Polemics of Nigeria's Socio-Political Realities and Chinua Achebe's *The Trouble with Nigeria*

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Abstract
One of the major topical concerns that have taken the centre stage in scholarly as well as pedestrian discourses in Nigeria in recent time is the apparent intractable web of Nigeria's socio-political woes. However, the nuances and shades of opinions on the topic are in many ways interesting and at the same time disturbing. A common essence in relation to the topic is polemics of corruption and leadership failure. From critical observation, it is apparent that the trajectories of scholarly perspectives on some assumed reasons behind the lingering Nigeria's socio-economic woes have continued to generate more debates. Thus, the stimuli and reactions from the various perspectives and the attendant debates form the focal points of the study. In reaction to these vistas of perception and inclinations, the paper attempts a contextualization of the supposed popular views in relation to Achebe's postulations in *The Trouble with Nigeria*. The study adopts social constructivist paradigm, interpretive attribution deduction subsumed in analytical semiotics to pursue an interpretive cognitive discourse on the focused topic. Lastly, the study postulates that Nigeria's troubles are primarily beyond dumping of blame semantics solely on leadership failures due to sheer incapacity and corruption, rather the troubles are essentially subsumed in entrenched culture of hypocrisy and lack of faith in Nigeria.

Keywords: Attribution, Chinua Achebe, Corruption, Leadership, Nigeria, Politics, Worldview

> To be aware of the ideal of social structure and to use it with sensibility is to be capable of tracing such linkages among a great variety of milieux. To be able to do that is to possess the sociological imagination.
> **Mills, C. Wright**

1. Introduction

The quest to propose functional solutions to subsisting socio-political challenges facing Nigeria have yielded and have continued to yield bountifully scholarly as well as pedestrian suppositions which variously subsume diverse varieties of theoretical and conceptual inclinations. As part of this quest, in 1983 Chinua Achebe added his contribution in an essay he captioned *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Achebe in the essay elaborately articulates on the correlation between the concepts of leadership efficacy and social-economic advancement in Nigeria in the period 1960 to 1983. Thirty-four years after, Achebe's major suppositions in the essay have remained cardinal references in many ways in several scholarly works focusing on Nigeria's socio-political realities.

Hence, the need to revisit critically, Achebe's positions in the focused essay, in line with the apparent recasts by some academic and political intelligentsia in Nigeria thirty-four years after Achebe's essay *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Achebe's aforementioned essay locates the troubles with Nigeria within the following trajectories: Failure of Leadership, Tribalism, False Image of Ourselves, Leadership – the Nigerian Style, Lack of Patriotism, Social Injustice, Cult of Mediocrity, Indiscipline and Corruption. The inclination of this paper is that Achebe's contribution in *The Trouble with Nigeria* is of wide implication and that his perspectives are consistent in many ways with views of very many scholars, relevant politicians and genuine observers of Nigeria's socio-political contexts. Hence, the focus of this paper is not on aptness or otherwise of Achebe's observations, but on the social constructivist ontology and sociological contemplation on a given aspect of his essay, 'the failure of leadership', which he views as central and core to the troubles with Nigeria.

To provide a plausible and clear frame of discussion in an attempt to advance a deeper appreciation on the focused theme in a bid to limit avoidable ambiguity, this paper espouses on some relevant conceptual notions and expressions such as leadership, failure of leadership, social construction of reality, corruption and attribution. The expression leadership apparently connotes as well as represents not exactly the same idea to different people and communities. Some scholars predominate on the methodology and skills of leadership exhibited by individuals as their foundation in formulating a definition of leadership, whereas this paper defines leadership on the basis of when an individual can be presumed to be in charge of affairs literally. Therefore, this paper adopts a contextual approach in defining leadership, and in line with this perspective, leadership in summary connotes or represents the taking-up of the responsibilities of authority for the purpose of harnessing available resources through applicable means and processes, in a bid to achieve set purposes and objectives of the given community or the concerned. Regardless of semantics, this definition of leadership accords with the view of Peter Northouse who defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (2007, p. 3). On the term 'failure of leadership', this paper defines it as that instant whereby leadership is not resulting into the expected purposes and objectives of those concerned or a community of people whose resources are supposedly being harnessed to attain and sustain the expected purposes and objectives. To this end, when leadership is deemed to have failed, people concerned usually begin to ask questions and evidently in Nigeria's case, corruption is majorly viewed as the 'cancer'. Illuminating on the manifestations and dimensions of corruption, Dirk Tänzler *et al* observes that:

