Machiavelli states:

In the actions of all men, especially of princes, where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end. So let the prince win and maintain his state: the means will always be judged honourable, and will be praised by everyone (Bull, 1981: 101).

A corresponding statement in Machiavelli's *Discourses*, Book I, Chapter IX, goes thus:

A prudent orderer of a republic, who has the intent or wish to help not himself, but the common good, not for his own succession but for the common fatherland, should contrive to have authority alone; nor will a wise understanding ever reprove anyone for any extraordinary action that he uses to order a kingdom or constitute a republic. It is very suitable that when the deed accuses him, the effect excuses him; and when the effect is good, as was that of Romulus, it will always excuse the deed; for he who is violent to spoil, not he who is violent to mend, should be reprov'd (Mansfield, 1996: 29)

Thomson's translation of *Discourses* renders the above statement thus:

For this reason the wise founder of a commonwealth who seeks to benefit not himself only, or the line of his descendants, but his state and country, must endeavour to acquire an absolute and undivided authority. And none who is wise will ever blame any action, however extraordinary and irregular, which serves to lay the foundation of a kingdom or to establish a republic. For although the act condemns the doer, the end may justify him; and when, as in the case of Romulus, the end is good, it will always excuse the means; since it is he who does violence with intent to injure, not he who does it with the design to secure tranquility, who merits blame" (Thomson, 1883: 66 – 67).

The phrase, "the end justifies the means", is a coinage of the Jesuit writers as a result of several passages in *The Prince* and *Discourses* where Machiavelli "advocates for violence and cruelty" because of their beneficial results (Germino, 1966: 804). It is actually a rephrase of the words of ancient writers, which had appeared several times in ancient literature. The Greek playwright, Sophocles, wrote in *Electra* (c. 408 BC) "The end excuses any evil," and the thought was later rendered by the Roman poet Ovid as "The result justifies the deed" in *Heroides*" (c. 10 BC). To the Jesuits, Machiavelli's ideas, as shown in his above cited statements, show that he does not care about moral and religious ideals, but only achievement or realization, whether by violence or cruelty, of political ends. Thus, for them, everything about Machiavelli's ethical cum political philosophy is guided by his idea that the "end justifies the means." There is no doubt that Machiavelli's statements as cited above seem to suggest what the Jesuits think of them, that is, that "the end or outcome justifies whatever means the prince might use to achieve it – in other words, that a good end makes even the most wicked means morally acceptable" (Rebhorn, 2003: XXIII). According to Rebhorn, what Machiavelli "is really saying is that people will judge a prince's

means to be good as long as he succeeds and the outcome is beneficial to them” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXIII).

However, Rebhorn clearly notes that “by not declaring that the end justifies the means for the prince,” Machiavelli “is not offering the prince a convenient way out of the moral dilemma he faces, which results from the fact that if he wants to gain and keep political power, he has to do despicable things that cannot really be justified *morally* by the end he pursues (Rebhorn, 2003: XXIII). Rather, it implies that a prince’s action should be justified if it is done “simply in order to bring about some greater good – defined as, say political stability or economic welfare” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXIII). Thus for Machiavelli, as a utilitarian, as long as the prince’s action should promote the well-being of the state, he should not mind doing that. Machiavelli knows very well that politicians rise to power through deceptive, violent and cruel means, and he, in Chapter VIII of *The Prince*, commends such crime and cunning if they are perpetrated in the interest of the state. He gives two very similar examples, one ancient and one contemporary, to illustrate his idea of individuals who rose from being ordinary citizens to take control of their cities by cunning and wickedness. In both cases the would-be rulers murdered leaders of the city and took over government. His first example was Agathocles the Sicilian who rose from the status of a private citizen and most abject condition of life to become king of Syracuse. Despite Agathocles’s blatantly cruel act, Machiavelli commends his prowess in confronting and surviving danger, and his courageous spirit in enduring and overcoming adversity (Bull, 1981: 63).

His second example was a contemporary of Machiavelli, Oliverotto of Fermo, an ordinary fatherless boy brought up by his maternal uncle, Giovanni, who as a soldier had great ambition to become great. He conspired with some citizens of his city for him to seize power and become its ruler (Bull, 1981: 65). He commends Oliverotto for his skillfulness in deception, which he sees as an important political skill. In *The Discourses*, Book II, Chapter XIII, Machiavelli insists that the art of deception is necessary for those who would “mount to great heights from low beginnings,” and should not be condemned when it is “skillfully conceived” (Thomson, 1883: 291). For him, any prince who would “accomplish great things” must have learned “how to deceive” (Thomson, 1883: 289). In *The Prince*, he holds that princes who “have achieved great things have been those who have given their word lightly, who have known how to trick men with their cunning, and who in the end have overcome those abiding by honest principles” (Bull, 1981: 99). By implication, for

Machiavelli, the long-term security and prosperity of the state is always the overriding concern and not the manner in which the ruler takes over or preserves power. What is distinctive about Machiavelli's political idea is that he doesn't care about the means through which political objectives are realized as much as he cares about the prosperity of the state. He believes not only that politicians must do evil in the name of public good, but also that they shouldn't worry about it.

This takes us to the crucial question: Why should Machiavelli feel that the actualization of one's objective should be one's main concern in any political action and not the means of actualizing one's objective. Or rather, one may ask: Why should Machiavelli hold the idea that the end of any political action justifies any means used to actualize it? For some scholars, such as Rogers (Rogers, 2016: 43) and Lee (Lee: 2011), Machiavelli sets out his guiding principle that the end justifies the means in line with his belief as a utilitarian. Utilitarians believe that actions can be considered right or wrong depending on its outcome. A good outcome, for them, makes an action good, while a bad outcome makes an action bad. Others, such as Gilbert (Gilbert: 1965), Croce (Jenson, 1960:13) and Skinner (Skinner, 1981: 43) argue that Machiavelli holds the position because he believes, out of his observation of the goings on in and around the Italian peninsula, that politics is incompatible with conventional morality. According to Gilbert, Machiavelli "was not interested in producing rules which were of general value and applicable to the behavior of every individual. His books were addressed only to those who acted in the political world: to rulers and to politicians" (Gilbert, 1965: 170). For him, "Machiavelli approached literary work with interest and aims of a practical politician, his writings differ from those of his humanist contemporaries" (Gilbert, 1965: 171). Furthermore he argues, "Machiavelli's writings differ from those of his aristocratic contemporaries who wrote on practical politics" because "what Machiavelli saw in the political situation was not what the aristocrats saw; what he believed to be a remedy for Florence's political ills was not a part of the program of the aristocrats" (Gilbert, 1965: 171). On this, he concludes:

The central point of his political philosophy was that man must choose: he could live aside from the stream of politics and follow the dictates of Christian morality; but if man entered upon the *vita active* of politics, he must act according to its laws (Gilbert, 1965: 197).

In line with the above view, Vivanti argues that Machiavelli was not concerned with moral standards but what will bring political results. For him, Machiavelli "was unconcerned with what

modern thinkers call the problem of dirty hands” (Vivanti: 2013). The import of the above is that, for Machiavelli, politics has its laws which are quite different from conventional view of morality. Morality he insists “may be a good thing, but it is not what drives people in the real world” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXIII).

In the same vein, some other scholars believe that there is some connection between Machiavelli’s idea that the end justifies the means and the political crises of Florence and Italy of his time. According to Biagini, “Machiavelli was a product of his times, and the times were full of turbulence and stratagem. In Machiavelli’s day, the powerful and the wealthy created their own standards, irrespective and disrespectful of the laws of church and state” (Biagini, 2009:4). Therefore, he feels that the state must assume its natural position for proper control of the people’s selfishness as well as for maintenance of law and order. Meinecke shares this view, highlighting Machiavelli’s view that “*raison d’etat* may be deflected or hindered by real or imaginary obstacles” (Downton and Hart, 1971: 401). Therefore, for Machiavelli, if the state will develop and become strong, it must “lay down its own unqualified right to existence in the face of all other vital forces” (Downton and Hart, 1971: 401). Rebhorn echoes a similar view. According to him, Machiavelli’s idea of *raison d’etat*, that is, “reason of state” is “morally unimpeachable” and “could justify the most criminally culpable acts” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXIII). It implies that “sometimes the prince must do evil simply because he cannot gain or preserve power otherwise, but as long as he succeeds and people benefit from it, they will not be upset” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXIV).

On the other hand, just as many scholars justify Machiavelli’s principle that the end justifies the means, there are others (most of whom I have mentioned in Chapter Two where I analyzed the various interpretations of *The Prince*) who condemn the principle and shower all kinds of vituperations and invectives on Machiavelli and *The Prince*. The Catholic Church condemned the principle and backed this stance with various sanctions ranging from the prohibition of *The Prince* in 1559 to decreeing the destruction of all the works of Machiavelli in 1564. For the Church, the principle is immoral and ungodly, and Machiavelli is an atheist and anti-Christian. This is hinged on the fact that the principle is not based on the scripture but on pragmatic politics. In other words, the Church is appalled that Machiavelli in *The Prince* separates theology from politics and does not put the Christian stamp on his advice to the prince. The Church’s conclusion on the principle

is that if “we succeed in advancing our interests by perpetrating injustices in this present life, we can still expect to find these apparent advantages cancelled out when we are justly visited with divine retribution in the life to come” (Skinner, 1981: 41). This is in line with the Christian belief that there is eternal life after this temporary life on earth.

However, looking critically at Machiavelli’s idea that the end justifies the mean, I would agree with scholars who suggest that he was influenced to hold the view by the state of affairs of Florence and Italy of his time. This can be deduced from his statement in Chapter XV where he states that his intention is to “represent things as they are in real truth rather than as they are imagined” (Bull, 1995: 48). He also states there that in discussing “how a prince must govern his conduct towards his subjects or his friends,” he draws “up an original set of rules” (Bull, 1995: 48). Part of this “original set of rules” is his idea that the end justifies the means which some of his admirers refer to as “new morality”. For me, I do not subscribe to Machiavelli’s view that the prince has to apply any available means to acquire or maintain his state because the end will justify whatever means he uses. I think that to suggest that is to clearly present somebody with a blank cheque for despotism and autocracy, and it will be difficult if not impossible to distinguish when the prince acts for the good of the state and when he acts for his selfish interests. In other words, I think that granting such allowance for the prince to act treacherously, ruthlessly and inhumanely will definitely breed injustice and abuse of human rights.

However, I do not think that Machiavelli deserves all the invectives and vituperations poured upon him by the Church and scholars who oppose his idea that the end justifies the means. Inasmuch as his view that the end justifies the means runs contrary to the religious cum conventional idea of morality, I think that he was careful in *The Prince* not to express any solid statements about faith that may justify his being labeled as an atheist or anti-Christian. What he appears to write about in the book is secular politics and he was careful to justify his pieces of advice to the prince with real events and not imaginary ideas, though sometimes his illustrations were tailored to suit the ideas he was canvassing. He may have been critical of church politics at times, as one can see in *The Discourses*, Book I, Chapter XII – where he says thus, “we Italians therefore have this obligation with the Church and with the Priests of having become bad and without Religion; but we also have a greater one, which is the cause of our ruin. This is that the Church has kept and still keeps this province (country) of ours divided.” But to me, he doesn’t in *The Prince* portray the image of

someone cynical towards the divinity. Moreover, he was part of the humanist movement of the Renaissance in which philosophers and writers turned back to the Greek and Roman classics for inspiration. This may have been why he appears to prefer a secular approach to politics over a theological approach.

At this point, the matter for consideration should be the implication of Machiavelli's idea that the end justifies the means on the practices of many Nigerians. It has to do with whether the principle has any bearing on the state of affairs in present-day Nigeria. One may not answer this question in the affirmative seeing that many of the ordinary and uneducated Nigerians who replicate this Machiavellian principle have not even read any of Machiavelli's books or heard about him. But what is clear in the matter is that whether consciously or unconsciously the principle not only manifests in their political activities but also in their social, economic and religious activities. From the look of things, it is apparent that the things that motivate many people in Nigeria today to commit all kinds of cruel and fraudulent things to survive politically and otherwise are the same greed, selfishness and unreliability that Machiavelli observed about human nature and politics which partly occasioned his idea that the end justifies the means.

One way, I will just mention in this section of the study, in which Nigerian political leaders have manifested this principle is the sit-tight syndrome which is like a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the political fabric of the Nigerian society. It has portrayed itself in both military and civilian administrations through arbitrary use of the power of incumbency. For instance, General Ibrahim Babangida, the Nigerian military ruler from 1985, out of selfish desire to continue in office as military President, presided over an endless transition to civil rule programme which later ran into a *cul de sac* when he annulled the 12th June 1993 Presidential election clearly won by Chief MKO Abiola, which both local and international observers declared as the fairest and freest election ever conducted in Nigeria. When the presidential seat became too hot for him as a result of his political miscalculations, he reluctantly stepped aside on 27th August 1993, and appointed an Interim National Government headed by Ernest Shonekan. Commenting on the disgraceful nature of Babangida's exit, Irukwu said, "of all the numerous problems and crisis situations that Babangida had to contend with towards the end of his military administration, the most difficult which must have exhausted his *maradonic* and crisis management skills were the problems associated with his good friend, Chief MKO Abiola and the annulled elections" (2005: 130)

Sani Abacha, the Nigerian military Head of State from 17th November 1993, took the sit-tight attitude to the next level. He stage-managed a situation in the country in which the early part of 1998 was occupied with agitations for and against his self-succession plan. On March 3 – 4, 1998, Daniel Kanu organized a million-man march in Abuja in support of Abacha's plan to become civilian president on 1st October 1998. That was followed by another pro-Abacha rally organized in Ibadan on 15th April 1998 by Chief Lamidi Adedibu, popularly regarded as the 'strongman' of Ibadan politics. The whole Abacha self-succession drama was heightened on April 16 – 20, 1998 when all the five registered political parties adopted him as consensus candidate for the coming presidential election. Irrked by this development, Bola Ige described the five political parties as "five fingers of a leprous hand." The precarious political situation in the country was saved only by the death of Abacha in the early hours of the morning of 8th June 1998.

Surprisingly to many, Obasanjo being a democratically elected president caught the same virus. Operating under a constitution that stipulated two terms of four years each, Obasanjo, just like his predecessors, subtly started the moves for tenure elongation through amendment of the Nigerian constitution to accommodate multiple terms. It started with some "third-term apostles" praising him and asking him to continue beyond 2007, and was followed by intentional silence over the issue from the Presidency and criticisms from within and outside Nigeria. Some state governors even supported the bid purely for selfish reasons, which were: the promise of getting automatic ticket for another gubernatorial election or getting automatic ticket for the Senate or being rewarded with a ministerial slot. Moreover, it was argued that if the constitution was amended and passed by the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly, it could also guarantee third term for state governors. However, just like in the case of Abacha, there was an intervention, this time not death but the strong resistance of the then National Assembly to the third term bid.

In view of the seeming impossibility of one trying to politically perpetuate oneself in office in a complex society such as Nigeria, what the Nigeria political elites have adopted is the practice of recycling themselves and translating from one political office to another. And the frustrating thing about it is that they translate themselves into other political offices not because of their selfless service to the masses, but through imposition on the people as candidates by their party leadership who they easily bribe with the stupendous wealth they acquired from looting the public treasury. Instead of leaving power for others, most of the state governors in the current democratic

dispensation who have completed their constitutionally stipulated two tenures of four years each are now continuing their power-play in the Senate. After the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria, sixteen ex-governors made it into the Senate. They include the following: Theodore Orji (Abia State), Godswill Akpabio (Akwa Ibom State), Jonah Jang (Plateau State) and Aliyu Wamako (Sokoto State) who were even elected while they were still incumbent governors serving their second and final term in office. Others are Sam Egwu (Ebonyi State), Adamu Aliero (Kebbi State), Isiaka Adeleke (Osun State) and Joshua Dariye (Plateau State), Kabiru Gaya (Kaon State), Abba Buka Ibrahim (Yobe State), Danjuma Goje (Gombe State) and Ahmed Sani (Zamfara State). The remaining are Bukola Saraki (Kwara State), George Akume (Benue State) and Shaaba Lafiaji (Kwara State).

While there are many other ways, apart from the above-cited sit-tight syndrome and political recycling, in which Nigerians show strict adherence to the Machiavelli's principle that "the end justifies the means", one notable aspect I will mention here is the issue of faking or counterfeiting of drugs and other consumable products which seems to have become part of the socio-economic system of the country. Counterfeiting is defined as "an act of unlawfully imitating or reproducing items/works protected by the law of trademarks, patents, or copyright, while portraying them as original" (Adebayo: 2017). It is no longer news that many of the cosmetics, electrical appliances, spare parts, canned food and drinks, shoes and clothing imported into Nigeria and sold in the markets are fake ones. But of all the fake products, I will touch only the issue of fake or counterfeit drugs, which is of utmost concern to all and sundry because it is a matter of life and death.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines fake or counterfeit drugs as those "that have been deliberately or fraudulently mislabeled with respect to identity and/or source" (Adebayo: 2017). According to Adebayo, "no other product has as much capacity to kill consumers as illicit pharmaceuticals" (Adebayo: 2017). Counterfeit drugs are usually manufactured without quality control, correct active ingredients and adequate toxic preparations. Undoubtedly, the importers and manufacturers of the fake drugs don't care about the after effects of their products because in their own reasoning the end justifies the means. That is to say that the economic benefits they will get from the acts becloud their sense of judgment and reasoning. Polls results released by NOI Polls Limited in February 2015 "revealed that 18 percent of Nigerians have personally been victims of

fake, counterfeit and substandard pharmaceutical products, medicines and drugs” (*The Guardian* Newspaper of 24th February 2015, under the caption *18% of Nigerians are Victims of Fake Drugs*).

To combat this anti-social practice, Nigerian Government in 1993 established the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) to regulate and control the manufacture, importation, exportation, distribution, sale and use of drugs and its related goods. But like other anti-social practices being perpetrated by Nigerians to acquire wealth, the importation, production and sale of fake drugs in Nigeria have continued to rise notwithstanding the efforts of NAFDAC to stop the unwholesome practice and the jail term attached to it. Reporting under the heading *Fake Drugs Production in Nigeria Rising, UN Warns*, *Punch* Newspaper of 2nd March 2016 stated:

The United Nations on Wednesday raised the alarm over an increase in illicit manufacturing of narcotics and psychotropic drugs and substances in Nigeria. The revelation was made in a report carried out by one of its agencies, International Narcotics Control Board and released to journalists in Abuja. The report said, “In Nigeria, three laboratories illicitly manufacturing methamphetamine were dismantled in May 2015, bringing to 10 the total number of such laboratories dismantled in that country since 2011.

Related to the issue of the sale of fake products is the sale of expired products, which many in Nigeria are also indulging in out of greediness. There is no gainsaying the fact that expired products are as deadly as fake and adulterated ones. According to Ejiofor, NAFDAC’s Head of Investigation and Enforcement Directorate, five suspects were arrested for alleged sale of expired products in July 2015 (*Premium Times* of 7th August 2015, under the caption *NAFDAC Arrests Man behind Distribution of Fake De Rica Tomato*). Notwithstanding that some culprits of the deadly business have been apprehended, prosecuted and jailed, the importers, producers and sellers of fake and adulterated drugs and products have continued to do the business because of the get-rich-quick syndrome prevalent in the Nigerian society. In March 2017, officials of the Standard Organization of Nigeria, SON, after a tip-off by members of the public, discovered in Lagos four-storey building containing 8 flats in which expired products are repackaged as new ones for sale in the market (*Vanguard* Newspaper of 14th March 2017, anchored by Olawale under the caption *SON Discovers 8 Flats Where Expired Products are Repackaged for Sale*).

The import of all highlighted in this section of the study is that many Nigerian politicians and non-politicians alike believe in the phrase “the end justifies the means” and manifest this belief both in their political and economic activities.

#### 4.2.2 VIRTUE

The English word “virtue” is derived from the Latin word *virtus*, meaning “manliness”. It is a derivation from the word *vir*, which means “man.” *Virtus*, in other words, designates something that is proper to man, such as courage, fortitude, audacity, skill and civic spirit. It has a whole of classical and renaissance theory of man and culture embedded in it, showing that “man is himself at his best when active for the common good, and he is not properly a man otherwise. It has little or nothing to do with the Christian concept of virtue or virtuousness” (Crick, 1970: 58). In *The Prince*, Machiavelli’s concept of virtue departs from the conventional Christian virtue, which indicates moral excellence. He instructs his audience of princes and would-be princes in the art and means of statecraft, and what is required to become an accomplished, durable political leader, and encapsulates these qualities, a bundle of character traits, in the Italian word *virtu*. Machiavelli uses the Italian word *virtu*, which does not have English equivalent, but seems to be closer in meaning to the Latin word *virtus*, which, as I have already explained above, means manliness or boldness. He uses *virtu* to refer to the range of personal qualities that a prince will find necessary to acquire if he wants to maintain his state and achieve great things.

In *The Prince*, the two things that mark power, for Machiavelli, is acquiring it and maintaining it. For him, only people with *virtu* can acquire and hold on to power successfully. As a result of this, he seems to see *virtu* as directly opposed to the Christian doctrine of humility, which, for him, cannot secure and maintain power. Thus *virtu* is a “specifically civic spirit... the quality of mind and action that creates, saves or maintain cities” (Crick, 1970: 58). The import of the above is that *virtu* is the term that best captures Machiavelli’s vision of the requirement of power politics, such as having skills, strength, intelligence and prudence. According to Meinecke, Machiavelli concentrated all his real and supreme values in what he called *virtu* – a concept that is exceedingly rich in meaning (Downton and Hart, 1971: 408). For him:

Although it was taken over from the tradition of antiquity and humanism, it had been felt and elaborated in a quite individual manner; ethical qualities were certainly embraced in

it, but it was fundamentally intended to portray something dynamic, which Nature had implanted in man – heroism and the strength for great political and warlike achievements, and first and foremost, perhaps, strength for the founding and preservation of flourishing States, particularly republics (Downton and Hart, 1971:408).

Meinecke distinguishes two kinds of virtue in Machiavelli's writings – “the civic virtues, which embrace a readiness to devote oneself to the common good; and virtues of the ruling class, which consist of the wisdom, energy and the ambition of the great founders and rulers of states” (Downton and Hart, 1971: 408). For Machiavelli, the *virtu* of the founder and ruler of the state is of a higher order, while the other *virtu*, the civic virtue, is of a secondary quality, and could only be durable if it was rooted in a people whose spirit was naturally fresh and unspoilt. In his opinion, the *virtu* of the higher order has the ability, by means of appropriate “regulations” to distil out of the thoroughly bad and wretched material of average specimens of humanity the other kind of *virtu*, i.e., the civic virtue (Downton and Hart, 1971: 408). The implication of the above is that the concept of virtue in Machiavelli's political cum ethical theory is separated into two types; one is original and the other is derived. Plamenatz remarks that “there are differences of opinions about what he calls *virtu*” (Parel, 1972: 157). These differences, he thinks, “are about what is to be understood by the term, what qualities it refers to, than about the place of *virtu* in Machiavelli's political thought generally and his conception about man” (Parel, 1972: 157).

According to Villari, in his book *Life and Times of Machiavelli*, published in 1892:

Machiavelli always used the word *virtue* in the sense of courage and energy both for good and evil. To Christian virtue in its more general meaning, he rather applied the term *goodness*, and felt less admiration for it than the pagan virtue that was always fruitful of glory (Parel, 1972: 157).

For Plamenatz, “though writers since Villari's time have gone further than he did in distinguishing the various senses that Machiavelli gave to *virtu*, they have not seriously challenged his account of it” (Parel, 1972: 158). *Virtu*, in the perception of Machiavelli, is the drive, talent, or ability directed toward the achievement of certain goals, and it is the most vital quality for a prince. It is the human energy or action that a prince needs to seize and maintain his principedom. It is characterized by great use of intelligence, physical energy and force. For Strauss, virtue in Machiavelli's thought consists in “greatness of mind and manliness combined.” (Strauss, 1958:

269). From the above, one can see that there is no equivalence between the conventional idea of virtue and Machiavellian *virtu*. Machiavelli expects princes of the highest *virtu* to be able to behave in a completely evil fashion whenever the need arises. This is because, for him, the nature of politics is such that moral viciousness can never be ruled out from the realm of possible actions the prince may have to engage in if he should keep his state intact. Therefore, the virtuous ruler must master all the rules connected with the effective application of power. What this implies is that *virtu*, for Machiavelli, is to power politics what conventional virtue is to those who believe that moral goodness is sufficient to be a legitimate ruler. One can therefore take it that *virtu* is his touchstone of political success.

To buttress his point that *virtu* signifies military prowess, Machiavelli recommends as examples of virtuous persons, Francesco Sforza and Cesare Borgia, individuals who won or preserved their states with what he calls “the right means”, that is, great prowess. He writes:

I want now to give you two examples from living memory: namely Francesco Sfoza and Cesare Borgia. Francesco using the right means, and by his own great prowess, from being a private citizen became duke of Milan. On the other hand, Cesare Borgia commonly called Duke Valentino, acquired the state through the good fortune of his father, and lost it when that disappeared; and this happened even though he used the same way any prudent and capable prince would to consolidate his powers in the states he had won by arms and fortune of others (*The Prince*, Chapter VII, translated by George Bull, 1981: 54)

One may ask at this juncture whether Machiavelli knows about conventional Christian virtues. Machiavelli is surely aware of the conventional Christian virtues, but he sees them as imaginary standards of conducts, rather than real standards of conduct for political leadership. He sums up his views thus:

I have thought it proper to represent things as they are in real truth, rather than as they are imagined. The gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done learns the way to self-destruction rather than self-preservation. The fact is that a man who wants to act virtuously in every way necessarily comes to grief among many who are not virtuous. Therefore if a prince wants to maintain his rule he must learn how not to be virtuous, and make use of this or not according to need (Chapter XV. Bull, 1981: 90 – 91).

In addition to the above, his view of Christian virtues can also be understood from this statement he made concerning Pope Leo:

Now His Holiness pope Leo found the papacy in an extremely strong position; and it is our hope that, his immediate predecessors having established its greatness by force of arms, he, by his goodness and countless other virtues, will make it very great and revered (*The Prince*. Chapter XI. Bull, 1981: 76).

The import of the above is that, for Machiavelli, conventional Christian values can lead to greatness in other fields of human endeavour, but not in politics. This is hinged on his belief that, for the prince, “some of the things that appear to be virtues will, if he practices them, ruin him, and some of the things that appear to be vices will bring him security and prosperity (Chapter XV. Bull, 1981: 92).

Discussion on Machiavelli’s concept of *virtu* is still ongoing, with scholars taking variety of opinions. The “most commonly held view, which originated with DeSanctis, is that *virtu* is force and energy of mind used for good or bad purposes. By holding this position, DeSanctis and his emulators proclaim that Machiavelli abandons moral virtue” (Downton and Hart, 1971: 441). Though Whitfield objects to this idea that Machiavelli by his concept of *virtu* abandons moral virtue, he believes that his use of *virtu* is somehow ambiguous. According to him, Machiavelli gives different meanings to the word *virtu* which cannot be reconciled by a comprehensive meaning. Sometimes, Whitfield argues, he uses *virtu* as virtue, as opposed to vice (*vizio*) and vileness (*vilta*), and at other times, he employs other terms to denote moral goodness such as *bonta*, and good (*buono*), and honest (*onesto*), in contrast to bad (*cattivo*) and wicked (*tristo*) (Whitfield, 1947: 92 – 105). Wood agrees with Whitfield’s submission “that Machiavelli’s use of *virtu* is highly ambiguous, and that no simple formula will do justice to his meaning” (Downton and Hart, 1971: 442).

I also think that Machiavelli’s idea of *virtu* in *The Prince* is ambiguous. From his statements, he seems to portray that those attributes regarded as conventional virtues are good and glorious in that they help someone to be a great and revered citizen. This agrees with Meinecke’s suggestion, which I have noted earlier, that Machiavelli in his writings distinguishes two kinds of virtue – “the civic virtues, which embrace a readiness to devote oneself to the common good; and virtues of the ruling class, which consist of the wisdom, energy and the ambition of the great founders and rulers

of states” (Downton and Hart, 1971: 408). This “civic virtue” appears to be what Machiavelli has in mind while referring to Pope Leo (*The Prince*. Chapter XI. Bull, 1981: 76). But when it comes to politics and governance, the virtue of the higher order, which Machiavelli refers to as *virtu* is needed for success. This implies that the ruler must be a person of *virtu* who will be ready to apply force and cruelty when necessary. This is because he feels that “civic virtues” would bring any ruler down if he continues with only practicing them.

The highest point of Machiavelli’s ambiguity in his use of *virtu* is seen in Chapter VIII, where he commends Agathocles for his display of *virtu* and at the same time condemns him for not having virtue. He concludes of him thus, “It cannot be called prowess to kill fellow citizens, to betray friends, to be treacherous, pitiless, irreligious. These ways can win a prince power but not glory ...his brutal cruelty and inhumanity, his countless crimes, forbid his being honoured among eminent men” (Bull, 1995: 27 – 28).

On why Machiavelli, a well-known personality with republican inclination and background came about his concept of *virtu*, I think that his ethical sense was beclouded by the political crises in Florence and Italy of his time, as well as his desire to impress the ruling Medici prince, Lorenzo, to whom he dedicated his treatise, *The Prince*. For me, Machiavelli employs the term to show the kind of prince that would salvage Italy from the clutches of the barbarians and to equip him with the needed information for the salvaging role. That is why he makes even very ruthless persons like Agathocles and Cesare Borgia or extremely cruel rulers like Oliverotto and Severus to possess *virtu*. Moreover, being conversant with the selfish and egoistic tendencies of both the princes and people of his era, he knows that such an idea that celebrates physical energy and military prowess over moral rectitude will impress the Medici princes. Whether his desire is to impress the Medici in order to secure employment from them or to spur them to liberate Italy from desolation, one thing which is clear is that his concept of *virtu* has to do with physical strength and abilities, as opposed to the conventional idea of virtue. One can thus understand why Wood concludes that “Machiavelli’s men of *virtu* are predominantly warriors who triumph in circumstances of extreme danger, hardship, and chance” (Downton and Hart, 1971: 447).

The issue now is how Machiavelli’s idea of *virtu* bears on the state of affairs in Nigeria. In other words, one may ask: Is there any relationship between Machiavelli’s concept of *virtu* and the behaviour of present-day Nigerians? For me, the answer is in the affirmative. This is because it

has become a common occurrence in Nigeria for both politicians and non-politicians to resort to coercion and application of physical strength in getting what they want. The first instance I will cite here is the Fulani herdsmen invasion of many communities in different parts of Nigeria, which at the moment is threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria. From December 2015 when the herdsmen started their onslaught against communities who reject that their farmlands will be turned into grazing field, the following are among the communities they have invaded:

1. Kwata community in Jos South Local Government of Plateau State, in which at least 22 persons were killed (December 2015).
2. Agatu community in Benue State in which over 48 lives were lost (February 2016).
3. Dosi and Mesuma villages in Gashaka Local Government Area of Taraba, in which more than 40 people were murdered (April 2016).
4. Nimbo Town in Uzo Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State, in which they slaughtered over 40 people (April 2016).
5. Tse-Aondo, Tse Ankyou, Vaase, Mbachom, Tse Gabo and Anyiin communities in Logo and Ukum Local Government Areas of Benue State, in which 81 people were killed (Between 30th May and 20th June 2016).
6. Tambor Jumor community in Girei Local Government Area of Adamawa State, in which six persons were murdered (July 2016).
7. Ndiagu, Attaukwu, in Akagbe Ukwu community, in Nkanu West Local Government Area of Enugu State, in which two people were murdered (August 2016).
8. Akokwa town in Ideato North Local Government Area of Imo State, in which two persons were killed (August 2016)
9. Ossissa community in Ndokwa East Local Government Area of Delta State, in which five natives were killed (May 2017).
10. Ancha community in Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, in which nineteen persons were killed (September 2017).
11. Nkiedonwhro community in Bassa Local Government Area of Plateau State, in which 27 persons were slaughtered (October 2017).

While the motive behind the incessant attacks by the herdsmen may superficially be seen as securing and preserving grazing lands for their cattle, many see it in the political sense as a modern

way of continuation of the Fulani expansionism, also known as Fulani Jihad, started by Usman dan Fodio (1751 – 1817) the founder of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1804. Available evidences indicate that as a result of the attacks, hundreds of Nigerians have lost their lives while many communities have abandoned their homelands to the herdsmen, since 29th May 2015 when the current president of Nigeria, Muhamadu Buhari, a Fulani man, assumed office. Reporting in the *Vanguard* of 27th April 2016, under the caption *710 Nigerians Killed by Fulani Herdsmen in 10 Months*, Mamah & Ndujihe stated thus,

The Igbo Youths movement has lamented that Fulani herdsmen have killed over 710 Nigerians, excluding the 48 Agatu people in Benue State, in the last 10 months without the Federal Government addressing the issue.

In June 2016, they invaded some communities in Benue State, where they slaughtered over 26 persons after razing down their houses. Reporting on the incident, under the heading *Suspected Fulani Herdsmen Kill 26 Persons, Injure Many in Benue*, Duru stated that the communities invaded and destroyed were “Uzaar in Tombo, Anyii in Logo Local government and vase in Ukum Local Government.” According to his report, “from the sustained attacks it is becoming clear that the herdsmen want to take over the affected communities close to River Benue because of rich vegetation (*Vanguard* of 22nd June 2016). In a statement sent to *Daily Post* on Friday, 17th March 2017, a group known as “Vanguard Against Tiv Massacre” (VATIM) claimed that “the renewed Fulani herdsmen attack across Benue State has killed no fewer than 500 people and displaced 300,000” (Opejobi: 2017).

Another instance to show that many Nigerians have imbibed Machiavelli’s idea of the use of physical strength and aggression in getting what one wants is the issue of domestic violence. Simply put, domestic violence denotes all kinds of violence or abuse by one person against another in a domestic setting. It includes wilful intimidation, physical assault, sexual and psychological assault and exploitation, as well as other forms of systematic harassment and power control by one person against another. According to Animasaun, “the statistics on domestic violence in Nigeria is shocking. Nigeria has one of the highest rates of domestic violence in Africa.” (Animasaun: 2016). Similarly, Akinloye reports that “six out of every 10 Nigerian children suffer violence, findings from a national survey reveal” (Akinloye: 2016). For Musawa, “25% of women in Nigeria have to go through an ordeal of domestic violence and every fourth Nigerian woman suffers

domestic violence in her lifetime” (Musawa: 2016). Below is the list of just a few of the uncountable victims of domestic violence in Nigeria in recent years:

1. Ndidi Mordi, hacked to death with a machete by her husband, Chukwudi Mordi, in Egbudu-Aka town, Aniocha South LGA of Delta state, following an argument (22nd February 2013).
2. Ndidi Nwankwo, beaten to death in Akpawfu Village, Nkanu East Local Government Area of Enugu State by her husband, Ozoemena Nwankwo (17th October 2014)
3. Alice Ita Daniel, hacked to death while sleeping, with a machete by her husband, Ita Daniel Okpo, in Mbiokporo, Nsit Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, for cheating on time (16th June 2015).
4. Mrs. Angela Oyibo, beaten to death in Aku, Igbo-Etiti Local Government Area of Enugu State by her husband, Charles Oyibo, in a heated argument (3rd November 2015).
5. Patience Ekukpe, who was stabbed to death in Benin, Edo State, by her husband, Ojochunu Ekukpe, for absconding from their home (14th February 2016).
6. Jacinta Uguru, was beaten to death by her husband, James Uguru, in Izzi, Ebonyi State, for having extra-marital affairs (20th February 2016).
7. Ronke Shonde, a banker, mother of two, allegedly beaten to death by her husband, Mr. Lekan Shonde, during an argument in their home, in Egbeda, Lagos State (5th May 2016).
8. Roselyn , whose throat was slashed by her husband, Jafaru Sougie, in Araromi Street, in Oshodi Area of Lagos State, while she was asleep, after they quarreled (26th May 2016).
9. Nsikak, beaten to death by her husband, Christopher Okon, in Port Harourt, Rivers State, during a quarrel over his lover (11th May 2016).
10. Fatimo, killed by being set ablaze by her husband, Keji Osunjirin, in Abeokuta, Ogun State, because she disobeyed him and went to a party ( 2nd May 2016).

Howbeit, numerous incidents in Nigeria show that it is not only women that are violated domestically. There are many cases where victims of domestic violence are men, while women are perpetrators. Few instances of these are:

1. A 25-year woman, Blessing Onyibe Nwogbagami, who killed her husband, Onye, with a machete, while he was sleeping, in Ebonyi State (12th October 2014).
2. A housewife, Folashade Sodiya, who stabbed her husband, Jude Iginedor, to death over a heated argument, in Ikorodu area of Lagos State (13th November 2014).
3. Mrs. Owolati Laide, who, out of fury on learning that her husband had five other wives, poured hot water on her husband, Owolati Tajudeem, while he was sleeping, in Abuja, (November 2014).
4. Mr. Ajanaku Oyediran, who was stabbed to death by his wife, Yewande Oyediran (nee Fatoki) in Ibadan, Oyo State, over claims that he fathered a son out of wedlock (1st February 2016).
5. Mr. Godwin Abuul, a lecturer in the Theatre Arts Department of College of Education Oju in Benue State, who was killed by his wife, in connivance with her siblings, for cheating on her (June 2016).
6. Mr. Vincent Kanung, who was stabbed to death by his wife, Doris Kanung, in Ibadan, Oyo State, following some disagreement (3rd August 2016).

From the above-listed incidents of application of coercion and physical strength as means to an end, it is clear that many present-day Nigerians replicate both politically and domestically Machiavelli's idea of virtue. It is like for many Nigerians, might is right.

#### **4.2.3. FORTUNE**

Machiavelli, in *The Prince*, holds that one of the various ways of acquiring principalities is by fortune. From there he develops the concept of Fortune which runs through many of his works, and is considered as a complement to his concept of virtue – as can be seen in Chapter VI where he states that becoming a prince, for the private citizen, “presupposes either ability (*virtu*) or (*fortuna*) good fortune” (Bull, 1981: 50). Machiavelli did not invent the figure of Fortune, but rather “inherited it from a long tradition” (Pitkin, 1984: 138). The concept of “Fortune,” or as in Italian, “Fortuna” has a long and interesting evolution in the classical Roman mythology. The Romans saw it as a female deity, like the Greek *Tyche* – a perception which is seen by many as the sign of Greek influence on the Romans. According to Flanagan,

The word *fortuna* is formed adjectivally from the Latin *fors* (luck), which is ultimately derived from the verb *ferre* (to bring). Thus “the core meaning of *fors* is that which is brought, and *Fortuna* is she who brings it. Similarly the Greek equivalent Tyche, is derived from a root meaning ‘to succeed’ or ‘to attain.’ The basic meaning in both cases is not what we moderns term ‘chance,’ that is, events which seem to occur randomly (Parel, 1972: 129-130).

