

AFRICAN HISTORIES AND MODERNITIES

GOVERNANCE AND THE CRISIS OF RULE IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

Leadership in Transformation

Edited by
Ebenezer Obadare & Wale Adebanwi



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GOVERNANCE AND THE CRISIS OF RULE IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICA

Leadership in Transformation

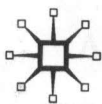
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In July 2013, the Obafemi Awolowo Institute of Government and Public Policy (OAIGPP) based in Lekki, Lagos, Nigeria, organized a two-day international conference on Leadership and Governance in Africa, where papers were presented by scholars and graduate students from Africa, Europe and North America. That conference forms the basis of this book.

In our invitation to potential presenters at the conference, we noted how “the unenviable history of the African postcolony can be written around the subject of the absence...of positive leadership”. However, we insisted that “despite the overwhelming focus in both academic and lay literature on bad leadership in Africa, the continent has produced outstanding leaders in all spheres of human endeavor and at every level of state and society.” “Therefore,” we added, “this is an exciting time to be a student of leadership in Africa, given the myriad challenges to, and opportunities for leadership which have been produced by the ascendancy of neo-liberal economics, the surge of globalization, the undeniable push for greater democratization and transparency, and the unprecedented diffusion of new media technologies...in contemporary African state and society.” Against this backdrop, we were interested in exploring “the various dimensions of leadership and its connections to governance, both at the macro and micro levels.”

Despite our vital scholarly focus, the participants at the conference were not only scholars and students. Politicians, former and serving state governors, administrators, public servants and others were present to engage with both the theoretical and practical issues raised by the question of rule in contemporary Africa. Those who contributed to the discussions and debates—not necessarily from an academic perspective—helped expand the horizons of the presenters and assisted in no small measure in emphasizing the critical role of leadership in contemporary Africa. In his address at the conference, Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State, himself a scholar and former civil society activist, articulated the heritage of leadership and governance symbolized by the man after whom the host Institute is named, Obafemi Awolowo. Stated Fayemi, “Whether in the context of political structure [in Nigeria], particularly democratic federalism, in the nature, order, purpose and limits

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CHAPTER 12

Olusola Saraki, Charismatic Leadership, and Patron-Client Relations in Modern Ilorin

Gbemisola A. Animasawun

INTRODUCTION

*Eebo ti'nse owo ko le na bi Baba Bukola;
Bi eru banba o rin, yio di oba.
Ojo weliweli Kwara, to ba sun, to ba ro,
bi ara se ntu talika lohun tu ijoba.*

*(The white man who mints money dare not spend it like Bukola's dad; if a
slave befriends you, he will become a king.
When Kwara's clouds gather and rain,
comfort comes to both the poor and the government)*

—Odolaye Aremu, popular Ilorin musician.

*Boolu ni oselu, e jeki a fon ko tobi, ki gbogbo wa lerigba
(Politics is like football, let us inflate it very well, so that we can all play it)*

—A respondent quoting Dr. Olusola Saraki.

In a response to the dominant view in Western literature, which ascribes negative values to the clientelism, Utas (2012) rejects the argument that patron-client networks are mainly sociocultural and African by citing instances of the existence of informal networks in places like Italy and the United States. Based on this, he posits that it should be viewed as sociostructural because certain structural features dictate specific social outcomes. He argues further that networks are social and cultural manifestations just as they are political and economic. However,

their manifestations are usually peculiar as determined by specific settings. Therefore, it might be jaundiced to describe it as a wholly African phenomenon.

Nevertheless, postcolonial politics and electoral processes in many African countries have for long been controlled by such "alternative governors," or patrons, although some of them have been in and out of government occupying elective and appointive positions. Nigeria is not in short supply of such men (they are mostly men) who qualify as Simeone's alternative governors. They are so described because they perpetually strive to control political processes and by extension socioeconomic activities, primarily, within their immediate political communities, and secondarily, nationally. The dominance of such men, through a combination of corruption, complicity by security agencies and patron-client relationship, both vertical and horizontal, has become an important phenomenon in Nigeria since the inception of the Fourth Republic. Prominent amongst them are late Chief Lamidi Adedibu, called "the strongman of Ibadan politics" (See Omobowale and Olutayo 2007; Obadare 2007), Turakin Ilorin, Dr. Olusola Saraki, the main patron of Kwara State politics, Sir Emeka Offor and Chief Chris Uba both of Anambra State, to mention only a few.