> The meaning of corruption changes over time and from place to place, and diverse forms of corrupt practice and various modes of the perception as well as the evaluation of it can be observed simultaneously in one society, in different social groups and even in the behaviour of one and the same actor in separate social contexts. (2012, p. 3)

The view Tänzler *et al* espouse locates corruption as a phenomenon that embodies both universal common as well as locale specific shades, thus, the need to evaluate the reality of corruption from locale specific social contexts. Therefore, in adoption of Tänzler *et al* conceptual position, the contexts of failure of leadership which is blamed mostly on corruption will be examined through social constructionism paradigm, which in many ways provides plausible frame of analysis and explanation on subjects through contextual and relative interpretations. Social constructionism according to Tom Andrews, "originated as an attempt to come to terms with the nature of reality" (2012, p. 39). Furthermore, Andrews, notes that social constructionism is traceable in part to an interpretivist approach to thinking. Thus, Andrews observes that

conceptually and ontologically "in attempting to make sense of the social world, social constructionists view knowledge as constructed as opposed to created" (2012, p. 39). The relevance of this view to this paper is that one is inclined to accept the position that Nigeria's social reality is a product of Nigerians' cumulative choice of actions and inactions. Illuminating further, Andrews indicates that social constructionism provides the necessary framework for people to appreciate that "one can believe that concepts are constructed rather than discovered" (2012, p. 40). Still on the provision of plausible framework for a clearer understanding of the expression 'social contexts', Victoria Dickerson and Jeffrey Zimmerman observe that a social constructionist perspective, "locates meaning in an understanding of how ideas and attitudes are developed over time within a social and community context" (1996, p. 80). To espouse further on the conceptual nuance which social constructionism provides, Alexandra Galbin observes that:

> Social constructionism regards individuals as integral with cultural, political and historical evolution, in specific times and places, and so resituates psychological processes cross-culturally, in social and temporal contexts. (2014, p. 85)

Furthermore, Galbin observes that "apart from the inherited and developmental aspects of humanity, social constructionism hypothesizes that all other aspects of humanity are created, maintained and destroyed in our interactions with others through time" (2014, p. 85). Here, Galbin applies the conceptual frame of social constructionism in attempt to provide rational and plausible explanations to dynamics of realities in different social contexts, which includes variable such as specific political system. Then to situate a political system as a product of social construction of reality, Gabriel Almond explains that "the task of describing a political system consists in characterizing all the patterned interactions which take place within it" thus "it takes us beyond the legal system into all the roles which occur and involves our defining these roles in action or behavioural terms" (1966, p. 362). Buttressing on this, John Högström explains that a "political system is a set of institutions concerned with formulating and implementing the collective goals of a society or of groups within it" (2011, p. 2). Still on the description of a political system as products of social construction of reality, according to Uma Eleazu "political activity consists in all those actions related to the making of such community decisions, and political institutions are those engaged in one way or another, intermittently or wholly in this process" (1975, p. 69). Furthermore, Eleazu posits that "the system of interaction of individuals in roles and institutions that are engaged in authoritative decision making for a community make up the political system" (1975, p. 69). Again, Eleazu believes that, "each political system is embedded in its own environment and milieu and the way things are generally done tend to make those living with each other have particular attitudes or orientation towards the political system and its rules of action" (1975, p. 69). Therefore, people in a given locale attempt to adapt to those realities subsisting in their environment. The idea here is that the subsisting social realities define the social contexts of a given community.

To situate social context as a product of social construction of reality which in many ways emanates from shades of adaptation, Douglas Futuyama observes that "adaptation is a characteristic that enhances the survival or reproduction of organisms that bear it, relative to alternative character states, especially the ancestral condition in the population in which the adaptation evolved" (2009, p. 279). Furthermore, Futuyama observes the phenomenon adaptation also refers to "the process whereby the members of a population become better suited to some feature of their environment through change in characteristic that affects their survival or reproduction" (2009, p. 279). The understanding here is that social adaptation means that when some subsisting realities in an environment appear inimical, such as when people are individually

or collectively confronted with none viable options or no options, typically, people voluntarily or involuntarily, individually or collectively react either by adaptation or they incrementally perish. Consequently, the conceptual here is that changes in adaptation modes over time, naturally in time re-aggregate a social context. Therefore, in many ways, the individual contributions of Eleazu, Almond, and Högström accord with the position of this paper that the political system of any given society is mostly the contribution of the aggregate social construction of realities in that domain. The argument here is that if human actions and behaviors are products of intra and inter-personal human interactions, which are products of social construction of reality, then political systems are products of social construction of reality because they are products of human interactions.