The importance of *Fortuna* in the religious life of ancient Rome cannot be overestimated. She was “worshipped under a variety of cult names even before the syncretistic period of the Empire – the fortune of the harvest, the fortune of the sea, the fortune of mothers” (Parel, 1972: 130). Originally, the Romans were neutral concerning the manner in which fortune brings what is brought, but they later had the idea that fortune is capricious, variable, or unpredictable. Consequently, they believed that fortune is a woman, because it has “fickle unreliability” that characterizes women and they “recognized the potential conflict between virtue – that is, human strength and capability – and *Fortuna*” (Ghita, 2003: 80-81). Therefore, whenever life becomes unbearable fortune is worshipped. She was ordinarily, depicted in “one of the three ways – with a horn of plenty, holding the rudder of a ship, or a rotating ball” (Parel, 1972: 130). However, the figure of the goddess *Fortuna*, luck or fortune, is often portrayed in a positive light, because they believed that despite her fickle and uncertain nature, she was the bringer of good luck and abundance. This is why she was depicted in one of her symbols with an overflowing cornucopia.

Because of the positive ideas people had about *Fortuna*, her worship was widespread in the then known world. Her popularity as a popular goddess lived on even after the collapse of the Roman Empire in spite of Augustine’s polemics which tried to destroy her popularity with the argument that the notion of fortune is incompatible with Christian faith. However, it was with Boethius that the positive ideas about fortune changed. In his *Consolation of Philosophy*, the Christian philosopher, Boethius, focused on Fortuna’s dark side, and this caused a change in the direction of speculation on fortune from the early middle ages before the recovery of the classics. This resulted change of the image of *Fortuna* made her to be adopted with a different spirit which in the course of time made her to lose all her popularity and colourful imagery and to become much more of a somber figure. Describing this change in the people’s perception of fortune, Ghita notes, “during the middle ages, though it was still seen as a woman, Christianity realized a transformation of its personality to an officer of God’s will, and a terrifying instrument of divine providence”

(Ghita, 2003: 81). For Pitkin “much of the metaphor and imagery surrounding fortune disappear; there remains only the wheel, with which fortune grimly turns. The wheel’s movement and fortune’s character shift from capriciousness to inexorability” (Pitkin, 1984: 139).

Although her classical elements survived, subsequent images of her in the medieval Europe focused on her ability to dash human hopes and ambitions. It is thus understandable that Machiavelli associates *Fortuna* with the blind strength of nature, and is depicted as the primary source of chaos, disorder, violence and other problems facing humanity. Though the idea of Fortune runs throughout *The Prince*, Machiavelli deals thoroughly with the concept in Chapter XXV. He uses two different images or metaphors to depict it – the image of a raging river or a flood and the image of a woman – and begins the chapter in this way:

I realize that many people have thought, and still do think, that events are so governed in this world that the wisdom of men cannot possibly avail against them, indeed is altogether useless. On this basis, you might say that there is no point in sweating over anything, we should simply leave matters to fate (Adams, 1992: 67).

He continues, “Indeed, sometimes when I think of it, I incline toward this opinion myself” (Adams, 1992: 67). But in his characteristic manner, Machiavelli refuses to endorse the pessimistic opinion that man’s strength and cleverness can never prevail in the face of the constant change of fortune. According to him, “rather than give up on our free will altogether, I think it may be true that Fortune governs half of our actions, but that even so she leaves the other half more or less in our power to control” (Adams, 1992: 67). Rebhorn notes that Machiavelli “speaks in mathematical terms” of the ability of human beings to deal with Fortune “at least fifty percent of the time” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXXII). For Skinner, Machiavelli by the statement “insists that to suppose our fate to be entire in her hands would be to eliminate human freedom.” This is because “God does not want to do everything, in order not to deprive us of our freedom and the glory that belongs to us” (Skinner, 1981: 32).

To show the veracity of his claims, Machiavelli employs the imagery of the raging river. According to him:

I compare fortune to one of those violent rivers which, when they are enraged, flood the plains, tear down trees and buildings, wash soil from one place to deposit it in another.

Everyone flees before them, everybody yields to their impetus, there is no possibility of resistance. Yet, although such is their nature, it does not follow that when they are flowing quietly one cannot take precautions, constructing dykes and embankments so that when the river is in flood they would keep to one channel or their impetus be less wild and dangerous. So it is with fortune. She shows her potency where there is no well-regulated power to resist her, and her impetus is felt where she knows there are no embankments or dykes built to restrain her (Bull, 1981: 130 – 131).

In the above-used metaphor, Machiavelli is saying that it is in the nature of Fortune to change from time to time. No wonder that Flanagan concludes that Fortune is “Machiavelli’s major term for designating the uncertainty and dependency of human affairs (Parel, 1972: 129). At the same time, Machiavelli in the metaphor is calling for well-ordered human action if the devastation of Fortune is to be minimized. He insists that dykes and embankments can be built to channel the river before it floods and becomes overwhelming and irresistible. By implication, to deal with her, at least to some degree, Machiavelli insists, there is need for prudence and foresight, as well as rational planning. For him, taking precaution towards Fortune means making well-timed efforts that will regulate and resist her potency whenever she changes for destruction. In other words, her potency when she becomes wild is reduced with structured plans put in place when she was quiet.

According to Rebhorn “this notion of controlling Fortune’s power by building dikes fits perfectly the imagery Machiavelli uses throughout *The Prince* to describe the prince and his activities, for he imagines that figure as a builder or architect whose grand construction is the state” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXXII). This implies that those princes who depend solely on Fortune without planning for her natural emergencies will definitely come to grief when she changes. One can then understand why Harrison remarks that “the great antagonist of *virtu* is *fortuna*, which we must understand as temporal instability – the flux and contingency of temporal events” (Harrison: 2011).

Another interesting angle which Machiavelli goes with this concept of Fortune is on his idea on how to prevail over her. This comes from his proposition, while dealing with the constantly changing nature of Fortune, that people will enjoy success only if they are able to adapt their methods to suit the nature of the times. This means that two people can use quite different methods and can both succeed due to the fact that their times and circumstances are different. Likewise, two people can apply the same method at different times, one will achieve his end and the other

will not. This takes me to the other image Machiavelli uses about Fortune which is more traditional – the image of a woman. According to him:

It is better to be impetuous than circumspect; because fortune is a woman and if she is to be submissive it is necessary to beat and coerce her. Experience shows that she is more often subdued by men who do this than those who act coldly. Always, being a woman, she favours young men, because they are less circumspect and more ardent, and because they command her with greater audacity (Bull, 1981: 133).

What Machiavelli seems to be saying here is that Fortune is so unpredictable that no human policy, however circumspect it is, can control her, and that the only way to keep her down is by being impetuous. Like a woman, he argues, it is necessary to keep her down by beating and knocking her about. Also, being a woman, she is always the friend of the young because they are less cautious and more brutal, and handle her more recklessly. According to Rebhorn, “Fortune, here is, of course, a version of the traditional goddess, but what is striking about this passage is Machiavelli’s vision of the prince manhandling her in order to make her bow to his wishes, a vision that he uses to validate his preference for impetuosity and violence over caution and restraint” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXXIV). To illustrate his point here, Machiavelli cites as example Pope Julius II, who was successful in all his undertakings because he always acted impetuously. He says, “Pope Julius II was impetuous in everything; and he found the time and circumstances so favourable to his way of proceeding that he always met with success’ (Bull, 1995: 79).

I think that the entire concept is ambiguous because one would have expected Machiavelli to go on and say that at some point the pope failed because the times changed and no longer accommodated his one way method. All he says about Pope Julius is that in all his actions he was successful. And to save his generalization, he says, “the shortness of his life prevented him from having the opposite experience; but in fact, if circumstances had ever required him to act cautiously, he would have been ruined at once; he could never have found the style to which nature inclined him” (Adams, 1992: 69).

For me, this raises the question of whether Fortune is something that men can control by foreseeing her effects and acting accordingly, or whether she is so unpredictable that men can only try to dominate her with audacity and strength? However, I think that what Machiavelli is trying to say here is that the method or policy to be used in combating Fortune needs to vary from time to time

to suit Fortune's changing nature. Thus he says "men prosper so long as fortune and policy are in accord, and when there is a clash they fail (Bull, 1981: 133), meaning that no particular method can be taken as a permanent solution in controlling Fortune. From the above, one can see that Machiavelli's analysis of the concept of Fortune in *The Prince* is in line with his overall theory of *virtu*. It "complements his selection of *virtu* as the key term for defining the prince's behavior" (Rebhorn, 2003: XXXIV). Though he does not indicate that one should try to transcend fortune, he advocates that one should meet her head on and bend her, possibly, to one's own will. By implication, *virtu* is the human energy or action that stands in opposition to fortune. Commenting on this, Grazia says:

She lets herself be won, because being beaten and jolted please her. The young, in treating and commanding her "with greater audacity", commit acts that obtain the desired result. But they do not subdue her; they seduce her. Fortune "lets her be conquered" (Grazia, 1989: 214).

In *The Discourses*, Machiavelli shows more ambiguity in his concept of fortune. This is seen clearly in Book II, Chapter XXIX, the title of which leaves no one in doubt of what Machiavelli wants to convey about fortune. Some notable quotes there are:

So far does fortune darken men's mind when she would not have her ascendancy gainsaid (Thomson, 1883: 368).

Men may aid Fortune, but not withstand her; may interweave their threads, but cannot break it. But for all that, they must never lose heart, since not knowing what their end is to be, and moving towards it by cross-roads and untraveled paths, they have always room for hope, and never to abandon it, whatsoever befalls, and into whatsoever straits they come (Thomson, 1883: 369).

What the above statements seem to convey is the fact that Fortune, for Machiavelli, is in total control of men's affairs of life. That is to say that there is no guarantee that success will come your way by what you do without the aid of Fortune. In other words, no amount of work will give you good results if fortune does not allow it. This idea, of course, runs contrary to his conclusion in Chapter XXV of *The Prince*. Crick believes that there is something mythological about the way Machiavelli uses the concept. According to him:

It is part of his pagan ethic. The gods or the heavens send good fortune or bad fortune with inscrutable whimsy. It is prudent to accept Fortune as she comes; but it is heroic, and sometimes successful, to resist it. Something of the god-like is attributed to the man who can rape Fortune. And this need not be mere literary imagery in Machiavelli: it is a touch of classical paganism, that men and gods are (unlike in Christianity) of one substance, so that a man who has super-abundant skill, force, manliness and all that can possibly go to make up *virtu* becomes a demi-god (Crick, 1970: 56 – 57).

From all indications I would say that Machiavelli's concept of Fortune in *The Prince* is based on his idea that with prudence, foresight and rational planning, Fortune can be dealt with, at least to some degree. His proposition seems to be that since the world is constantly changing, people who will enjoy success are only those who adapt their methods to suit the changing times and circumstances. In other words, for him, people will succeed in life if their methods and their circumstances are in harmony. This implies that there is no laid-down rule for success in life, as success comes mostly from one's ability to change with time. Again, I do not agree with Machiavelli's insinuation that it is necessary to beat and coerce women if they are to be submissive. Perhaps, he developed such idea about women because of his observations about human nature or that he expresses such view in order to buttress his theory of *virtu*. Be that as it may, I see it as undue justification for male dominance over female in the human society and support for male oppression of women. For Rebhorn, it is a "disturbing" and a symbolic justification of "the use of male violence against women" (Rebhorn, 2003: XXXIV).

This brings me to the key question at this point, which is the relationship between Machiavelli's opinions on fortune and the state of affairs in contemporary Nigerian politics. One point I need to re-emphasize here is that the political behaviour of many Nigerians seems to resemble Machiavelli's opinions on fortune. Political events have shown that most Nigerian politicians are registered members of many political parties at the same time, and their reason for the malpractice has always been that whenever political condition changes and they need the platform of any other party, they will switch over to that party. Their usual Nigerian adage is that one doesn't put all his eggs in one basket. I will illustrate this point of mine with some of the practices of many Nigerians who justify their illegal actions with the proverb that "heaven helps those who help themselves." I had thought that the statement is from the Bible until now that I know that it runs contrary to biblical principles. From all indications, this principle has led many Nigerians to be committing

what, apart from its being against the electoral act of Nigeria, appears to be political prostitution in the name of surviving with the changing times.

One significant area that this principle has played out in the Nigerian political landscape is the incessant changing of political parties by candidates, who lose party primary elections in their parties, just to have another platform for contesting election. This has become a normal practice in the Nigerian political scene, showing as I have earlier observed in this study that most Nigerian politicians see politics just as a means of acquiring or retaining political power in order to amass wealth. This implies that party manifestos and ideologies have no influence on the choice of political parties for Nigerian politicians but spoils of office. Inasmuch as carpet-crossing is an accepted political practice worldwide, the practice of changing political parties like clothes is not ideal, for me. For instance, when the present Governor of Imo State, Rochas Okorocha, couldn't get the People's Democratic Party (PDP) ticket for Governorship election in 2011, he decamped to the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) to run as APGA candidate for the Imo State Gubernatorial election in April 2011. Incidentally, he won the election, but in 2013, he decamped to the All Progressive Congress (APC), in which he served out the remaining two years of his first tenure, and won another term in the 2015 gubernatorial election.

Also, when Mr. Labaran Maku, the Minister of Information under former president, Goodluck Jonathan, lost the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Nasarawa State Governorship Primary election in 2014, he joined All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and contested the 2015 Governorship election under APGA, which he lost to the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Umaru Tanko Al-Makura. In 2007, Adebayo Alao-Akala of Oyo State decamped to the Labour Party (LP) from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) when he could not get the PDP Governorship election ticket. In the Labour Party (LP), he contested and won the election to become the Governor of Oyo State from 2007 – 2011. After his gubernatorial election victory in 2007 on the platform of Labour Party (LP) he went back to the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In the build up to the 2015 Governorship polls, his failure to get the PDP ticket to re-contest for the high office led to another switch to the Labour Party, where he contested and lost the election to the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Senator Isiaq Abiola Ajimobi, the incumbent Governor.

The former Governor of Ondo State, Olusegun Mimiko, was originally in People's Democratic Party (PDP) before he joined Labour Party (LP) and contested the 14th April 2007 Ondo State Governorship election, which he lost to Olusegun Agagu. He contested the election result at the Election Tribunal and replaced Agagu as the Governor on 23rd February 2009 following an Appeal Court ruling which cited irregularities in the 2007 election. He won for his second tenure in the Ondo State Gubernatorial election of 20th October 2012 still under the Labour Party. But on Thursday, 2nd October 2014, he decamped from the Labour Party (on which platform he won both elections) to the People's Democratic Party. He was received back to the PDP fold by former Vice President of Nigeria, Namadi Sambo, and other PDP dignitaries.

In the build-up to the 2017 Anambra State gubernatorial election held on 18th November 2017, decamping from one political party to the other was the order of the day. Below are a few highlights on the decamping issue:

1. Dr. Tony Nwoye who won the primary election of the All Progressives Congress (APC) on Saturday, 26th August 2017 decamped to the party from the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In fact, he contested and lost the last gubernatorial election in Anambra state, in 2013, as a candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). In 2015, he won the election into the Federal House of Representatives on the platform of the PDP (he is still a serving member of the House of Representatives) and later in 2016 decamped to the All Progressives Congress (APC) to contest the governorship election on their platform in 2017.
2. Senator Andy Uba, one of the aspirants who lost to Dr. Tony Nwoye in the said primary election is a serving senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria who was elected into the Senate in the 2015 election on the platform of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Like Dr. Tony Nwoye, he decamped to the All Progressives Congress (APC) not because of any known political philosophy he has but just out of quest his for acquisition of political power.
3. The winner of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) primary election held on Monday, 28th August 2017, Mr. Oseloka Obaze, decamped to the party from All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), in which he served as the Secretary to the Anambra State Government from 2012 to 2015, during the second tenure of former governor of Anambra State, Mr.

Peter Obi (2010 – 2014) and first year of the incumbent governor, Mr. Willie Obiano. He decamped to the People's Democratic Party (PDP) undoubtedly to seek political power seeing that the incumbent governor will definitely go for second tenure in the 2017 election.

4. One of the aspirants in the said People's Democratic Party (PDP) primary election, Mr. Ifeanyi Uba, defected to the party (PDP) from the Labour Party (LP), in which he contested and lost the Anambra State gubernatorial election of 2013. He was in the People's Democratic Party (PDP) before he defected to the Labour Party (LP) in the build up to that 2013 governorship election. Few weeks after losing the 28th August 2017 primary election of the PDP, he decamped to the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), claiming that there was no level playing ground for all candidates in the primary election which he lost.
5. The winner of the United Progressive Party (UPP) primary election held on Saturday, 19th August 2017, Mr. Osita Chidoka, decamped to the party from the People's Democratic Party (PDP), in which he served under the former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, as Corps Marshall of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) and Minister of Aviation. Mr. Osita Chidoka, just like others mentioned above, decamped to the United Progressive Party solely to have a platform for contesting in the 2017 Anambra State governorship election.

The few cited above are just a tip of the iceberg. This practice of jumping from one political party to the other to contest elections happens not only at the state level but in all levels of political activities in Nigeria. In the 2015 elections, it was rampant that many are still wondering whether this is what democracy is all about or that it is a replication of Machiavelli's idea of changing with the times and circumstances by Nigerians. When asked why they go against standardized global democratic practice by changing political parties like clothes, many Nigerian politicians defend the practice by claiming that there is nothing like standardized global democratic practice, arguing that what they are doing is playing the game of politics in the Nigerian context. The implication of this attitude of Nigerian politicians is that politics is not played with manifestos and ideologies, but with the principle that one can use any available means to acquire political power since the end justifies the means.

#### **4.2.4. NECESSITY**

One of the key concepts in the philosophy of Machiavelli is the concept of necessity, which he uses to justify certain actions which are violent, treacherous, cruel, and immoral in the eye of conventional morality. Necessity means something that is necessary, unavoidable or absolutely requisite. In other words, it refers to law-like consequences that must necessarily follow in certain situations. It is a term that Machiavelli appeals to in justifying his view that certain fraudulent, wicked, violent and cruel actions are necessary for the acquisition and maintenance of political power. This is hinged on his view that the preservation or longevity of the state supersedes the traditional idea of morality, and that the morality of politics is quite different from conventional Christian idea of morality. To say that necessity has compelled one implies that one has no choice but to act in a particular manner in order to accomplish certain end; and so one is absolved of blame for doing something that would have ordinarily been followed by reproach, condemnation and punishment. Thus for Machiavelli, it is necessary that exceptional individuals with the *virtu* to pursue the good of the state do so without any moral scruples. This is why it is generally believed that the concept of necessity reveals much about Machiavelli's moral values and his idea of politics.

Explaining Machiavelli's concept of necessity, Rehorn submits as follows:

Actually, Machiavelli never advocates the pointless or wanton commission of crimes or suggests that a prince should get some sort of sadistic thrill out of inflicting harm on others. Rather, such things as assassinating one's enemies or severely punishing one's followers when they err are presented as necessities – duties, almost – that are imposed upon the prince, for if he did not act in that way, he would run the risk of losing power (Rehorn, 2003: XXIV).

For Crick, Machiavelli's "necessity is only ever a hypothetical or consequential necessity: if you wish to achieve X, you must do Y and Z" (Crick, 1970: 54). That is to say that necessity, for Machiavelli, is a "synonym for inevitability, that is, what the prince must do or a situation that cannot be avoided" (Witlin, 2011: 3). By implication, trying to avoid the act would ruin the prince or his administration.

Machiavelli's first and foremost ground for the concept of necessity is his conception of human nature. At the beginning of Chapter XV of *The Prince*, Machiavelli acknowledges that he is aware

that “many have dreamed up republics and principalities which have never in truth been known to exist” (Bull, 1995; 48). But he intends to write about *la verita effettuale della cosa*, i.e., “effectual truth of the matter.” By “effectual truth” he means “a truth – about politics as well as human nature – that has an effect in the real world, rather than something more purely speculative or contemplative” (Rebhorn, 2003: XXII). In line with his preference for the effectual truth, Machiavelli in Chapter III of *The Prince* mentions the natural difficulties always encountered in new principalities. He observes thus:

What happens is that men willingly change their ruler, expecting to fare better. This expectation induces them to take up arms against him; but they only deceive themselves, and they learn from experience that they have made matters worse. This follows from another common and natural necessity: a prince is always compelled to injure those who have made him the new ruler, subjecting them to the troops and imposing the endless other hardships which his new conquest entails (Bull, 1995: 6).

He equally shares similar sentiments in *The Discourses*:

For men are so restless, that if ever so small a door is opened to their ambition, they forthwith forget all the love they have borne their prince in return for his graciousness and goodness, as did these soldiers and allies of Scipio; when, to correct the mischief, he was forced to use something of a cruelty foreign to his nature (*The Discourses*, Book III, Chapter XXI. Thomson: 480 – 481).

Because the nature of men is ambitious and suspicious and does not know how to set a limit to any fortune it may have, it is impossible for the suspicion suddenly arising in the prince after the victory of the captain not to be increased by that same one because of the mode or term of his used insolently. So the prince cannot but think of securing himself against him; and to do this, he thinks either of having him killed or of taking away the reputation that he has gained for himself in his army or in his people (*The Discourses*, Book I, Chapter XXIX. Mansfield: 65).

The populace is by nature fickle; it is easy to persuade them of something, but difficult to keep them in that persuasion. Therefore one must urgently arrange matters so that when they no longer believe they can be made to believe by force (*The Prince*, Chapter VI. Bull, 1981: 52).

From the above statements, one can see some descriptions of Machiavelli's idea of human nature, which partly forms the basis of his concept of necessity. For him, human beings are naturally greedy, ambitious, rebellious, ungrateful, liars, deceivers and fickle (Bull, 1981: 96), and so should be dealt with as particular situation necessitates. In some situations, necessity may call for imposition of hardship, while in others, it could be cruelty; in some, it could call for murder, while for others, it could demand use of force or violence. He believes that in real life experience, not many men are virtuous. "A man who wants to be virtuous in every way comes to grief among so many who are not virtuous. Therefore if a prince wants to maintain his rule he must learn how not to be virtuous, and to make use of this or not according to need" (Bull, 1981: 91). For instance, the virtue of generosity is good, but it is "necessary for a prince to incur the reputation of being a miser, which invites ignominy but not hatred, than to be forced, by seeking a name for generosity, to incur a reputation for rapacity, which brings him hatred as well as ignominy" (Bull, 1981: 95). It is far better to be feared than loved. This is because, for Machiavelli, "men worry less about doing an injury to one who makes himself loved than to one who makes himself feared. The bond of love is one which men, wretched creatures that they are, break when it is their advantage to do so" (Bull, 1981: 96 – 97).

The second ground for Machiavelli's concept of necessity is the interest or good of the state. Machiavelli believes that the interest or good of the state supersedes all ethical considerations about human action. For him, "there are two ways of fighting: by law or by force. The first way is natural to men, and the second to beasts. But as the first way often proves inadequate one must recourse to the second. So a prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man (*The Prince*, Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1981: 99). In other words, if a prince is to maintain his position, it is necessary for him to know how to act like a beast as well as a man. As a prudent ruler, one of the ways to do this is that he "must not honour his word when it places him at a disadvantage and when the reasons for which he made his promise no longer exist (Bull, 1981: 99 – 100). Secondly, he must use every available means to actualize his end. Machiavelli advises thus: "So let a prince set about the task of conquering and maintaining his state; his methods will always be judged honourable and will be universally praised (Bull, 1981: 101). A prince "who wants to maintain his rule is often forced not to be good, because whenever that class of men on which you believed your continued rule depends is corrupt, whether it be the populace, or soldiers, or nobles, you have to satisfy it by adopting the same disposition" (*The Prince*, Chapter XIX. Bull:

108). Also, for Machiavelli, it is necessary for a prince to acquire skill in war, its organization and discipline. In fact, he holds that “the art of war is all that is expected of a ruler; and it is so useful that besides enabling hereditary princes to maintain their rule it frequently enables ordinary citizens to become rulers (Bull, 1981: 87).

Thus a new prince “is often driven (*necessitato*), in order to maintain his position, to act contrary to good faith, charity, humanity and religion: he has need of a mind, ready to turn according as the wind of fortune and changes in the situation dictate” (Crick, 1970: 54). Machiavelli buttresses this view by citing the execution of Remirro de Orco by Cesare Borgia in Chapter VII of *The Prince*. Sensing that his government in Romagna, which he placed in the hands of cruel but efficient Remirro de Orco, was falling into the danger of bringing hatred of the masses because of Remirro’s severities, and that such hatred will negatively affect his government if not controlled, he planned and executed Remirro publicly in order to “purge the minds of the people and to win them over completely” (Bull, 1995: 23). Narrating the killing of Remirro, Machiavelli concludes, “the brutality of this spectacle kept the people appeased and stupefied” (Bull, 1995: 24). This view is also expressed by Machiavelli in the *The Discourses* III, Chapter XLI:

When the entire safety of our country is at stake, no consideration of what is just or unjust, merciful or cruel, praiseworthy or shameful must intervene. On the contrary, every other consideration being set aside, that course alone must be taken which preserves the existence of the country and maintains its liberty (Thomson, 1883: 546).

Some scholars share Machiavelli’s view that the action of the prince should not be guided by any moral standard, but by necessity. For Merleau-Ponty, Machiavelli is not necessarily advocating the use of violence but wants to show us that it may be “more cruel not to use it in some situations” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 211, 216). This is supported by Weber who argues that those who refuse to use violence in politics reject an ethics of responsibility for the results of their actions (Weber, 1958: 77 – 128). Corroborating this view, Wolin holds that what Machiavelli advocates is “an economy of violence, a science of the controlled application of force (Adams, 1992: 170). He argues that Machiavelli counsels the use of violence “in an economical fashion”, that is, in a manner which “reduces the number of instances in which it must be applied” (Wolin, 1960: 222). This is based on Machiavelli’s idea that the person that deserves to be blamed is the one who uses violence to spoil things and not the one who uses it to amend them. Thus, for Machiavelli, rulers

are pressed by necessity to act on two grounds – the necessity to deal with human nature and the necessity to acquire political position or secure and maintain the existing position.

Some other scholars, however, hold a different view of Machiavelli's concept of necessity. According to Vivanti, many are against it because of Machiavelli's bold maintenance that in politics, "evil deeds cease to be evil if urgent interests make them necessary" (Vivanti: 2013). For such scholars, evil deeds are evil deeds no matter the circumstances. This is why, Vivanti notes, "strenuous efforts are being renewed to draw the sting of this stark message" (Vivanti: 2013). For Gilbert, Machiavelli's concept of necessity is "not just a hostile force which makes man's action purely automatic, but may coerce man to take an action which reason demands, and may create opportunities" (Gilbert, 1965: 193). That is to say that, at most times, "there are possibilities for men to turn circumstances to their advantage" (Gilbert, 1965: 193). In line with the above, Kahn holds that Machiavelli's claim of being guided by the *verita effettuale*, or the "effectual truth," implies "that one does not simply imitate necessity but can manipulate it – effect it – to one's own advantage" (Kahn, 1994: 37). This is based on the fact that there is no particular way to measure or differentiate between the interest of the state and the interest of the ruler. Many a time, available evidences point to the fact that the personal interest of the ruler is pursued in the guise of pursuing the interest of the state.

The question now is how Machiavelli's doctrine of necessity sheds light on the state of affairs in present-day Nigeria. One area in which I think there is a close relationship between Machiavelli's concept of necessity and political practice in Nigeria is the concept of "Security Vote". In actualization of the mandate of section 14(b) of the 1999 Constitution which states that "security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government," there is in Nigeria today a set-aside fund known as security vote. Security vote is the amount of money which the Federal Government allocates to every state governor (as the Chief Security Officer of the state) in Nigeria every month for security of the state. It is believed that the practice originated from the military era to the present democratic dispensation. This special allocation has become a political norm in Nigeria because of the necessity to protect the lives and property of people in the state. Just like Machiavelli's doctrine of necessity permits the prince to do anything – that is, to act without any moral restriction – in the name of securing the state, the practice of security vote in Nigeria permits

the state governor to spend the allotted funds on anything he deems necessary – that is, to spend the funds without any financial restriction – in the name of securing the state.

By implication, the governor has the right to spend the money on anything that he or she thinks will contribute to the maintenance peace and security in the state, and nobody, even the state House of Assembly, is authorized to request any account of how the money is spent. This routine security fund, amounting to hundreds of millions of Naira monthly, has been a subject of controversy in Nigeria because many see it as fuelling corruption since its deployments are neither made public nor accounted for. Also the governors have not helped matters in their spending of the security vote allocated to them, as many have been accused of spending it on their personal needs instead of the security needs of the state.

The problem with security vote, just like critics of Machiavelli's concept of necessity argue, is that considering the selfish nature of human beings, which Machiavelli himself acknowledges, there is the tendency that the interest of the state can be manipulated to the advantage of the ruler. While the amount each governor receives as security vote in Nigeria has remained a mystery, it is estimated that every governor gets at least ₦300 million monthly. In January 2017, there was the allegation that Chief Willy Obiano, the governor of Anambra State was collecting "a whooping ₦1.2 billion monthly" (Eleke: 2017). Though no official statement of denial came from Anambra State government regarding the truth of the matter, many believe that no amount is too much for the security of lives of residents of a state as long as the governor makes judicious use of the money. However, a lot of Nigerians argue that the idea of handing over to politicians monthly, as security vote, hundreds of millions of Naira that will not be accounted for is a recipe for corruption. And there are available evidences to buttress the validity of their argument. Writing under the heading, *How Kogi Governor, Bello, Squandered over ₦260 million 'Security Vote' Days after Assuming Office*, Isine reports that "barely a week after he became Governor of Kogi State, Yahaya Bello approved for himself a total of ₦260 million as security votes" (*Premium Times*, 13th May 2016).

Similarly, Edeh, in a report anchored in *Vanguard* Newspaper of 16th December 2015 under the caption, *Yuguda Spent ₦91billion Security Vote in 8 Years*, stated as follows:

The Bauchi State Government has said that the past administration of Isa Yuguda received and squandered ₦91 billion security vote in eight years. The revelation is coming on the heels of promise by the state Governor, Mohammed Abubakar, that the days of lack of accountability and financial recklessness in the management of resources were over in the state.

There is no doubt that most Nigerians are not happy with the use of security vote by the state governors. They argue that in spite of the billions of Naira spent as security vote in the last sixteen years of Nigeria's democratic dispensation, there is nothing on ground to show that such amount has been spent. There seems to be no security anywhere in Nigeria presently, as evidenced by activities of *Boko Haram* and Muslim fundamentalists in the North, Biafra agitations in the East, militant activities in the Niger Delta, and Oodua People's Congress restiveness in the West. There is also incessant kidnapping and armed robbery all over the nation, coupled with the farmers and herdsmen clash that has continued to threaten the corporate existence of the country in the past two years. The question everyone is asking is: Where is the security vote going? Available evidences show that the security vote, instead of being properly channeled to the purpose for which it is meant, is being cornered by the governors to their respective pockets. Many believe that if the security vote is being used judiciously, the security issues that presently confront Nigeria as a nation would be reduced significantly.

#### **4.2.5. HUMAN NATURE**

According to Spencer, Machiavelli's *The Prince* "ate its way, destroying humanism, Christianity, political practice, and traditional virtues, but nowhere is the book's perspective more corrosive than in its view of human nature" (Spencer: 2012). Any reader of Machiavelli's *The Prince* will observe that much of the advice he gives the prince in the book emanated from his view of human nature. Interestingly, his understanding of human nature completely runs contrary to the belief and teaching of the humanists of his time. While the humanists believe that individuals have much role to play in the successful running and well-being of the state, Machiavelli sees human beings generally as self-centred, ungrateful and untrustworthy. In Chapter III, where he talks about "Mixed Principalities," he states that problems are associated with all new states because "men are ready to change masters in the hope of bettering themselves. In this belief they take up arms against their master, but find themselves deceived when they discover by experience that instead things

have got worse” (Adams, 1992: 5). What this means is that people are fundamentally self-interested. As a result of man’s selfishness, he advocates for the necessity of violence, use of force and arms in ruling human beings. He declares thus:

It is the nature of people to be fickle; to persuade them of something is easy, but to make them stand fast in that conviction is hard. Hence things must be arranged so that when they no longer believe they can be compelled to believe by force (Chapter VI. Adams, 1992: 17)

Thus, he sees people as naturally selfish, stubborn and unreliable. In Chapter IX, where he talks about the civil principality, Machiavelli opines that the common people remain content and happy so long as they are not afflicted and oppressed. This means that they might be trustworthy in prosperous times, but they can turn selfish, deceitful and profit-driven in adverse times. But he thinks that the nobles are more dangerous, because ambition lies in heart of those who have achieved some power. For him, “The worst thing a prince can expect from a hostile population is that they will abandon him, but hostile nobles may not only abandon him, but attack him directly” (Adams, 1992: 28). Speaking on the reasons why men, especially princes, are praised or blamed, in Chapter XV, Machiavelli asserts:

How men live is so different from how they should live that a ruler who does not do what is generally done, but persists in doing what ought to be done, will undermine his power rather than maintain it. If a ruler who wants always to act honourably is surrounded by many unscrupulous men his downfall is inevitable (Skinner and Price: 54).

The implication of the above assertion is that human beings are by nature hypocritical. They admire and praise qualities such as integrity, mercy, honesty, humaneness, religiosity, and generosity in other people, but rarely try to foster those characteristics in themselves. They are always fighting with each other for anything, whether food, clothing, shelter or power. Therefore, anyone who decides to be good all the time will definitely come to ruin among so many who are not good. Based on this, Machiavelli advises the prince to apply some form of cruelty and treachery if he wants to succeed in governance. He states:

It is a general rule about men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, fearful of danger and greedy for gain. While you serve their welfare, they are all yours, offering their blood, their belongings, their lives, and their children’s lives, as we noted above – so

long as the danger is remote. But when the danger is close at hand, they turn against you. Then any prince who has relied on their words and made no other preparations will come to grief. ...People are less concerned with offending a man who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared: the reason is that love is a link of obligation which men, because they are rotten, will break any time they think doing so serves to their advantage; but fear involves dread of punishment, from which they can never escape (Chapter XVII. Adams, 1992: 46).

From the above, one can see that in Machiavelli's assessment, human nature offers little to inspire. Man, for him, is always discontented and unsatisfied with his situation. One can become very loyal to another through receiving acts of goodwill, but even one's strong sense of loyalty is not absolute, because it can be lost. In other words, men can have their feelings toward others changed, with certain catalysts, and they can turn against someone they favoured, or they can shift their favour to someone they used to view negatively. This implies that human character as actually exhibited by people leaves nothing to be desired. Human beings are so ungrateful, he insists, that once situation begins to inconvenience them, gratitude is forgotten. To portray human greed and inordinate desire for acquisition of property, Machiavelli posits that "men forget sooner the killing of a father than the loss of their patrimony (Skinner and Price, 1988: 59). In Chapter XVIII, where Machiavelli discusses "The Way Princes Should Keep Their Word," he makes another startling observation about human nature, with a rule that "a prudent prince cannot and should not keep his word when to do so would go against his interest, or when the reasons that made him pledge it no longer apply" (Adams, 1992: 48). He says:

Doubtless if all men were good, this rule would be bad; but since they are a sad lot, and keep no faith with you, you in your turn are under no obligation to keep it with them. ...Men are so simple of mind and so much dominated by their immediate needs that a deceitful man will always find plenty who are ready to be deceived (Adams, 1992: 48).

Thus, Machiavelli believes that all that men want is nothing but glory or wealth, and they are so desperate about it that they can lie and cheat to get what they want. In other words, human beings, for him, are so gullible and caught up with their immediate concerns that they easily fall prey to dupers and manipulators. This is because, according to him:

Men in general judge more by the sense of sight than by the sense of touch, because everyone can see but only a few can test by feeling. Everyone sees what you seem to be, few know what you really are; and those few do not dare take a stand against the general opinion, supported by the majesty of the government. In the actions of all men, and especially of princes who are not subject to a court of appeal, we must always look to the end. Let a prince, therefore, win victories and uphold his state; his methods will always be considered worthy, and everyone will praise them because the masses are always impressed by the superficial appearance of things, and the outcome of an enterprise (Adams, 1992: 49).

This implies, in the context of human nature, that human beings usually cling to the general opinion and judge more from appearance than from reality. That is why, as he holds, their sense of judgment is always based on the outcome of human actions more than in the actions themselves.

Furthermore, advising the prince on how to avoid flatterers, in Chapter XXIII, Machiavelli says that “men take such pleasure in their own concerns, and are so easily deceived about them, that this plague of flattery is hard to escape (Adams, 1992: 64). By this statement, he means that men are always consumed by pride and arrogance to the extent that sycophants understand and use this knowledge to get what they want from rulers. However, there is one area he shows, though ironically, that human beings can sometimes show some sense of gratitude and appreciation for a favour done to them. In Chapter XXI, where he advises the prince on how to act to acquire reputation, he says that it is safer for a prince to always take a stand for one powerful side against another, instead of being neutral. If the side that he supports eventually wins, the tendency is that he will not be oppressed by the victor because “men are never so dishonest that they will show gross ingratitude by turning immediately on their helpers. Besides, victories are not so decisive that the victor does not have to maintain some moderation, show some justice” (Adams, 1992: 62). What he means here is that people, no matter how cruel they are, naturally feel obligated after a favour or service, and that this bond is not broken capriciously.

Machiavelli also talks about human nature in *The Discourses*. In Chapter XXIX of Book I, titled “Which is more Ungrateful, a People or a Prince?” he says:

Men are by nature both ambitious and suspicious, and know not how to use moderation where their fortunes are concerned, it is impossible that the suspicion aroused in a prince

after the victory of one of his generals should not be increased by any arrogance in manner or speech displayed by the man himself. This being so, the prince cannot but look to his own security, and to this end consider putting him to death or depriving him of the standing he has thus obtained with his army and with his people by industriously pointing out that the victory was not gained by the general's valour, but by luck, or by the cowardice of the enemy or by the prudence of the officers associated with him in the action (Crick, 1970: 181 – 182).

Thus, for Machiavelli, many of the things men do are caused by ambition and suspicion. In Book III, Chapter XXI, Machiavelli wonders why Hannibal and Scipio who used different methods in Italy and Spain respectively got the same results, and comes to this conclusion:

Men are fond of novelty; so much so that those who are prosperous desire it as much as those who are poor. For, as has been said before, and rightly, in prosperity men get fed up, and in adversity cast down. Now, this desire for novelty throws open the door to anyone in the neighbourhood who puts himself at the head of a new movement. If he be a foreigner, men run after him; and if he be a local man, they crowd round him, boost him and push him forward; with the result that, whatever line he takes, he succeeds in making great headway in this locality. Besides which, men are moved in the main by doing two things; either by love or by fear. Hence it comes about that a person in authority may be either one who makes himself loved or one who makes himself feared. Indeed, a man who makes himself feared is usually better followed and better obeyed than one who makes himself loved (Crick, 1970: 463).