2. Interpretive Review of Perspectives on the Trouble with Nigeria

A most resounding innuendo in Nigeria is that the actions and inactions of Nigerian political class and leaders are majorly responsible for the disturbing state of affairs in Nigeria. Thus the consequences of these supposed actions and inactions have continued to instigate from diverse perspectives and inclinations enchanting as well as incongruous debates and analysis. The abundance of views and contributions on this topic in many ways denotes the ramifications. These contributions encompass opinionated as well as germane seminal suppositions encapsulating perceived inadequacies and litany of woes which have kept Nigeria on her knees. Noteworthy, few of the commentators provide few bits and pieces of solutions in line with differing perspectives. However, a review of scholarly contributions on this topic indicates that scholars tend to mostly suggest that Nigeria is grossly underperforming and evidently unhealthy. Again some scholars to a large extent blame poor and ineffective leadership, whereas some blame some cancerous habits such as corruption, nepotism, tribalism and parochial tendencies. Encapsulating this scenario aptly, Musa Salisu Ibori succinctly notes that on the issue of Nigeria and her troubles:

> Literature is awash with prognoses on the probable causes of this parlous state. There is a growing consensus that lack of probity and accountability are responsible for the appalling governance situation in Africa. Scholars in Nigeria taking a cue from polemics on politics and administration dichotomy and its dialectics in the western hemisphere have been arguing about the helplessness of public administration in Nigeria's crisis of governance. (2011, p. 1)

Among other things, in Ibori's observation, one thing appears apparent and significant in relationship to the topic being discussed; Nigeria is in throes and Nigeria is not where she is expected to be. From a scholarly intelligentsia, Michael Ogbeidi in his article entitled 'Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socio-economic Analysis', the trouble with Nigeria is essentially the problem of selfish individuals as leaders. Philosophically, he reflects:

> It is a paradox that Nigeria, the world's eighth largest exporter of crude oil, a country endowed with many resources, still has more than 70 percent of its population living below the poverty line as a result of corruption and economic mismanagement. Pathetically, the logic of the Nigerian political leadership class has been that of self-service as some of the leaders are mired in the pursuit of selfish and personal goals at the expense of broader national interests. (Ogbeidi 2012, p. 3)

Besides the suffocating level of selfishness portrayed by most individuals who were or are leaders in Nigeria, Ogbeidi thinks that "it is an incontrovertible fact that corruption has been the

bane of Nigeria's development" and that "the phenomenon has ravaged the country and destroyed most of what is held as cherished national values" (2012, p. 3). Clearly, Ogbeidi blames corruption as the malignant disease that has remained the core trouble with Nigeria and poignantly he relates the shades of social contexts defined by corruption. Ogbeidi furthermore laments the bane of quality leadership in Nigeria:

> Unfortunately, the political class saddled with the responsibility of directing the affairs of the country have been the major culprit in perpetrating this act. Regrettably, since independence a notable surviving legacy of the successive political leadership both civilian and military that has managed the affairs of the country at different times has been the institutionalization of corruption in all agencies of the public service, which, like a deadly virus, has subsequently spread to the private sector of the country. (2012, p. 3)

Unambiguously, contribution suggests that the trouble with Nigeria is dense and corroding, which portends monumental consequences. Similarly, Omololu Fagbadebo in an essay captioned 'Corruption, Governance and Political Instability in Nigeria' observes:

> The Nigerian State is a victim of high-level corruption, bad governance, political instability and a cyclical legitimacy crisis. Consequently, national development is retarded, and the political environment uncertain. The country's authoritarian leadership faces a legitimacy crisis, political intrigues, in an ethnically differentiated polity, where ethnic competition for resources drove much of the pervasive corruption and profligacy. (2007, p. 28)