Commenting on Machiavelli's view of human nature, Gale states that "unlike Plato and Aristotle, Machiavelli used the concept of human nature in a descriptive rather than normative sense" (Gale: 2008). For him, "man's innate evil qualities are such, however, that they do not preclude the possibility of cooperative human endeavor; indeed some of these very qualities facilitate social cooperation". This is because under conditions of necessity, when their lives are threatened by a hostile physical environment or by an act of aggression, men's desire for self-preservation moves them to act cooperatively and even virtuously. For Spencer, Machiavelli's view of human nature "could have sounded more discordant to an age schooled to believe in mankind's awe-inspiring, creative potential. It seems better suited to our own, lived as it is in the shadow of humanity's towering inhumanity (Spencer: 2012).

Despite the vast number and eminence of modern scholars who try to rationalize Machiavelli's view of human nature, Gooch believes that "Machiavelli is unfair to mankind". According to him,

The professed realist only saw a limited portion of the vast field of experience. The will to power is not the sole key to human nature... If man were indeed the unruly and perfidious animal that he believes, *The Prince* might be accepted as a recipe for making the best of a bad job (Hornqvist: 2003).

On why Machiavelli sees human nature in such a bad perspective and proposes such application of force, cruelty and treachery by the prince in governance, I think that he wants to provide a framework for his view concerning a future prince that would unite and stabilize Italy. This is hinged on his belief that men are naturally ambitious and self-centred, and that they will prevent the city from becoming great if they are allowed too much liberty to operate with their greed and ambition. In other words, Machiavelli reasons that as soon as self-seeking individuals and sectarian interests begin to thrive in the city, factions start to emerge and people's desire for the collective interest of the society becomes correspondingly eroded. While I do not agree with the one-sided negative view he has about human nature, I think that he proposes such view of humanity out of his opinion that Italy required at that point in time a strong ruler who would have complete control of all Italian citizens and institutions. For him, this would only be achieved if the prince is allowed to govern without any moral scruples. But he appears not to foresee the implications of replicating his political ideas in a large scene and quite different political conditions. I say this because in our modern forms of totalitarianism and dictatorship we see the consequences of adopting Machiavellianism.

Again, I think that Machiavelli by his view of human nature wants to be as real as he can. In other words, he wants to present his illustrations the way they are "in real truth, rather than as they are imagined," just as he pledges in the beginning of Chapter XV. Undoubtedly, he describes in *The Prince* the nature of people the way he experiences them, giving no vent to any conventional or humanistic idea of human nature. His observations of the way of politics and extensive study of ancient history have taught him that the best way to deal with human nature is the application of deception, treachery and violence. However, I think that by his descriptions of humanity in *The Prince*, he chooses the human traits that support his claims and presents them in a way that will convince the young Lorenzo he dedicates the book to and also align with his purpose of writing

the book. Inasmuch as the traits he mentions in *The Prince* reflect the qualities people exhibited in his time, and even in our present-day society, I strongly believe that there were still in his time people who lived their political lives in conformity with conventional ideas of morality. And Machiavelli also believes that such people exist, only that in politics, for him, such people are walking the path “of self-destruction rather than self-preservation” (Bull, 1995: 48).

However, the important question now, or rather, the concern of this study is not whether Machiavelli’s view of human nature is valid or not, but whether the lifestyles of many Nigerians in the present-day society reflect what Machiavelli observed about human beings in his time. From the happenings in the present Nigerian society, one may say that the lifestyles of many Nigerians are similar to what Machiavelli observed in people of his time. Available empirical evidences show that in today’s Nigeria, out of greed and inordinate desire for acquisition or retention of political power, many perpetrate all kinds of cruel and unwholesome acts, such as lying to and cheating of others, intimidation, kidnapping and maiming of political opponents. To authenticate my argument in this section of the study, I will only highlight a number of instances of political kidnappings in Nigeria. Some high profile Nigerians who are victims of kidnap in recent times are:

1. Professor James Adichie, father of the popular Nigerian author, Chimamanda Adichie, who was kidnapped on 2nd May 2015 on his way to Anambra State, from Nssuka, Enugu State.
2. Justice Samuel Obayomi of Kogi State High Court, who was abducted on 25th May 2015 in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State.
3. Professor Rosemond Green-Osagholu, the Vice Chancellor of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, who was kidnapped on 18th June 2015 in Port Harcourt.
4. Sheikh Adam Idoko, the Deputy Secretary General of Nigerian Supreme Council For Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) who was kidnapped at Ogrute, Enugu-Ezike in Enugu State on 11th September 2015.
5. Olu Falae, former Secretary of the government of the Federation, former Minister of Finance and Presidential Candidate of the All Progressives Party in the 1999 election, who was kidnapped on 21st September 2015 in his farm at Ilado, along Igbatoro Road, Akure North Local Government area of Ondo State.
6. Nancy Keme Dickson, the sister of the Governor of Bayelsa State, Seriake Dickson, who was abducted at Yenogoa, Bayelsa State, on 19th December 2015.

7. Professor M. E. Ogburie, the Director of Centre for Continuing Education, River State University of Science and Technology, abducted on 18th January 2016 in Elele, Rivers State.
8. Chief Inegite Jonathan, uncle and foster father of former president of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, and Samuel Oki, Jonathan's cousin, who were kidnapped on 17th February 2016 at Otueke, Bayelsa State. Two days later, the decomposing body of Samuel was discovered. His uncle, Inegite, was released later.
9. Timilehin Olusa, Tofunmi Popoolaniyan and Deborah Akinayo – the three students of Babington Macaulay Junior Seminary, Ikorodu, Lagos State, who were abducted in their school on 29th February 2016.
10. Colonel Samaila Inusa, who was abducted in Kaduna, Kaduna State on 27th March 2016. He was later found dead after two days.
11. The three clergymen – Rev. Emmanuel Dzigau, Rev. Yakubu Dzarma and Rev. Iliya Anto – who were kidnapped in Dutse, along Abuja – Kaduna Road on 21st March 2016. While Reverends Dzigau and Dzarma were lucky to come out of hostage alive, Rev. Anto died out of exhaustion.
12. Stephen Maiyaki, Kogi State Commissioner for Lands and Survey, who was kidnapped on 30th May 2016, in his farm at Osara in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State.
13. Musa Salisu, 10 year old boy, who was kidnapped in Kano, Kano State, on 6th June 2016.
14. Lagos monarch, Yushua Oseni, the Oba Oniba of Ibaland, who was abducted on 16th July 2016 at his palace. The abductors shot his wife and killed his guard.

From the kidnap incidents listed above, one can see that political kidnapping is not a problem of a section of the country, but one that cuts across all parts of Nigeria. In May 2016, the Nigerian Senate approved a proposal to introduce a bill that will make kidnapping punishable by death. Expectedly, many people welcomed the decision arguing that the death penalty will deter the increasing number of kidnappers in the country. But there are those who argue that death penalty cannot be the solution to kidnapping and other forms of criminality (Bamgboye: 2018). They trace the history of death penalty in Nigeria from 1970, when it was first introduced by the military government of General Yakubu Gowon, to the present time and portray its inability to stop the crimes they were attached to. Consequently, they argue that there is no credible evidence that death penalty will stop political kidnapping in the country (Popoola: 2016). In the midst of all the

arguments, one thing that is certain is the fact that the motive behind most political kidnap cases in Nigeria is greed as well as the desire to acquire or retain power by all means. This is undoubtedly a typical manifestation of human nature as Machiavelli sees it. And it may not be wrong to attribute this kind of manifesting human nature to the adoption by many Nigerian politicians of the principle that the end justifies the means.

#### **4.3. CONCLUSION**

On the strength of the instances highlighted above, there is no gainsaying the fact the ideas expressed by Machiavelli in *The Prince* find replication in the practices of Nigerian politicians and non-politicians alike. Therefore, I will conclude this chapter of the study by agreeing with Okorie who opines that Nigeria perhaps represents “the best theatre for Machiavellian politics” (Okorie, 2006: 33) and Oyekunle who believes that “Nigerian politicians profess to be democratic when indeed they are devoted to Machiavellian principles” (Oyekunle, 2015: 180).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROPOSITION OF THE STUDY WITH THE EVENTS IN THE POST-INDEPENDENCE NIGERIAN SOCIETY (1960 -1999)**

### **5.1. INTRODUCTION**

In the year 2008, Mefor asserted,

Nigerian political elite are the worst to be found in any clime, bereft of any progressive idea, and overly corrupt and hungry. To them, power and leadership are ends in themselves, not means for accomplishing any tasks or meeting any common goals (Mefor: 2008).

Seven years later, Adegboyega observed,

The practice of democracy, and more importantly, the acquisition of political power since independence, has always taken after Machiavellian politics. The mentality of political leaders is incompatible with democratic mentality, no political leader is ready to step down for anybody (Adegboyega, 2015: 6).

The previous chapter examined Machiavelli's ideas in *The Prince* in relation to the happenings in the political sphere of Nigeria. The findings indicate that the ideas are replicated by many Nigerians in their social and political practices. This chapter analyzes the political events in Nigeria from 1960, when Nigeria secured independence from Britain, to 1999, when the last military regime returned the country to democracy. The purpose is to explore the proposition that the Nigerian society right from independence has been a manifestation of Machiavelli's idea that the end justifies the means. For orderliness and clarity, the presentation of the events and analysis in this chapter will be done chronologically.

### **5.2. EVENTS IN THE FIRST REPUBLIC (1960 TO THE FIRST MILITARY COUP, 1966)**

Nigeria secured independence from British rule on 1st October 1960, and on 16th November 1960, Nnamdi Azikiwe became the first Nigerian Governor-General, while Abubakar Tafawa Balewa assumed the position of Prime minister. They held their respective positions until 1st October 1963 when Nigeria became a republic. When Nigeria became a republic, Nnamdi Azikiwe, who continued as the Head of State, took the title of President, while Abubakar Tafawa Balewa continued as Prime Minister. Like I have noted in Chapter One, the introductory chapter, by the time Nigeria got independence, it was entering a period of rapid social and economic change, and

many people were quite optimistic about its future. With abundant mineral deposits, including oil, and human resources, as well as stable economy, the future of the young nation looked very bright and promising. Nobody would have imagined that in the next few years, inordinate power struggle, ethnic sentiments and self-centredness on the part of political leaders would lead the promising young nation to political chaos that would culminate in a military coup, counter coup and a thirty-month civil war. Looking down memory lane, there are indications that right from independence many political leaders in Nigeria manifested by their socio-political activities the Machiavellian principle that the end justifies the means.

It happened that at independence no party was able to win an absolute majority in the preceding Federal elections. Consequently, the Federal government was formed by a coalition of the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) made up of mainly people of Northern Nigeria and the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) made up of mostly people from Eastern part of Nigeria. The opposition party was the Action Group (AG) made up of mainly people from Western part of Nigeria. While the coalition government leaders were Nnamdi Azikiwe, the Governor-General and Leader of NCNC, and Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the Deputy Leader of NPC and Prime Minister, Obafemi Awolowo was the leader of the opposition party, AG. The implication of the above-highlighted political setting in post-colonial Nigeria is that selfish tendencies and ethnic inclinations, which Machiavelli in *The Prince* holds that human beings are naturally inclined to, began to manifest itself early in the life of Nigeria as a nation. The three main political parties, NPC, NCNC and AG were respectively based on the three main ethnic groups in the country – the Hausa in the Northern part of Nigeria, the Igbo in the Eastern part of Nigeria, and the Yoruba in the Western part of Nigeria. Though there were many other ethnic nationalities in Nigeria, they operated in the First Republic under the umbrella of the three main ethnic groups – Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba – until the creation of more states later in the life of the nation.

During Nigeria's pre-independence elections of 1959 and the Federal elections of 1964, it was observed that voters cast their votes along tribal and regional divides. That was why at independence in 1960, none of the three political parties had a clear majority to form a government at the Federal level. This corroborates what Machiavelli said in *The Prince*, Chapter XXIII, that "men take such pleasure in their own concerns, and are so easily deceived about them" (Adams, 1992: 64). The implication of this is that the political parties of the First Republic were formed

along tribal lines, showing that the post-colonial political leaders appeared to be interested more in promoting the affairs of their respective tribes than those of the country at large. This brought about inter-tribal suspicion and rivalry in Nigeria, which among other things, led to the first military coup in Nigeria and the collapse of the First Republic. This takes me to my assumption in Chapter One of this study that election violence and thuggery contributed largely to the fall of Nigeria's First Republic. The question now should be: What are the things that led to the fall of Nigeria's First Republic and how are they related to Machiavelli's observations and postulations in *The Prince*?

In trying to answer this important question, there is the need to firstly look at the issue of population census in Nigeria, the first of which also triggered the chain of events that led to the collapse of the First Republic. There is every indication that tribal selfishness and quest for ethnic superiority and power control manifested in the intrigues associated with the first population census in independent Nigeria. That 1962 census, conducted from 13th – 27th May 1962, was very important because the allocation of seats in the Federal House of Representatives as well as revenue allocation were based on population. By implication, the result of the census would determine the part of the country that would dominate in the political life of the new nation and the part that would receive more of the Federal allocation. Because of tribal sentiments manifesting at the heart of every issue in the newly independent nation, there were rumours that the census results yet to be published were grossly inflated to the extent that it gave the Northern Region a larger population than both Eastern and Western Regions put together. The AG and NCNC, out of fear that the North would, as a result of the census, continue their political dominance in the country, attacked the census result bitterly. The Prime Minister promised to look into the whole questions arising from the census. In September 1963, it was announced that a new census would be held later in the year, and it actually took place in November 1963.

At the conclusion of the second census, the results, finally announced in September 1964, confirmed the dominant position given to the North by the first census. The second census gave the entire country a population of 55 million: 29.7 million to the North and 25.3 million to the other parts of the country. The East, Mid-West, and part of West under Awolowo rejected the census results, while the North and part of West under the control of S. A. Akintola (who by then had problems with Awolowo, the leader of AG, and was therefore replaced by the party in 1962

with S. A. Adegbenro as the Premier of Western Region) accepted the results. The NCNC Government in the East took the Federal Government to court on the census issue, but the suit was dismissed by the Federal Supreme Court which ruled that it had no jurisdiction over the administrative function of the Federal Government. Till today, that unresolved crisis resulting from the 1963 census results has persisted, to the extent that many Nigerians doubt the figures put forward in the later censuses, 1973 (the result of which was cancelled); 1991 (88,992,220); and 2006 (140,003,542).

Apart from the ethnic-mindedness which has already manifested in the pre-independent elections in 1959, the post-independent political activities, and the 1962 and 1963 censuses controversies, other manifestations of the adherence of post-independent Nigerian politicians to Machiavellianism, which contributed to the fall of Nigeria's First Republic, are undue political trickery and deception, massive electoral fraud and violence. It happened that right from the beginning of the First Republic in Nigeria, the NPC-NCNC led coalition was hostile to the opposition party, AG, and they showed it by doing everything possible, though subtly, to destroy the AG. To whittle the power of AG in Western Region where the AG dominated, they sponsored and facilitated in the Federal House of Representatives the passage of a motion for the creation of a Mid-West State out of the minority area of Western Region. The state was in reality created, against the wish of the AG, in 1963, while Northern Region and Eastern Region, where NPC and NCNC respectively had political dominance were left intact in spite of the numerous ethnic nationalities that were clamouring for identity in the two regions.

The ruling coalition also exploited to their advantage the division in AG between the faction led by Awolowo who wanted to continue in opposition until the day they would win Federal power and that led by S. A. Akintola, the AG Deputy Leader and Premier of Western Region, who wished to be part of the Federal Government. Tension escalated over the matter, leading to the summoning of AG Party Conference in May 1962 and replacement of Akintola as Premier of Western Region by S. A. Adegbenro, who was loyal to the party leader, Awolowo. Consequently, riots broke out in the Western House of Assembly as Akintola's supporters and those from the opposition party, NCNC, tried to prove that Adegbenro, the new Premier, did not have the support of the majority of the house. Seizing the opportunity, the Federal Government imposed a state of emergency on Western Region, and appointed a Federal Government Administrator, M. A. Majekodunmi, who

administered the region for the next six months. In the following month, June 1962, under the guise of fighting corruption and insecurity, a Commission of Enquiry was set up to examine the affairs of six Western Government corporations. In September, AG leaders, including Awolowo, were arrested and charged for treason. After a celebrated trial, Awolowo was found guilty and sentenced to ten years imprisonment, which on appeal was reduced to seven. Anthony Enahoro, another leading figure of the AG, was repatriated from Britain to face the same charges, and was sentenced to fifteen years, which was later reduced to ten. For me, the trial and imprisonment were ways in which the ruling Federal coalition practicalized the Machiavellian postulation that “there are two ways of fighting: by law and by force,” and that “a prince must understand how to make nice use” of both (*The Prince*, Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1995: 54). With the removal of the two leaders of the opposition party, they thought, it was just a matter of time for the annihilation of the AG.

In January 1963, when the state of emergency was lifted in the Western Region, Akintola, who by then had become a strong ally of the ruling NPC, resumed as the Premier of Western Region. He formed a new party, the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) with his supporters and some members of the NCNC. The new party, with the backing of the ruling Federal coalition, controlled the Western House of Assembly but it was not representative of the people of the West, majority of whom supported the AG and the NCNC. As a result of these developments, relations between Akintola’s supporters and those of AG and NCNC were so bitter and hostile that political violence and thuggery became the order of the day in Western Region. As the first Federal parliamentary elections conducted in the newly independent nation in 1964 drew close, there was palpable tension in the country, as all kinds of political scheming and manoeuvring were applied by both the ruling coalition and the opposition. In July 1964, the NCNC abandoned its coalition with the NPC and declared its decision to have joint campaign with the AG in the coming Federal elections. Reacting to this development, the NPC decided to join hands with Akintola’s NNDP. In August 1964, the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) was formed, comprising the NPC, NNDP, the Mid-West Democratic Front (MDF) and Niger Delta Congress (NDC).

This was followed in October 1964 by the formation of United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) made up of the NCNC, AG, Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC). In addition to the tensed political scenario that resulted from the desire of the political elites to acquire or retain power by all means, earlier on, in June 1964, a

nationwide strike was called by the Joint Action Committee of the Nigerian Trade Unions as a result of the Federal Government's delay in acting on the recommendations of the Morgan Commission for substantial increases in the basic salaries of workers. As the labour unrest continued, there were communal riots in the North and West, and mounting public criticism of the corruption in public life. Seeing the happenings as the handwork of the opposition, the ruling NPC launched strong attacks on its rival southern-based parties, and they (the southern-based parties) returned the attacks in equally strong or even stronger language. These incidents heated up further the already tensed political atmosphere and led to more irregularities and cases of thuggery and intimidation.

The already bad situation was worsened when the election was postponed for several weeks as a result of discrepancies between the number of names on the voting register and number on the census returns. Sensing that they could not win an overall majority, the leaders of UPGA boycotted the elections, thereby giving their opponents, i.e. the candidates of NNA, a landslide victory. Everybody knew that a national crisis was imminent and there were even talks of a possible military take-over. To avert such a development, the then Prime Minister of the Federation, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, agreed to form a Government of National Unity, and also to have fresh elections, which later held on 18th March 1965, in the constituencies where no effective election took place due to the UPGA boycott.

The final thing that led to the collapse of the First Republic was the Western Region elections held on 11th October 1965. During the campaign, there were cases of violence, intimidation and assassination of opponents or destruction of their properties perpetrated by both the NNA and the UPGA. The UPGA, led by Adegbenro, accused Akintola's Government of rigging the election, seeing that many of Akintola's candidates were returned unopposed notwithstanding that the UPGA had put forward candidates in the constituencies concerned. Akintola and his party were declared to have won 88 out of the 98 seats. In a counter reaction, Adegbenro summoned a Press Conference in the house of jailed Awolowo at Ibadan and announced that he won 68 out of the 98 seats, and not the 10 seats that were credited to him by the electoral umpire. He pronounced himself the Premier of the Region and appointed eight ministers of his cabinet, thereby setting the stage for a serious political crisis.

In the midst of all these, Akintola was sworn in as the Premier of the Region, while Adegbenro was arrested. Consequently, chaos and complete lawlessness broke out all over the Western Region, leading to massive destruction of lives and properties. It was reported that during the crisis, about 1000 people lost their lives and about 5,000 houses were burnt down, while the newly sworn-in premier, Akintola, went into hiding. Surprisingly, as the political cataclysm in Western Region persisted, the Federal Government did not intervene, creating disillusionment in the minds of some people and the suspicion that the hand of the ruling party was in the happenings. In the midst of the despondency, not many were surprised when the military, delayed by the Commonwealth Conference held in Lagos in January 1966, struck on the night of 14th – 15th January 1966, immediately after the Conference, and terminated the First Republic.

In view of all that happened in the Nigerian First Republic, as highlighted above, one may say without fear of equivocation that the political activities of many Nigerians in the First Republic reflected much of Machiavelli's principle that the end justifies the means. This is because many of the then politicians and non-politicians alike manifested much of the traits that Machiavelli observed in *The Prince* about human nature, and also replicated his views on political deception, treachery, cruelty and violence. This adherence to Machiavellianism was characterized in their lifestyles of personal and tribal interests, lies and deceit, thuggery and intimidation, violence and cruelty, electoral fraud and rigging, which undoubtedly led to the collapse of the First Republic.

### **5.3. FIRST MILITARY COUP AND REGIME IN NIGERIA (1966)**

Events in Nigeria's First Republic, as highlighted above, indicate that the fall of the First Republic may not be unconnected with putting into practice by the then political leaders the ideas enunciated by Machiavelli in his treatise, *The Prince*. As I have noted above, the first military coup in Nigeria, which terminated the life of Nigeria's First Republic, took place on the night of 14th – 15th January 1966. Subsequent events show that the activities of that night triggered in the country incidents in which Nigerian military leaders, just like their civilian counterparts, manifested the ideas of Machiavelli in *The Prince* on human nature, treachery, violence and cruelty. The incidents, which no doubt bear on the problems confronting Nigeria as a nation today, spanned for thirteen years until the handover in 1979 of the reins of power to a democratically elected president, Shehu Shagari.

Machiavelli, on human nature, says:

It is a general rule about men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, fearful of danger and greedy for gain (Chapter XVII. Adams, 1992: 46).

Men are so simple of mind, and so much dominated by their immediate needs, that a deceitful man will always find plenty who are ready to be deceived (Adams, 1992: 48).

Men are by nature both ambitious and suspicious, and know not how to use moderation where their fortunes are concerned (*Discourses*, Book1, Chapter XXIX, Crick, 1970: 181).

On treachery, he says:

Contemporary experience shows that princes who have achieved great things have been those who have given their word lightly, who have known how to trick men with their cunning, and who in the end have overcome those abiding with honest principles (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1995: 54).

A prudent ruler cannot, and must not, honour his word when it places him at a disadvantage and when the reasons for which he made the promise no longer exist (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1995: 55).

On violence, he says:

It is the nature of people to be fickle; to persuade them of something is easy, but to make them stand fast in that conviction is hard. Hence things must be arranged so that when they no longer believe they can be compelled to believe by force (Chapter VI. Adams, 1992: 17).

There are two ways of fighting: by law and by force. The first way is natural for men, and the second to beasts. But as the first way often proves inadequate, one must have recourse to the second. So a prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1981: 99).

And on cruelty, he says;

Indeed, there is no surer way of keeping a city than by devastation. Whoever becomes the master of a city accustomed to freedom, and does not destroy it, may expect to be destroyed himself (Chapter V. Bull, 1995: 16).

The Duke (Cesare Borgia) was a man of such ferocity and prowess, and he understood so well that men must be either won over or destroyed. ... So having summed up all that the duke did, I cannot possibly censure him. Rather, I think I have been right in putting him as an example for all those who have acquired power through good fortune or the arms of others (Chapter V. Bull, 1995: 25).

There are facts to show that the coup that terminated the First Republic was a manifestation of adherence by the military to the above-cited ideas articulated by Machiavelli in *The Prince*. As it happened, on that night of 14th to 15th January 1966, a group of majors based in Kaduna staged a coup in which the Federal Prime Minister (Abubakar Tafawa Balewa), the Premiers of the North (Ahmadu Bello) and West (Samuel Ladoke Akintola), the Federal Minister of Finance (Festus Okotie-Eboh), and most senior army officers were killed. The coup plotters, led by Chukwuma Nzeogwu, did not succeed in taking over the Government, because they failed to kill the head of the army, J. T. U. Aguiyi Ironsi. Therefore, Ironsi and other surviving officers were able to put down the coup and restore their control of the army. But out of fear, the politicians, already discredited by the political hostilities and other controversies that characterized the First Republic, handed over power to the army, and Ironsi became the Head of State. Commenting on that first military coup in Nigeria, Adejumobi and Momoh argue that it failed because the officers that masterminded it were politically naïve and inexperienced in the art of coup planning and execution (Adejumobi and Momoh, 1995: 360).

The first fact that shows Machiavellian influence in the coup that terminated the First Republic in Nigeria is its application of cruelty and violence. The coup plotters tried to take over the reins of power in the country through violence and brutality – an attempt that resulted in the assassination of high profile people in the corridors of power. That was, without any doubt, a practical application of the above-cited Machiavellian principles: that “there is no surer way of keeping a city than by devastation,” that “a prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man” and that “men must be either won over or destroyed.” The coup typifies Machiavelli’s view that one can use any available means to acquire or retain power since it is the end that justifies the means. In other words, it falls into Machiavelli’s concepts of *virtu* and necessity which I have explained in Chapter Three of this study.

Secondly, with the benefit of hindsight, it is now clear that the coup was a manifestation of inordinate ambition, treachery, insubordination, selfishness and greediness which according to Machiavelli are traits of human nature. The usual reason given for military incursion into politics is that they come to correct the ills of the past civilian administrations (Adejumobi and Momoh, 1995: 358). And truly, the first coup which ended the First Republic was widely welcomed by the entire country as a relief from the chaos and corruptions of the civilian regime. People were excited, especially with the promise by the military that they came to correct the ills of the past six years. However, years of military rule in Nigeria have shown that the military were really not the “angels” or the “messiahs” that they have always presented themselves to be whenever they intervened in the politics of Nigeria. From the things that happened in the military eras, they are in fact known to be as corrupt as, or even more corrupt than, the civilians that they pushed aside.

Developments after the coup indicated that the ethnic sentiments and inordinate desire for ethnic supremacy which partly destroyed the First Republic have also permeated the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Consequently, the northerners were bitter because their two chief political leaders were killed alongside the Western Premier and Mid-Western Federal Minister, whereas the Eastern Premier was not killed. Moreover, whereas some high ranking northern officers were killed in the coup, only one Igbo officer met that fate. Furthermore, although the coup was carried out by non-Igbo army officers, it was led by an Igbo officer and it also brought in a government headed by an Igbo man. All these made the coup to look like an Igbo takeover, which probably was not the intention of its ring-leaders. Added to the fears of the northerners was the action of the new Head of State, Aguiyi Ironsi, who in May 1966, barely six months after takeover, abolished the regions by decree. By that, he abolished the federal structure of government and replaced it with a unitary system of government, a situation that the northerners interpreted as an attempt to bring the northern region under southern control and Igbo domination. Consequently, about the end of May 1966, the pogrom began, with the massacre of southerners, mostly Igbo people, who were living in the North.

#### **5.4. SECOND MILITARY COUP AND REGIME IN NIGERIA (1966 -1975)**

In July 1966, a second military coup took place, resulting in the death of the Head of State, Major General J. T. U. Aguiyi Ironsi and numerous other officers of southern origin, including Lieutenant Colonel Fajuyi, a Yoruba officer. The counter-coup was planned by soldiers from the Northern

part of Nigeria for two reasons, which when critically analyzed portrayed the same tribal sentiments, inordinate ambition and greed that were hallmarks of the overthrown First Republic. The first was to retaliate the first military coup in which the Prime Minister and Premier of Northern Region were among those killed, and the second was to correct what appeared like their losing grip of political power in the country. The second coup brought Lieutenant Colonel Yakubu Gowon, from a northern minority group, as the new Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Upon assumption of office as the Head of State, Gowon restored the Federal system of government, and also summoned a conference in Lagos to review the constitution. These moves did not seem to have reassured the northerners sufficiently as a second outbreak of massacres of Igbo people in the North occurred, a situation that cut short the work of the Constitutional Review Conference.

As a result of these massacres thousands of southerners in the North, mostly Igbo indigenes, streamed home. Their stories led to reprisal action against northerners in southern towns, making them to leave for their homes. Incidentally, the reprisal attacks in turn led to fiercer wave of attacks on southerners in the North. At this point, the Governor of Eastern Region, Lieutenant Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, summoned all Igbo people living in the North back home and asked all non-easterners, with the exception of Igbo people from Mid-Western Nigeria, to leave the Eastern Region. Not recognizing Gowon's position as the Head of State, he refused to deal with the Federal Government. However, he agreed to attend a meeting on the future of the country with Gowon and his fellow Governors, but refused to attend such meetings in Lagos for fear of his safety. Consequently, the meeting was held at Aburi in Ghana in January 1967, with the Ghanaian Head of State as host. In that meeting, Gowon, Ojukwu, and other military governors and service chiefs appeared to have reached an agreement that Nigeria would be run as a loose federation, which would make each region virtually autonomous. But when they came back, the Federal Government and government of Eastern Region differed in their interpretations on how much autonomy they have agreed at Aburi for the regions. This implies that the Aburi talks and its agreement, popularly known as "Aburi Accord" had failed to provide the needed settlement of the ensuing crisis, thereby paving the way for the secession of the East from the Federation.

To make matters worse for Ojukwu and his Igbo people, Gowon on 27th May 1967 issued a decree dividing Nigeria's four regions into twelve states. The East was divided into three states – the

predominantly Igbo East Central State, Rivers State and Cross River State. The North was divided into six states – North-Western State, North-Eastern State, Kano State, North-Central State, Benue-Plateau State and Kwara State. The West was divided into two – Western State and a new Lagos State carved from it. The Mid-West Region was left intact as a state. I share the view of many analysts of Nigerian political scene that Gowon primarily divided Nigeria into twelve states at that time as a way of scattering the momentum generated by the issue of Eastern Region seceding from Nigeria. For me, by that action, he practicalized Machiavelli's view that says,

There are two ways of fighting: by law and by force. The first way is natural for men, and the second to beasts. But as the first way often proves inadequate, one must have recourse to the second. So a prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1981: 99).

By that creation, Igbo people were cut off from the predominantly Igbo city of Port Harcourt, and from most of the oil producing areas of the former Eastern Region. It gave the minorities in the former Eastern Region, who now have two states – River State and Cross River State – out of the three existing states that formerly made up the Eastern Region, a sense of being part of the Nigeria project and the impression that the struggle for secession of Biafra from Nigeria is an Igbo thing. Even in the present-day renewed agitation for a sovereign state of Biafra, that impression has continued in the minds of the minorities in the former Eastern Region who now have two more states, Akwa-Ibom State and Bayelsa State.

Meanwhile, to Ojukwu and like-minded Igbo people, Gowon's act was seen as a calculated attempt to rob them of their due place in Nigeria and a threat to their corporate existence and survival. Three days later, 30th May 1967, Ojukwu, with the backing of the elders and people of Igbo land, proclaimed the independent Republic of Biafra, comprising the three existing states that were formerly known as Eastern Region of Nigeria. As it turned out, the Igbo people had sympathizers in the outside world that, because of the ugly massacres preceding their declaration of independence, saw them as a people fighting for self-determination. Four African States – Tanzania, Zambia Gabon and Ivory Coast recognized the new Biafran regime, while France, though it did not recognize Biafra, gave the regime some help. A number of international charitable organizations – Caritas, the World Council of Churches, and the Red Cross – offered considerable

help in sustaining the people of Biafra. Apart from France, other great powers supported Nigeria which was seen to be fighting to preserve its territorial integrity.

As observed above, within the Biafran territory itself which was formerly the Eastern Region of Nigeria, there were serious divisions. The minorities in the Eastern Region who were in the two newly created states – Rivers State and Cross River State – were not in support of the new Biafran State. Though they did not speak it out, their body language showed that they saw the secession as the concern of the Igbo people, now found mainly in the East Central State as a result of Gowon's State creation of 27th May. I see the attitude of the minorities as manifestation of the same selfish inclinations and tribal bias that have characterized the behaviour of most people from all parts of Nigeria right from independence.

Expectedly, in line with the Machiavellian idea that the most important thing for the ruler is the maintenance and preservation of his power, and that it should be achieved through any necessary means, the Federal Government made it clear that it would not tolerate secession. However, they seemed to underestimate the strength of Biafra's determination to defend its secession, and so called its action against Biafra a mere police operation. For me, the Federal Government in thinking that the Biafran confrontation would be a minor push-over seemed to overlook the implication of Machiavelli's statement that "men sooner forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony (Bull, 1981: 97). They tend to be ignorant of the fact that the early massacres of Igbo people in the North made the secessionists to have the view that the Federal army was bent on wiping out the Igbo race. Therefore, they were ready to defend their lives and secession with the last drop of their blood. Consequently, what the Federal Government thought was to be a few months operation turned out to be a full-scale war that dragged on for thirty months.

Nevertheless, at the end of the whole drama, the Federal armies, which were much more equipped and mobilized than the Biafran forces, prevailed and won the battle. Their victory was made possible because of the support given to them by most of the world powers who believed that their economic interests would be better served by a united than by a dismembered Nigeria. Also, because of the Nigerian blockade, the Biafran forces lacked so much of the necessary materials, such as food, clothing and military hardware. By the middle of 1969, as the odds were increasingly against the Biafran forces and the Federal troops were steadily and progressively closing in on them, it became obvious that Biafra was on the verge of collapse. It was thus not surprising that

on realizing that courage and determination alone could not prosecute and win the war for them, the Biafran forces surrendered unconditionally in January 1970. Their leader, Odumegwu Ojukwu, at the last minute escaped to Ivory Coast, leaving his commander, Philip Effiong, to announce the Biafran surrender.

In line with Machiavelli's advice that "a prince should appear a man of compassion, a man of good faith, a man of integrity, a kind and a religious man" (Bull, 1995: 56), the Nigerian Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon received the Biafran surrender with the famous "no victor, no vanquished" speech. Commendably, he followed it up with an amnesty for the majority of those who participated in the Biafran uprising, as well as a programme of "Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (the three R's) aimed at repairing the extensive damage done to the economy and infrastructure of the Eastern Region during the years of the war. Many Igbo people were therefore reabsorbed into the Federal administration, while many who left the North at the time of the massacres returned to their old places. Nigeria won the admiration of the secessionists and the rest of the world for this generosity in victory and the policy of reconciling the defeated secessionists with the rest of the nation. It is believed that Gowon's administration's policy of Reconciliation, Reconstruction and Rehabilitation (the three Rs) did so much to save the young Nigerian nation. Regarded as a model of how to secure post-war peace, it was seen as one of the greatest achievements of that regime.

The postwar years saw Nigeria enjoying a meteoric, oil-fueled, economic upturn in the course of which the scope of activity of the Nigerian Federal Government grew to an unprecedented degree. However, the period also showed another manifestation of human greed and covetousness, just as Machiavelli observed about human beings – an increase in corruption, mostly bribery, misappropriation and embezzlement of funds among Federal Government officials. Although Gowon was never found complicit in the corrupt practices, he was often accused of turning a blind eye to the activities of his staff and cronies. On his side, he exhibited the same human greed and self-centredness that Machiavelli talks about by what seemed like a sit-tight attitude in which he cancelled twice his earlier dates of returning the country to civilian rule on 1st October 1974 and 1976 and in fact postponed the handover date indefinitely. According to him, the promise had been premature and the military would stay in power for some time to come. That act, no doubt, was a practical example of replicating the following precepts of Machiavelli:

Princes who have achieved great things have been those who have given their word lightly, who have known how to trick men with their cunning, and who in the end have overcome those abiding by honest principles (Bull, 1981: 99).

A man who wants to act virtuously in every way necessarily comes to grief among many who are not virtuous. Therefore if a prince wants to maintain his rule he must learn how not to be virtuous, and make use of this or not according to need. (Chapter XV. Bull, 1981: 90 – 91).

A prudent ruler cannot, and must not, honour his word when it places him at a disadvantage and when the reasons for which he made his promise no longer exist. If all men were good, this precept would not be good; but because men are wretched creatures who would not keep their word to you, you need not keep your word to them (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1995: 55).

As the criticism over the unwillingness of Gowon to relinquish power continued, some military officers capitalized on it and other weaknesses of his government to topple his government. On 29th July 1975, while Gowon was attending an Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit in Kampala, Uganda, a group of officers led by Colonel Joe Nanven Garba announced his overthrow.

### **5.5. THIRD MILITARY COUP AND REGIME IN NIGERIA (1975 - 1976)**

The coup plotters that overthrew the administration of General Yakubu Gowon appointed Brigadier Murtala Ramat Muhammed (later General), a member of Gowon's government, as the new Head of State and Brigadier Olusegun Obasanjo (later Lt. General) as his deputy. The generality of the Nigerian populace welcomed the new regime of Murtala Muhammed with a great sense of relief, hoping that it would take Nigeria back to the path of order after many years of drifting, corruption and near despair.

Evidently, the new Head of State appeared to be well-versed in Machiavellianism. He seemed to understand perfectly the following Machiavellian ideas:

A prince has of necessity to be so prudent that he knows how to escape the evil reputation attached to those vices which could lose him his state, and how to avoid those vices which are not so dangerous (Chapter XV. Bull, 1995: 49).

The prince should, as I have already suggested, determine to avoid anything which will make him hated and despised. So long as he does so, he will have done what he should and he will run no risk whatsoever (Chapter XIX. Bull, 1995: 57).

In line with the above precepts, the new Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed promptly and ably waded into the areas of the nation's enormous problems which appeared to be overlooked by his predecessor. He immediately scrapped the controversial 1973 census, which was alleged to have been figured in favour of the North, and reverted to the use of the 1963 count for official purposes. He replaced Gowon's twelve state governors and top Federal officials with new ones, as a way of restoring public confidence in the Federal government, and went further to endear himself in the hearts of the people by announcing 1979 as a new date for returning civilian rule to the country. Like Gowon, Muhammed created seven more states for the Federation, thereby increasing the number from twelve to nineteen. Because of the chronic congestion and overcrowding of Lagos, he decided to establish a new Federal Capital at Abuja, a more central location in the interior part of the country and a place not identified with any particular ethnic group.

It was therefore not surprising that Murtala Muhammed endeared himself to all Nigerians, irrespective of tribal or religious affiliation. Even now, over 40 years after his assassination, many adult Nigerians who witnessed Murtala Muhammed's policies still have high regard of him to the extent that he is somehow regarded as a folk hero. According to Eluwa, "Murtala Muhammed gave Nigeria at the time she badly needed it, a strong, purposeful, honest and dynamic leadership. He set the country on a new direction and gave Nigerians new hopes, new visions, a new sense of commitment and a new level of performance" (Eluwa *et al*, 2013: 275).

However, in the ensuing euphoria, Muhammed, decided to act in another Machiavellian fashion by trying to consolidate his hold on power. Just as Machiavelli advised that a prudent prince will use any available means to conquer and maintain his state, Muhammed ventured into restructuring and sanitization of the Nigerian military. He considerably reduced the powers of the new governors at the centre by excluding them from membership of the Supreme Military Council (SMC), which was the highest decision-making organ of the military administration, unlike their predecessors in

Gowon's era who were members of the SMC. Instead, they were expected to administer Federal policies handed down by the Head of State through the military council. He imposed the authority of the Federal Government in areas reserved for the states before his administration, thereby restricting the power of state governments and their governors in determining and executing policies. He made broadcasting a Federal monopoly, and took over the operation of the nation's two largest newspapers and state-run universities.

When analyzed critically, it is easy to decipher that Muhammed's restriction of the power of state governors was a subtle application of Machiavelli's statement that "the prince who does not detect evils the moment they appear is lacking in true wisdom" (Chapter XIII. Bull, 1995: 45). He knew that Gowon's government was discredited and subsequently overthrown because he had no stranglehold on political power and the information that was released to Nigerians. Therefore, he seemed to have introduced the policy as a way of strengthening and consolidating his hold on power at the centre, knowing that once the influence of the governors of the component states was whittled, their loyalty to the centre would be guaranteed, as well as their ability to antagonize or dethrone him. He knew very well that in any country public information is usually the source behind the people's support for or revolt against the government. By making broadcasting and education a Federal monopoly, he would be able to monitor and control the information that would go out to the Nigerian public and the information and lectures that would be passed onto the university students. The implication of the above was that the response of the Nigerian public and students at any time to his administration would depend on the information they had through the news media and their school curricula.

To cut the Nigerian army to size, he boldly began the process of demobilization of 100,000 troops from the ranks of the armed forces. Many saw this move as an indirect way of weeding out of the Nigerian army those he perceived as threats to his personal ambition, and also handing control of the Nigerian army to a particular section of the country. His announcement of plans to that effect led to an abortive coup led by Lt. Col. Buka Suka Dimka on 13th February 1976, in which he was assassinated, along with his Aide-De-Camp (ADC), Lieutenant Akintunde Akinsehinwa, Orderly and driver. The low profile security policy adopted by Muhammed made it easy for the coup plotters to ambush his car while en route to his office at Dodan Barracks. The only visible sign of protection around him was a pistol carried by his orderly, and this made his assassination an easy

task. Today, as a way of immortalizing him, his portrait adorns Nigeria's twenty Naira note. Also, Nigeria's foremost airport, Murtala Muhammed International Airport Lagos, is named in his honour.

## **5.6. OBASANJO'S MILITARY REGIME (1976 -1979)**

The coup that led to the assassination of Murtala Muhammed was foiled because the plotters missed General Olusegun Obasanjo who was Murtala's deputy and Chief of Staff Supreme Headquarters, as well as the third in command, General Theophilus, Danjuma who was the Chief of Army Staff. Although the plotters were able to take over the radio station to announce the coup, they failed to monopolize communications, thereby enabling Obasanjo and Danjuma to establish a chain of command and re-establish security in Lagos. Upon regaining control, Obasanjo was appointed the Head of State on 14th February 1976 by the Supreme Military Council, while Danjuma became his deputy. Just like his predecessor, Murtala Muhammed, Obasanjo upon assumption of office immediately replaced and reassigned the state governors, appointed just few months earlier by his predecessor. Many observers of political events of that time considered the replacement of the governors needless, arguing that since Obasanjo was the number two man in Murtala's government, and was continuing with the policies already put in place by his predecessor, he should have known the state governors well to the point of working with them.

However, reflecting now on the replacement and resassignment of those officers by Obasanjo at that point in time, one may not be wrong to say that he put into practice the Machiavellian precept which says:

The first opinion that is formed of a ruler's intelligence is based on the quality of the men he has around him. When they are competent and loyal he can always be considered wise, because he has been able to recognize their competence and to keep them loyal. But when they are otherwise, the prince is always open to adverse criticism; because his first mistake has been in the choice of his ministers (Bull, 1995: 73).

Obasanjo seemed to be aware of the implications of having round pegs in square holes as state governors, and so did what he needed to do at that point in time, notwithstanding the public criticisms mounted against his action. Secondly, Obasanjo by that act seemed to understand perfectly that the Nigerian army had become badly politicized since the first coup in 1966. Thus,

he needed to consolidate his hold on power since it was natural that the loyalty of the governors he inherited from his predecessor would never be the same with that of those he appointed himself. This is in line with Machiavelli's idea which says:

When you see a minister thinking more of himself than you, and seeking his own profit in everything he does, such a one will never be a good minister, you will never be able to trust him. ...a man entrusted with the task of government must never think of himself but of the prince, and must never concern himself with anything except the prince's affair (Bull, 1995: 74).

According to Machiavelli, when the relations between the princes and their ministers are not built on trust, "the result is always disastrous for both of them" (Bull, 1995: 74). However, inasmuch as Obasanjo would be excused of the act on the pretext that he wanted to make use of the best hands available, it is clear that the act was primarily committed in order to strengthen and preserve his hold on power.

It is praiseworthy that the Obasanjo's military regime kept its promise to return the country to civilian rule by organizing elections which led to the handing over of power to Shehu Shagari on 1st October 1979. Though the elections were "criticized by international observers as having been massively rigged" (Abubakar: 2015), Obasanjo became the first military Head of State in Nigeria to transfer power peacefully to a civilian regime. However, there is the accusation that Obasanjo and key members of his regime exhibited greed and selfishness by using the government machinery to amass wealth to themselves at the expense of the Nigerian public. A case in point is Obasanjo's deceit in eventually turning the Agricultural programme of the regime tagged *Operation Feed the Nation* (OFN) into his private farm, *Obasanjo Farms Nigeria* (OFN) (Adegboyega, 2012: 5).

## **5.7. THE SECOND REPUBLIC (1979 – 1983)**

After being in power for thirteen years, from 1966 – 1979, the military stepped down and handed over power to a democratically elected civilian administration on 1st October 1979, thereby ushering in the second political dispensation in Nigeria known as the Second Republic. This Second Republic (1979 – 1983) was a presidential system of government patterned on the American model, unlike the First Republic (1960 – 1966) which operated on the British

parliamentary model. The presidential system was preferred to the parliamentary system because many thought that it could help in unifying the nation by putting an end to the selfishness and ethnic politics that characterized the First Republic. It was fashioned in such a way that only when a presidential candidate secures twenty-five percent of votes in two-third of all the states in the country that he or she will be declared winner. By implication, the presidential system made the whole nation the constituency of the president unlike in the parliamentary system where the prime minister needed only a limited, localized constituency for his or her election.

In the build-up to the Second Republic, the five political parties that met the stringent requirements by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) for recognition and registration as political parties were:

1. National Party of Nigeria (NPN) with Shehu Shagari as Presidential Candidate.
2. Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) with Obafemi Awolowo as the Presidential Candidate.
3. Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP) with Nnamdi Azikiwe as the Presidential Candidate.
4. Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP) with Waziri Ibrahim as the Presidential Candidate.
5. Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) with Aminu Kano as the Presidential Candidate.

At the conclusion of the elections in 1979, Shehu Shagari, candidate of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) emerged the winner of the presidential election and was sworn in as the President of Nigeria and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, along with his deputy, Dr. Alex Ekwueme, who was sworn in as the Vice President. At the time of Shagari's inauguration, vast majority of Nigerians of different ethnic groups were genuinely convinced that the new president with his personality and experience gathered while serving in different government capacities for many years would ensure peace and stability in Nigeria and also promote the survival of democracy and rule of law after thirteen years of military rule.

But against all expectations, the Second Republic did not produce much to be admired by Nigerians because it didn't take long from its inception for those in power to manifest Machiavelli's submission that "men are so simple of mind, and so much dominated by their immediate needs" (Adams, 1992: 48). There was massive corruption, inefficiency and extravagant spending witnessed in most areas of public life. As if to corroborate Machiavelli's view that men are naturally "greedy for gain" (Chapter XVII. Adams, 1992: 46), lifestyles of greed and selfishness

resurfaced in the activities of many political leaders and civil servants. In fact, the squandermania of the regime was all the more reprehensible in that it occurred in the period of world oil glut which resulted in reduced income from petroleum, which was and still is the mainstay of Nigeria's revenue. Lamenting the failure and shortcomings of Nigeria's Second Republic, Eluwa noted:

While the nation's external reserve stood at 2.5 Billion Naira at the beginning of the regime, the nation was over 20 Billion Naira in debt by the time that government was removed from office. This was as a result of a great increase in imports, uncontrolled external borrowing, and gross financial mismanagement and extravagant spending at both the federal and state levels (Eluwa *et al*: 280 – 281).

In the midst of the shortcomings, another general election came in 1983, this time to be conducted under a civilian administration. The outcome of the election confirmed that Nigerian politicians are among the greatest practitioners of Machiavelli's assertion that "men are by nature both ambitious and suspicious, and know not how to use moderation where their fortunes are concerned" (*Discourses*, Book1, Chapter XXIX, Crick, 1970: 181) and equally authenticated the guiding principle of Machiavellianism which says:

In the actions of all men, and especially of princes who are not subject to a court of appeal, we must always look to the end. Let a prince, therefore, win victories and uphold his state; his methods will always be considered worthy, and everyone will praise them because the masses are always impressed by the superficial appearance of things, and the outcome of an enterprise (Adams, 1992: 49).

The elections held on 6th August 1983 returned the incumbent president, Shehu Shagari. Like the previous ones, they were full of electoral malpractices and voting irregularities. This takes me to my assumption in Chapter One of this study that election violence and thuggery contributed partly to the fall of Nigeria's Second Republic. Commenting on the 1983 elections, Wright noted that "serious irregularities and malpractices were reported which were sufficient to question the validity of the election results as a whole" (Wright, 1984: 69). According to Abubakar, the 1983 election was "marred by corruption, political violence and polling irregularities; it provided another set of military adventurers the impetus to seize power on December 31, 1983, citing electoral malpractices as one of its reasons for overthrowing the civilian government" (Abubakar: 2015). In a similar vein, Thom-Otuya said:

The 1983 general elections were massively rigged by the ruling party “in connivance with the election management body, Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) and security forces. That again set the stage for the second wave of military intervention in the nation’s politics on December 31, 1983” (Thom-Otuya: 2015)

The most controversial of all in the said elections was the gubernatorial election in which the ruling party, NPN, was said to have won 10 states out of the 19 states of the federation. The large scale rigging that characterized the elections sparked off violent riots, arson, hooliganism and looting in many parts of the nation, especially in Ondo and Oyo states, reminiscent of the 1965 election crisis in the then Western Region of Nigeria. There was palpable tension and disgust in the country as a result of the unimaginable landslide victory of the ruling party in the elections, and it was not surprising to many when that much vaunted landslide victory was nullified with a military coup on 31st December 1983.

#### **5.8. THE BUHARI MILITARY REGIME (1983 – 1985)**

The military coup that toppled the Shagari regime brought in Major General Muhamadu Buhari as the Head of State and Commander in Chief of Armed Forces, and General Tunde Idiagbon as his deputy. Inasmuch as the politicians of the Second Republic contributed largely to the return of the military after four years, there is no gainsaying the fact that selfish desire for political power on the part of the military leaders also contributed to their staging the coup. No wonder, Oyekunle remarks that the Nigerian “military has over the years become politicized and corrupt” (Oyekunle, 2015: 180). This is seen in their activities in government which portrayed them exhibiting the same corruption, inefficiency and extravagance in government spending for which they overthrew the Second Republic. The highest point of their display of corruption and Machiavellianism is their reluctance to relinquish political power and concentrate on their statutory duty which is protecting the country from internal and external aggression.

Right from the onset of that military regime, Buhari presided over the government as if he is replicating the following ideas of Machiavelli:

The populace is by nature fickle; it is easy to persuade them of something, but difficult to confirm them in that persuasion. Therefore one must urgently arrange matters so that when they no longer believe they can be made to believe by force (Chapter VI. Bull, 1995: 19).

There are two ways of fighting: by law and by force. The first way is natural for men, and the second to beasts. But as the first way often proves inadequate, one must have recourse to the second. So a prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1981: 99).

He showed by his words and actions that he wasn't ready to tolerate criticism or opposition of any kind. Armed and postured as a corrective regime, the government launched what they called "War Against Indiscipline" (WAI) aimed at instilling a new and healthy order in Nigeria's public and private life. Knowing the place of law as an instrument of social control and punishment, as noted by Machiavelli above, Buhari set out to use it, even ruthlessly, through decrees and special tribunals, without rights of appeal. He set up four military tribunals consisting of three senior officers and a judge to try all political leaders who have been in detention since the coup. By decrees, he conferred absolute power on his government, to the extent that its supremacy could not be questioned even in a court of law.

By his Decree Number One, he suspended and modified parts of Nigeria's constitution to empower the Federal Military Government to issue decrees signed with the force of law. That decree also vested all executive powers on the head of the Federal Military Government, who exercised it in consultation with the Supreme Military Council. Decree Number Two (State Security Decree) of 1984 empowered the Chief of Staff at Supreme Headquarters, General Tunde Idiagbon, to detain, anyone suspected to be a security risk to the state or contributing to the economic adversity of the nation, indefinitely without trial, for three months initially, and then renewable. Decree Number Three of 1984 (Recovery of Public Property Decree) empowered the government to set up tribunals to try former government officials suspected of embezzlement and appropriation of public funds. Under Decree Number Three, many people considered "corrupt and responsible for Nigeria's economic mess" were detained and allegedly tortured. The funny aspect of their controversial trial under the Special Military Tribunals was that the accused was assumed guilty until proven innocent rather than being innocent until proven guilty.

It is therefore not surprising that a lot of high profile politicians of the Second Republic fell victim of Buhari's Machiavellian tactics. They included:

1. Jim Nwobodo, Second Republic Governor of Anambra State – Jailed for 22 years by the Military Tribunal in 1984, released later by the Babangida administration.

2. Abba Musa Rimi, Second Republic Governor of Kaduna State – Jailed for 21 years in 1985 by the Special Military Tribunal, released by the Babangida administration.
3. Awaal Muhammed Ibrahim, Second Republic Governor of Niger State – Jailed by the Military Tribunal, and removed as Emir in 1994. He was reappointed Emir in 2000 by Governor Abdulkadir Kure.
4. Ambrose Ali, Second Republic Governor of Bendel State – Jailed for 100 years by the Military Tribunal. He was later released when Sir Gabriel Igbinedion paid the stipulated fine.
5. Alex Ekwueme, Second Republic Vice President – Jailed by Buhari's regime, released later by Babangida's government.
6. Adamu Attah, Second Republic Governor of Kwara State – Jailed by the Special military Tribunal in 1984, released later by the same Buhari administration.
7. Melford Okilo, Second Republic Governor of Rivers State – Jailed for 21 years in 1984 by the Military Tribunal.
8. Abubakar Rimi, Second Republic Governor of Kano State (1979 – 1983) – Jailed for 21 years by the Military Tribunal, released by Babangida administration.
9. Sabo Barkin Zuwo, former Senator, elected Governor of Kano State in 1983 by defeating Abubakar Rimi – Jailed on two different cases for 21 years and 300 years respectively. He was later released by Babangida administration.
10. Aper Aku, Second Republic Governor of Benue State – Jailed for 21 years. He died in 1988, shortly after his release by Babangida administration.

By Decree Number Four, the Buhari administration made publication of any material considered embarrassing to any government official a punishable offence. The first victims of the obnoxious Decree Number Four were the *Guardian* Newspaper and two of its journalists, Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor. The two journalists were jailed for one year without an option of fine, while the Newspaper was fined Fifty Thousand Naira, because they published in the *Guardian* of 1st and 8th April 1984 stories with the respective headlines *Eight Military Chiefs Tipped as Ambassadors* and *Haruna to Replace Hannaniya*, which the Buhari government termed misleading. Many other decrees were issued which sent arsonists, drug traffickers, armed robbers, currency traffickers and oil smugglers to the firing squad. The most obnoxious of them was the Decree Number Twenty of 1984 on illegal ship bunkering and drug trafficking which was hurriedly promulgated and

backdated by one year. Notable victims of that Decree Number Twenty were Lawal Ojuolape (30 years), Bernard Ogedengbe (29 years) and Bartholomew Owoh (26 years) who were executed by firing squad on 10th April 1985 after being arrested and tried for drug trafficking. The most pathetic of the three was the case of Bernard Ogedengbe who was executed on the basis of the retroactive Decree Twenty, notwithstanding that the crime did not carry capital punishment but six months imprisonment when he committed it.

By July 1984, seven months into the administration, Buhari had issued 22 decrees covering wide range of offences, such as arson, forgery, destruction of public property, postal matters, examination malpractices, etc. In order to avoid any form of opposition, all manner of students' union activities together with trade union activities by medical doctors and other professional bodies were banned. Reminiscing on the Buhari regime over twenty years later, Soyinka said, "Buhari enslaved the nation. He gloated and gloried in a master-slave relation to the millions of its inhabitants" (Soyinka: 2007). For him, Buhari and his "partner-in-crime, Tunde Idiagbon" by their style of leadership placed "Nigerians on notice that they were now under an iron, inflexible rule, under governance by fear" (Soyinka: 2007). It is an incontestable fact that the Buhari regime by its inflexible, intolerant and puritanical style of governance alienated a good portion of the Nigerian populace. By the end of the first half of 1985 the nation seemed to have had enough of their dictatorial methods, no matter how well-intentioned they were. Thus, on 27th August 1985 when the regime was overthrown in a bloodless coup, otherwise referred to as "palace coup", everybody felt relieved.

Looking back to the twenty months of Buhari/Idiagbon dictatorship in Nigeria, their style of governance and events in the country, I would agree with Soyinka that Buhari's pattern of government was "governance by fear". It reminds me of the following words of Machiavelli:

It is better to be feared than loved if you cannot be both... Men worry less about doing injury to one who makes himself loved than to one who makes himself feared. The bond of love is one which men, wretched creatures that they are, break when it is to their advantage to do so; but fear is strengthened by a dread of punishment which is always effective (Chapter XVII. Bull, 1995: 52 – 53).

A wise prince must devise ways by which his citizens are always and in all circumstances dependent on him and in his authority; and then they will always be faithful to him (Chapter IX. Bull, 1995: 33).

Both Buhari and Idiagbon seemed to have viewed the character of Nigerians in the light of Machiavelli's idea of human nature, which was probably why they adopted the use of law and force in their governance. They may have known that such method would on the part of the citizens bring fear rather than love, but they preferred to be feared than to be loved, probably sensing that fear would produce better results for them than love. And truly, they got it right, for in those days of their reeling out decrees upon decrees and fighting the "War Against Indiscipline" (WAI), the fear of Idiagbon, Buhari's unsmiling deputy, was the beginning of wisdom for every Nigerian who wanted to be free from detention and punishment.

## **5.9. THE BABANGIDA REGIME (1985 – 1993)**

According to Machiavelli,

Men are ready to change masters in the hope of bettering themselves. In this belief they take up arms against their master (Chapter III. Adams, 1992: 5).

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

A general rule about men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, fearful of danger and greedy for gain. While you serve their welfare, they are all yours, offering their blood, their belongings, their lives, and their children's lives, as we noted above – so long as the danger is remote. But when the danger is close at hand, they turn against you. Then any prince who has relied on their words and made no other preparations will come to grief (Chapter XVII, Adams: 46).

Reflecting on the events of 27th August 1983, which saw the Buhari Military regime toppled in what is regarded as a palace coup, one may not be wrong to say that the above-cited observations of Machiavelli were manifested by the Nigerian military in grand style. Having acquired the culture of coups and military interventions in the country's politics, not many were surprised when the military government of General Muhammadu Buhari was toppled in a military coup, which

though bloodless put Nigeria in “the unenviable record of having produced the highest number of military coups in the African continent” (Irukwu, 2005: 122). That coup brought in General Ibrahim Babangida, Chief of Army Staff in Buhari’s government, as the new Head of State, who capitalized on Buhari’s uncompromising nature to achieve his selfish desire of grabbing political power. Trying to justify their reason for toppling the Buhari/Idiagbon regime, the new Head of State, Ibrahim Babangida, in his maiden broadcast told the confused nation thus:

Let me at this point attempt to make you understand the premise upon which it became necessary to change the leadership: The principles of discussion, consultation and cooperation which should have guided the decision-making process of the Supreme Military Council were disregarded soon after the government settled down in 1984. Where some of us thought it appropriate to give a little more time, anticipating a conducive atmosphere that would develop, in which affairs of state could be attended to with greater sense of responsibility, it became increasingly clear that such expectations could not be fulfilled.

Regrettably, it turned out that Major General Muhammadu Buhari was too rigid and uncompromising in his attitudes to issues of national significance. Efforts to make him understand that a diverse polity like Nigeria required recognition and appreciation of differences in both cultural and individual perceptions, only served to aggravate these attitudes. Major General Tunde Idiagbon was similarly inclined in that respect. As Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, he failed to exhibit the appropriate disposition demanded by his position. He arrogated to himself absolute knowledge of problems and solutions, and acted in accordance with what was convenient to him, using the machinery of government as his tool (Irukwu, 2005: 123 -124).

From the above statement, it is clear that Babaginda and his fellow coup plotters applied Machiavelli’s advice that the only alternative when persuasion fails is the use of force. By implication, they applied force on Buhari who out of his rigid and uncompromising nature could not yield to their entreaties regarding the best way to govern a diverse and complex polity like Nigeria. Being an astute military tactician and politician, Babangida, upon assumption of office, decided not to make Buhari’s mistake, which was alienating himself with a good number of the populace through his policies and personal disposition. He, Babangida, seemed to understand the implication of these pieces of advice that Machiavelli offers to the prince:

One of the most powerful safeguards a prince can have against conspiracies is to avoid being hated by the populace. This is because the conspirator always thinks that by killing the prince he will satisfy the people; but if he thinks that he will outrage the people, he will never have the courage to go ahead with his enterprise (Chapter XIX. Bull, 1995: 58).

Men are won over by the present far more than the past; and when they decide that what is being done here and now is good, they content themselves with that and do not go looking for anything else. Indeed in that case they would do anything to defend their prince (Chapter XXIV. Bull, 1995: 76).

Knowing that most Nigerians welcomed his coup because the country was becoming tired of Buhari's dictatorship, he immediately took several actions aimed at winning public acceptance and support for his administration and corrected some of the perceived errors of the Buhari regime. No wonder that Okorie describes him "as the Machiavelli of Nigerian politics for his practical demonstration of some of the basic tenets of rulership as prescribed by Machiavelli in his book *The Prince*" (Okorie, 2006: 32). Due to his shrewd political dribbling and deftness in handling political issues, many describe him with the sobriquet 'Maradona', in relation to the dribbling skills of the legendary Argentine footballer, Diego Maradona.

In spite of the military governmental tradition of ruling by decrees, Babangida gave Nigerians a more liberal government by allowing public discussions on certain vital issues like the IMF loan and the political future of Nigeria. On the issue of drug trafficking, the government assumed a more liberal and humanistic position by replacing Buhari's death penalty with long terms of imprisonment. It also removed the previous regime's ban on Union activities by students and medical doctors, and relaxed the restrictions on the press, thereby making the Nigerian press one of the most liberal in the African continent. On the freedom of the press, Babangida's government dramatized its posture by granting unconditional pardon to the imprisoned *The Guardian* journalists and repealing Buhari's Decree Four under which the journalists were jailed. Babangida also released a good number of political prisoners, including Nigeria's Second Republic President, Shehu Shagari, and his Vice, Alex Ekwueme (Eluwa *et al*, 2013: 284). Shagari was released from house arrest, while Ekwueme was released from prison.

Be that as it may, after many years of being in power, there were allegations that Babangida presided over a corrupt administration. A case in point is the over "\$12 Billion Gulf War windfall

which he was alleged to have siphoned” (Naswem: 2015). According to Gboyega, despite repeated calls for account on how the 12.4 billion dollars of oil windfall made during his regime was spent, Babangida could not account for it (Gboyega, 1996: 34). Added to the catalogue of issues of corruption already raised in the military administrations preceding Babangida’s regime, many Nigerians came to the conclusion that the statements of the military, whenever they strike, that they came to correct the ills of past civilian administrations are mere lip-service.

In view of the allegations of corruption, as well as the growing public disenchantment arising from Babangida’s endless transition to civil rule programme and the inability of his government to tackle the numerous social and economic problems confronting the nation, Nigerians became aware that he overthrew his master, Buhari, out of self-interest and not the interest of the nation. This implies that Babangida merely fulfilled Machiavelli’s submissions, as cited above, which say:

Men are ready to change masters in the hope of bettering themselves. In this belief they take up arms against their master (Chapter III. Adams, 1992: 5).

A general rule about men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, fearful of danger and greedy for gain. While you serve their welfare, they are all yours, offering their blood, their belongings, their lives, and their children’s lives, as we noted above – so long as the danger is remote. But when the danger is close at hand, they turn against you (Chapter XVII. Adams, 1992: 46).

Consequently, riots broke out in many cities across the nation as many began to push for his exit, which were followed by an unsuccessful military coup by some junior officers, led by Major Gideon Orkar, on 22nd April 1990. But the regime continued to survive until the years 1992 and 1993, which observers of Babangida’s political cunning in Nigeria regard as the most difficult years of his administration. In these years, as people got tired of his endless programme of transition to civilian rule, he moved from one crisis to another in an environment of continued economic decline and many other problems associated with acute fuel shortage. The most difficult, which clearly exhausted his political astuteness and acclaimed crisis management skills, were the problems associated with his annulment of the 12th June 1993 Presidential election won by Chief MKO Abiola, which observers both locally and internationally, declared as the fairest and freest election ever conducted in Nigeria. When the pressure of the annulment and the entire situation

became too hot for him to bear, he decided to *step aside* on 27th August 1993 by handing over power to an Interim National Government headed by Ernest Shonekan.

#### **5.10. THE ERNEST SHONEKAN ADMINISTRATION (1993)**

According to Machiavelli,

Those who from being private citizens became emperors...rely on the goodwill of those who have elevated them, and both these are capricious and unstable things. They do not know how to maintain their position, and they cannot do so. They do not know how, because, unless they possess considerable talent and prowess, private citizens are incapable of commanding; they cannot, because they do not have loyal and devoted troops of their own. Then again, governments set up overnight, like everything in nature whose growth is forced, lack strong roots and ramifications. So they are destroyed in the first bad spell. This is inevitable unless those who have suddenly become princes are of such prowess that overnight they can learn how to preserve what fortune has suddenly tossed into their laps (Chapter VII. Bull, 1995: 20 – 21).

If there are evidences that Machiavelli's precepts, as cited above, are still relevant in this 21st century, they are the events that took place in Nigeria in 1993. It all started on 27th August 1993, when General Ibrahim Babangida, out of unbearable pressure, *stepped aside* and installed an Interim National Government (ING) headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan, with General Sani Abacha as Secretary of Defence in the cabinet. Most Nigerians were worried by, and suspicious of, Babangida's retention of General Sani Abacha in Shonekan's Interim National Government. The general opinion then was that somebody like General Abacha who was an integral part of the 1983 and 1985 coup plots should have been retired alongside his mates in order to restore sanity and confidence of the populace in the military. Consequently, there were insinuations that Babangida deliberately left Abacha in Shonekan's government as a way of appreciating him (Abacha) for years of standing with his (Babagangida's) government, especially for rallying the resistance and crushing of the attempted coup of 22nd April 1990, which was almost successful had it not been Abacha's timely intervention and military prowess. General Abacha, who was at that time the Chief of Army Staff and concurrent Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, was the one who went on radio to assure the country that the situation had been brought under control and that the Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida, was perfectly safe.

That foiled coup attempt, as observers of then Nigerian military politics noticed, heightened Babangida's confidence in Abacha and also marked the beginning of Abacha's own independent network in the military, known as "Abacha Boys", who were to play important roles later in Abacha's quest for acquisition of political power and consolidation of his acquired political power. After carrying out the two batches of executions of that April 1990 coup convicts in September 1990, Babangida ceded his all along held position as Minister of Defence to General Abacha who combined it with his already held position as the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff. To the surprise of many, Abacha combined both positions until the end of Babangida's military administration. In view of Abacha's presence in Shonekan's Interim National Government (ING), many suspected that an unwritten part of the new arrangement was that Babangida would on stepping aside create an opportunity for Abacha to have a shot at governance. This seemed to corroborate Babangida's continuous reference to Abacha, after the events of 22nd April 1990, as "Khalifa", meaning 'my successor' (Amor: 2014).

Apart from Abacha's retention in Shonekan's administration, most Nigerians and some foreign observers of the events in Nigeria at that time saw the dramatic appointment of Chief Ernest Shonekan, a Yoruba man, as an attempt by Babangida to pacify the Yoruba people of Nigeria over his nullification of the election mandate of their kinsman, Chief MKO Abiola. Also by doing that, he, Babangida, wished to neutralize the tensions and agitations caused by the nullification of Chief Abiola's "June 12" mandate. However, the Yorubas and indeed most Nigerians were not impressed by the ING, which they described as an illegal government because it was neither an elected civilian government nor a military one. (Irukwu, 2005: 134). As the chairman of the ING and the Interim President, Chief Shonekan appointed Chief MKO Abiola as his Vice President in a bid to calm him down and make him forget his "June 12" mandate. In a swift reaction, Abiola, who had fled the country, issued public statements from his base abroad denouncing the Shonekan's Interim Government, which he described as a puppet government and urged the international community to reject it as illegal. In spite of his inheriting a country in a precarious political upheaval, Shonekan, tried to carry on his assignment to the best of his ability, but he couldn't make headway because he lacked what Machiavelli, as cited above, called "considerable talent and prowess".

From all indications, Shonekan being an unelected civilian president couldn't exert firm control over the military because General Sani Abacha, the Secretary of Defence was in firm control of

the military, and he (Abacha) appeared to have a hidden agenda which he was waiting for an opportunity to actualize. Interestingly, Shonekan's administration was only able to survive for two months and 21 days, because in the midst of the unfolding political drama, General Sani Abacha forced him to resign on 17th November 1993. In line with Decree Number 61 of 1993, as the "most senior military officer" and "most senior" Minister in Shonekan's cabinet, Abacha took over as the Head of State, confirming Machiavelli's assertion that "governments set up overnight, like everything in nature whose growth is forced, lack strong roots and ramifications", and are therefore prone to be "destroyed in the first bad spell". Analysts describe the ousting of Shonekan as Nigeria's quietest bloodless coup inspired and led by General Sani Abacha who, as noted above, played a major role in the 1983 and 1985 military coups. That was the seventh military coup in Nigeria since independence in 1960.

#### **5.11. THE ABACHA REGIME (1994 – 1998)**

According to Machiavelli,

In the actions of all men, especially of princes, where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end. So let the prince win and maintain his state: the means will always be judged honourable, and will be praised by everyone (Bull, 1981: 101).

There is no better statement of Machiavelli to describe the mindset of General Sani Abacha immediately after his assumption of office as Head of State on 17th November 1993 than the above-cited one. He had as his deputy General Oladipo Diya, a Yoruba senior military officer – a move which was definitely a means of placating the aggrieved Yoruba people who were still angry about what was done to their kinsman, MKO Abiola. Just like Buhari did in 1983 when he overthrew the democratic government of Shehu Shagari, right from the very start of his regime, Abacha made it clear to everyone that as the new prince that has acquired his state, he will maintain his state by every available means and will not tolerate any kind of opposition. He displayed in the events of his first few days in office good knowledge of Machiavelli's view that "a prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man", that is, how to "fight by law or by force". In his maiden national broadcast on 18th November 1993, he dissolved the Interim National Government (ING) and the following political structures that were already in place as structures of the Third Republic before Babangida annulled the result of the 12th June 1993 Presidential election:

1. All National and State Assemblies.
2. The State Executive Councils.
3. All Local Governments.
4. The two existing political parties – Social Democratic Party (SDP) and National Republican Convention (NRC).

The implication of that dissolution was that another full-blown military rule has begun in Nigeria, merely 91 days after the exit of last military dictator, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. Abacha immediately abrogated the legally moribund Decree Number 61 of 1993, the basis of which he assumed power as the “most Senior Minister” less than 24 hours ago. Observers of political events then knew that he invoked a version of that legally moribund decree in order to beat some of his fellow coup-plotters who were also eying the position of the Head of State. Having benefitted from the decree, he abrogated it, thereby telling his fellow military officers in a subtle manner that there is nothing like order of military hierarchy in his regime. That act of political wizardry helped Abacha to preside over a regime characterized by sycophancy as military officers schemed for positions of influence knowing that seniority was no longer the criterion for any political appointment. It thus enabled him to consolidate his position in later years of his regime amidst great opposition both from within and outside Nigeria. Having abolished all democratic structures, Abacha on that same day, 18th November 1993, established a Provisional Ruling Council as the principal organ of government headed by himself as the chairman.

In a typical Machiavellian fashion, he created a well-constructed centrally-located power base, which was centred around him, from which he directed and controlled all aspects of the affairs of state. He retired immediately seventeen senior military officers whom he felt would stand in his way of consolidating his hold on political power in Nigeria. Just as Machiavelli disliked foreign interferences in the affairs of Florence and Italy of his time, Abacha never hid, even from day one, his dislike for foreign interference in the affairs of Nigeria. It was thus not surprising that he had a message for both local critics and the international community in his maiden speech of 18th November 1993. He warned thus:

This regime will be firm, humane, and decisive. We will not condone nor tolerate any act of indiscipline. Any attempt to test our resolve will be decisively dealt with. For the international community, we ask that you suspend judgment while we grapple with the

onerous task of nation building, reconciliation and repairs. This government is a child of necessity with a strong determination to restore peace and stability to our country and on these foundations, enthrone a lasting and true democracy. Give us the chance to solve our problems in our own ways. Long Live the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Talking about human nature as observed by Machiavelli, it was surprising to observers of political developments in Nigeria that out of greed and selfishness, Abacha's cabinet was dominated by civilians, many of whom were well-known politicians of the Third Republic, including Babagana Kingibe who was Abiola's running mate in the annulled 12th June 1993 election, who would have been Abiola's Vice President if the election was not annulled. Others were Senator Iyiorcha Ayu, the erstwhile Senate President, Chief Ebenezer Babatope and other well-known political figures drawn from both within and outside Abiola's political party, the Social Democratic Party (SDP). These were men whose party man, MKO Abiola, was robbed of his election victory and chased out of the country, and who afterwards were cunningly pushed out of their political positions in the country and National Assembly by the new military schemers. But instead of standing with the Nigerian populace who at that point had grown tired of military rule and their endless transition programmes, they pitched their tents with the new military usurper of the Nigerian throne, General Sani Abacha, to continue enjoying the spoils of office which they were enjoying before the change of government. That was, for me, pure validation of Machiavelli's view that "men are so simple of mind, and so much dominated by their immediate needs, that a deceitful man will always find plenty who are ready to be deceived" (Chapter XVIII. Adams, 1992: 48).

Nigerians at that time were told that Oladipo Diya, Abacha's second in command, who was from Abiola's Yoruba race, Abiola's political associates who joined the Abacha Cabinet, and all others who supported or participated in the removal of Shonekan did so on the understanding that Abacha after taking over and sorting out matters would restore Abiola's "June 12" mandate by installing him as president. This means that Abacha may have secured their support and participation in the ouster of Shonekan and his Interim National Government (ING) by assuring them that he wanted to stabilize the nation and hand over reins of power to Abiola who won the 12th June 1993 presidential election. But what happened later was a typical example of putting into practice the following precepts of Machiavelli:

Contemporary experience shows that princes who have achieved great things have been those who have given their word lightly, who have known how to trick men with their cunning, and who in the end have overcome those abiding with honest principles (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1995: 54).

A prudent ruler cannot, and must not, honour his word when it places him at a disadvantage and when the reasons for which he made the promise no longer exist (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1995: 55).

It turned out that after settling down, Abacha did not honour the ‘agreement’, which was purported to have been reached. Instead, he used all facilities at his disposal to consolidate his administration. This led to Retired Brigadier-General David Mark’s (one of the seventeen senior military officers retired by Abacha immediately after he took over in November 1993) famous interview in *Newswatch* magazine of 11th April 1994 in which he alleged that the Abacha’s government had no political programme and that it would stay in power till 1999. Responding to the controversy generated by David Mark’s interview, the Federal Government on 22nd April 1994 released a multi-phase political programme, which was to be kick-started with a Constitutional Conference. On 15th May 1994, National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) was formed to press for the revalidation of the 12th June 1993 presidential election mandate and the reinstallation of all democratic structures that were dissolved by Abacha. The popularity of NADECO was tested on 23rd June 1994 when the National Constitutional Conference convened by Abacha was massively boycotted in the South West in obedience to NADECO’s boycott call.

It was as if Abacha’s bubble burst with the events that followed David Mark’s interview. Responding to the barrage of criticism against him and pressure mounted on him after the interview, Abacha changed his style of governance from the use of persuasion to the application of violence and force. In fact, it was as if he felt that time had come to use Machiavelli’s idea, which says:

It is the nature of people to be fickle; to persuade them of something is easy but to make them stand fast in that conviction is hard. Hence things must be arranged so that when they no longer believe they can be compelled to believe by force (Chapter VI. Adams, 1992: 17)

Thus, in reaction to the massive boycott of Abacha's Constitutional Conference called for by NADECO on 23rd June 1994, Ibrahim Coomasie, Inspector General of Police, declared NADECO illegal, thereby signaling government's decision to clamp down on pro-democracy activists. David Mark, whose interview led to the formation of NADECO and beginning of resistance to Abacha's government immediately fled to Ghana on exile, from where he relocated to United Kingdom. Dan Agbese, Ray Ekpu and Yakubu Mohammed, founders of *Newswatch* Magazine, which carried the David Mark interview, were arrested and detained. In the boiling situation, Chief MKO Abiola, in an attempt to claim his presidential mandate, surfaced from self-exile and declared himself President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria at Epetedo, Lagos Island on 11th June 1994, the eve of the first anniversary of 12th June 1993 presidential election. He went into hiding after the declaration, for fear of arrest, but was arrested on 23rd June 1994, charged for treason and kept in detention. The arrest and detention of Abiola sparked off a very long strike by the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) and Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN) on 5th July 1994 which plunged the nation into a monumental fuel crisis, causing untold hardship on the populace. The already bad situation worsened on 8th July 1994 when riots broke out in the Southwestern states of Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, Ogun and Edo, and compounded on 3rd August 1994 when the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) commenced a general strike in solidarity with the oil workers' strike.