In accord with Fagbadebo's position, Uwem Jonah Akpan is of the view that "corruption is undoubtedly the most pressing governance and development challenge that has confronted Nigeria in her contemporary history" (2016, p. 369). He argues that, "corruption has debilitating and corrosive effects on progress, stability and development of the nation" (Akpan, 2016, p. 369). Therefore, he contends that corruption largely "impedes economic growth by discouraging foreign investment, creates distortion in resource allocation and competitive markets, increases the cost of business undertaking and reduces the net value of public spending" (Akpan, 2016, p. 369). To Atiku Abubakar, "most Africans blame bad and corrupt leadership as the major cause of Africa's woes" (2016, p. 214), whereas Chiedozie Okoro believes that "Africa in general and Nigeria in particular are trapped in the quagmire of inept, corrupt, and directionless leadership" (2010, p. 1). According to Tochukwu Okeke the subsisting reality in Nigeria indicates that the trouble with Nigeria is traceable to dysfunctional leadership (2010, p. 178). Furthermore, Okeke observes that the bane of Nigeria's quest for heart-warming socio-political reality stems from the fact that "the electorate are so taken in by the wealth and opulence of politicians that they mortgage their consciousness for mere pittance at the expense of electing quality leaders" (2010, p. 178). The notion here is that most of the so-called leaders, largely find their way into leadership position through crooked means, thus Adera Paul Tse observes:

> Nigeria elites in leadership positions usually betray the trust and confidence reposed in them by the electorates. They collect bribes and other inducements from government and individuals thereby abandoning their people at the most crucial times. (2006, p. 72)

According to Norbert Oyibo Eze, "the leadership question in Nigeria is, indeed, the national question, if by national question; we mean the fountainhead of the variegated socio-economic and political problems that appear to make the unity and positive development of our

country intractable" (2011, p. 95). According to Kenneth Eni, "the effects of poor democratic traditions in the underdevelopment of the Nigeria society are quite visible", thus he believes that "Nigeria is a country that has been wrestling with complex decolonization, militarization, economic and development issues since gaining independence in 1960" (2014, p. 13). Here, Eni includes another variable 'neo-colonial forces' as part of the contributory factors holding Nigeria down. According to Best Ugala:

> Besides the mindlessness, profligacy, corruption and greed of our political leaders, there are other factors that have rendered Nigeria's democracy a sham. They include ideological void, leadership failure, irresponsible and impotent parliament, acquiescent judiciary, mass complacency and inaction. (2014, p. 13)

It is clear from Ugala's position that it is far from consensus that ineffective leadership is the sole factor responsible for the troubles with Nigeria. However, Ugala makes an interesting remark: "When there is no ideology, the nation gropes according to the whims of the leaders that the system throws up" (2014, p. 13). Here, Ugala indicates that Nigeria lacks progressive national ideological framework, thus the lack of convergent national interest, makes it extremely difficult for leadership to be cohesive and not at cross-purposes consciously or unconsciously. Undoubtedly, regardless of semantics and intensity of words, the apparent common ground for all the cited scholars is that Nigeria is not functioning to the satisfaction of most Nigerians, and that the causes are traceable to ineffectual leadership and overall high level negative behaviour by Nigerians. Consequently, these scholars believe Nigeria's polity requires comprehensive political and ideological overhaul.

3. Polemics of Achebe's Nuances in *The Trouble with Nigeria*

From the many literatures relating and discussing the polemics on Nigeria's socio-political woes, this study focuses on Chinua Achebe's views in his essay *The Trouble with Nigeria*. According to Achebe, the "trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership" (1983, p. 22). Achebe goes on to suggest that "there is nothing wrong with the Nigeria's land or climate or water or air" (1983, p. 22). To this end Achebe notes that "the Nigeria's problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which is the hallmark of true leadership" (1983, p. 22). Through his contribution, no doubt Achebe in many ways has laid bare a serious reality within the realities that combine to constitute problems and troubles with Nigeria. In an example provided by Achebe to elucidate on the effect of effective leadership on the behaviour of the citizens of Nigeria, he notes:

> On the morning after Murtala Muhammed seized power in July 1975, public servants in Lagos were found 'on seat' at seven-thirty in the morning. Even the 'go-slow' traffic that had defeated every solution and defied every regime vanished overnight from the street! Why? (1983, p. 22)