On 18th August 1994, the crackdown finally began as Abacha's government began to react to the workers' strike. It sacked the Executive Councils of NUPENG, PENGASSAN and NLC and closed down three newspapers, *The Punch*, *Concord Group* (owned by Abiola) and *the Guardian*. In the siege that followed, Chief Anthony Enahoro, General Alani Akinrinade, Cornelius Adebayo and other NADECO officials were arrested and detained, as well as Chief Frank Kokori, the General Secretary of NUPENG and Chief Gani Fawehinmi. For fear of his life, Professor Wole Soyinka fled into exile. To strengthen its battle for survival, in line with Machiavelli's words that the prince, if he would survive, must know how to fight "by law and by force" (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1995: 54), the Abacha regime promulgated decrees which put its action beyond legal challenge in the courts. Olu Onagoruwa, a well-known pro-democracy activist, was sacked as the Attorney General and Minister of Justice for disowning eight decrees promulgated by the Government. In the face of both local and international hostility against him and his government, Abacha devoted a lot of his skill and attention to ensuring the survival of his government. He did

so by installing various security organs through which he silenced or framed up oppositions. Armed with his decrees and security organs, he proscribed or harassed all organized units of the Nigerian civil society and professional organizations such as the Nigeria Bar Association, Nigerian Medical Association, organized labour and student unions.

Machiavelli advised thus:

Men must either be pampered or crushed, because they can get revenge for small injuries but not for grievous ones. So any injury a prince does a man should be of such a kind that there is no fear of revenge (Chapter III. Bull, 1995: 8).

In line with the above, those that dared the Abacha regime were severely dealt with. For instance, Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni activists were sentenced to death by a Special Military Court, while Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, the 18th Sultan of Sokoto, was deposed on alleged grounds of insubordination and poor leadership and replaced with Alhaji Muhammadu Maccido. To silence General Olusegun Obasanjo, military Head of State (1976 – 1979) and leaders of his new political organization, the National Unity Organization (NUO) formed on 3rd November 1994, the Abacha government on 28th February 1995 arrested him (Obasanjo), Brigadier Lawan Gwadebe, General Musa Yar' Adua and others over an alleged coup plot. A military tribunal under the chairmanship of Major General Aziza tried and sent them to jail, after which government showed video clips of the alleged coup plotters to a limited audience of traditional rulers across the country.

Testifying before Oputa Panel on Human Rights Violation five years later, Col. Bello Fadile, who implicated Obasanjo and others in that 1995 phantom coup said that “he framed them to save his own life”. According to Fadile, “the only opportunity for him to stay alive then was to rope in Obasanjo and others, as demanded by his torturers”. He added that “there was no coup, but attempt by Abacha to get rid of those he considered as threat to his regime” (*Vanguard Daily* of 3rd November 2000, anchored by Ajayi and Ugwunebo under the caption, *Why I Framed Obasanjo, Yar' Adua – Fadile*).

With Obasanjo and his co-political activists cooling their heads in various prisons in the country, and many other pro-democracy activists already imprisoned or hounded into self-exile abroad, Abacha had a brief internal respite, during which he showed signs of trying to win people's support. He seemed to be aware of Machiavelli view that “cruelty badly used is that which,

although infrequent to start with, as time goes on, rather than disappearing, grows in intensity”, and Machiavelli’s conclusion that those who indulge in such cruelty “cannot possibly stay in power” (Chapter VIII. Bull, 1995: 29 - 30). Thus, he began his ‘populist’ programmes by setting up in December 1995 eight-member National Electoral Commission of Nigeria (NECON) to organize democratic elections, and Transition Implementation Committee (TIC) to supervise the transition to civil rule process. On 30th September 1996, NECON registered five political parties – Committee for National Consensus (CNC), United Nigeria People’s Convention (UNCP), Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN), National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), and Grassroots Democratic Movement (GDM). On 1st October 1996, Abacha announced the creation of six states, bringing the number of states in Nigeria to 36.

However, in spite of the efforts of Abacha to make his administration acceptable to the people by showing some commitment towards the return of democracy to the country, the issue of Abiola’s mandate continued to remain a thorn in his flesh. Series of bomb explosions in Lagos and other parts of the country at that time also heightened the already volatile security situation in the country, as well as the increasing rate of assassination and assassination attempts on some notable critics of the government. Notable examples were the attempted murder, around Falomo Bridge in Ikoyi, Lagos on 2nd February 1996, of Alex Ibru, the publisher of *The Guardian* Newspaper, which at that time was highly critical of the Abacha regime, and the murder in Lagos on 6th June 1996 of Kudirat Abiola, senior wife of the detained president-elect, who incidentally was a fierce fighter for the validation of his husband’s mandate.

Now, after over twenty years of the two incidents, the issues surrounding both had undergone extensive scrutiny and laid to rest. On the attempted murder of Alex Ibru, Chief Security Officer to General Sani Abacha, Major Hamza Al-Mustafa and some other members of Abacha’s security organs (James Dambaba, former Lagos State Police Commissioner; Jibril Bala Yakubu, former Zamfara State Military Administrator; and Rabo Lawal, former head of Aso Rock Anti-Riot Police) were arrested on 22nd October 1998, after Abacha’s death, and were tried for twelve years. They were discharged and acquitted on 21st December 2010 on the ground that all the evidences adduced by the prosecution against them were “worthless” and “thoroughly discredited”. Lagos State Government appealed the judgment, but lost the appeal on 13th October 2011. On the murder of Kudirat Abiola, of which Hamza Al-Mustapha and former personal assistant to late MKO

Abiola, Lateef Shofolahan, were tried, a Lagos High Court in Igbosere on 30th January 2012 sentenced them to death by hanging, but they appealed the judgment and were discharged and acquitted of the crime on 12th July 2013 by the Appeal Court, which said that there wasn't enough evidence to incriminate them in the murder.

On 2nd July 1997, the Transition Implementation Committee (TIC) set up by Abacha announced the following as dates for new polls: State House of Assembly, 6th December 1997; National Assembly, 25th April 1998; Governorship and Presidential elections, 1st August 1998. But at that point, rumour had emerged that Abacha was planning to translate from military Head of State to civilian President and that he was ready to do anything possible to realize the ambition. It was therefore not surprising to many Nigerians who knew Abacha very well when the government announced on 12th December 1997 a coup involving General Oladikpo Diya, Abacha's Deputy, General Adisa, former Minister of Works & Housing, General Olarenwaju former Minister of Communications, and a group of military personnel and civilians. They were, just like in the case of Obasanjo and others in 1995, arrested, tried and sentenced by a Special Military Tribunal headed by Major General Victor Malu. Generals Diya, Adisa and Olarenwaju and four others were sentenced to death, while others received various jail terms. Their death sentence was later commuted to 25 years imprisonment by General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who succeeded General Abacha in 1998 after his death. But before his handover to civilian administration in 1999, he granted them clemency after which he released them and dismissed them from the military.

Just like the 1995 phantom coup which Obasanjo, Yar'Adua and others were alleged to be involved in, many people believed that the 1997 coup was not real but an attempt by General Abacha to remove those he perceived as opponents of his self-succession bid. And truly, as events unfolded in Nigeria, people's suspicion regarding Abacha's desire to succeed himself as the next civilian president of Nigeria was confirmed, and Abacha, just as Machiavelli advised, used all kinds of methods to actualize that ambition. Apart from his use of cruelty and violence, one method that yielded positive results for his self-succession bid was his perfect understanding of Machiavelli's submission that "men are so simple of mind, and so much dominated by their immediate needs, that a deceitful man will always find plenty who are ready to be deceived" (Chapter XVIII. Adams, 1992: 48). He, therefore, took advantage of the greed and covetousness which are the hallmarks of Nigerian politicians and non-politicians alike. All those who supported his move to succeed

himself received socio-economic patronage and were given opportunities to plunder the nation's resources in the popular Nigerian parlance known as "sharing the national cake".

Unsurprisingly, many Nigerians joined the Abacha "self-succession train" and started organizing national programmes, which they called "seminars" or "prayers for divine intervention in the affairs of the nation." They used the "seminars" and "prayers" to drum up support for Abacha as the next civilian president of Nigeria. Consequently, the early part of 1998 in Nigeria was characterized with agitations for and against Abacha's self-succession plan, which after a while turned into rallies. On 3rd – 8th March 1998, Daniel Kanu organized a million-man march in Abuja in support of Abacha's plan to become civilian president on 1st October 1998. That was followed by another pro-Abacha rally organized in Ibadan on 15th April 1998 by Lamidi Adedibu, popularly regarded as the 'strongman' of Ibadan politics. The self-succession drama was heightened on 16th – 18th April 1998 when all the five registered political parties adopted Abacha as the consensus candidate for the coming presidential election scheduled for 1st August 1998. Irked by this development, Bola Ige described the five parties as "five fingers of a leprous hand."

In a swift reaction, the United Action for Democracy (UAD) on 1st May (May Day) 1998 organized a public protest against the adoption of Abacha as consensus presidential candidate by the parties. Protesting youths took to the streets, attacking homes of Abacha's leading supporters in the South West. Expectedly, the Federal Government arrested and arraigned Ola Oni, Bola Ige, Lam Adesina and other activists before the Chief Magistrate's Court, Iyaganku Ibadan over the May Day riots. Due to the happenings, the European Union on 5th May 1998 officially declared Nigeria's transition to civil rule programme a failure. As a follow-up, the G34, a multi-ethnic coalition of eminent Nigerians led by Alex Ekwueme, former Vice President, on 7th May 1998 sent a letter to Abacha in which they stated eight grounds on which his adoption as sole candidate by the five political parties breached all relevant laws and urged him to decline the purported nomination. In the confusing political scenario, Gani Fawehinmi filed a suit at the Federal High Court challenging the adoption of Abacha as the sole presidential candidate by the five political parties. Also Tunji Braithwaite and Mohammed Dikko Yusuf went to Appeal Court to stop Abacha from contesting in the presidential election.

But, in accordance with the Machiavellian stipulation that a prudent "prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man", that is, how to fight "by law or by force" (Chapter

XVIII. Bull, 1995: 54), Abacha arranged a strong legal team that was raising objections to all suits filed against him and also used government machinery to ensure that the courts declined jurisdiction to abdicate in cases brought against his self-succession bid. To this end, a constitutional lawyer, Chimezie Ikeazor (SAN) on 3rd June 1998 filed a suit at the Court of Appeal Abuja seeking to invoke legal power to protect the presumed ambition of Abacha and to ascertain the legal propriety of those opposing Abacha's adoption as sole presidential candidate of the five political parties. As the struggle went on, it became clear to all that unless something else happened no human or political pressure could stop Abacha from replacing himself as the civilian president of Nigeria on 1st October 1998. It was therefore a great relief to both Nigerians and all foreign observers of events in Nigeria when news came in the early hours of the morning of 8th June 1998 that Abacha died of unexpected cardiac arrest.

Suffice to say that Abacha also exhibited the greediness that Machiavelli observed in people of his time. After his demise, billions of dollars were recovered from some of his bank accounts within and outside Nigeria, as well as his house, which are part of his loot from the Nigerian treasury (Pieth, 2008: 43 – 44). According to the chairman of Nigeria's Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption, PACAC, Itse Sagay, "at the time of his death, Abacha's assets were allegedly worth over \$4 billion" (*Premium Times* Newspaper of 12th January 2017, anchored by Onyeka under the heading *Nigeria May Lose \$550 Million Abacha Loot to U.S.*). More than fifteen years after Abacha's death, funds he looted from the Nigerian treasury were still being returned from foreign banks where he stashed them. Reporting under the caption, *Abacha Loot: Switzerland Returns \$723m to Nigeria in 10 Years*, Nwabughogu wrote:

The Swiss government has confirmed that it had so far returned \$723 million (about N142.43 billion) of stolen funds seized from the family of the late former Head of State, Sani Abacha, to the Nigerian government over the last 10 years. The amount excludes \$321 million (about N63.24 billion) which the Swiss authorities recently said it was planning to repatriate to Nigeria. These details are contained in the agreement signed on March 8, 2016, in Abuja by representatives of the Swiss Federal Council and the Nigerian government (*Vanguard* Newspaper of 10th March 2016).

## **5.12. THE ABUBAKAR MILITARY REGIME (9TH JUNE 1998 – 29TH MAY 1999)**

Following the sudden death of Sani Abacha on 8th June 1998, the military hierarchy announced that the new Head of State and Commander in Chief of Nigeria's Armed Forces would be General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who until then was Chief of Defence Staff. On Tuesday 9th June 1998, General Abubakar was sworn in as Nigeria's 8th military Head of State. Those who knew the new ruler described him as very honest, sincere, humane, loyal and totally committed to military ethics, creed and discipline. They also described him as a modest and basically unambitious officer, quite unlike many military officers in Nigeria whose inordinate ambition led to the coups and counter-coups that have been experienced in Nigeria since 1966.

According to Machiavelli:

When a prince has the goodwill of the people he must not worry about conspiracies;  
but when the people are hostile and regard him with hatred he must go in fear of  
everything and everyone (Chapter XIX. Bull, 1995: 59).

Most Nigerians were pleased with the choice of Abubakar, hoping and expecting that he would honour the promise to return the country to democratic rule at the shortest possible time, thereby bringing to an end the national instability associated with military administrations. True to the above-cited view of Machiavelli, he ruled Nigeria without any fear of any group of people or manifestation of ethnic or religious bias. In his maiden broadcast, he assured all Nigerians that his administration would ensure the successful implementation of the transition to civil rule programme initiated by Abacha administration and appealed to all Nigerians who left the country during the Abacha years and other Nigerians in diaspora to return home and join hands in the task of national reconciliation and reconstruction. Assuring the international community of the desire of his regime to honour all international obligations, he appealed to them to give Nigeria a fair hearing and an opportunity to return to the international comity of nations instead of being isolated as was the case during the Abacha years. Confidence in Abubakar's military regime was strengthened when Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka returned home after four years in self-imposed exile.

Machiavelli states that "one of the most important tasks a prince must undertake" is "to satisfy the people and keep them content" (Chapter XIX. Bull, 1995: 59). In keeping with this precept, Abubakar dissolved the five political parties registered by Abacha regime – which have already

been tainted by their adoption of Abacha as consensus candidate – and established a plan for multi-party elections that would produce those to be sworn in on 29th May 1999. He announced a general amnesty to all political prisoners and released most of the prisoners jailed under Abacha regime in connection with the phantom coups of 1995 and 1997. While General Olusegun Obasanjo, former Head of State, regained his freedom unconditionally, his former deputy, General Shehu Yar'Adua, who died in Abakaliki prison while serving his prison sentence, was granted posthumous state pardon. A number of other political prisoners including some famous journalists jailed during Abacha clampdown, such as Chris Anyanwu, publisher of *TSM* Magazine, George Mbah of *TELL* Magazine and several others were also released unconditionally.

With the release of most of the political prisoners by the Abubakar administration, Nigerians expected that before long the most important political prisoner of the country, MKO Abiola would also be released. But that earnest expectation was turned into deep mourning on 7th July 1998 when the death of Abiola in detention was announced. According to the report, just like Abacha one month ago, Abiola died as a result of sudden cardiac arrest. There is no doubt that the death of Abiola and its timing was the greatest setback encountered by the Abubakar regime. It was a national tragedy that virtually brought the Nigerian nation to a halt. There was a general suspicion that government had contributed to Abiola's death, and this led to riots in some states in south-west of the country. The tension was however doused by the result of an autopsy on Abiola conducted by a team of international medical experts which confirmed the government's position that there was no foul play in Abiola's death. This result really helped in saving the situation for the Abubakar administration, albeit it did not stop some Nigerians from maintaining their earlier held position that it was the military that killed Abiola since they brought about the situation that led to his imprisonment and death.

When the country recovered from the distractions caused by Abiola's unexpected death, General Abubakar announced that the military would hand over to a democratically elected civilian government on 29th May 1999. Nigerians reacted to this announcement of the handover date with great delight and relief. They agreed that the extension from 1st October 1998 that Abubakar had indicated in his maiden speech was necessary to enable the government accomplish all that must be accomplished in order to make the transition smooth and efficient. And true to his word, Abubakar and his administration ensured successful installation of the necessary political and

electoral apparatus, including registration of new political parties – Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), and Alliance for Democracy (AD). Elections were held in February 1999, after which Olusegun Obasanjo, former military ruler and candidate of PDP, was declared winner and sworn in on 29th May 1999 as the elected civilian president. Obasanjo won with 62.6% of the vote, sweeping the strongly Christian South and the predominantly Muslim North.

### **5.13. CONCLUSION**

On the basis of the things that happened in the political life of Nigeria from 1960, when the country secured independence from Britain, to 1999, when the military handed over power to Olusegun Obasanjo, as presented in this chapter, I would say that Nigerians play politics as if they are following the standards laid down in *The Prince* by Machiavelli. I would therefore conclude this chapter in agreement with Mefor's assertion that for Nigerian politicians, "power and leadership are ends in themselves, not means for accomplishing any tasks or meeting any common goals" (Mefor: 2008) and Adogboyega's submission that in Nigeria, "the practice of democracy, and more importantly, the acquisition of political power since independence, has always taken after Machiavellian politics." (Adegboyega, 2015: 6). What this means is that the proposition that the Nigerian political situation presents a classic case of Machiavellianism is valid. For further test of the validity of the proposition, I now turn to the events of the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria which is generally regarded as the Fourth Republic.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **REBIRTH OF DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA (THE FOURTH REPUBLIC): JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROPOSITION OF THE STUDY WITH THE EVENTS IN THE PRESENT DEMOCRATIC DISPENSATION (1999 TILL DATE)**

#### **6.1. INTRODUCTION**

According to Oviemuno, “politics in Nigeria right from independence has generally followed the Machiavellian perception by removing morality from politics (Oviemuno: 2002). In a seeming concurrence with his view, Kemabonta stated,

The political arena of 21st century Nigeria has a deadly resemblance of the 13th century political Europe. It is the order of the day to kill, steal and destroy to achieve one’s goal with absolute impunity. High profile killings go unpunished, because the law enforcement agencies are structurally too crippled to undertake any meaningful investigation. Policemen are paid to act as personal bodyguard to anyone who can afford it. State treasury is looted by the political elite on a daily basis (Kemabonta: 2015).

In the previous chapter, I explored the social and political events in Nigeria from 1960, when Nigeria secured independence from Britain, to 1999, when the last military regime returned the country to the present democratic dispensation. From the findings of the study, one may without fear of contradiction say that Nigerian politicians and military leaders in their activities played out Machiavelli’s *The Prince* in Nigeria. This chapter is an analysis of the state of affairs in the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria in the light of the political ideas propounded by Machiavelli in *The Prince*. This is aimed at testing further the validity of the proposition that the current Nigerian democratic dispensation presents a classic case of Machiavellianism. As done in the last chapter, the presentation and analysis of the events in this chapter will be done chronologically.

#### **6.2. THE OBASANJO CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION (1999 – 2007)**

The greatest achievement of the Abubakar military administration was the restoration of democracy in Nigeria after 16 years of military dictatorship. In one of the speeches he delivered during the period of the installation and formal inauguration of General Obasanjo, he described

the new civilian president as a man of great experience and outstanding courage, and assured his audience that these qualities will stand the new president in good stead in his carrying the mantle of leadership of Nigeria at a critical stage in the country's political history. On the day of inauguration, 29th May 1999, Olusegun Obasanjo and his deputy, Atiku Abubakar, took their oaths of office, which were administered to them respectively by the Chief justice of Nigeria, Justice M. L. Uwais. Ironically, few months ago, the new president was languishing in prison, serving a twenty five years jail term with hard labour imposed on him by the Abacha military junta. In circumstances similar to the case of Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Obasanjo moved from prison to the presidency. And expectedly, he exhibited some degree of sincerity and commitment in his administration of Nigeria, especially in his first tenure, 1999 – 2003, although, at the end of his eight years in office, neither of these problems confronting Nigeria – corruption, collapsed infrastructure and unemployment – was successfully addressed.

Machiavelli observed in *The Prince* that there are “two ways of becoming a prince, by prowess or by fortune” (Chapter VII. Bull, 1995: 21). If there is any Nigerian that has received the greatest benefit from what Machiavelli called “fortune” in *The Prince*, it is Obasanjo. It is on record that on two different occasions, Obasanjo had ruled Nigeria on the stroke of fortune. As a military Head of State (1976 -1979), Obasanjo benefited from the abortive coup led by Lt. Col. Buka Suka Dimka on 13th February 1976, in which the Head of State, General Murtala Mohammed, was assassinated, along with his Aide-De-Camp (ADC), Lieutenant Akintunde Akinsehinwa, Orderly and driver. As a civilian President (1999 – 2007), he benefited from Babangida's annulment of Abiola's 12th June 1993 election mandate, which culminated in Abiola's arrest, detention and death. Being a “detribalized” Yoruba man with military background, he perfectly fitted into the kind of civilian president needed by the military hegemony which at that time felt that the Yoruba people needed to be appeased for the seeming injustice done to them by denying their kinsman, Abiola, his election mandate and incarcerating him in the process, thereby bringing about his death in detention. It was in the process that Obasanjo became, in 1999, the First President of Nigeria in the present democratic dispensation without going through the usual rigours of election in Nigeria, such as contentious primaries and having to go from one end of the country to another canvassing for votes.

Machiavelli said that “private citizens who become princes by good fortune do so with little exertion on their part; but subsequently they maintain their position with considerable exertion” (Chapter VII. Bull, 1995: 20). Being a retired military General, it is understandable that Obasanjo’s style of governance and actions immediately he assumed office were in consonance with the above-cited precepts of Machiavelli. As mentioned in Chapter Five of this study, Ernest Shonekan lost his position as Interim President to General Sani Abacha on 17th November 1993 because he (Shonekan) did not possess what Machiavelli called “considerable talent and prowess” (Chapter VII. Bull, 1995: 20) needed for him to maintain his position. Unlike Shonekan, immediately Obasanjo moved into office as President and Commander in Chief of Nigerian Armed Forces, he started by sanitizing the military. To do this, he moved quickly and retired over 100 military officers who held political positions in the military regime. Reporting on the sanitization of the Nigerian military, under the caption *President Obasanjo Cleans Up The Military*, Remi Oyo wrote:

Nigeria’s new President, Olusegun Obasanjo, appears determined to clean up the military to prevent another coup d’etat in the country. The military has dominated Nigeria’s politics since independence in 1960. To prevent them from seizing power again, Obasanjo, who is himself a former military leader between 1976 – 1979 has retired 116 military officers who had held political offices since 1985, the year former military dictator General Ibrahim Babangida seized power. ... “The retirements are in keeping with the pledge made by the president in his inaugural address (on May 29) to initiate far reaching measures that will ensure the permanent subordination of the military to civil authority and ensure that the Nigerian Armed Forces regain their pride and professionalism”, said Doyin Okupe, spokesperson of the President (InterPress Third World News Agency, IPS, 13th June 1999).

Sixteen years later, reflecting on that clean-up of the Nigerian military by President Obasanjo and the need to have an apolitical military in Nigeria, Braimah noted thus:

In 1999, Obasanjo whose ascension to power was facilitated by the military took critical policy measures that showed to the whole world that he was not a stooge of the military that helped him back to power. One of such decisions was the compulsory retirement of high ranking military officers who had at one time or the other served as military governors or administrators of states or as ministers during the military interregnum

between December 1983 and May 1999. Not spared also were officers who even served as mere Aide de camps to the military governors (*The Nigerian Observer* Newspaper of 22nd February 2015, under the caption *Real Reasons Obasanjo is Angry*).

In corroboration of the above view, Obasanjo revealed at his 80th birthday organized by the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) in Abuja on Saturday, 15th July 2017, that “the mass retirement was inevitable on account of the lavish lifestyle of some top military men in the corridors of power.” According to him, the officers “were used to what is called the chummy chummy life in government house, and if I had left them in the military they would have been the ones that would have created more problems for us and our democratic dispensation would not have lasted as it has” (*Daily Post* of 16th July 2017, anchored by Inyang under the caption *Why I sacked 93 Top Military Officers in 1999 – Obasanjo*)

During Obasanjo’s time as civilian President of Nigeria, there are certain actions of his government that seemed like practicalizing Machiavelli’s idea, which states:

It is the nature of people to be fickle; to persuade them of something is easy but to make them stand fast in that conviction is hard. Hence things must be arranged so that when they no longer believe they can be compelled to believe by force (Chapter VI. Adams, 1992: 17)

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

For instance, on 20th November 1999, the Nigerian military was accused of killing of hundreds of unarmed civilians and destruction of all private buildings in Odi town in Bayelsa State in retaliation for the killing of several soldiers by some armed hoodlums in the community. People accused Obasanjo’s administration of ordering the massacre, though the military defended its action by saying that it was ambushed on the way to Odi. And surprisingly, the Nigerian

government did not arrest or prosecute anyone in connection with the massacre. Recounting the incident eighteen years later, Bolou said:

The government unleashed military terror on my people. They killed both young and old, raped our mothers and daughters, looted property worth billions of Naira and burnt down all our buildings. That was the peak of man's inhumanity to man. It was a complete genocide. They were shooting and shelling from all corners – Kaiama bridgehead, Odi junction, Patani. The innocent people that were travelling were caught in the sporadic shooting. They killed all of them (*Punch Newspaper of 16th December 2017, under the heading Odi Massacre: Anyone with Tribal Marks on the Chest was Slaughtered, Corpse Littered Everywhere*).

In February 2013, the Federal High court ordered the Federal government to pay 37.6 Billion Naira compensation to the people of Odi for that military action. The judgment led to the payment of 15 Billion Naira by the Goodluck Jonathan led administration to the Odi town, as agreed after series of negotiation between the representatives of the town and the Federal Government.

Few months after the Odi massacre, in April and May 2000, Obasanjo's government again used repressive force in Ogoniland by deploying paramilitary Mobile Police to K-Dere village in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State because they opposed the restoration of the oil operations of Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited (SPDC) in the area. The Shell operations were closed in 1993 after the mass demonstrations organized against oil exploration in the area by the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP) led by Ken Saro-Wiwa. As it happened then, Saro-Wiwa and eight other leaders of MOSOP were arrested, tried and convicted by a Special Tribunal, and were subsequently executed in November 1995, despite local and international pleas for mercy, by Sani Abacha's military regime. Thus, in the process of arresting or intimidating those opposing the return of SPDC to the area by the Mobile Police squad sent by the Obasanjo's civilian regime, ten houses were burnt down, several civilians were killed and a number of people were detained for various periods and charged with different offenses, including Ledum Mitee, the then MOSOP leader and colleague of late Ken Saro-Wiwa.

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

On 24th August 2006, the Nigerian military razed the Aker Base community outside Port Harcourt after militants abducted an Italian oil worker and shot one soldier there. As usual, the Obasanjo administration never fully explained this action, and neither investigation nor arrest was made concerning it.

Just as Obasanjo followed Machiavelli’s idea that in politics force may be applied where persuasion seems not to work, Nigerian politicians have continued to apply force in settling political issues, especially in trying to win elections or securing political positions. With the return of democracy in 1999, many heaved a sigh of relief hoping to hear no more of brutal killings which were rampant in the dying days of military rule in Nigeria. But the continued slaughtering of political opponents shows that many Nigerian politicians choose to apply cruelty and force where persuasion fails. In fact, the list of high profile politically motivated killings in the time of Obasanjo and his successor, Umaru Musa Yar’Adua is exhaustive. They include:

1. Odunayo Olagbaja, member of Osun State House of Assembly, brutally murdered in Ile-Ife on 19th December 2001, in front of a Police Station.
2. Bola Ige, Attorney General and Minister of Justice, murdered in his bedroom on 23rd December 2001.

3. Janet Oladape, a People's Democratic Party leader in Odigbo Local Government Area, Ondo State, clubbed to death by gunmen on 13th August 2002.
4. Ahmed Pategi, Kwara State Chairman of People's Democratic Party (PDP), murdered at Aiyetoro in Kogi State on 15th August 2002.
5. Barnabas Igwe, Chairman of Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) Onitsha Branch, and his wife, Abigail Igwe, murdered in Onitsha on 1st September 2002.
6. Dele Arojo, Lagos State Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Gubernatorial Aspirant killed in Lagos on 25th November 2002.
7. Ogbonnaya Uche, Senatorial Aspirant of All Nigerian People's Party for Orlu Zone, Imo State, murdered on 8th February 2003 in his home in Owerri, Imo State.
8. Theodore A. Agwatu, Principal Secretary to the Governor of Imo State, killed on 22nd February 2003 in Owerri, Imo State.
9. Marshall Harry, National Vice Chairman of All Nigerian People's Party (ANPP), brutally murdered on 5th March 2003 at home.
10. Andrew Agom, a member of the Board of Trustees of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), killed when the convoy of former Benue State Governor, Senator George Akume, was attacked on 4th March 2004.
11. Aminasoari Dikibo, National Vice Chairman (South South) of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), killed in Delta State on 22nd October 2004 on his way to the South-South PDP meeting in Asaba .
12. Anthony Ozioko, Assistant National Director, Research and Planning of Peoples Democratic Party, murdered on 27th July 2005 in his residence in Saburi-Gwagwa, Abuja.
13. Jesse Aruku, a Plateau State Governorship Aspirant of the Advanced Congress of Democrats (ACD), killed on 30th June 2006, near his house in Bassa Local Council of Plateau State.
14. Funsho Williams, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governorship Aspirant in Lagos State, killed at his home on 26th July 2006.
15. Ayo Daramola, Peoples Democratic Party Governorship Aspirant in Ekiti State, killed on 14th August 2006, in his bedroom at his hometown, Ijan Ekiti.

16. Charles Nsiegbe, Political Associate of Rivers State Governor, Mr. Rotimi Amaechi, murdered in cold blood on 21st November 2009, in Port Harcourt.
17. Dipo Dina, Ogun State Governorship Aspirant of Action Congress (AC) in 2007, murdered on 25th January 2010 in Ota, Ogun State.

Up till now, most of the above-listed murder cases are still unresolved. On the gruesome murder of Bola Ige, there were widespread lies and intrigues in the investigation that Abraham Adesanya, leader of *Afenifere* (a Yoruba Cultural Organization) concluded that “the police is trivializing the murder investigation” (*Tell Magazine*, 4th March 2002, p.24). According to *Tell Magazine*, “the general belief in the South-West today is that PDP created the political ferment that culminated in the assassination of Ige” (*Tell Magazine*, 12th August 2002, p.18). It is therefore not surprising that fourteen years later, accusing fingers still pointed at the Federal Government under Obasanjo on the death of Chief Bola Ige. Writing under the caption, *Obasanjo Knows about Ige’s Killing*, in the *Daily Post* of 27th December 2015, Odunsi noted:

Fourteen years after the gruesome murder of the then Justice Minister and Attorney General of the Federation, Chief Bola Ige, *Afenifere* leader, Chief Adebajo, has stated that the government of President Olusegun Obsasanjo cannot absolve itself of the murder. Adebajo told Sunday Telegraph that “The Federal Government of that period murdered Bola Ige, and incidentally, instead of confessing, they passed the buck, accusing Ige’s political associates of the murder.” The Yoruba leader lamented how “the Number One Chief Law Officer of the Federation at that time could be killed in his house in such a ridiculous manner, when all the six security aides attached to him vacated their duty posts at the same time and investigation into the murder was bungled”

On 17th July 2016, the Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari ordered the Nigerian Inspector General of Police to reopen the murder cases of Bola Ige (after 15 years) and Aminosoari Dikibo (after 12 years). Reporting on the presidential directive, Omonobi and Ajayi stated thus:

President Muhammadu Buhari, yesterday directed the Acting Inspector General of Police, Ibrahim Idris, to open investigation into the unresolved murder of former Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, and ex-Deputy National Chairman, South South, of Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, Chief Aminasoari Dikibo, and fish out the perpetrators. The killing of the two personalities

caused national outrage, with Nigerians calling on the government of former President Olusegun Obasanjo to fish out the killers who have still not been found (*Vanguard Newspaper* of 18th July 2016, under the heading *Buhari Orders IGP to Reopen Bola-Ige, Dikibo's Cases*).

On the murder of Barnabas Igwe, a well-known critic of Mbadinuju's administration, and his wife, accusing fingers point at Chinweoke Mbadinuju, former Governor of Anambra State, in whose tenure the couple was killed. While his wife died on the spot, Barnabas died later in the hospital, but he was reported to have made a dying declaration linking Governor Mbadinuju to the attack. In an article anchored by Ekenna on Page 31 of *NewsWatch Magazine* of 23rd September 2002, titled "Who Killed the Couple," he stated that "insinuations from Anambra State are that Igwe and his wife paid the supreme price for spearheading the struggle against the state government by lawyers." Though Mbadinuju was arraigned in 2006, after the expiration of his tenure as governor, he was later discharged and acquitted. But up till now, none of the killers of the couple has been found.

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

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

A thorough scrutiny of the third-term agenda of the former president would reveal that the scheme was to perpetuate himself in power and not to just to spend another four years in office. The implications of the third-term agenda, particularly on the National Assembly where ₦50 million bribe was said to have been doled out to each of the lawmakers from the presidency, to support the third-term agenda, remain one of the stains which the institution still carries till date. Another implication of the agenda was the ploy to tamper with the constitution, specifically not in the interest of the country or the people, but for the purpose of perpetuating one man: Okikiolu Aremu Olusegun Obasanjo in office beyond the stipulated constitutional two terms of eight years (Odumakin, 2014: 74).

Just like in the time of Abacha, it started with some “third-term apostles” extoling Obasanjo's achievements in office and asking him to continue beyond 2007, and was followed by intentional silence over the issue from the Presidency. Some state governors supported the bid purely for selfish reasons, which were the promise of getting automatic ticket for another gubernatorial election or getting automatic ticket for the Senate or being rewarded with a ministerial slot. Moreover, they were enticed with the argument that if the constitution was amended and passed by the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly, it could also guarantee third term for state governors. Therefore, the year 2006 in Nigeria was dominated by campaign for Obasanjo's third term by his loyalists which was followed by criticism from within and outside Nigeria against Obasanjo for allowing himself to be infected with the sit-tight virus that has already eaten deep into the system of many African leaders. The controversy, however, ended when the Nigerian Senate later in 2006 rejected the proposed amendment of the constitution.

With the failure of Obasanjo's third term bid, People's Democratic Party (PDP) presented Umaru Musa Yar'Adua as their candidate in the April 2007 Presidential election. Yar'Adua was declared the winner of the election, which was marred by voting irregularities and fraud in all

parts of the country, a fact that was also declared by the domestic and international observers who monitored the election (Takirambudde: 2007). There were apparently incidents of violence, thuggery, intimidation of political opponents, hijacking and stuffing of ballot boxes as political parties and politicians apply Machiavellian methods to win the election, believing that “the end justifies the means”. Nonetheless, Yar’Adua was sworn in on 29th May 2009 to succeed Obasanjo as the president of Nigeria, with Goodluck Jonathan as the Vice President.

### **6.3. THE YAR’ADUA ADMINISTRATION (2007 - 2010)**

Talking about the exceptional prowess of Cesare Borgia which was cut short by sickness and death, Machiavelli remarks as follows:

If we consider the duke’s career as a whole, we find that he laid strong foundations for the future. And I do not consider it superfluous to discuss these, because I know no better precepts to give a new prince than ones derived from Cesare’s actions; and if what he instituted was of no avail, this was not his fault but arose from the extraordinary and inordinate malice of fortune (Chapter VII. Bull, 1995: 21).

The foundations he laid in so short a time were so sound, that, had those armies not been bearing down on him, or had he been in good health, he would have overcome every difficulty (Chapter VII. Bull, 1995: 25).

He was a man of great courage and high intentions, and could not have conducted himself other than the way he did; his plans were frustrated only because Alexander’s life was cut short and because of his own sickness (Chapter VII. Bull, 1995: 25).

If there is any way to relate the above-cited remarks of Machiavelli to events in the present democratic dispensation of Nigeria, it is what happened to Umaru Musa Yar’Adua, the President of Nigeria from 29th May 2007 – 5th May 2010. Upon assumption of office as the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Umaru Musa Yar’Adua faced the enormous task of governance with great commitment and dedication. His notable achievement was his establishing peace and reconciliation in Niger Delta through his Amnesty Programme. However, his main problem was ill-health, as he was constantly travelling abroad for medical treatment, even before he was sworn in as president, and continued to do so when he became president. His ability to continue with his presidential duties amidst his health issues was stalled on 23rd November 2009 when he went

to Saudi Arabia for treatment of heart and kidney problems. Unfortunately, Yar'Adua never recovered from the sickness, but died on 5th May 2010. He was succeeded by the Vice President, Jonathan Goodluck, as the Nigerian Constitution stipulated. A lot of people believed that if not the cold hands of death, Yar'Adua's policies would have led Nigeria to greatness. According to Abdallah, "Yar'Adua's three years as president were legendary, basically due to his frugal disposition to life, meticulous to details and commitment to service." For him:

In the Niger Delta, for instance, if the political class seems to forget him, the youth, particularly those that took arms against the state will never forget him. Yar'Adua was the one who rolled out the Amnesty Programme which saw hundreds of them going abroad for studies and professional training. Many of them have since returned as reformed citizens while others are making positive impact in various fields of endeavour across the world (*Yar'Adua: Six Years After*, in *Daily Trust* Newspaper of 5th May 2016).

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

As provided in Section 145 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria, the functions of the president would only be performed in acting capacity by the Vice President if the President had transmitted a letter to the National Assembly informing them of his inability to discharge his presidential

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

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

#### **6.4. GOODLUCK JONATHAN ADMINISTRATION (2010 – 2015)**

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

A prince must be slow to take action, and must watch that he does not come to be afraid of his own shadow; his behaviour must be tempered by humanity and prudence so that over-confidence does not make him rash or excessive distrust make him unbearable (Chapter XVII. Bull, 1995: 52).

If there is any president in the present democratic dispensation of Nigeria whose disposition perfectly fits into Machiavelli's above-cited qualities for the prince, it is Goodluck Jonathan.

Goodluck Jonathan became the Acting President of Nigeria on 9th February 2010, courtesy of the “Doctrine of Necessity” invoked by the National Assembly to empower him to discharge the presidential duties until the recovery of President Yar’Adua who was away for medical treatment in Saudi Arabia. Upon the death of President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua on 5th May 2010, he was sworn in as the President of Nigeria, in accordance with the order of succession in the Nigerian Constitution. His nomination of the former Governor of Kaduna State, Namadi Sambo, as the Vice President was approved by the National Assembly, and together they completed the remaining last year of the four-year tenure of Late President Yar’Adua and won the 2011 Presidential election.

President Jonathan manifested in so many ways the above-cited words of Machiavelli. He signed into law the Freedom of Information (FOI) Bill, and created a political atmosphere characterized by the rule of law. Throughout his period as president of Nigeria, there was neither political assassination nor oppression of political opponents. Analyzing the political disposition of Jonathan in the light of established authoritarian style of political leadership in Nigeria, many argue that Jonathan was weak (Ajani: 2016). They base their argument on the fact that unlike his predecessors, both military and civilian, he allowed social critics, journalists and political opponents to criticize him both constructively and destructively (Ochayi: 2013). In fact, his tolerating disposition towards the opposition and the Nigeria media, as well as his religious tolerance, they maintain, enabled the *Boko Haram* to grow and have a stranglehold on the entire North East of Nigeria. It also enabled the opposition to vilify him while in office (Adekunle: 2012) and eventually wrestle political power off him in the 2015 presidential election. It was astonishing to all that unlike the military and civilian rulers before him, he did not interfere with the electoral and judicial systems during his tenure, which is why he oversaw the conduct of two of the most free, fair and credible elections in the history of Nigeria, the 2011 and 2015 elections.

At the end of the presidential election held on 28th March 2015, Muhammadu Buhari of the All Progressives Congress (APC) was declared winner, and sworn in on 29th May 2015. That election and handover were remarkable in Nigerian history because for the first time, Nigeria had a smooth hand over of political power at the national level from one political party to another. There was domestic and international commendation to the former President, Jonathan Goodluck, for his unprecedented show of magnanimity in defeat by calling on phone to

congratulate the opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, even before Buhari was declared winner of the election, and also for handing over peacefully to him. Worthy of mention is the fact that after the 2015 Presidential election, for the first time in the history of presidential elections in the present democratic dispensation, the outcome was not contested in any tribunal or court. This is because Goodluck Jonathan, prevailed on his party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) not to go through the usual way of Nigerians, which was to contest election results, even when they clearly know that they lost, hoping that they can bribe the judiciary to overturn the results which did not favour them.

Speaking on the matter over two years later, Jonathan said,

I conceded defeat without a fight because I wanted to set a standard for our democracy, going forward. My aim then was to change the narrative and prove that election-related litigations should no longer define Nigeria's democracy. People must not always go to court and obtain judgments before elections in Nigeria are declared conclusive.

We don't get to hear about such court cases in mature democracies. I wanted us to get to that point in our democratic experience (*Daily Post* Newspaper of 27th October 2017 anchored by Ameh Godwin under the heading, *Why I Conceded Defeat to Buhari in 2015* – Jonathan).

I think that what Jonathan said is true because what he did was unprecedented in the history of democracy in Nigeria. For me, he has set the pace on political behaviours which will go a long way in curbing the Machiavellian tendencies of Nigerian politicians.

## **6.5. MUHAMMADU BUHARI ADMINISTRATION (29TH MAY 2015 – DATE)**

Men are ready to change masters in the hope of bettering themselves. In this belief they take up arms against their master, but find themselves deceived when they discover by experience that instead things have got worse (Chapter III. Adams, 1992: 5).

It is the nature of people to be fickle; to persuade of something is easy, but to make them stand fast in that conviction is hard. Hence things must be arranged so that when they no longer believe they can be compelled to believe by force (Chapter VI. Adams, 1992: 17).

How men live is so different from how they should live that a ruler who does not do what is generally done, but persists in doing what ought to be done, will undermine his power rather than maintain it. If a ruler who wants always to act honourably is surrounded by many unscrupulous men his downfall is inevitable (Chapter XV. Skinner and Price, 1988: 54).

A general rule about men, that they are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, fearful of danger and greedy for gain. While you serve their welfare, they are all yours, offering their blood, their belongings, their lives, and their children's lives, as we noted above – so long as the danger is remote. But when the danger is close at hand, they turn against you (Chapter XVII. Adams, 1992: 46).

Men are so simple of mind, and so much dominated by their immediate needs that a deceitful man will always find plenty who are ready to be deceived (Chapter XVIII. Adams, 1992: 48).

The current Nigerian President, Muhammadu Buhari, was sworn in on 29th May 2015 after defeating the former President, Jonathan Goodluck, in the 28th March 2015 Presidential election – an election that was declared free and fair by both domestic and international observers. Looking at events in Nigeria prior to the 2015 presidential, it is noticeable that three things, which related to what Machiavelli noted in *The Prince*, were responsible for the victory of the opposition All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 elections. The first was the internal crisis in the then ruling party, People's Democratic Party (PDP), which emanated from greed, selfishness, deception, ingratitude and other natural human traits which Machiavelli observed in *The Prince*. In the course of that crisis in the then ruling party, many sitting Governors and leaders of the party formed what they called "New People's Democratic Party" (New PDP), which later merged with the then opposition, APC, in the build-up to the 2015 elections. Reporting on the merger in the *Premium Times* of 26th November 2013 under the caption *APC Merges with New PDP*, Owete wrote thus:

The All Progressives Congress, APC, has announced a merger with the Abubakar Baraje-led faction of the People's Democratic Party tagged 'New PDP'. The merger was announced at the end of a meeting in Kano Governors Lodge in Abuja on Tuesday. The merger means the APC now has its 11 governors and the seven governors who are members of the New PDP; making a total of 18 state governors.

The second thing that gave the opposition party, APC, victory in the 2015 elections was the tribal sentiment aroused in the minds of the Northerners that it was their turn to produce the next president of Nigeria, after their kinsman, Yar'Adua, who died in office in 2010, was replaced constitutionally by his deputy, Goodluck Jonathan, a Southerner. Jonathan contested for the office of the president in 2011 and won the election alongside his deputy, Namadi Sambo. The Northerners, out of what seemed like simplicity of mind and domination by tribal interests, which Machiavelli observed about human beings, 'bought' the tribal view canvassed by Northern political leaders in the build-up to the 2015 elections and thus voted massively for their kinsman, Muhammadu Buhari.

The third thing, which was similar to the second, was the *Boko Haram* menace that destroyed a large part of North-East of Nigeria, which the Northern political leaders used as an indication to the Northerners that the then government, because it was headed by a Southerner, Jonathan Goodluck, did not want to deal decisively with *Boko Haram*. Seeing that tribal sentiments, whenever whipped up, have always beclouded the sense of reasoning of most Nigerians even before independence in 1960, it is not surprising that Northerners voted massively for their kinsman, Muhammadu Buhari in the 2015 presidential election, unlike in 2011 when they voted massively for the same Goodluck Jonathan, thereby bringing about his victory over the same Muhammadu Buhari in the North.

Apart from the above-cited seeming applications of Machiavelli's view on human nature by Nigerian politicians and voters before and during the 2015 elections, the manner of conduct of the 2015 presidential election campaign by the two leading political parties, PDP and APC, lent credence to the fact that the political practices of Nigerian politicians could be seen in the light of Machiavelli's principle that "the end justifies the means" and his precept that "the gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide" (Chapter XV. Bull, 1995: 48). This was manifested by the unprecedented kind of campaign of calumny exhibited in the buildup

to the 2015 by members of both political parties. With the availability of mobile communication gadgets, internet access and social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Instagram, imo, etc., it was very easy for mischief-making politicians to spread their lies and deceits to all nooks and crannies of the country. As soon as the two leading presidential candidates in the presidential election, Goodluck Jonathan of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Muhammadu Buhari of All Peoples Congress (APC), inaugurated their campaigns, their supporters began to spread messages of hate, division, mischief and calumny all in the name of garnering support for their candidates. Their campaigns, particularly in the social media, at some point completely became exchange of insults, abuses and counter-abuses by their supporters. All these happened despite the accord signed by the two candidates on 14th January 2015, in which they promised that their campaigns will be based on issues and not on individuals.

For instance, few weeks to the presidential election, their campaigns in the newspapers, magazines, television stations and social media were dominated by the following irrelevant matters:

1. The authenticity of Buhari's Secondary School Certificate and Jonathan's PhD certificate.
2. Who should a better First Lady between Jonathan's wife and Buhari's wife?
3. Jonathan's young age versus Buhari's old age.
4. Buhari's medical fitness and possibility of not outliving his four-year tenure.
5. Buhari's Islamic fundamentalism and tribal mindset.

Reporting on the events of that period, with the caption *Hate Campaign Speeches: Group Calls for Erring Media Sanction*, in the *Newswatch Times* of 24th March 2015, Obiozo wrote:

Following the harsh campaign strategies employed by the two major political parties, using the core and social media, a group has called for severe punishment for media houses that violate the basic ethics of journalism and advertising as it regards politics. Speaking at the presentation of the final report of CLEEN Foundation's Security Threat Assessment (FSA), Mr. Nengal Daniel Gondyi, Programmes Manager of the Group said political parties, especially the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) seem to have reached their climax level in terms of campaigns and strategies to win elections across the country. According to him, this was

noticed in their campaign strategies which are thought to be unethical and violates the Advertizing Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) and National Broadcasting Corporation (NPC) Codes guiding political campaigns. There have been reports of hate speeches by aspirants publicly.

Out of selfish desire to grab or retain power by all means, the usual practice of most Nigerians to change political parties like clothes was rampant in the 2015 elections. For them, political parties are joined not because of their manifestos but purely to contest and secure political power. In Chapter Four, section 4.2.3 of this study where I discussed the relationship between Machiavelli's concept of *Fortuna* and political practices of most Nigerian politicians, I mentioned names of some politicians who after losing party primaries or elections in their former parties jumped to other parties just to get new platforms to contest for political power. It is therefore not a coincidence that many of the State Governors who are now governing their states on the platform of APC were formerly high political office holders in the PDP. They include:

1. Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai, who was formerly Minister of Federal Capital Territory under the PDP.
2. Governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Tambuwal, who was the immediate past Speaker of the House of Representatives under the PDP.
3. Governor of Katsina State, Aminu Masari, who was former Speaker of House of Representatives under the PDP.
4. Governor Abubakar Bello of Niger State, who was former Commissioner of Commerce and Investment under the PDP.
5. Governor of Kwara State, Abdulfatah Ahmed, who formerly served as Commissioner of Finance and Development under the PDP.
6. Governor Badaru Abubakar of Jigawa State, who was a former chieftain of PDP.
7. Governor Simon Lalong of Plateau State, who was former Speaker of State House of Assembly under the PDP.
8. Governor of Kano State, Abdullai Ganduje, who was formerly Deputy Governor under the PDP.
9. Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State, who was a former Minister of Trade and Investment under the PDP.
10. Governor Tanko Al-Makura of Nasarawa State, who was formerly a frontrunner of PDP.

11. Governor Abubakar Bagudu of Kebbi State, who was a former PDP Senator representing Kebbi Central in the Senate.
12. Governor of Adamawa State, Bindow Jubrilla, who was formerly the PDP Senator representing Adamawa North in the Senate.
13. Governor of Ogun State, Ibikunle Amosun, who formerly under the PDP represented Ogun Central in the Senate.

By implication, thirteen out of the 22 governors of the ruling APC were formerly members of the PDP. Even the present Senate President, Bukola Saraki, and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Yakubu Dogara, were also members of the PDP. The present Senate President was Governor of Kwara State for eight years under PDP. Many ministers serving in the present APC government were one time PDP governors in their home states. For instance, Mr. Rotimi Amaechi, Minister of Transport, and Dr. Chris Ngige, Minister of Labour and Employment, were formerly PDP governors of River State and Anambra State respectively. The implication of the above is that political parties for the Nigerian politicians are not ideological platforms for serving the people but just platforms for acquiring political positions and amassing wealth. That is why instead of grooming people to take over and continue from where they stopped, Nigerian politicians recycle themselves from one political position to another.

In their desperate bid to continue from one political position to another, they have continued to employ all kinds of political malpractices and electoral irregularities. For instance, in 2015, “the Police in River State arrested a middle aged man for allegedly snatching a ballot box in Tai Local Government of the state” during the 2015 Presidential election (*Premium Times* of 28th March 2015). Testifying before the Abia State National Election Petition Tribunal on what transpired at the Abia North Senatorial District election held on 28th March 2015, the Returning Officer, Ihekweaba Chukwugoziem, said “pressure was mounted on me to sign and declare the results as presented with all the manipulations in them, and I refused, insisting that the right thing should be done” (*Premium Times* Newspaper of 25th August 2015 under the caption, *How I Resisted Pressure To Announce False Results*).

While there are good electoral officials who do not succumb to the pressure of Nigerian politicians to commit electoral offences, there are those who willingly because of financial inducements or intimidation collude with politicians to indulge in electoral malpractices.

Reporting on the Imo State Governorship and State Assembly elections of 25th April 2015, in *The Guardian* Newspaper of 27th April 2015, under the caption *Police Arrest 20, Three INEC Officials over Electoral Offences in Imo*, Ogugbuaja stated that Officers and men of the Imo state Police Command arrested twenty persons for indulging in electoral offences ranging “from thuggery, and thumb-printing to electoral violence.” According to the report, “three of them who had thumb-printed and filled ballot boxes before 11am claimed they were INEC staff.”

Even in the present Buhari-led government in Nigeria, the same act of snatching of ballot boxes also happened in different constituencies in the Rivers State rerun elections for the National Assembly and River State House of Assembly which took place on 19th March 2016, causing the Rivers State Resident Electoral Commissioner to cancel the polls in the affected constituencies. In Abia State, over 40,000 votes were cancelled in the Abia North Senatorial re-run election held on Saturday 5th March 2016 due to widespread ballot snatching by thugs in Ohafia, Umunneochi and parts of Arochukwu, making the Independent National Electoral Commission to declare the election inconclusive. In the Bye-election in Nasarawa State, cases of snatching of ballot boxes were also reported. Writing on this, *The Guardian* Newspaper of 28th May 2016 reported thus:

Nasarawa State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Lawal Shehu on Saturday confirmed that hoodlums snatched five ballot boxes in the on-going bye-election in the state. He told the News Agency of Nigeria that the boxes were snatched at Ugwar ward of Toto Local Government Area of the state. He said INEC officials reported the snatching of ballot boxes containing electoral materials in units 003, 004, 005, 006 and 008, adding that he had directed his men to ensure the recovery of the boxes and arrest of the culprits.

While many Nigerians, some of whose names I have mentioned in section 6.2 of this study, have lost their lives in politically motivated assassinations in the present democratic dispensation, the trend has continued even in the present Buhari-led government. The following are some of the politically motivated assassinations in 2016 and 2017 alone:

1. On 28th April 2016, Lucky Ajie, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chieftain in Ogba/ Egbema/ Ndoni Local Government Area of River State, was assassinated in his country home.

2. On 20th May 2016, the Senior Special Assistant to the Governor of Benue State, Igbana Denen was murdered in cold blood in his residence in Makurdi.
3. On 29th August 2016, prominent All Progressives Congress (APC) lawyer, Ken Atsuwete, was murdered in his home.
4. On 2nd September 2016, Niyi Pirisola, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman of Okitipupa Local Government Area of Ondo State was shot dead as he returned to his house.
5. On 20th August 2017, Tavershima Adyorough, a Principal Special Assistant to Benue State Governor on Knowledge Economy and Investments was murdered in his residence.

Some high profile politicians lucky to escape from assassins since Buhari assumed office as President of Nigeria in 2015 include:

1. Ike Ekweremadu, Deputy Senate President, who escaped assassination attempt on Tuesday 17th November 2015 in Abuja. According to *Vanguard* Newspaper of 17th November 2015, "The suspected assassins, who operated in a tinted, white-coloured Mercedes Benz AMG E63 without a plate number, were chauffeured by a long-bearded light skinned foreigner, apparently a mercenary."
2. Goodluck Jonathan, the former president of Nigeria, who escaped death on 30th November 2015, in Yenogoa, capital of Bayelsa State, when suspected assassins intercepted and drove into his short motorcade and trailed the motorcade to the entrance of his private residence. Luckily for the former president, the suspected assassins were overpowered by combined team of security operatives attached to him.
3. Pius Odubu, Edo State Deputy Governor, whose convoy was attacked on 30th April 2016 in Auchi, Etsako Local Government Area of Edo State, where he went for campaign.
4. Godwin Obaseki, Edo State Governorship Aspirant of the All Progressives Congress, who was attacked by armed men at Sobe, Owan West Local Government Area on 8th May 2016 while on campaign.

On why political violence has continued relentlessly in Nigeria, many opine that apart from Nigerian security agencies being badly equipped to halt the rate of the crimes, they are usually handicapped in their investigations of the cases and apprehension of the perpetrators because of the involvement of high profile politicians in them. Moreover, the Nigerian judiciary is highly

compromised and corrupt, thereby providing opportunities for the politicians to thwart the course of justice.

In another show of desperation to acquire or continue in political power by all means, Nigerian politicians have registered under-aged children and allowed them to vote in elections, notwithstanding the legal and moral implications of such act. Those eligible to vote in Nigeria are people from eighteen years upwards, but it is surprising that several cases of underage voting have been allowed by electoral officials particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria. This practice took place in the Sokoto State Governorship election of 2012 (*Premium Times* Newspaper of 21st February 2012, under the caption *Shocking Documentary Evidence of Sokoto's Underage Voters*). But it got to the climax with the brazen manner which it happened in Taraba State (*Vanguard* Newspaper of 28th March 2015) and many other parts of Northern Nigeria in the 2015 General elections. It got to the point that the children were even caught on camera undergoing accreditation by INEC officials who are supposed to know the electoral law. Reporting on this, under the heading *2015 Elections: INEC to Prosecute Under-age Voters*, the *Daily Post* Newspaper of 11th February 2016 stated thus:

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) said on Wednesday that it would prosecute under-age voters in Plateau. Dr. Godwin Kwanga, the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) of INEC in the state made this known in a Stakeholders' Forum in Jos ahead of the re-run elections in the state fixed for February 20. Kwanga said that the state was replete with underage voters in possession of permanent Voter Cards (PVCs).

The campaign slogan of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 elections, which was partly instrumental to their election victory over the People's Democratic Party (PDP) that had been in power in Nigeria since the return of democracy in 1999, was CHANGE. But upon assumption of office, greed and desire for material benefits, which Machiavelli observed in human beings, got the better of them. They soon jettisoned the "Change" mantra with which they got into government and manifested the "business as usual" mentality of Nigerian politicians which they spoke against as opposition members in their campaign for votes in the 2015 elections. A typical example of this was the issue of "Budget Padding" that nearly rocked the Nigerian National Assembly after the passage of the 2016 Budget. "Padding" was the term they

used to describe a situation in which some key members of the National Assembly went behind and added items of expenditure to what was already passed by the two legislative arms. The matter came up for the first time when President Buhari refused to assent to the 2016, accusing the National Assembly of padding it. After series of controversy arising from media reports on the situation, horse-trading between the Presidency and National Assembly, as well as purported modifications, the matter ended when President signed the Budget into law.

But surprisingly, the matter resurfaced again when a member of the House of Representatives and former Chairman of House Committee on Appropriation, Abdulmumin Jibrin, who was relieved of his position after the “Budget Padding” saga, opened the can of worms and revealed the rot and corruption going on in the National Assembly under the guise of “Constituency Projects.” Jibrin alleged that the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, his Deputy, Yussuf Lasun, Chief Whip, Alhassan Ado Doguwa, Minority Leader, Leo Ogor, and 11 other committee chairmen were actually involved in the padding. According to Jibrin, the Speaker, Dogara, and the above-listed principal officers of the House made into the 2016 Budget “senseless’ insertions of projects worth about ₦40 billion out of the ₦100 billion allocation for members’ constituency projects. He alleged thus:

Dogara made “criminal insertions (otherwise known as “budget padding”) to the tune of over ₦3 billion to his constituency alone. While the entire Zonal Intervention for the three (3) Senatorial Districts of Bauchi State and 12 Federal Constituencies in the state amounts to N1,666,666,666, the Speaker criminally inserted about 200 percent of the amount, totaling N3,079,000.000 to his constituency alone. The same Speaker, Yakubu Dogara diverted 50 percent of the total Capital Projects allocated to Bauchi State to the tune of N4,781,003,431 out of N9,231,289,842 allocated to the state to his constituency (*Daily Trust* Newspaper of 7th August 2016, anchored by Musa Abdullahi Krishi, under the caption, *Dogara Made Criminal Insertions in Budget – Reps Group*).

Countering the allegation by Abdulmumin Jibrin, the Speaker’s camp said that Jibrin was removed from office for wrongdoing. According to them, it was Jibrin that was involved in the budget padding with his introduction of certain projects to please the president, which were not even in the original proposals from the Presidency. According to the Chairman of House Information Committee, Abdulrazak Namdas:

One clear example is the insertion of funds for the so called Muhammadu Buhari Film Village in his Constituency in Kano State without the consent or solicitation of Mr. President. This has brought both Mr. President and the government to disrepute. Again, it was found out that he was fond of inserting projects into prominent persons' constituencies without their knowledge to curry favour and possibly use it as a means of blackmail against them when necessary. One of such is the numerous projects he claimed in a Channels TV interview in April 2016, to have cited in Mr. President's home town of Daura, Katsina State without Mr. President's solicitation or knowledge. ...He did not stop there. Hon Abdulmumin went about soliciting Honourable members to nominate projects for him to help them include in the Budget. When called upon to defend his actions as Appropriation's Chairman, all he did was to be calling names of those members and the amount he helped include for them in the Budget in an unsuccessful bid to silence them (*The Nation* Newspaper of 27th July 2016, anchored by Dele Anofi, under the heading, *Reps Seek EFCC Probe for Jibrin for Budget Padding*).

Considering the huge amount of money being cornered into their pockets by legislators throughout Nigeria in the process of appropriation, lobbying and law-making, one can understand why just like in the House of Representatives, lawmakers in many states in Nigeria are fighting themselves over the spoils of office, at the detriment of making laws for the good of their states which is the primary purpose of their being in their states' Houses of Assembly.

For instance, in late 2015, the fight for the position of Speaker in the Kogi State House of Assembly got to a dangerous point that two Speakers emerged with each laying claim to the position of the Speaker. On Thursday, 10th December 2015, Momoh Jimoh-Lawal, the Speaker of the State Assembly, alongside his Deputy, Aliyu Akuh, and Minority Leader, Hassan Bello, were reportedly impeached, and were replaced by Godwin Osiyi, John Abba, and James Eneche as the new Speaker, new Deputy Speaker, and new Minority Leader respectively. In a swift reaction, Jimoh Lawal insisted that he still remained the authentic Speaker of the House, adding that the move to hijack the leadership of the House of Assembly by some unpatriotic members were resisted, forcing him to adjourn the House to 2nd February 2016. That battle for the soul of the Kogi House of Assembly and conflicting claims by both camps made the House of Representatives to mandate the intervention of their members from Kogi State on the matter.

On 16th February 2016, another purported impeachment of the same Speaker, Momoh Jimoh-Lawal, and the Principal Officer of the House, and election of, this time, Ahmed Umar Imam as new Speaker, was announced. The impeachment threw the State into another round of political tension and controversy, thereby making the House of Representatives to move a motion for the sealing of the Kogi State Assembly Complex by the Inspector General of Police. Reacting to his removal again, along with other principal members of the Assembly, Jimoh-Lawal, who insisted that he remained the Speaker, declared the impeachment null and void, alleging that the impeachment was masterminded by the State Governor, Yahaya Bello, who being an APC member, wanted to replace him (Lawal, a PDP member) with his fellow APC member, notwithstanding that APC is in the minority in the House. Luckily for the impeached Speaker, Jimoh-Lawal, he took the matter to Court and secured judgment in his favour. Reporting on the judgment under the caption, *Court Reinstates Impeached Kogi Speaker, Deputy, 7 Principal Officers*, in the *Vanguard* Newspaper of 20th May 2016, Nnochiri stated as follows:

The Abuja Division of the Federal High Court, yesterday, reinstated the Speaker of the Kogi House of Assembly, Hon. Momoh Jimoh Lawal. In a judgment delivered by Justice Nnamdi Dimgba, the court equally restored the Deputy Speaker, Aliyu Akuh and seven other Principal Officers of the Kogi State House of Assembly, saying the process that led to their purported impeachment on February 16, 2016, was unconstitutional and illegal.

Reflecting on these accusations and counter accusations going on both in the National Assembly and many states' legislatures, one thing is clear – that the lawmakers in the present Buhari government, just like their predecessors, are not concerned with alleviating the sufferings of the masses but only with how to amass wealth and fulfill their selfish desires. Moreover, it portrays the anti-corruption posture of President Buhari in bad light, seeing that his party men are equally corrupt as those they criticized and defeated in the 2015 election with the slogan “Change.”

In the light of the above and the manner in which the ruling party played down the accusations and counter-accusations in the National Assembly, as well as other allegations against members of their party, many believe that the much-talked-about anti-corruption fight by the Buhari administration is a Machiavellian ploy by the ruling party to intimidate political opponents and whittle down the power of the main opposition party, People's Democratic Party (Ugwuanyi: 2015). This is equally corroborated by the fact that most of those that are in detention and under

investigation by anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) are chieftains of the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP). Reporting on the feelings of the opposition party, People's Democratic Party (PDP) on Buhari Government's anti-corruption crusade, under the caption, *Akpabio's Corruption Investigation: Buhari's Anti-Corruption War is Selective – PDP*, Adebayo wrote:

The ongoing corruption investigation of a former Akwa Ibom State Governor, Godswill Akpabio, is an attempt at weakening the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, and frustrate its rebuilding efforts ahead of the 2019 elections, the Nigerian opposition party has claimed. The PDP Publicity Secretary, Olisa Metuh, made the claim while addressing journalists at the party's secretariat in Abuja on Sunday. Accusing President Muhammadu Buhari of 'hypocrisy, double standards and dictatorial proclivities', Mr. Metuh wondered why only the petition against Mr. Akpabio would be acted on, when there were petitions against former governors of Lagos and Rivers states, Babatunde Fashola and Rotimi Amaechi, who are members of the All Progressives Congress, APC (*Premium Times* of 18th October 2015).

The implication of the above is that Buhari's anti-corruption fight is consistent with Machiavelli's injunction that "if the ruler wants to keep hold of his new possession", the first thing he must bear in mind is "that the family of the old prince must be destroyed" (Chapter III. Bull, 1995: 7). As at October 2016, many high profile members of the People's Democratic Party were being investigated by the EFCC and ICPC. They included:

1. Sambo Dasuki – National Security Adviser in the administration of former President, Goodluck Jonathan. He was arrested and prosecuted for spearheading the \$2.1 billion arms deal scandal.
2. Femi Fani-Kayode – Former Minister of Aviation and spokesperson of the 2015 Presidential Campaign Organization of the People's Democratic Party (PDP)
3. Iyiola Omisore – Former Deputy Governor of Osun State, under the People's Democratic Party (PDP).
4. Yinka Taiwo – Chairman of People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Oyo State.
5. Olisa Metu – National Publicity Secretary of People's Democratic Party (PDP).
6. Reuben Abati – Aide (Spokesperson) to Former President, Goodluck Jonathan.

7. Amajuoyi Azubike – Aide to Former President, Goodluck Jonathan.
8. Waripamowei Dudafa – Special Adviser to Former President, Goodluck Jonathan, on Domestic Affairs.
9. Ayodele Fayose, the Governor of Ekiti State, whose personal account with Zenith Bank and those of some of his associates were frozen by the EFCC.
10. Patience Jonathan, the wife of Former President, Jonathan Goodluck, whose personal account domiciled in Skye Bank was frozen by EFCC, while her \$15, 591,700 was seized.
11. Diezani Allison-Madueke – Former Minister of Petroleum Resources under former President, Goodluck Jonathan.

The names cited above are just a few of the high profile politicians of the PDP undergoing investigations by the anti-graft agencies.

In the light of the above, the opposition party, PDP, accused President Buhari of shielding and harbouring some ‘corrupt’ members of his party, APC, because of their financial contributions to his election. They specifically mentioned the Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi; the Minister of Works, Power and Housing, Babatunde Fashola; and the Minister of Labour and Employment, Chris Ngige, who, as they alleged, had corruption allegations hanging on their necks when they served as State Governors of Rivers, Lagos and Anambra respectively. They accused President Buhari and EFCC of deliberately not attending to the several petitions written against Amaechi, Fashola and Ngige, but only attending to petitions written against those regarded as thorn in the flesh of the ruling party, such as the present Senate President, Bukola Saraki, and Senate’s Minority Leader, Godswill Akpabio, who were being prosecuted on the basis of petitions written against them when they served as Governors of Kwara State and Akwa Ibom State respectively.

They also alleged that all the petitions bordering on allegations of corruption against Kayode Fayemi, the Minister of Mines and Steel Development (formerly Solid Minerals Development) under Buhari’s administration, when he was Governor of Ekiti State (15th October 2010 – 16th October 2014) have not been attended to because he is a member of the ruling party and one of the main sponsors of Buhari’s presidential campaign. It is therefore understandable that the PDP berated the ruling APC for an alleged bias in the fight against corruption. According to them,

“the opposition has been singled out for harrowing experiences. Some people are treated with kid gloves, while others, particularly those in opposition, are subjected to all manner of harrowing experiences” (Yakubu: 2017). One of the Senators of the ruling party, Senator Shehu Sani of Kaduna State, who could not hide his feelings on the matter put it succinctly by his remarks that the Buhari administration uses deodorant to fight corruption when it concerns some APC members and his kitchen cabinet and insecticides when it involves members of the opposition and those in the National Assembly (Baiyewu: 2017. Jannah: 2017).

Expectedly, President Buhari refuted the allegation that his anti-corruption fight was targeted at members of the opposition and other perceived enemies. Reporting in the *Vanguard* Newspaper of 20th July 2016, under the caption, *I Don't Think My Ministers, Aides are Corrupt – Buhari*, Nwabughioogu stated thus:

Again, President Muhammadu Buhari has come to the rescue of his ministers and aides, absolving them of any corrupt practices. This came on a day the Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo, refuted claims in some quarters that the anti-corruption war of President Muhammadu Buhari's government was targeted at members of the opposition party and perceived enemies, saying the view was grossly incorrect and unfounded. Recall that the President had, during his first media chat last December, said none of his ministers was corrupt.

But such denial by government spokespersons that Buhari's fight against corruption was not selective may not be plausible, considering the course of events in Nigeria under his governance. Another reference point is the incident of late Friday to early Saturday, 7th to 8th October 2016. On that night, operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS) in a Gestapo style, in many parts of the country (Abuja, Port Harcourt, Gombe, Kano, Enugu and Sokoto), raided the homes of some senior Nigerian judges over allegations of corruption, and in the process, arrested some of them, including judges of the Supreme Court. The affected judges were:

1. Adeniyi Ademola – Federal High Court, Abuja.
2. Nnamdi Dimgba – Federal High Court, Abuja.
3. John Okoro – Supreme Court.
4. Kabiru Auta – Federal High Court, Kano.
5. A.I Umezulike – Chief Judge, Enugu State.

6. Muazu Pindiga – Chief Judge, Gombe State.
7. Justice Samia – Chief Judge, Sokoto State
8. Sylvester Ngwuta – Supreme Court.
9. Mohammed Liman – Chief Judge, Rivers State.

Though the Presidency defended the legality of the action of the DSS (Ameh: 2016), critics of the midnight raids argue that invading the homes of judges in that manner is unconstitutional and against the rule of law and their fundamental human rights (Ojiabor: 2016; Oditah: 2016; Amaize *et al*: 2016). The matter was complicated by separate letters written to the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Mahmud Mohammed, by two of the arrested judges, Justices John Okoro and Sylvester Ngwuta, denying any wrongdoing and blaming their woes on several unsuccessful attempts by chieftains of the ruling party, All Progressives Congress (APC), to influence the appeals challenging the outcomes of governorship elections of Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Ebonyi, Abia and Ekiti States. Justice Okoro specifically mentioned the former Governor of Rivers State and present Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, while Justice Ngwuta pointed accusing fingers at the same Rotimi Amaechi and the former Governor of Abia State, who is presently the Minister of Science and Technology, Ogbonnaya Onu.

Expectedly, Amaechi denied the allegations against him by the two judges, describing them as fictitious and dubious diversionary tales concocted to muddle the very serious issues of the arrest and investigation of acts of corruption against the judges by the Department of State Security Services (DSS). In the same vein, Onu denied the bribery allegation by Justice Ngwuta, claiming that he couldn't have done that kind of thing, being a patriotic Nigerian "conscious of the essence of the rule of law as a vital component of true and enduring democracy" (*The Sun* Newspaper of 28th October 2016, anchored by Ujuh, under the caption *The Judges' Weighty Allegations Against Ministers*). But beyond Amaechi and Onu's spirited denials, it is surprising that the government dismissed the weighty allegations made against them by the two judges with a wave of the hand. And the matter was further compounded by the fact that the states in question – Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Ebonyi, Abia and Ekiti – are all in the hands of the opposition party, People's Democratic Party (PDP), and those being accused of trying to influence the judges are chieftains of the ruling party, All Progressives Congress (APC).

Another instance of Buhari government's selective anti-corruption fight was the investigation and prosecution of the Senate President, Bukola Saraki, and his Deputy, Ike Ekweremadu, soon after their emergence as Senate President and Deputy Senate President respectively. It was a public knowledge that the Senate President, Bukola Saraki, came to his position on the support of the senators of opposition party, People's Democratic Party (PDP). Though he is a member of the ruling party, All Progressives Congress (APC), on 9th June 2015, he stood for, and won, on the floor of the Senate, the election as Senate President, against the desire of his ruling party, which had already 'anointed' Ahmed Ibrahim Lawan for the position. His deputy, Ike Ekweremadu, a member of the opposition party, PDP, emerged after a tightly contested election, in which he beat the candidate chosen by the ruling party, George Akume. A similar scenario played out the same day in the House of Representatives, with the election of Yakubu Dogara as Speaker of the House. Though Dogara is a member of the ruling party, APC, he stood for the election and won it against the wish of the ruling party which had resolved internally that Femi Gbajabiamila would be the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Responding to the election in the National Assembly, the ruling party rejected the emergence of Saraki and Dogara as Senate President and House Speaker respectively. On this, the *Premium Times* of 9th June 2015, under the caption, *APC Rejects Election of Saraki, Dogara as Senate President, House Speaker*, reported as follows:

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has described as totally unacceptable and the highest level of indiscipline and treachery the conduct of Tuesday's inauguration of the National Assembly that led to the emergence of Bukola Saraki and Yakubu Dogara as Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives respectively. "Senator Bukola Saraki and Hon. Dogara are not candidates of the APC and a majority of its National Assembly members-elect for the positions of Senate President and House Speaker. The party duly met and conducted a straw poll and clear candidates emerged for the posts of Senate President, Deputy Senate President and Speaker of the House of Representatives, supported by a majority of all Senators-elect and members-elect of the House of Representatives. All National Assembly members-elect who emerged on the platform of the party are bound by that decision. The party is supreme, and its interest is superior to that of its individual members," the party said in a statement issued in Abuja Tuesday by its National Publicity Secretary, Lai Mohammed. "Consequently, the APC

leadership is meeting in a bid to re-establish discipline in the party and to mete out the necessary sanctions to all those involved in what is nothing but a monumental act of indiscipline and betrayal to subject the party to ridicule and create obstacles for the new administration,” it said. APC decried a situation in which some people, based on nothing but inordinate ambition and lack of discipline and loyalty, will enter into an unholy alliance with the very same people whom the party and entire country worked hard to replace and sell out the hard won victory of the party.

In view of the above, many believe Saraki’s allegation that the 13-count criminal charge which the Federal Government on September 11, 2015, slammed against him at the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT) is nothing but a political witch-hunt for his going against his party’s choice of Senate leadership (Abubakar *et al*: 2015; Ejike: 2017). His offences, as cited by the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), ranged from anticipatory declaration of assets to making false declaration of assets in forms he filled while he was Governor of Kwara State (2003 – 2011). Also, he was accused of failing to declare some assets he acquired while serving as Governor, acquiring assets beyond his legitimate earnings, as well as operating foreign accounts while being a public officer. They alleged that investigations of various petitions of corruption, theft, money laundering, among others against Saraki in 2010, jointly conducted by the EFCC, CCB and the DSS, revealed that he abused his office as Governor of Kwara State and was involved in various acts of corruption, such as borrowing huge sums of money running into billions from commercial banks and using the proceeds of the loan to acquire several landed properties in Lagos, Abuja and London.

Related to the above was another trial involving the same Senate President, Bukola Saraki, his deputy, Ike Ekweremadu, the Clerk of the National Assembly, Salisu Maikasuwa, and his deputy, Benedict Efeturi, who were accused of forging the Senate Standing Rules with which the upper chamber’s presiding officers were elected on 9th June 2015. The four accused persons were arraigned on Monday, 27th June 2016, before Justice Haliru Yusuf of the Federal High Court, Jabi-Abuja, on a two-count charge of conspiracy and forgery, contrary to sections 97 and 362 of the Nigeria Penal Code Law. It was alleged that on the 9th day of June 2015, they conspired among themselves and forged the Senate Standing Order 2011 (as amended) and circulated the forged document among the elected senators for use during the inauguration of the 8th Senate of the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They pleaded not guilty

to the two-count charge and were granted bail. The entire saga started days after the 9th June 2015 inauguration of the 8th Senate and election, when Suleiman Hukunyi, the secretary of the Unity Forum, the Senate caucus comprising the All Progressives Congress (APC) lawmakers who opposed the election of Saraki and Ekweremadu as the Senate presiding officers, petitioned the Inspector General of Police, alleging forgery of Senate's Rules and calling for criminal investigation into the allegation.

The main thrust of the petition was that the Standing Rules used for the 2015 inauguration “purports to allow for secret instead of the open ballot system that has been prevalent in all Senate elections as permitted by the extant rules.” According to Hukunyi, the infraction arose from the “fraudulent production of rules without an approved consideration by the 7th Senate” (*Premium Times* of 13th July 2016, anchored by Adebayo, under the heading, *Forgery Suit: How Federal Government Plans to Prove Case against Saraki, Ekweremadu*). While it is appropriate for Saraki, Ekweremadu, Maikasuwa and Efeturi to face the full wrath of the law if they actually produced without due process the Standing Rules used the election of the presiding officers of the 8th Senate, many believed that their prosecution was a grand design by the ruling party's to sanction and remove them for scattering their plan for the 8th Senate. Reporting on the pulse of the people on the matter, Okoli submitted thus:

A Coalition of Ethnic Nationalities Youth Organizations in the country has condemned the planned prosecution of the Senate President, Senator Bukola Saraki and his Deputy, Senator Ike Ekweremadu, by the Federal Government over alleged forgery of Senate Rule, saying that it is a “threat to democracy”. Describing the forgery charges as “trumped up”, the group, in a statement issued in Umuahia, after visiting the President of Ohaneze Ndigbo Youth Council, said the issue in contention was “an internal affair of the senate and should be resolved by the senators themselves based on the principle of separation of powers. ...The group alleged that the prosecution was a pure political intimidation ahead of 2019 general elections to cow the Saraki and Ekweremadu leadership (*Vanguard Newspaper* of 27th June 2016, under the caption, *Ethnic Nationalities Condemn Prosecution of Saraki, Ekweremadu*).