Achebe answers the question he poses by noting that naturally the immediate and temporal need for self preservation propelled by fear against a regime and its new helmsman, who's "reputation for ruthlessness was sufficient to transform in the course of only one night the style and habit of Nigeria's unruly capital" is responsible for the abrupt detour in behaviour pattern of concerned Lagos commuters (1983, p. 22). This circumstance is a typical example of reaction and adaptation by the concerned people, which logically was propelled by natural instincts of self preservation. Clearly, what occurred in the circumstance alluded by Achebe is not an example of genuine transformation of behaviour, rather it can be viewed as adaptation and

survival tendency. Noteworthy, at the death of Murtala Muhammed, the so called transformed people reverted to their usual style and habits. Achebe supports this point of view as he notes, "we know, alas, that that transformation was short-lived; it had begun to fade even before the tragic assassination of Murtala Muhammed" (1983, p. 22). To this end, Achebe's submission is that:

> In the final analysis a leader's no-nonsense reputation might induce a favourable climate but in order to effect lasting change it must be followed up with a radical programme of social and economic re-orientation or at least a well-conceived and consistent agenda of reform which Nigeria stood and stands in dire need of. (1983, p. 22 – 23)

As I read through Achebe's suppositions, I began to wonder why he will attempt to glorify and canonize autocracy and military no-nonsense posturing and ruthlessness as a sine qua non for Nigeria. However, Achebe quickly adds:

> I am not here recommending ruthlessness as a necessary qualification for Nigerian leadership. Quite on the contrary, what I am saying is that Nigeria is not beyond change. (1983, p. 23)

Certainly, on this, I also agree with Achebe, however, to provide a succinct reality behind the relapse in behaviour, we take a case of an individual in Nigeria who needs to urgently answer the call of nature. Typically, the subsisting reality is that public conveniences are not provided by the concerned government agencies, and when available, they are detestable. Consequently, regardless of the extreme ruthlessness of the subsisting leader, when nature calls, people will react accordingly within permissible circumstances. Thus, the Lagos traffic is not working optimally at the time Achebe referred to because adequate planning leading to the commensurate expansion and regulation of the traffic corridor was not in place. Therefore, ruthlessness by Murtala Muhammed was merely a stop-gap desperate measure, which its effects hardly endured. Achebe laments the magnitude of woes bedevilling Nigeria, the apparent triviality and notes:

> The trouble with Nigeria has become the subject of our small talk in much the same way as the weather is for the English. But there is a great danger in consigning a life-and-death issue to the daily routine of small talk. No one can do much about the weather; we must accept it and live with or under it. But national bad habits are a different matter; we resign ourselves to them at our peril. (1983, p. 23)

Afterwards, Achebe goes ahead to make a solemn and passionate appeal:

> The aim of this booklet is to challenge such resignation. It calls on all thoughtful Nigerians to rise up today and reject those habits which cripple our aspiration and inhibit our chances of becoming a modern and attractive country. (1983, p. 23)

Amongst the contributory factors, Achebe points at 'tribalism' as a major drawback which results in ineffectual leadership for Nigeria. Tribalism which persists in Nigeria is fuelled by tribal politics. Another concern suggested by Achebe is the issue of presenting at will 'false image of ourselves'. This phenomenon according to Achebe is apparent in situations whereby most Nigerians present themselves other than what they essentially are. To Achebe, this represents another serious drawback and he explains:

> In spite of conventional opinion, Nigeria has been less than fortunate in its leadership. A basic element of this misfortune is the seminal absence of intellectual rigour in the

political thought of our founding fathers, a tendency to pious materialistic woolliness and self-centred pedestrianism. (1983, p. 31)

Similarly, Achebe blames social injustice manifested both at individual and communal levels as another serious impediment against Nigeria's attempt to prosper. On this subject he elucidates:

We have displayed a consistent inclination since we assumed management of our own affairs to opt for mediocrity and compromise, to pick a third and fourth eleven to play for us. (1983, p. 38)

Still hammering on the necessity of leadership, Achebe elaborates:

I am saying that Nigeria can change today if she discovers leaders who have the will, the ability and the vision. Such people are rare in any time or place. But it is the duty of enlightened citizens to lead the way in their discovery and create an atmosphere conducive to their emergence. (1983, p. 23)

At this point, I pause to ponder on what Achebe suggests and proposes. Depending on how I look at it, two trajectories emanate. These trajectories are the need for an efficacious leadership and the long process of nurturing individuals to become the dream leaders. Regardless of exactness or otherwise as regards to what Achebe refers to in the above comment, tacitly; it is obvious that Achebe agrees that blaming leadership and leaders inability to re-engineer Nigeria is peripheral, akin to scratching the surface. Rather what will endure is to work on the situations that generate the subsisting mindset to pave way for functional conducive atmosphere that breed citizens that will honestly believe in the oneness of Nigeria to emerge. Such dream leaders Achebe suggests can hardly emanate from an environment where children are denied admission to higher institutions because of ludicrous admission framework that promotes mediocrity and suffocates meritocracy. The social construction of reality is that when children begin to soak in the brunt of social injustice, they will mostly develop extreme survival and self-preservation ideology. These children are the leaders of the future and they will surely carry the scares of poor social structures, which have inflicted monumental quantity of pain, injustice, disenchantment and exclusion on them brutally to adulthood.