Interestingly, majority of the Senators were behind their principal officers undergoing trial, and were always present en masse whenever the case appeared in court, thereby making the matter to appear as a battle between the executive and legislative arms of government. The matter was

further compounded by the statements by the Senate President, Bukola Saraki, and his deputy, Ike Ekweremadu, that they were being persecuted for their stand on separation of powers. Reporting on this in the *This Day* Newspaper of 28th June 2016, under the caption, *Saraki, Ekweremadu Warn, Their Trial is Dangerous, Poses Threat to Democracy*, Soniyi, Ogunmade and Enumah stated as follows:

Following their arraignment at an Abuja High Court Monday on allegations of forging the Senate Standing Orders, 2015, Senate President Bukola Saraki and his deputy, Ike Ekweremadu, in separate emotionally-laden statements both declared their innocence and excoriated the executive for using the apparatus of the state to ride roughshod over the Senate over its choice of leadership. ...Saraki, in a statement he personally signed, said he would fight the current battles confronting him and would be glad to end up in jail rather than surrender the leadership of the Senate to the “nefarious agenda of a few individuals”.

In view of the above, it was not surprising to observers of political events in Nigeria when, on Thursday, 6th October 2016, the Federal Government withdrew the forgery charges against Saraki and Ekweremadu. Reporting in the *Premium Times* Newspaper of 6th October 2016, under the caption *Nigerian Government Withdraws Forgery Charges against Saraki, Ekweremadu*, Tukur wrote:

The Federal Government of Nigeria has filed a motion to withdraw the charge of criminal conspiracy against Senate President, Bukola Saraki, and his Deputy, Ike Ekweremadu. An affidavit was filed before the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory on Thursday by a litigation officer from the Federal Ministry of Justice, Odubu Loveme.

In spite of the sufferings of the Nigerian masses as a result of the poor state of Nigeria’s economy, happenings in the corridor of power show that politicians in Buhari’s government cannot be absolved of the greediness and simple-mindedness which Machiavelli observed as human traits in *The Prince*. They seem not to care about or understand the need to improve the well-being of the people they are representing in government. This is properly exemplified by the outrageous jumbo salaries and allowances the lawmakers appropriate to themselves in spite of the dwindling economy of the country? According to Ajayi,

The Economist Magazine revealed that Nigeria Federal legislators, with a basic salary of \$189,500.00 per annum (N30.6m), are the highest paid lawmakers in the world. It looked at the lawmakers' basic salary as a ratio of the Gross Domestic Product per person across the world. According to the report, the basic salary (which excludes despicable allowances) of a Nigerian lawmaker is 116 times the country's GDP per person of 1,600.00.

In another report, the 469 federal lawmakers (109 senators and 360 members of the House of Representatives) cost Nigeria over 76 billion on annual salaries, allowances and quarterly payments. Each member of the 54 standing Senate committee receives a monthly imprest of between N648 million and N972 million per year, while a member of the HOR receives N35 million or N140 million as quarterly or yearly allowances; which means conservatively the 25 percent of the overhead of the nation's budget goes to the NASS (Ajayi: 2013).

Following rising public outcry that the salaries and allowances of Nigerian lawmakers were taking too much from the Federation Account leaving little for other sectors of the Nigerian economy, the Nigerian government in 2015 was forced to step down the annual spending of the National Assembly from ₦150 billion to ₦120 billion. On the salary and allowances controversy, Daniel stated as follows:

The National Institute of Legislative Studies, NILS, apparently worried by growing public outcry against the Nigerian lawmakers, on Friday released a set of documents, showing what constitutes the earnings of the 109 Senators and 350 members of Nigerian House of Representatives. ... The figure shows that Nigerian Senator gets an annual basic salary of ₦2,026, 400,00, while a member of the Nigerian House of Representatives goes home with ₦1,985,212,50 per year. But beyond that, a Senator takes home a bouquet of allowances which hike their salary to ₦12,902,360.00, while their House of Representatives counterpart goes home with ₦9, 525, 98 .50 annually. ... Beyond that, the lawmakers earn special amount in every four-year period on accommodation, vehicle loan, furniture and severance allowance, which make every Senator to pocket N 24,090,000.00 and a House of Representatives member to go home with N23,822,000.00 within the same period (*Vanguard Newspaper of 10th October 2015, under the caption, Revealed at Last: Salary and Allowances of NASS Members*).

Apart from the above-listed salaries and allowances of the lawmakers, they earn huge sums of money from their oversight functions and other sources. It is therefore not surprising that many Nigerian politicians commit all kinds of atrocities to get into elective positions in both the National Assembly and States' Houses of Assembly, knowing that once they get there, they will acquire material possessions that will make them and their unborn generations super rich and powerful. It may not be out of place to say that this desire for acquisition of material possessions is behind the recent request by some Nigerian National Assembly legislators for immunity and life pensions for their presiding officers, apart from the jumbo salaries and allowance that they receive. Understandably, most Nigerians were incensed by this outrageous request and followed it up with serious condemnation. Reporting on this, *Vanguard* of 19th June 2016, under the caption, *Senators' Proposal for Life Pension, Immunity for Saraki, Dogara, Self Serving – SERAP*, stated thus:

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has strongly condemned as “self-serving and despicable the demand by some senators on Saturday for immunity and life pension for presiding officers of the National Assembly after their tenure in office.” SERAP’S statement followed proposals by the senators at a two-day retreat on Constitution Review organized by the Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Constitution Review in Lagos on Saturday. Among others, the proposals want presiding officers, such as President of the Senate, Deputy President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Deputy Speaker of House of Representatives to enjoy life pension and immunity, since the executive and judiciary are enjoying it.

According to SERAP, the retreat by the National Assembly titled ‘Towards Ensuring Governance, Accountability in Nigerian Federalism’ is their grand strategy and calculated way of using their “legislative powers to alter the 1999 constitution in their own favour so that they can enjoy life benefits at the expense of millions of economically and socially disadvantaged Nigerians who voted them into office.” Similarly, a well-known Nigerian Human Rights lawyer, Femi Falana, described the proposed life pension and immunity for National Assembly leaders as “insensitive, irrational and immoral,” while Niyi Akintola, a respected Senior Advocate of Nigeria, said that “the call for such incentives for the National Assembly leaders was unreasonable” (*Punch* Newspaper of 20th June 2016, under the heading, *Proposed Pension Immunity for Saraki, Dogara Provocative*). Seeing the heat generated by their proposal and the

futility of such idea in present-day Nigeria, the proponents of life pension and immunity for National Assembly leaders decided not to push their proposal forward for debate in the National Assembly.

Available evidences indicate that Buhari's style of governance seem to validate Machiavelli view that "men are so simple of mind, and so much dominated by their immediate needs." From all indications, his body language and government appointments have so far portrayed him as an ethnic-minded person who is incapable of promoting peaceful co-existence among the multi-ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. This calls to mind what happened after Buhari's 31st December 1983 coup, how he placed the then President, Shehu Shagari (a Northern Muslim of Fulani extraction) under house arrest, while the then Vice President, Alex Ekwueme (a Southern Christian of Igbo extraction) was arrested and thrown into Kirikiri Maximum Security Prison (Agbese: 2002). Speaking about the events of that time, while celebrating his 80th birthday in October 2012, Ekwueme, who died on 19th November 2017, noted thus:

After the Buhari regime put me in prison for serving my country so selflessly, I felt Nigeria was not worth dying for or sacrificing for. I felt that bad. But eventually, I got over that. But going into government and serving as selflessly as possible, putting all your energy into it, having all sleepless nights trying to work out solutions for the problems facing the country as honestly as possible, and then you end up in prison as a reward for that selfless service, is not something that one should be happy about (Atuma: 2018).

It is thus understandable that the opinion of a good number of Nigerians since Buhari set his government in motion in 2015 has been that behind his relentless aspiration to be the president of Nigeria is the desire to use the machinery of government to bring about political domination of his Fulani tribe and people of his religious affiliation. That has been part of the campaign points raised against him in the three times (2003, 2011 and 2007) he unsuccessfully contested to be the president of Nigeria, and notably in 2015, when the cord of peace and unity holding Nigeria was almost torn apart by the activities of *Boko Haram*, which claimed to be a jihadist organization linked with Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Whether this view is true or not, many of the events in Nigeria since Buhari's assumption of office as president of Nigeria lend credence to this viewpoint. They include:

1. Lopsided nature of his appointments, which appeared to put the Northerners, mostly Muslims of Fulani extraction, in charge of sensitive and strategic positions in the Nigerian government.
2. Incessant attack by Fulani herdsmen wielding sophisticated weapons on their host communities throughout Nigeria and the seeming helplessness of security agencies in apprehending or arresting them.
3. Introduction of Grazing Reserve Bill in the National Assembly which sought to authorize Government to acquire lands throughout Nigeria, develop the lands and hand them over to Fulani herdsmen for grazing of their cattle.

On the lopsided nature of Buhari's appointments, it is clear that his appointments did not reflect the multi-ethnic character of Nigeria. During the Ethnic Nationalities Movement Conference held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja on 11th and 12th February 2014, 389 ethnic nationalities registered and participated in the two-day event. But out of these 389 ethnic nationalities, it was apparent that Buhari's appointments since inception of office as President of Nigeria favoured mainly the Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri ethnic groups, thereby relegating the remaining 386 ethnic nationalities to the background of power play in Nigeria. Even members of his political party, All Progressives Congress (APC), know that unlike his predecessors, he did not take into cognizance the multi-ethnic make-up of Nigeria. Reporting on the issue in the *Premium Times* of 28th August 2015, under the caption, *Outrage Grows across Nigeria as Buhari's Lopsided Appointments Continue*, Abdulmalik stated:

President Muhammadu Buhari's appointment of some of his administration's most key officials Thursday set off a firestorm of condemnation, with critics characterising the nominations as overwhelmingly lopsided, lacking in gender balance and regional equity. Mr. Buhari named Babachir David Lawal, from Adamawa State, as Secretary to the Government of the Federation and Abba Kyari, from Borno, as his Chief of Staff. He appointed Hameed Ali, a retired colonel, as the Comptroller-General of Nigerian Customs Service, curiously finding no career customs official suitable for the post. Messrs Ali and Abeshi are from Bauchi and Nasarawa states respectively. A former Senator, Ita Enang was appointed senior special assistant to the president on Senate affairs, while Suleiman Kawu of Kano, who was a former House of Representatives member, was named president's senior special assistant on House of Representatives.

The six officials brought to 29 the total number of frontline administration staffers who will handle the economy, energy, defence and other important sectors of governance for the nearly 100-day-old Buhari administration. In all, the president has yet to appoint a single female, a marked difference from Mr. Buhari's predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan, who had women in all major segments of government.

A graphic illustration of facts at that early stage of Buhari's government, showing the representation of Buhari's appointments in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria, which Abdulmalik presented, showed as follows: North West – 13, 43%; North East – 6, 20%; North Central – 3, 10%; South South – 5, 17%; South West – 3, 10%; South East – 0, 0%. When these lopsided appointments started at the onset of the Buhari-led administration, Nigerians were pleaded with by his spokespersons to be patient with him as more appointments from him would reflect Federal character. But over one year into the four-year life of the administration, when his full appointments were made, the apprehension concerning Buhari's ethnic-centredness was confirmed. It was difficult to believe that Buhari could be so insensitive to the make-up of Nigeria to the extent that all functional Boards and key security apparatus in Nigeria went to the North, mostly Muslims of Fulani origin. Although Section 171, Sub-Section 1 of the *1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (As Amended)* gives the President power to appoint persons into or remove persons from national public offices, Sub-Section 5 of that Section 171 stipulates that “in exercising his power of appointment under this section, the President shall have regard to the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity” (2011: 140 – 141).

Below were some of the appointments made by Buhari in key sectors of Nigerian government as at July 2016, which indicate his ethnic-mindedness. In the Security Unit alone, he appointed the people in numbers one to fourteen into the following key positions, while retaining those in numbers fifteen to seventeen who were appointed by his predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan:

1. Inspector General of Police – Ibrahim K. Idris (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
2. Chief of Army Staff – T. Y. Buratai (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
3. Chief of Air Staff – Sadique Abubakar – (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
4. Chief of Naval Staff – Ibok-Ete Ekwe (Southern Christian).
5. Chief of Defence Staff – Abayomi Gabriel Olanisakin (Southern Christian).

6. Minister of Defence – Mohammed Dan Ali (Northern Moslem / Hausa-Fulani).
7. National Security Adviser (NSA) – Babagana Monguno (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
8. Director General, Department of State Services (DSS) – Lawal Daura (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
9. Commandant General, Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSDC) – Abdulahi Gana Muhammadu (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
10. Director General, Nigerian Customs Service – Hameed Ibrahim Ali (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
11. Director General, Nigeria Immigration Service – Mohammed Babandede (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
12. Director General, Nigeria Prisons Service – Ahmed Ja’afaru (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
13. Corps Marshall, Federal Road Safety Commission – Boboye Oyeyemi (Northern Muslim).
14. Director General, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) – Ibrahim Magu (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
15. Comptroller General of Federal Fire Service – Joseph Anebi (Northern Christian).
16. Director General, National Emergency Management Agency – Sani Didi (Northern Muslim).
17. Director General, National Intelligence Agency – Ayo Oke (Southern Christian).

Thus, of the fourteen appointments he made, twelve were Northerners, while only two (4 and 5) were southerners. This implies that of the seventeen security agencies listed above, only three (numbers 4, 5 and 17) were occupied by southerners. Expectedly, many southerners criticized Buhari for not reflecting the principle of Federal Character in his appointments. Reporting on this, Oketola, Falodi and Alagbe in the *Punch* Newspaper of 2nd July 2016, under the caption, *Southern Groups Knock Buhari’s Pro-North Security Appointments*, stated thus:

President Muhammadu Buhari has come under fire by southern groups over what they described as “lopsided” appointments of heads of the various agencies in the country. *Saturday PUNCH* findings showed that 14 of the nation’s 17 security agencies are

currently being headed by Northerners. The majority of them were appointed by President Buhari. Only three agencies are headed by Southerners, a situation the groups tagged as “worrisome.”

In the Education Sector, Buhari appointed mostly Northern Muslims of Hausa-Fulani extraction as Minister and Heads (Chief Executives) of Key Institutions and Agencies, which are under the Federal Ministry of Education. They included:

1. Minister of Education – Adamu Adamu (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
2. Head of National Universities Commission (NUC) – Prof. Abubakar Adamu Rasheed (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
3. Head of National Board for Technical Education – Dr. Mas’ud Kazaure (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
4. Head of National Commission for Colleges of Education – Prof. Bappah Aliyu (Northern Muslim / Hausa Fulani).
5. Head of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) – Dr. Abdulahi Baffa (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
6. Head of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) – Prof. Ishaq Oloyede, Professor of Arabic Studies (Muslim of Yoruba extraction).
7. Head of Universal Basic Education Board (UBEC) – Dr. Hameed Bobboyi (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
8. Head of National Teachers’ Institute (NTI) – Prof. Garba Dahuwa Azare (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
9. Director General, National Youth Service Corps – Sule Kazaure (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
10. Head of National Examinations Council (NECO) – Prof. Charles Uwakwe (Southern Christian).
11. Head of National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) – Prof. Isioma Isiugo-Abanihe (Southern Christian).
12. Head of National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education – Prof. Abba Aladu (Northern Muslim)

Others appointments made by Buhari into other key positions of governance in Nigeria included:

- ❖ Secretary of the Federation (SGF) – David Lawal (Northern Christian).
- ❖ Clerk of the National Assembly – Sani Omolori (Northern Muslim).
- ❖ Chairman of National Assembly Commission – Dr. Adamu Mohammed Fika (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
- ❖ Chairman of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) – Mahmoud Yakubu (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
- ❖ Accountant General of the Federation – Ahmed Idris (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).

The same thing happened in the Judiciary, where he appointed Muslims of Hausa-Fulani lineage as heads of Judicial institutions. They were:

- ❖ The Attorney General and Minister of Justice – Abubakar Malami (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
- ❖ Head of Federal Courts of Appeal – Zainab Bulkachuwa (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).
- ❖ Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairman of National Judicial Council (NCJ) – Mahmud Mohammed (Northern Muslim / Hausa-Fulani).

The import of the above is that all heads of the three Organs of Government in Nigeria – Executive: Muhammadu Buhari; Legislature: Bukola Saraki; and Judiciary: Abubakar Malami – were Muslims. No wonder, Junaid Mohammed accused President Buhari of the worst form of nepotism ever experienced in the history of Nigeria (*Punch* Newspaper of 23rd July 2016, under the heading *Nepotism in Buhari's Government, The Worst in Nigeria's History*). Whether it was a coincidence or not, one may not be wrong to say that Buhari is practicalizing Machiavellian ideas by using the machinery of government to actualize selfish, religious and tribal interests. It is therefore not surprising that the Church in Nigeria opposed the lopsided appointments. According to *Daily Post* of 11th August 2016, under the caption, *NCEF Lists Discriminatory Appointments against Non-Muslims, Says Buhari Has Islamized Nigeria*:

Chairman of the Nigerian Christian Elders Forum, NCEF, Solomon Asemota, says Nigerians ought to be reminded that the present distress in the nation is not from an act of God but man-made. He said the agenda of the Buhari-led government is to Islamize the country which is definitely unfair and unjust to Christians in Nigeria. In a press release on Thursday, Asemota listed all appointments in the Security Units in the nation,

adding that Buhari has “masterfully completed the configuration of the entire National Security structure/architecture firmly in the hands of the Northern Hausa-Fulani Muslims alone.” The statement also contains full lists of army officers compulsorily retired by Muhammadu Buhari. It said they are 90% non-Muslims which projects that Ethnic and Regional cleansing continues.

Trying to bring back President Buhari to the path of justice and equity, the Governors elected on the platform of his own political party, APC, took the matter to him in their meeting held on Monday, 24th October 2016. Reporting in the *Punch* Newspaper of 25th October 2016, under the caption *APC Governors tackle Buhari on Appointments*, Adetayo noted:

Some governors elected on the platform of the All Progressives Congress on Monday expressed their displeasure on how they were being sidelined in the choice of those being given federal appointments in their states by President Muhammadu Buhari. The governors protested to Buhari and Vice President, Yemi Osibanjo, at the meeting they had at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.

The main concern of the APC governors was certainly the need for equity and fairness in Federal appointments. That may have resulted from the fact that at that point many local and international observers were increasingly becoming wary of the President Buhari’s leadership style and its implications on Nigeria. According to Madu:

A REPORT just released by the United Nations, UN, on Nigeria’s Common Country Analysis, CCA, has revealed a deeply divided society on the basis of the plurality of ethnic, religious and regional identities that had tended to define the country’s political existence. The report also painted a gloomy picture, with most of the development and social indices in the country registering at levels unacceptable. The report, which was read during a consultative meeting on the formulation of the UN Development Assistance Framework IV (UNDAF) for the South East geo-political zone in Awka observed that for decades, different segments of Nigeria’s population had, at different times, expressed feelings of marginalization, of being short-changed, dominated, oppressed, threatened, or even targeted for elimination (*Vanguard* Newspaper of 5th September 2016, under the heading, *Nigeria Deeply Divided, Says UN Report*).

Another instance is the two-page official letter written on 1st September 2016 by a member of United States Congress, Tom Marino, who doubles as a member of the Committee on the Judiciary, Homeland Security and Foreign Affairs, and the Chairman, Sub-committee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law, to United States Secretary of State, John Kerry, requesting for withholding of security assistance to Nigeria for the time being. The excerpts of the letter read thus:

There are a number of warning signs emerging in the Buhari administration that signal the man who once led Nigeria as a military dictator might be sliding towards former autocratic tendencies. I would urge the U.S. to withhold security assistance to the nation until President Buhari demonstrates a commitment to inclusive government and most basic tenets of democracy. ... Of President Buhari's 122 appointees, 77 are from the north and control many of the key ministries and positions of power. Distrust is already high in Nigeria and favouring Northerners for key appointments has only antagonized the issue.

These appointments are also primarily Muslims from the north and Christians in the South, adding a religious aspect to long-held regional biases. Of additional concern is President Buhari's selective anti-corruption drive which has focused almost exclusively on members of the opposition party, overlooking corruption amongst some of Buhari's closest advisors. Politicizing his anti-corruption efforts has only reinforced hostility among southerners. ...The State Department should urge President Buhari to form a government that represents the diversity of its citizens and allows dissenting voices to be heard. Democracy can thrive only if people are free to assemble, to express their beliefs and voice their concerns (*This Day Newspaper* of 4th September 2016, anchored by Abimbola Akosile, under the caption, *US Congressman Writes Kerry, Accuses Buhari of Autocratic Tendencies, Selective Anti-Graft War*).

In spite of Buhari and his government spokespersons' denial of the accusations being levelled against him that he is ethnic-minded, events have always betrayed their denials. Another instance is the comment by the World Bank President that Buhari asked them to focus on Northern Nigeria. Reporting in the *Punch Newspaper* of 13th October 2017 under the caption *Buhari Asked Us to Focus on Northern Nigeria*, Abioye noted thus:

The President of World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim, said on Thursday that the bank had concentrated on the northern region of Nigeria in line with President Muhammadu Buhari's request.

Kim and the Managing Director, International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, who spoke at separate press conferences in Washington DC, United States, also advised Buhari to invest in things that would enhance economic growth.

Kim said, "You know, in my first meeting with President Buhari he said specifically that he would like us to shift our focus to the northern region of Nigeria and we've done that.

In view of the above, it is not a coincidence that sleeping issues of Biafra, Niger Delta militancy and restructuring of the Nigerian Federation, which since the return of democracy in 1999 have not been at the front burner of national discourse, have been woken up and are matters generating great controversy in the last couple of years. Aside the reignited calls for the restructuring of Nigerian Federation and Niger Delta militancy, the agitation for Biafra, from the end of the civil war in 1970, has not been as fierce as it has been since 2015 that Buhari came back to power. According to Uzor and Ekpunobi "the emergence of Buhari as the current Nigerian President revived and restored the massive consciousness of Biafra actualization." This is because he continued the "Hausa/Fulani Islamic, political, economic and religious conquest of the Middle Belt and Southern regions" (*Sun Newspaper* of 30th May 2016, under the caption *MASSOB Marks Declaration of Biafra Today*).

In addition to manifestation of ethnic bias, the issue of Fulani herdsmen's attack on their host communities also shows some similarity between Machiavelli's observations in *The Prince* on human nature and the events in Buhari's administration. Having been mentioned in Chapter Four, Section 4.2.2 of this study to show that Machiavelli's idea of *virtu* truly bears on the state of affairs in Nigeria, the Fulani herdsmen's attacks will now be seen from a different angle – the angle of Buhari's tribal bias and seeming desire to use the machinery of government to bring about political domination of his Fulani tribe and people of his religious affiliation. Noticeably, the impunity with which the herdsmen operate goes a long way in fueling the suspicion that they are backed by the powers that be in Nigeria, especially considering that the key security agencies in present-day Nigeria that should deal decisively with the herdsmen are headed by their kinsmen. It is incomprehensible that President Buhari turned a blind eye while his kinsmen, the

Fulani herdsmen, continued to massacre other Nigerians in their own communities just to secure and preserve grazing lands for their cattle. Armed with sophisticated weapons, they usually invade and attack their target communities, mostly Christian communities, at vulnerable times, such as midnights or on Sundays, when they are in the Church. Survivors of their operations, while recounting their ordeals, say that when they strike, they usually boast before their victims that nothing will happen to them.

Expectedly, various kinds of condemnation have trailed the dastardly act of the herdsmen, especially the seeming reluctance of the security agencies to deal with the herdsmen. Commenting on the issue, the Anglican Archbishop of Enugu Ecclesiastical Province, in South East Nigeria, Emmanuel Chukwuma, “regretted the president’s failure to address the crisis caused by the Fulani herdsmen across the country, insisting that government is paying lip service to the issue.” According to him, “the menace is a grand plan orchestrated to Islamize Nigeria” (*The Sun Newspaper* of 5th June 2016, anchored by Eze, under the heading, *Buhari is Corrupt – Archbishop Chukwuma*). In a similar vein, Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, “attributed the unrelenting violence being perpetrated by the Fulani herdsmen to the refusal of the Federal Government to arrest and punish the herders for the serial killings across the country.” He described as a “promotion of undisputed impunity the failure of the government to offer legal, logical and moral response to the spate of killings by the cattle rearers” and stated that “it was shocking that the government had yet to make a terse statement against the killings done by the herdsmen” (*Punch Newspaper* of 29th April 2016, reported by Oni, Aborisade, Chiedozie, Nnodim, Isenyo and Okafor, under the heading, *FG’s Inaction Fuelling Fulani Herdsmen Attacks –Soyinka*).

Sensing that the situation was getting out of control, the leadership of the National Assembly called for urgent actions on the matter as “the development was capable of threatening the corporate existence of the country.” While the Senate President, Bukola Saraki, “sought an end to the spate of killings by the herdsmen to safeguard the country’s unity and security, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yakubu Dogara, said there was need for deliberate and proactive actions to end the incessant farmers and herdsmen clashes spreading across the country, noting that it could divide Nigeria, if not properly checked” (*Vanguard Newspaper* of

27th April 2016, anchored by Umoru, Ovuakkporie, Agbakwuru, Erunke, Akinrefon, Alaribe and Nwaiwu, under the heading, *FULANI HERDSMEN: Attacks Threaten Nigeria's Existence*).

It was after much pressure from several angles on President Buhari to intervene on the menace of the murderous Fulani herdsmen that he finally broke his silence on the matter and ordered the arrest of the rampaging herdsmen. Reporting under the caption, *Buhari Breaks Silence, Orders 'Herdsmen' Brought to Justice*, *Premium Times* of 27th April 2016 stated as follows:

President Muhammadu Buhari has reacted to the recent upsurge in communal violence by suspected herdsmen, and has ordered the police and the military to “take all necessary action to stop the carnage”. Mr. Buhari’s directive, Wednesday, followed the latest attack on Monday, in Ukpabi Nimbo, a community in Enugu State, where dozens of people were reportedly killed by heavily armed herdsmen. An earlier attack on Agatu, Benue State, in March, killed over 100 people, locals said. Mr. Buhari has been accused of not responding firmly to the attacks that have spread to other states, and has been widely criticized for his silence.

Faulting President Buhari’s handling of the clashes between herdsmen and farmers across the country, Adichie says:

Since Mr. Buhari came to power, villages in the middle-belt and southern regions have been raided, the inhabitants killed, their farmlands sacked. Those attacked believe the Fulani herdsmen want to forcibly take over their lands for cattle grazing. It would be unfair to blame Mr. Buhari for these killings, which are in part a result of complex interactions between climate change and land use. But leadership is as much about perception as it is about action, and Mr. Buhari has appeared disengaged. It took him months and much criticism from civil society, to finally issue a statement “condemning” the killings. His aloofness feels, at worst, like a tacit enabling of murder and, at best, an absence of sensitive leadership (*Punch Newspaper* of 19th October 2016, under the caption, *Buhari Wasted Opportunity to Boldly Reform Nigeria – Chimamamda*).

President Buhari’s belated response notwithstanding, it is frustrating that not much has been done by the security agencies to stop the carnage and convince people like Emmanuel Chukwuma, the Anglican Archbishop of Enugu, that the President was not “paying lip service to the issue” by ordering the apprehension of the rampaging herdsmen. The frustrating situation

is even worsened by the fact that there are several cases of herdsmen arrested with arms but nothing tangible came out of those arrests, which should have deterred others from carrying out the cruel acts. Reporting on one of the arrests, Soriwei, Adetayo and Egwu wrote:

The soldiers of the Guards Brigade of the Nigeria Army have arrested 92 Fulani herdsmen in Abuja. The Assistant Director, Army Public Relations of the Guards Brigade, Capt. Bashir Jajira, said that 36 of the suspects were arrested by the troops at a military checkpoint between the Federal Capital Territory and Nasarawa State. The suspected herdsmen were said to have told the soldiers that they were on a mission to recover their stolen cows. He said that 56 others who were also armed were arrested by the soldiers at a military checkpoint at Dantata, along Abuja Airport Road. He said the troops recovered ‘one pump action gun, 19 cartridge dane guns, 118 cartridge ammo, 28 cutlasses, 3 jack knives, 14 sticks, 14 sticks, 7 torch lights, certificate of occupancy, assorted charms and hard drugs. During the interrogation by troops at the checkpoint, they claimed to be going to Nasarawa Local Government in Nasarawa State. He said the arrested herdsmen would be handed over to the police for prosecution (*Punch Newspaper* of 19th April 2016, under the caption, *Soldiers Arrest 92 Armed herdsmen in Abuja*).

In another arrest, reported by Duru in the *Vanguard Newspaper* of 5th May 2016 under the heading, *Herdsmen Arrested with Arms in Benue*, it stated thus:

Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State, Wednesday, disclosed that some Fulani herdsmen had been arrested with various firearms following the recent killings of farmers in parts of the state. Ortom, who spoke when he hosted members of the Movement Against Fulani Occupation, MAFO, in Makurdi noted that those apprehended were being investigated. The Governor said that it was regrettable that in spite of the massive destruction of lives and properties in several local government areas across the state by the herdsmen, not even one person had been arrested for prosecution. According to him, “If arrests and prosecution of those culpable were made from the onset, it would have served as a deterrent to others who engage in the heinous crime.”

On another arrest, featured in the *Premium Times* of 30th August 2016, under the caption, *Police Arrest Herdsman with AK47 Rifle, Ammunition in Enugu*, report went thus:

A 20 year old herdsman, Ibrahim Adamumale, has been arrested by the Police in Enugu for being in possession of an AK47 rifle, police said. The suspect, who said he was an

indigene of Nasarawa State, was also found with 24 rounds of live ammunition. The spokesman of Enugu Police command, Ebere Amaraizu, confirmed the arrest to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday in Enugu. Mr. Amaraizu said the suspect, who revealed that he lived at Hausa quarters in 9th-mile area and had some cows at Affa-Udi bush, was arrested on Sunday. “The suspect was nabbed by the combined efforts of the police and the members of the public from Affa-Udi community acting on a tip off. The suspect, before he was arrested, had expended about six shot on the air to evade being arrested. Before now, the police and members of the public have gathered information about the suspect’s antecedents in relation to bearing of sophisticated weapon within Affa-Udi axis in Udi council area and its environs,” he said.

The most celebrated of the arrests was that of those involved in the midnight invasion and massacre of people of Ukpabi, Nimbo community in Enugu State. Reporting on their arrest in the Vanguard Newspaper of 26th May 2016 under the heading, *Nimbo Attack: How Police Nabbed 5 Suspects*, Igata stated as follows:

In its renewed determination to rid the society of crimes and all forms of criminality, the police have arrested five of the Fulani herdsmen involved in the midnight raid on Nimbo community in Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State. The suspects, alleged to be herdsmen, had on April 25, 2016, attacked the sleepy community, killing over 40 persons and inflicting injuries on scores of others. They were said to have been arrested by operatives of the Inspector General of Police, IGP’s Intelligence Response Team, IRT, based on credible technical intelligence. The suspects include Mohammed Zurai, Ciroma Musa, Sale Adamu, Suleiman Laute and Haruna Laute. A Gionee L88 mobile phone with memory card containing the video recording of the massacre in the community was recovered from the suspects.

Apart from the seeming reluctance and inability of the Nigerian president and security agencies to deal with the menace of the herdsmen, most people from the Southern part of Nigeria and Christians in Northern Nigeria believe that the herdsmen are backed by Northern political and religious leaders. This is due to the fact that instead of calling the herdsmen to order, political and religious leaders from the North seem to be absolving the herdsmen from being responsible for the heinous crimes. Reporting on this, Alabelewe wrote:

The 19 Northern Governors have taken a strong exception to the branding of perpetrators of crimes around the country as Fulani. The Governors, rising from a meeting in Kaduna yesterday, said that inasmuch as they condemned the recent attacks by suspected herdsmen in Enugu and other parts of the country, it was out of place by anyone to label all criminals as Fulani. Chairman of the Northern States Governors Forum (NSGF) and Governor of Borno State, Alhaji Kashim Shettima, said it was an insult to consider criminals as Fulani. He said; “We want to unequivocally condemn the recent killings in Enugu and other parts of the country. But we equally condemn the politicization or permit me, ‘the ethnicisation’ of the whole crisis,” the Governor said. “It goes beyond Fulani. If anything happens, they say Fulani herdsmen. To me, it is an insult.” (*The Nation* Newspaper of 30th April 2016, under the caption *Killings by Herdsmen: Northern Governors Defend Fulani*)

In another statement, which clearly portrayed the position of Northern leaders on the issue, the Emir of Ilorin, Sulu Gambari, said that “it was not true that Fulani herdsmen were responsible for the destruction of lives and property in some parts of the country, stressing that Fulanis were peaceful, lovable and honest in their dealings with other tribes” (*Vanguard* Newspaper of 30th August 2016, reported by Akinyemi, under the caption, *Fulani Herdsmen Aren’t Criminals – Emir of Ilorin*).

Considering the pains brought to many families and communities touched by the criminal activities of these herdsmen, it is not surprising that the nineteen Northern governors came under severe criticism for their position on the suspected attack of Fulani herdsmen in Ukpabi-Nimbo community and other parts of Nigeria. Among those who condemned the Northern governors were the Afenifere, the Yoruba Socio-political organisation, and the Ijaw Youths Council (IYC). Speaking through Odumakin, their National Publicity Secretary, the Afenifere said:

It (the northern governors’ position) is a sign of unfeeling, uncaring for any group today to come out and say that those who have been causing problems and killing people in the Middle Belt and the South are not Fulani herdsmen. They have killed in Agatu land, Enugu; a traditional ruler was killed in Delta State; they killed Olu Falae’s guard and kidnapped Chief Falae himself. For some people to call themselves northern governors, and have no sympathy for lives than to be defending the Fulani herdsmen, shows clearly that it is a tragedy of monumental proportion to be in the same country with these

elements. You also begin to wonder if the blood of human beings runs through their veins because anybody that has human blood running in his veins will not come and say that Fulani herdsmen are not responsible. What nonsense.

I think the northern governors should bury their heads in shame. I do not think they are fit to be in the comity of civilized human beings. If the attackers are not Fulani herdsmen, where have they struck in the North-West? Why are their activities only in the Middle Belt and in the South? That is the question these northern governors should answer. When the militants were blowing up pipelines in the South-South, were they not called Niger Delta militants? Do they want us to call them Yoruba herdsmen? (*Vanguard Newspaper of 1st May 2016, under the caption, ENUGU MASSACRE: Northern Govs Under Fire... For Defending Fulani*).

The Ijaw Youths Council (IYC), in their own statement, described the northern governors' position as "an affront on other nationalities". According to Omare, the spokesman for the group:

The governors' stance was disappointing and a tacit support for criminality and the ongoing Fulani herdsmen terrorism. If they are interested in peace in Nigeria, they ought to be more concerned about the implication of the activities of the Fulani herdsmen rather than a perceived insult on the Fulani race. ...Part of the reason why Boko Haram grew to become a national problem was the tacit support given to them by northern political leaders and this Fulani herdsmen is taking the same pattern; it must be taken seriously (*Vanguard Newspaper of 1st May 2016, under the caption, ENUGU MASSACRE: Northern Govs Under Fire... For Defending Fulani*).

Incidentally, confessions from arrested herdsmen have clearly shown that all crimes in the southern part of Nigeria and Middle Belt in which accusing fingers were pointed at Fulani herdsmen were actually committed by them. By implication, they have their imprints on them which clearly distinguish those crimes from the usual crimes being perpetrated by other criminal elements in the country. On the Nimbo massacre of 25th April 2016 that triggered the hues and cries on the criminal activities of the Fulani herdsmen, the later arrest of five persons involved in the massacre showed that those pointing accusing fingers on the Fulani herdsmen were indeed correct. Reporting on the confession of one of the arrested herdsmen, in *The Sun Newspaper* of 7th May 2016, under the caption, *Enugu Massacre Planned in Kogi, Suspect Confesses*, Ikenwa and Adeyemi noted:

KOGI State Police now has in its custody, one of the suspected herdsmen who participated in the recent massacre of more than 48 persons in Nimbo community, Uzo –Uwani Local Government of Enugu State. *Saturday Sun* gathered that the suspect simply identified as Mohammed Zure was initially arrested by the police because of his connection with some suspected kidnappers in the state. According to a reliable source in the state command, Mohammed was granted bail after the prime suspect in the kidnap case for which he was nabbed was arrested. “He was granted bail and because he needed someone to take him on bail, the investigating officer decided to switch on his phone. Out of curiosity, he decided to go through the content of his phone. It was in the process that the discovered horrible video clips of a murder scene.

“Everything changed immediately and he was taken back to the interrogation room. He later confessed that he was the one who took the video while they were slaughtering one of the victims during the Enugu killings. In the video, you could hear him shouting and saying in Hausa ‘I have killed you now. You think that you can kill Fulani herdsmen and go free.’ He personally took the picture to show his family members that he was actually successful and participated in the killings,” the police source stated. According to the source, Mohammed confessed that they were more than 100 Fulani herdsmen who came for the attack. “He confessed that they were more than 100 and were selected from different states, especially from Taraba, Kogi, Benue, Nasarawa, Katsina, Niger and Kaduna states.

In another confession, following the arrest of Abdullahi Usman (aka Kadiri) and Babawuro Kato for the kidnap of Olu Falae, former Secretary of the Government of the Federation, and murder of his guard on Monday, 21st September 2015, Usman said that the aim of kidnapping Falae was to get money to celebrate Sallah (Eid El-Kabir) festival and provide wedding funds to some of his friends. According to him:

One Datijo approached him complaining that he was so broke that he might not be able to satisfactorily celebrate the coming festival unless he (Usman) was able to give him information on any big man that could be abducted for money. “I told him that I know one man who used to bring a Hilux vehicle in his farm and I used to see him as I move my cows about”, he told reporters. That was how the gang members arranged to kidnap Chief Falae on his farm on Monday, September 21, 2015. Usman said they then took Falae to Owo where he was kept at a place called ‘Pipeline’ around Benin junction where

the man was kept. Eventually, the ransom of N5 million was paid to Datijo who according to Usman made away with the money. In their narrative, it was the second suspect, Kato, who ferried Datijo and Falae on his commercial motorcycle from the hideout to where he was eventually picked up by the Police. Kato however, insisted that he was not part of the gang as he was only contracted to transport the two on that night (*Vanguard* Newspaper of 12th October 2015, under the caption, *How Falae Was Kidnapped – Abductors*).