Interestingly, Achebe again tactically advocates the need for selection of the right individuals as leaders. At this point, let us pause and rummage. The supposition is that the so called enlightened citizens are actually leading the way in their discovery of specific individuals that will lead in line with sectional agenda. Clearly, there is nothing new about pre-determined agenda setting for would-be leaders all over the globe. However, what appears to be the crucial question can be frame in following manner: what is the content of the agenda and whose agenda is it? The trouble with Nigeria is that virtually all the leaders that have governed Nigeria in the highest capacities are routinely accused of harbouring and engineering ethnic or sectional agenda. Thus, when a leader emerge with an agenda heavily leaning towards sectional or ethnic favouritism, their design and actions will be viewed as self-serving by those not favourably disposed to it. The trouble with Nigeria is the sectional as well as ethnic influenced ideological agenda setting. The politics of Nigeria is 'domain propelled', which manifests in a Nigerian seeing self first and exclusively as a Hausa or an Igbo, or a Fulani, or a Yoruba or an Ijaw or any other of the five hundred and so tribes. Sincerely, I have not met any Nigerian that knows the names of all ethnic nationalities in Nigeria by heart.

The national leaders are encumbered and mostly they have to satisfy the sectional or ethnic demands of their constituency first, if they should remain relevant politically. Those who have tried not to toe this line are disparaged, disrespected, vilified and jettisoned by the political class and the constituent electorates from their geo-section of origin. In this regard, there are a lot about social construction of reality in play. Achebe appears in many ways in his essay very practical as well as academic. The trouble with Nigeria is that the configuration of the entity Nigeria based on popular and wide spread opinion is that it is not currently progressive, thus its earnestly needs restructuring to thrive.

Definitely, the metaphor is apparent; clearly it is unambiguous what represents the social contexts Achebe indicates as the trouble with Nigeria. However, what is disturbing is that Nigeria's socio-political and economic realities have continued to remain majorly not heart-warming. The question here remains: why has Nigeria not regained good health decades after Achebe appear to have provided viable prognosis? Again, is Nigeria not responding to medication or is Nigeria not under treatment all this while, or is Nigeria's health condition terminal? Supposedly these questions represent the core to the ambiguity that envelopes Nigeria. In reaction, scholars and political intelligentsia have variously made attempts to provide plausible explanations.

4. Decades after Achebe, Reactions from Scholars and Political Intelligentsia

At the Chinua Achebe International Conference, held on May 23rd 2017 at Princess Alexandra Auditorium, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, in a lead paper, Ikedi Ohakim a political intelligentsia notes that several people including Chinua Achebe, whom he describes as an eagle on the Iroko, a trail-blazer, a pathfinder and an African icon, have located Nigeria's problem in the quality or absence of quality leadership (2017, p. 64 – 67). Furthering, Ohakim presents his perspective on the contextualization of the meaning of leadership as he posits:

> Leadership is that point, where we can all look, and feel reassured, that our hope is alive. It must be the furnace that constantly fires up all our aspirations, the engine room of our national advancement. In other words, my idea of leadership is like a canvass on which everyone can see his or her dreams and the hope that those dreams can be realized in a secure nation that, in the first place, guarantees those dreams as the rights of citizens. (2017, p. 67)

Ohakim's notion of leadership appears more ethereal than mundane. However, the core of his perspective remains in deed the dream of families, communities and nations. Still on the subject of importance of quality leadership, Ohakim reflects:

> For me, especially as a politician who have been in the arena of contest for power, leadership is critical, whether in the family, Town Union, Age Grade, the community or nation, the success of a group or a nation depends entirely on the capability of the leadership. (2017, p. 67)