Interestingly, the above confession by Usman was confirmed by the kidnap victim, Olu Falae, who identified his abductors when they were paraded before him. Confirming this, Johnson and Onoyume stated as follows:

Former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Chief Olu Falae, who was kidnapped by Fulani herdsmen on his 77th birthday and released after paying N5m ransom four days after, has identified his abductors who were paraded before him by the police. Falae on Tuesday, identified three of the suspects as those who kidnapped him and threatened to kill him if he failed to pay the ransom. Chief Falae, according to a police source, also identified one of the kidnappers who was kind to him. Five of Falae's kidnappers were arraigned yesterday, before an Akure High Court, Ondo and Chief Falae will be a star witness when the trial commences November 10. The suspects, who were docked for kidnapping, conspiracy and armed robbery 24 days after the abduction were Abubakar Auta, Bello Jannu, Umaru Ibrahim and Idris Lawal. Three of the kidnappers admitted that their share from the N5m ransom was N100,000 each (*Vanguard* Newspaper of 16th October 2015, anchored by Johnson and Onoyume under the caption, *Falae Identifies Kidnappers*).

The third thing to justify Buhari's tribal bias and seeming desire to use the machinery of government to bring about political domination of his Fulani tribe and people of his religious affiliation is the Grazing Reserve Bill, which nearly tore Nigeria apart in 2016. Looking at the issue of Grazing Reserve, one will no doubt see it as putting into practice Machiavelli's precept, which says:

There are two ways of fighting: by law or by force. The first is natural to men, and the second to beasts. But as the first way often proves inadequate one must have recourse to

the second. So a prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man (Chapter XVIII. Bull, 1995: 54).

The implication of the above-cited remark of Machiavelli is that as the Fulani pastoralists on one hand employ violence and force to get pastures for their cattle in all parts of Nigeria, they are on the other hand trying to arrive at the same destination through the law, especially now that their kinsmen are at the helm of affairs in various sensitive units in the country. It all started with the presentation to the Senate of a bill for the enactment of *An Act for the Establishment of the National Grazing Reserve Commission for The Preservation and Control of National Grazing Reserves and Stock Route* by Zainab Kure, representing Niger South Senatorial District. Simultaneously, Sadiq Ibrahim sponsored a similar bill in the House of Representatives titled: *National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016*. Though both Kure's and Ibrahim's bills were rejected by both the Senate and House of Representatives, the bill resurfaced in both Chambers through Rabiu Kwankwaso and Karimi Sunday respectively, and scaled through first reading amidst staggering opposition from southern Senators and House members. Writing on the *Premium Times* of 22nd June 2016, under the heading *Senate Begins Consideration of Cattle Grazing Bill*, Ogundipe stated:

The Nigerian Senate on Wednesday began the consideration of the Grazing Reserve Bill, which seeks to establish grazing reserves for pastoralists in the country. The Senate had earlier denied it received the bill, amid intense opposition from its members and many Nigerians. The bill, which had earlier been presented at the House of Representatives, passed the first reading in the Senate. It is sponsored by Rabiu Kwankwaso, who represents Kano Central Senatorial District.

While supporters of the Grazing Reserve Bill argue that it is the only way to end the persistent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in many parts of the country, opponents of the Bill say that it is a calculated attempt by the Fulani ethnic group to dominate and Islamize Nigeria. Expectedly, while governments of all the states in the North West and North East of Nigeria, which are dominated by core Hausa-Fulani people, indicated support for the Bill, there was opposition to it in some states in the North Central part of Nigeria, where majority are Christians and non-Hausa/Fulani people. In the states in the South-West, South-East and South-

South, there was general condemnation of the Grazing Reserve Bill. Voicing his opposition to it, Fani-Kayode said:

That Bill is a deliberate attempt to take our lands and hand the lands over to the Fulani cattlemen since it is only the Fulanis that rear cattle in Nigeria. That law, when passed, shall fulfill the directive of Uthman Dan Fodio and other Northern leaders to take over other parts of Nigeria. I implore you to use all available means to implore your Senator and Rep not to pass that law. The law will destroy Nigeria. All over the world, ranches are established and used to rear cattle. The farmers buy land and put their cattle there. There is no country where the land of citizens are compulsorily acquired and given to others. This is evil, and designed to favour the Fulanis where the President comes from (*Vanguard Newspaper of 24th April 2016, under the heading, Fulani Cows, Grazing Reserve Bill and The Looming Trouble*).

In the midst of the controversy over the Grazing Reserve Bill and the herdsmen's attacks, many state governments in the southern part of Nigeria put in place legal frameworks to check the activities of the Fulani herdsmen in their states. Ekiti State was the first to put in place a law prohibiting the activities of the herdsmen. According to *Punch Newspaper* of 29th August 2016:

The Ekiti State Governor, Mr. Ayo Fayose, on Monday signed the "Anti Grazing Bill 2016" recently passed by the House of Assembly into law. The bill was sponsored by the executive after the killing of two persons by suspected herdsmen in Oke Ako community in Ikole Local Government Area of the state. The new law criminalizes grazing in some places and certain time limit in the state (Under the caption, *Fayose Signs Bill on Grazing Prohibition into Law*).

Bayelsa State government, on its own, took another angle in dealing with the Grazing Reserve Bill. Reporting in *The Nation Newspaper* of 19th October 2016, under the caption *Bayelsa Assembly Throws out Grazing Reserve Bill*, Odiegwu wrote:

The Bayelsa State House of Assembly on Wednesday shot down a bill before the National Assembly for the establishment of a grazing route and reserves for herdsmen across the country. It was gathered that in a plenary, members of the House were unanimous in their rejection of the bill following a motion moved by a member representing Ogbia Constituency 1, Dr. Mitema Obordor. The lawmakers called on the

National Assembly to urgently discard the bill because of its wide rejection among Nigerians.

In Anambra State, the House of Assembly backed out of the proposed Grazing Bill expected to be presented to it for debate and approval. Presenting their reason for doing so, the Speaker of the House, Rita Maduagwu, said that “elders, the clergy and the Anambra League of Professionals had roundly kicked against the bill and advised the legislative chamber to distance itself from it in the interest of the citizenry and the Igbo race in general.” According to her, “who are we to say no if the people of Anambra State have spoken” (*Vanguard Newspaper* of 14th June 2016, anchored by Enyim under the caption, *Grazing Bill: Anambra Assembly Backs Out*). In Abia State, according to Okoli, the House of Assembly “rejected planned mapping out of land for cattle grazing in the state, declaring that Abia had no land for grazing” (*Vanguard Newspaper* of 30th May 2016, under the heading *Abia House Rejects Mapping out Land for Cattle Grazing*). Presenting the position of Ondo State Government on the matter, Johnson stated thus:

Governor Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State last weekend declared that his administration would not give room for establishment of grazing reserves in the state. He said the proposed grazing land issue does not align with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended (*Vanguard Newspaper* of 30th May 2016, under the caption *No Land for Grazing Reserve in Ondo*).

Similarly, Enugu State Government declared its opposition to the creation of grazing reserves across the country. According to the Deputy Governor, Cecilia Ezeilo, who made the declaration, “the Federal Government should create ranches to reduce the clashes between herdsman and farmers (*Premium Times Newspaper* of 30th April 2016, under the caption, *Nimbo Killings: Enugu State Makes Demands, Rejects Grazing Reserves*). Like the few states cited above, governments of other states in the southern part of Nigeria vehemently opposed the Grazing Reserve Bill, preferring instead the creation of ranches by cattle dealers for their cattle business.

The matter came to an abrupt end when the Nigeria Senate on 9th November 2016 passed a resolution withdrawing the three bills in the Senate relating to grazing areas. According to Ogunmade:

The foundation for the withdrawal of the bills was laid by the Deputy Senate President, Ike Ekweremadu, who said that the Senate lacked the powers to legislate on grazing matters which the bills set out to pursue. According to him, only states have powers to legislate on grazing matters and livestock animals, adding that since the matter was neither in the exclusive nor concurrent list, the National Assembly lacked the power to legislate on the matter (*This Day* Newspaper of 10th November 2016, anchored by Omololu Ogunmade under the heading *Senate Rejects Grazing Reserve Bill, Says It's Unconstitutional*).

## **6.6. CONCLUSION**

On the strength of all evidences presented in this chapter, I conclude by concurring with Oviemuno's assertion that "the political arena of 21st century Nigeria has a deadly resemblance of the 13th century political Europe" (Oviemuno: 2002). With all the manifestations of tribal and religious bias, greed and covetousness, political violence and cruelty, treachery and sit-tight syndrome clearly presented in this chapter, who would say on the contrary? Therefore, I declare without fear of contradiction that there is a striking similarity between Machiavelli's ideas in *The Prince* and the practices of many Nigerian politicians and non-politicians alike, and so validate my proposition that the Nigerian political society presents a classic case of Machiavellianism as expressed in *The Prince*.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION**

#### **7.1. INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter dealt with presentation and analysis of the state of affairs in the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria in the light of the ideas propounded by Machiavelli in *The Prince*. The outcome of the presentations and analysis showed that there is a striking similarity between the postulations of Machiavelli in *The Prince* and the practices of many Nigerian politicians and ordinary citizens, thereby validating my overall argument in this study that the Nigerian political scene presents a classic case of Machiavellianism. My task in this chapter is to do a critical evaluation of the entire study from the findings made in the course of the study. This will enable me draw the conclusion of the study, in which I hope to, in view of the findings, make some necessary recommendations which when implemented would go a long way in helping to provide solutions to the socio-political and economic problems confronting Nigeria as a nation.

#### **7.2. EVALUATION**

In a way of critically evaluating this research work, I will, from the findings made in the course of the study, say that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* to be a guide on how a prince should acquire power and retain it. In view of the facts gathered from *The Prince*, he established a political theory that devised a swift means of acquiring political power and retaining it under the guiding principle that “the end justifies the means.” The principle means that whatever aim or ambition one has in

life, one must strive by every possible means, whether conventionally accepted or not, to realize it because what matters in the end is one's actualization of one's ambition in life and not the means through which the desired ambition is realized.

Under this guiding principle, Machiavelli, according to my findings, set down the following precepts in *The Prince*:

1. The idea that human beings are naturally simple-minded, fickle, ambitious, selfish and greedy.
2. The idea that politics is all about acquiring and maintaining political power.
3. The idea that politics and conventional idea of morality cannot go together because any ruler that sticks to conventional idea of morality would definitely fail.
4. The idea that the good of the state supersedes the morality of whatever is done to achieve and enhance it.
5. The idea that violence and force are necessary in politics because people would always fear and obey the violent and forceful ruler more than the quiet one.
6. The idea that cruelty, just like violence or force, is a necessary means of acquiring and maintaining political power, but must be inflicted at once and not continued.
7. The idea that virtue means physical prowess, which is quite different from conventional or Christian virtue, which indicates moral excellence.
8. The idea that lies, deception and hypocrisy are necessary in politics if they will enhance the good of the state.

Thus, while classical political theorists taught that politics should go with virtuous acts, Machiavelli stipulated that politics had no relationship with conventional ideas of morality, which he dismissed as some non-existing imaginations. Unsurprisingly, this collision of his views with the conventional cum religious standards of moral cum political behaviour brought about various kinds of condemnation to Machiavelli and *The Prince* from the Church and conventional moralists. However, many modern scholars took a less hostile view of Machiavelli and *The Prince*, preferring to judge him and interpret his ideas in *The Prince* in the light of the contents of the book, his personal and family background, circumstances surrounding his writing the book, the events in the Italy and Florence of his time, as well as his other writings, especially *The Discourses*. Notwithstanding their efforts to erase the negative image hanging over Machiavelli and *The*

*Prince*, the shock that emanates from the basic ideas in the book remains, and the mere mention of Machiavelli today still makes many to become disinterested in whatever is being said. This is basically because of the way his theory in the book has been received, understood, interpreted and practiced over the centuries.

Nevertheless, from a logical point of view, I think that Machiavelli's basic ideas in *The Prince* emanated from a wrong premise and are therefore refutable. Logically, if the premise of an argument is false and erroneous, the argument itself is bound to end up in an erroneous conclusion. In other words, for a statement to be regarded as sound and valid there has to be a necessary relationship between the premise and the conclusion. The major error of Machiavellianism, I would say, is its guiding principle that "the end justifies the means," taken from the assertion at the end of Chapter XVIII of the book, where Machiavelli states:

In the actions of all men, especially of princes, where there is no court to appeal to, one looks to the end. So let the prince win and maintain his state: the means will always be judged honourable, and will be praised by everyone (Bull, 1981: 101).

As stated above, all the major precepts stipulated by Machiavelli in *The Prince* stemmed from this principle that "the end justifies the means." As a utilitarian, Machiavelli believed only in the usefulness of an action as against the morality of such action. For him, what counts in any action is the ultimate result of the action, that is, the happiness the action brings to the greatest number of people. He believed that the means employed to achieve any desired result will always be praised and approved by all when the result is successful. By implication, the good result of any action justifies whatever means, whether good or bad, one used in achieving it. That is to say that one's success in any venture excuses him from any means used in achieving the desired success, or that it is justified for one to use cruel and unjust means to attain to a good end. This, to me is unacceptable. I think that Machiavelli's argument that the end (the "usefulness" or "good" brought by any human act) justifies its means (whatever method that was used in bringing about the desired end) raises a fundamental question on ascertaining the difference between public "usefulness" or "good" and that of a greedy and selfish prince or politician.

Therefore, one would have asked Machiavelli, if he were alive today, to explain how to measure or differentiate between the interest or good of the state and the interest or good of the ruler. This is important because the findings made in the course of this study indicate that the personal interest or good of the ruler has always been pursued in the guise of pursuing the interest or good of the state. There are uncountable examples in the present-day Nigeria, and even in the past, to prove that political office holders have always used their political positions to trample on the fundamental rights of others and also enrich themselves at the detriment of those they claim to serve. A typical example of this abuse of political positions is the alarming rate at which many Nigerian politicians and those in positions of authority loot the government funds entrusted into their care. Reporting on some looted funds recovered from former Nigerian political office holders by the Buhari administration, Alli wrote:

All seems set for the repatriation of over Two Hundred Billion Dollars stashed away by some former governors, ex ministers and other public officers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), The Nation learnt yesterday. Some mansions belonging to some former Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) and their cronies or fronts may be seized, a source said. Under the searchlight for stashing away cash or acquiring properties in the UAE are seven governors, six former ministers, a fleeing presidential aide implicated in the 2.1billion dollars arms deal (*The Nation Newspaper of March 22, 2016, under the caption Seven Ex-governors, Others To Lose Loot Kept In Dubai*).

In a similar vein, writing in the *Vanguard* of 5th June 2016, under the heading *Interim Forfeiture: ₦126 Billion; \$9 Billion; £2 Billion*, Aziken and Nwabughioogu reported thus:

The Federal Government said, yesterday, it had made cash recoveries totaling ₦78,325,354,631.82; \$185,119,584.61; £3,508,355.46 and €11,250, from looters of public treasury, from May 29, 2015 to May 25, 2016. The disclosure was in fulfillment of President Muhammadu Buhari's promise to make public the details of the cash recoveries on his first anniversary in office. ... Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, in a statement, also disclosed that Recoveries Under Interim Forfeiture (cash and assets) during the period totaled ₦126,563,481,095.43; \$9,090,243,920.15; £2,484,447.55.

The import of the above is that political office holders have always manipulated state machinery to their personal advantage. For them, when the supposed “interest” or “good” of the state conflicts

with their personal interest, they go for their personal interest. Machiavelli would have been in a better position to explain this since he observed in *The Prince* that man is naturally simple-minded, fickle, ambitious and greedy for personal gain and still went ahead to posit that “Reason of State” or “Public Welfare” supersedes all ethical considerations about human act. Therefore, there is no gainsaying the fact that Machiavelli’s concept of interest or good of the state and his concept of human nature conflict with one another in both theory and practice. In the light of the above, I insist that the end does not and cannot in any way justify the means.

Another error of Machiavellianism is the absolutization of power, that is, its regard of power as the ultimate goal of politics. Power, according to Dahl is “the ability to make somebody do something that otherwise he or she would not have done. That is to say that “A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl, 1957: 202-203). This corroborates Wasby’s definition of power as the capacity of “bringing about an action by someone against the will or desire of another” (Wasby: 1972). The importance of power in politics cannot be overemphasized, as I have shown in the introductory chapter of this study where I discussed the theory of power which is the framework upon which this study is anchored. On what power can offer to its holder, Giddens says “power is an important, if not exclusive, component of the social structure. Power is exercised by human agents and is also created by them, influences them, and limits them” (Sadan, 2004: 38). Similarly, in his *Theory of Community Power*, Dahl maintains that power is exercised in a community by a particular concrete individual while other individuals, also actual, are prevented from doing what they prefer to do. Power, for him, is exercised, in order to cause those who are subject to it to follow the private preferences of those who possess the power (Dahl: 1961).

From the above, one can see that power is an important component of a social structure, and so understand better why Machiavelli sees politics as nothing but a game of acquisition and exercise of power. For him, in order to acquire and exercise power, one can slay fellow citizens, deceive friends, and perform all kinds of acts of violence, cruelty, tyranny and wickedness if it is necessary to do so. This is hinged on his argument that the means of acquiring power becomes immaterial once one gets it. This means that acquiring power is more important than the means of doing so. For him, it is only in continuing with increasing rate of violence and cruelty after acquisition of power that the perpetrator is to be faulted. This is based on his belief that cruelty used well is that

which is employed once for all and not persisted in, while cruelty badly used is that which rather than disappearing grows in intensity as time goes on. But to me, Machiavelli by this theory of well-used cruelty and badly used cruelty seemed to be ignorant of the fact that with his observations about human nature, it may not be practicable for one who came to power through violence and cruelty to hold it successfully without more violence and cruelty. He thus appeared oblivious of what Acton observed about human nature and power that made him to state that “power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” He, Machiavelli, also seemed unaware of the fact that going by his observations about human beings, human beings cannot exist together in a society without pursuing their personal interests.

There is no doubt that Machiavelli’s analysis of power as the centre of all political activities has relevance to some of the problems confronting the world today. His theory presupposes that it is necessary for one who has acquired political power to use any available means to consolidate and extend it. Considering Hobbes theory that mankind has a natural inclination which is a perpetual and restless desire for acquisition of power after power that ceases only in death, as well as Machiavelli’s view of human nature in *The Prince*, it is arguable that Machiavelli’s absolutization of power may have led many world leaders to tyranny, dictatorship and all kinds of intimidation, oppression and annihilation of political opponents. That is to say that many world-famous dictators who terrorized their people, such as, Joseph Stalin Of Soviet Union (1878 – 1953), Benito Mussolini of Italy (1883 – 1945), Adolf Hitler of Germany (1889 – 1945), Mao Zedong of China (1893 – 1976), Idi Amin of Uganda (1925 – 2003), Pol Pot of Cambodia (1925 – 1998), Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe (1925 – date), Saddam Hussein of Iraq (1937 – 2006), Kim Jong’il of North Korea (1941 – 2011), and Muammar Gaddafi of Libya (1942 – 2011) may have at one point in their lives or the other gone through Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and decided to practice the principles enunciated by Machiavelli in the book.

It is thus not out of place to say that many current sit-tight African presidents are drawing inspiration from the basic ideas of Machiavellianism, especially considering that they perpetuate themselves in office through flawed elections, violence, intimidation, oppression and sometimes annihilation of political opponents. As I have shown in the course of this study, many Nigerians commit all kinds of cruel and treacherous things in order to acquire or retain political power. And this is not unconnected to the fact that just like Machiavelli suggested in *The Prince* they play

politics as a struggle for acquisition and retention of power. But unlike Machiavelli who canvassed that the acquired power should be used for the good of the state, they use their own acquired power as an avenue for self-aggrandizement rather than service for the good of the people. No wonder that they don't retire from active politics as it is done in other fields of human endeavour, neither do they have the mind to mentor and train the younger ones to take over from them as it is done in many advanced countries. All they do, as I found out from this study, is to jump from one political party to the other or recycle themselves from one political office to the other, at the detriment of the younger politicians with better mindset who want to come into the system and change it for the good of the state.

The ultimate goal of politics, for me, is never the acquisition or exercise of power but securing opportunity for rendering selfless service to the people and helping the people to have a meaningful and valuable life. By implication, power should not be seen as an end in itself, but as a means of bettering the life of its holder and that of the people in whose territory the power is exercised. I strongly agree with Foucault that "power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress, if it worked only through the mode of censorship, exclusion, blockade and repression, in the manner of a great Superego, exercising itself only in a negative way" (Foucault, 1972: 59). Any form of politics devoid of selfless service to the populace, for me, is off the mark.

I tend to agree with those who argue that the replication of the ideas presented by Machiavelli in *The Prince* by many Nigerian politicians and non-politicians is the bane of Nigeria's democracy, as well as the cause of many of the political, social and economic problems confronting the nation today. In Chapter One, while introducing this study, I noted thus concerning Nigeria:

The country now witnesses rising rate of poverty, polarization, restiveness and unemployment. Vulnerability is increasing every day, and the hospitals, universities and colleges are ill-equipped. The necessary infrastructure that should make life worth living for the citizens, such as the constant supply of electricity, good road networks, potable drinking water and shelter are for the privileged few.

The problems in the country presently have degenerated to the point that many Nigerians are risking their lives in search of greener pastures abroad. According to the Italian Interior Ministry, "Illegal immigrants from Nigeria account for 21 percent of the total 171, 299 immigrants that braved the Mediterranean odds to arrive Italy in 2016" (*Premium Times* of 11th January 2017,

under the caption *36,000 Nigerians Crossed Mediterranean to Italy in 2016*). From January to June 2017, “no fewer than 14,118 Nigerians have migrated to Italy, according to International Organization for Migration (IOM)” (Daily Trust Newspaper of 20th July 2107, anchored by Odeyemi under the heading *14,000 Nigerians migrated to Italy Irregularly in 2017*). According to “IOM’s Chief of Mission, Enira Krdzalic a total of 111, 148 migrants have arrived in Italy by sea after crossing the Mediterranean” and “Nigeria accounted for the main country of origin of migrants arriving in Italy” (Odeyemi: 2016).

In view of the socio-political problems that are often associated with abuse of power in any given society, it is heart-warming that debates about globalization have centred on calls to improve accountability and limit abuses of power in world politics (Grant and Keohane, 2005: 29). This is based on the premise that power should not be used as an instrument of coercion, but should be exercised in a manner that will make the people with power to be accountable to those who have entrusted them with it (Grant and Keohane, 2005: 32).

There are clear evidences, which I have shown in the course of this study, that both past and present political office-holders in Nigeria have applied the Machiavellian principles in *The Prince* far beyond what Machiavelli himself would have imagined. Nevertheless, I must say that Machiavelli or his treatise, *The Prince*, is not the architect of Nigeria’s problems. The problem of Nigeria, I think, is a moral one, and it is the separation of morality by most Nigerians from their social, political and economic activities. I agree, just like Omoregbe does, that Nigerian politicians “believe that politics and morality do not go together” (Omoregbe, 1993: 131). But while such belief aligns with Machiavelli’s views in *The Prince*, I think that it did not stem from being acquainted with the views but from poor idea of morality. This is because many Nigerians who have not even heard about Machiavelli let alone read his book, *The Prince*, still have the perception that politics is about acquiring wealth or preserving one’s interests. Their political idiosyncrasy suggests that being affluent in life is more important than offering selfless service to one’s fatherland. While it may be difficult to trace the origin of such perception of life by Nigerians, considering that they started manifesting such traits earlier on after independence in 1960, available facts show that acts manifesting holding of such view of politics and life by Nigerians instead of deceasing have increased in the last thirty years.

Therefore, I think that the major cause of the increase in moral decadence in Nigeria is the interruption in the educational system of Nigeria which was caused by government's takeover of all primary and secondary schools in Nigeria in 1970, during the military regime of General Yakubu Gowon. Prior to that action, primary and secondary schools were places that sound moral upbringing was inculcated in pupils and students, and they were run by religious organizations. It was these mission agencies that solely erected school structures, prepared curricular and extra-curricular activities, chose staff members for the schools and paid their remunerations. But with the takeover by government, all these changed and government became the sole sponsor and manager of the schools. The only thing government left for the religious organizations to do in those schools was to have one period every week for moral instruction. With time, the moral instruction which was formerly one of the core subjects in both primary and secondary schools was relegated to the background by government agencies responsible for school subjects. In many places, some religious organizations have turned the period for moral instruction into a period for indoctrination of students.

The resultant effect of the above is the total collapse of the quality of education which is being seen in Nigeria today and the disappearance of sound character formation process from the school system. This disappearance of sound character formation process in the school system over a period of time has led to high level of manifestation of greed, dishonesty and corruption in the political life of the nation. The situation is so critical at the moment that many Nigerians see nothing wrong with political violence and electoral irregularities or stealing of public funds or money belonging to one's company, institution or any large organization, as long as one is lucky to be in a position to do so without being caught and punished. Therefore, for me, that government takeover of all primary and secondary schools in Nigeria is the main cause of the poor idea of morality in Nigeria and the socio-political crimes in present-day Nigeria, not acquaintance with Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

However, in the midst of the socio-political crimes in present-day Nigeria and their consequences on the social and political development of the nation, it is reassuring that current discussions in both public and private sectors of the country centre on possible ways of combating the moral breakdown in the society. To this end, the present Nigerian government has taken steps to bring back History as a subject in all primary and secondary schools across the country. It was removed

as a core subject from the primary and secondary schools' curriculum from the 2009/2010 and subsumed into social studies. Commenting on the importance of returning History as a subject of study, the Minister of Education, Adamu, said thus:

Somebody who doesn't know his history is worse than dead. So, this government is going to bring back history. It would even be better if we study local history first. You have to know who you are before you can be anything in the world (*Premium Times Newspaper of 11th May 2016, under the caption, Nigeria to Restore History in School Curriculum*).

I sincerely appreciate and agree with the decision of the Nigerian Government to restore History as a core subject in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools throughout the nation. This is hinged on the belief that returning History as a core subject in primary and secondary schools will help Nigerian children at the earliest stage to become well enlightened on their respective cultural cum ethical values, and also appreciate better the unity in diversity status of the country.

There is no doubt that with what is happening presently in the Nigerian society, everybody is beginning to understand that a sound moral foundation is sine qua non for the social, political and economic growth of any society. Many Nigerians are now becoming aware of Oviemuno's remarks that "that removing morality from politics is as depriving cats from eating rats and fishes" (Oviemuno: 2002). Since schools are centres of excellence and strongholds for character formation, I agree with those who say that the takeover of schools from religious bodies was one of the costliest mistakes ever made by Nigerian government. And it is indeed a thing of joy that some state governments in Nigerian have taken a deep thought on the issue and are returning some of the taken over schools to their former owners. Reporting on the return of such schools by Anambra State government, Ujumadu stated as follows:

Anambra State Governor, Mr. Peter Obi, Monday handed over a total of 1,040 primary schools back to their original owners, the churches, and gave them N6 billion to maintain the schools. The amount will be distributed to the affected churches over the next 15 months, based on the number of schools owned by each group. Addressing education stakeholders, elders of the state and the general public on the occasion which held at the Women's Development Centre, Awka, Obi said the handover was necessitated by the level of moral decadence in the society owing to the forceful takeover of mission schools by the defunct East Central State Government at the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970

(*Vanguard* Newspaper of 22nd November 2011, under the heading *Obi Hands Over 1,040 Schools to Original Owners*).

Many other state governments, especially in the southern part of Nigeria have followed the footsteps of Anambra State government by returning some of the taken over schools in their respective states. I strongly believe that handing over schools back to their former owners will play a vital role in bringing the standard of morality back to what it used to be. If the standard of morality becomes high, Nigerians will certainly know that morality cannot be separated from all endeavours of life, including politics. Even those who by any means come across Machiavelli's *The Prince* will be in a better position to understand why he wrote the book and whom he wrote it to. Such understanding will definitely open their eyes to the implications of replicating the principles of Machiavellianism on the Nigerian society of the twenty-first century. When their eyes are opened to the implications of practicing Machiavellian principles on the post-colonial Nigerian society, there is the tendency that many will drop their cruel and treacherous lifestyles and begin to act in positive ways toward the Nigerian state and fellow citizens. When they begin to act positively towards the nation and fellow citizens, there is the likelihood that the present social, political and economic problems plaguing the nation will be a thing of the past.

### **7.3. CONCLUSION**

In concluding this study, I would say that Nigeria is democratic in theory but Machiavellian in practice. This is because, whether knowingly or unknowingly, many Nigerian politicians and non politicians alike have adopted Machiavelli's idea of politics in *The Prince* as more or less a struggle for acquisition and retention of power. As this study has shown, right from independence in 1960 the Nigerian military and political leaders have inclined to Machiavellianism in the following ways:

1. Relentless coup d'états, which now ranks Nigeria as one of the countries in the world with the highest number of military coups.
2. Violent electoral practices characterized by kidnapping, intimidation and assassination of political opponents.
3. Using fraudulent and treacherous means to acquire and retain political power, as if politics is a do or die affair.

4. Application of coercion and violence to intimidate and silence opposition and dissenting views.
5. Using the machinery of government to amass wealth or promote selfish and tribal interests.

Consequent upon this erroneous conception and practice of politics by many politicians and ordinary Nigerians, the country, blessed with abundant human and natural resources, has been undergoing social, political and economic problems which if not dealt with will stagnate and prevent it from achieving its full potentials. In spite of the billions of dollars being realized annually from the sale of crude oil, which is the mainstay of Nigeria's economy, the populace has continued to languish in abject poverty because substantial part of the moneys is channeled into the pockets of those in positions of authority. This fact is attested to by the recovery by EFCC operatives on 3rd February 2017 "of \$9,772,800 (Nine Million, Seven Hundred and Seventy Two Thousand, Eight Hundred United States Dollars) and another sum of £74,000 (Seventy Four Thousand Pound Sterling) cash" hidden in a fire proof safe in a building belonging to a former Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Andrew Yakubu, in Kaduna (*Premium Times* Newspaper of 10th February 2017, under the caption *How EFCC recovered \$9.8 million from Yakubu, Ex- NNPC GMD*). This is just an instance of the volume of corruption and fraud in all sectors of the Nigerian nation.

In view of the above, it is not surprising that the country has remained largely dependent on foreign aids and loans for sustenance and infrastructural development. On Monday, 9th October 2017, the Nigerian Senate President, Bukola Saraki read on the floor of the Senate a letter from President Buhari "for the approval of an external loan estimated at \$5.5 billion to enable the Federal government finance the 2017 Budget" (*Vanguard* Newspaper of 10th October 2017, anchored by Umoru under the heading *Buhari Writes Senate to Borrow \$5.bn to Finance 2017 Budget*). The external loan request was actually approved by the Senate on Tuesday, 14th November 2017, after series of meeting with "members of the executive to explain the benefits of the loan" (*Premium Times* of 14th November 2017, anchored by Busari with the heading *Senate Approves Buhari's \$5.5 Billion Loan Request*).

It is worthy to note that Buhari government's action is a continuation of a method which has been employed in governance by successive Nigeria governments, both at the Federal and state levels. As at 31st December 2004, Nigeria's external debts stood at \$35.994 billion, with the largest

proportion of the debts being the \$30.84 billion owed the Paris Club (*Debt Management Office, Federal Republic of Nigeria*: 6th October 2005). It was Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's president from 29th May 1999 – 29th May 2007, who on 29th June 2005 secured \$18 billion debt relief out of the \$30.84 billion owed the Paris Club, thereby reducing significantly the country's external debts. Afterwards, in 2006, "Nigerian government paid almost \$20 billion to both Paris Club and London Club of Creditors to settle her foreign debts" (*African Political and Strategic Centre*: 24th June 2010), thereby making the country free of foreign debt.

But, with the selfishness of Nigerian politicians and corruption in the polity, it is not surprising that the external debt profile of the country has accumulated again. As at 30th June 2017, the external debt stock of Nigeria stood at \$15,047 billion, while that of the 36 states and Federal Capital Territory stood at about \$3.94 billion (*Debt Management Office, Federal Republic of Nigeria*: 30th June 2017). And there is no doubt that servicing of the debts has negative effects on the economic well-being of the nation. For instance, according to Director General of *Debt Management Office*, Abraham Nwankwo, "in the past five years, Nigeria has spent \$1.62 billion for servicing of external loans contracted by both the federal and state governments" (*Punch Newspaper* of 27th March 2017, under the caption *External Debt Servicing Gulps \$1.62 Billion in Five Years*). Just in September 2017 alone, the 36 States of the Federation spent N2.67 billion to service external debt (*Premium Times* of 18th October 2017 under the heading *How Nigeria's 36 States spent N2.67 billion to Service External Debt in September*).

Considering that many of states in Nigeria owe backlog of salary of their workers, it is imaginable the feelings of those workers on the amount being spent just to service external debts. As I bring down the curtain on this study, which is aimed at examining the Nigerian society in the light of Machiavelli's political ideas in *The Prince*, I wish to make the following submissions which are however open to objections:

Firstly, Machiavelli's moral cum political principles as contained in his treatise, *The Prince*, were borne out of his desire to offer political advice to the prince through his knowledge of ancient history as well as his observations of the political events of his time. It was actually intended to be a "mirror for the prince", that is, a political guide for the new ruler of Florence, though it turned out to become a turning point in the history of political thoughts because of its break from the prevalent political idealism, its approach to politics from the standpoint of realism, and its position

on how the state could use its power to maintain law and order. Trying to be realistic and empirical, Machiavelli sets out in *The Prince* a political theory that has one-sided negative view of human nature, cares less about rules of ethical conduct, of good or evil, but celebrates end over means and advocates for physical prowess over conventional moral rectitude. Interestingly, the political ideas of Machiavelli in *The Prince*, as we have seen in the course of this study, find replication in the political practices of Nigerian political leaders and ordinary citizens since independence.

Secondly, in spite of the flaws already pointed out in Machiavelli's political philosophy in *The Prince*, I must commend him for the two most important insights I received from the book in the course of this study. The first is the insight into the negative aspect of human nature which has been left to control humanity in the arena of politics over the centuries and the second is the insight into the need to increase the capacity of government in securing the life and property of the people so as to generate and foster sense of protection, social solidarity and national cohesion. Inasmuch as I do not subscribe to his one-sided negative view of human nature (as I showed in section 4.2.5 of Chapter Four of this study where I discussed human nature), I must confess that his idea of human nature is not totally incorrect. While I do not support the abuse of human rights in the name of increasing the capacity of government in the area of security, the importance of security of life and property in any state cannot be overemphasized. In fact, any state without adequate security of lives and properties of the citizens cannot develop to her full potentials. No wonder that Section 14(b) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria states that "security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government."

Thirdly, I believe that Machiavelli by his treatise "*The Prince*" made a useful contribution to political thought. Undoubtedly, his ideas in the book bring to light political realities which many a time lead to conflict of interests or making of agonizing choices between personal interests and collective interests. His only theoretical errors, I would say, are his absolutization of power and separation of morality from politics, which substantially led him to the idea that "the end justifies the means".

In view of the seeming adherence of many Nigerians to Machiavelli's idea that the end justifies the means, as found out in this study, I humbly make the following recommendations which when applied will go a long way in helping to bring solution to the political problems plaguing the Nigerian nation:

1. There should be a radical determination by every Nigerian to stop the corruption and tribalism being seen in both public and private sectors of the Nigerian nation. This should be done by everyone living a life of high moral standard and uprightness, without manifestation of tribalism and nepotism
2. All corrupt public servants and politicians should be removed, while looters of public treasury should be prosecuted and made to return their loots. I sincerely commend the efforts of the present Buhari administration towards fighting corruption in Nigeria and making those who looted public funds to return the looted funds. It is definitely a step in the right direction. However, the war against corruption should be waged without fear or favour, so that those who see it as a means of witch-hunting perceived political opponents would be proved wrong.
3. Nigerian politicians should understand that politics is a clean game and play it as such. They should stop playing it as a “dirty game”, which is how most Nigerians regard it at the moment. This is very important because this erroneous view of politics is largely the reason why honest Nigerians shy away from it out of fear for their lives, while dishonest ones have a field-day playing it in resemblance to Machiavellian prescriptions.
4. Again, the sit-tight syndrome with which many African political leaders have been infected must be resisted by Nigerians. They should take a cue from the events of November 2017 which ultimately led to the resignation of 93-year-old former president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, after 37 years of being in power. For me, power is not about how long one exercises it but how well one uses it to impact the lives of his fellow citizens positively. There should be less emphasis on politics of acquiring or retaining power at all costs.
5. Religious leaders must understand and equally inculcate into the adherents of their religion the fact that without moral rectitude religion is incomplete. In other words, they should make people to know that high morality is the health of any society, and that any society characterized by corruption and immorality is unhealthy.

To complement the efforts of religious leaders, I respectfully call on the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to step up efforts towards mobilizing Nigerians to live a life of high moral standard and uprightness, devoid of tribalism and nepotism. Being the government agency saddled with the responsibility of communicating government policy, collating public opinion, promoting patriotism, national unity and development of society, they should be alive to their responsibilities

and do all within their power to transform Nigeria and ensure that every citizen, whether highly placed or not, does the right thing. To do this, government should provide adequate funds for the running of the agency and ensure that only competent, willing and committed hands are engaged to man their offices at the national, state and local levels. I strongly believe that if the National Orientation Agency (NOA) carries out its responsibilities effectively and efficiently, corruption, nepotism, political and moral ills in Nigeria will be reduced to the barest minimum.

The judiciary also has a role to play, especially in the area of the fight against corruption, crime and political ills bedeviling the Nigerian society. Being the Temple of justice and the arm of government that interprets the applicable laws, those who sit on the bench must accept the exceptionally high standard of probity it demands. By implication, they should be transparent in all areas of the discharge of their duties and conduct same in a manner that should not impugn their integrity. This is important because in justice, integrity is a necessity. I have deep conviction that if Nigerian judiciary performs in line with public expectation, there will be a drastic reduction of the social, moral and political problems plaguing the Nigerian nation:

Finally, I wish to admit, in view of the fact that Machiavellianism has a large scope, that this study may not have touched all there is to know about Machiavellianism and its relationship and pertinence to the present-day Nigerian society. To this end, I encourage those who may undertake similar study in future to extend the scope of their study to areas not covered by this study. That, just like this study, will in no small way help in solving the problems plaguing Nigeria at the moment due to the playing of politics by many Nigerian politicians and non-politicians in ways similar to the ideas Machiavelli articulated in *The Prince*.

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