Again Ohakim's position is intense, thus propels valid input. Success of a group or a nation contextually in more than one way depend greatly on the capability of the leadership in all situations and circumstances. It is vital to suggest at this point, that capable leadership is just but one cardinal ingredient required for the success of a group or a nation. Thus, it is pertinent to observe that when a group or a nation has divisive sub-groups who consciously have independent agendas which do not accommodate a national agenda, most capable leadership will not thrive. Noteworthy, even when the constituents of incapable leadership consider improving on their

ineffectiveness, the propagators and beneficiaries of these divisive sub-groups have a way of pushing such leadership perpetually out of the scene. Again, from Ohakim's contribution, we appreciate that when it is apparent that in a political arena, such as in Nigeria, the composing leaders overtly promote sectional agenda, the fear of being dominated by the other ethnic group, instigates desperation ploys, antics and tactics which negates national interests and further plunges the nation into state of socio-political quagmire.

Conclusion

As I have clearly mentioned earlier more than once, Achebe's major perspectives in his essay *The Trouble with Nigeria* motivated the central focus of discussion in this paper and propelled the need to examine the points he outlined as social contexts within the conceptual paradigm of social construction of reality. To this end this paper analytically discusses an aspect of Achebe's contextualization in his essay 'the failure of leadership' in Nigeria from 1960 to 1983. Having read severally and digested accordingly Achebe's essay *The Trouble with Nigeria* the inclination of this paper is that beyond doubts there are troubles with Nigeria. From the beginning of familial units to mass settlements of people, the complexities of co-habitation had continually generated multiple challenges to people in varying scale and manifestations. We learn from history, that people respond by devising means and processes to contain or reverse any unwanted trend and realities. Thus, the realities of continual social aggregation and re-aggregation are a consistent continuum. Consequently, it is plausible to expect challenges in every community, thus what matters really is the application of knowledge to successfully combat, mitigate, and forestall familial, communal and national challenges. The widely taunted common paradigm is that if any one understands his/her problem, it is plausible to say that there is hope to solve such a problem. However, this scenario does not represent the nuances of this reality in all social contexts. In Nigeria's social context, literally, most Nigerians think they understand the troubles with Nigeria. Regardless the troubles with Nigeria appear to grow as the days go by. Hence, until the troubles with Nigeria vanish, it will be odd to stop discussing the complex realities of Nigeria's many troubles. More worrying than not, is the question: why are the 'troubles with Nigeria' so not solvable. Plausible logic is that Nigeria's troubles will remain for years to come until workable solutions are sincerely applied or the troubles will bring Nigeria to her knees eventually. The point here is that the troubles with Nigeria are going no way because while the squabbles subsists amongst members of this currently dysfunctional family called Nigeria, the troubles with Nigeria gradually makes Nigeria sicker. Achebe's leaning in his perspectives is philosophical because it is plausible to suggest that leadership quality has the propensity to make or mare the fruits of leadership application and effort. However, another philosophical view is that quality leadership thrives in an environment that is conducive and receptive.

Again, leadership is about people, and people are majorly products of nurture and nature. Clearly circumstances such as socio-ideological inclinations, social consciousness, and common agenda of people populating the entity called Nigeria should be taken into consideration in considering the health, historical as well as the subsisting socio-political realities of Nigeria. However, what is paramount in the quest to propel Nigeria forward positively is meticulous engineering of functional social structures and arrangements which will not alienate any segment of the nation but will enthrone meaningful hope, fairness and meritocracy to all. Anything shot of this will propel retrogression and underachievement. Again, it is noteworthy to add that some scholars believe that Nigeria's leadership woes is the reflection of lack of sincere leadership. Thus, Nigeria has greatly been affected by insincerity of these leaders who have made double standard an operational norm. Logically, people though attempt to adapt to subsisting realities in their

environment to survive; however, when they cannot adapt after attempts, they wither metaphorically speaking. In many ways, the perspectives such as those presented by Achebe in *The Trouble with Nigeria* subsumes the web of human reactions propelled by the subsisting Nigeria's socio-political context and for the fact that Nigerians are still living under the troubles Achebe alludes to, connotes Nigerians' psycho-social mutation of psyche and worldview to perceived intolerable conditions because of immediacy of need to stay alive first. Lastly, this study suggests that Nigeria's troubles are earnestly further than dumping of blame semantics solely on leadership failures and corruption; rather the trouble with Nigeria is subsumed in the entrenched culture of hypocrisy, dysfunctional social and geographical structures and lack of faith in Nigeria by majority of Nigerians.

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