However, given the history of its sustained manifestations on the continent—and irrespective of its conceptual denotations as (neo)patrimonialism, prebendalism, or god-fatherism—clientelism is both socio-historical and sociostructural. In this network of relations especially in places where formal institutions are weak or absent, patron-client relations constitute alternative modes of governance, which qualifies them as "alternative governors of peopled infrastructure" (Simeone 2004: 42). Obadare (2007: 3) explains that such practices have caused "the retreat of the African state and the ascendance of its Big Men." Pitcher et al. (2009: 144) cautions that (neo)patrimonialism should be understood and utilized contextually and not sweepingly imposed as a causative emblem of African socio-political and economic pathologies. Although neopatrimonialism, clientelism and informality factually describes African pathologies, Olivier de Sardan (2008: 6) argues that they are problematic because they sometimes convey inadequate comprehension and are often applied in too general, sweeping and partial manners. However, given the charisma and social agency of certain individuals like Oloye Olusola Saraki, as alternative governors of peopled infrastructures, the concepts and their variants might still be qualifiedly relevant.

While not pandering to the bludgeoning view in Western literature that depicts and decries the master-slave context of patron-client relationships, it is actually an asymmetric relationship in which the patron

bestows gifts from private or public resources on followers to get and strengthen the loyalty of clients, who, in turn, give their loyalty in exchange for what is received (Weber 1980; Soest 2010). Medard (1982) explains that the exchange between patron and client is inherently unequal and illustrative of what Rothchild (1986) defines as "hegemonial exchange" (Soest 2010: 3). In depicting who a patron is, I transcend the limitation of the concept to holders of official positions alone, as put forward by Therkildsen (2005: 37), who argues that "Patrons are office-holders who use public funds or the power of being in office to build a personal following allowing them to stay in power." Rather, I broaden its application to the web of relationships located outside officialdom but with the capacity to determine what obtains in the official context. Hence, patron-client relations do exist with patrons who do not occupy political offices but determine who gets such political positions, whether such occupants will continue in such offices, and how they will function there.

As a charismatic leader, insight into the leadership style of Olusola Abubakar Saraki provides an interesting perspective into the study of patron-client relations at the local level, which is not covered sufficiently in extant literatures on leadership. Yet, patrons or patrimonial figures at the local level in Africa, even where they have a lot of power and influence beyond their locality, are usually not approached as "leaders" in the literature on leadership and governance. However, it is evidently clear that patron-client relation or networks produce a peculiar type of leadership that offers insight into the nuances of societies, relations and the legitimation of what would pass as unethical in other climes and within the context of bureaucratic rationality. This supports the position that patron-client relations are both sociostructural and sociocultural.

SARAKI: THE CHARISMATIC LEADER

One such man who typifies the ascendance of the Big Man in Nigeria, Africa's biggest democracy, was Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki, popularly called *Oloyee* (the Chief) because of his title as the Turakin Ilorin, one of the most respected traditional chieftaincies in the Ilorin Emirate Council. Born in Lagos on May 17, 1933, to Mukhtar Saraki of Agoro compound in Agbaji quarters in the Ajikobi Ward of Ilorin West local government area of Kwara State and Hajia Humuani Saraki, who hailed from Iseyin in Oyo State, he attended Eko Boys High School, Lagos. He later attended Chatham College of Technology England, University of London Licentiate Royal College of Physicians, and St. George's Hospital Medical School, London. He breathed his last in the early hours

of November 14, 2012 in Lagos. As a physician, Oni (2012: 43) reveals, "He made a lot of money through a retainership he had with the Nigerian Ports Authority, Ministry of Defence and other federal agencies where northerners occupied top positions."

Alhaji Saraki's philanthropy began in the early 1960s when he built a bore-hole for some villagers who were walking over great distances to fetch water in his Ilorin home. He followed it up with many more in locations within the Ilorin Emirate. His foray into electoral contest was met with defeat by Alhaji Babatunde Gada of the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) in 1964 when he sought to represent Asa constituency in the Northern regional parliament as an independent candidate (Oni 2012). This loss occurred despite his giving free medical treatment to the people of the area, who then had no hospital.

His philanthropic gestures did not go unnoticed, however, as the 9th Emir of Ilorin (1959–1992), Alhaji (Dr) Sulukarinaini Gambari (Aiyelabowo V), conferred on him the traditional title of Turaki in appreciation of his distinguished services to Ilorin emirate on April 12, 1974. Before the inauguration of Nigeria's Second Republic, he contested and won election into the Constitutional Conference in 1976 and became the first Senate Leader (1979–1983), while at different times, he held office as the national vice-chairman of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), a presidential candidate, and a man who embodied flamboyance and philanthropy, which earned him the appellation—Oloye (Chief)—in a manner that mirrors the Tswana saying: "A chief is a chief through the people" (Morton 2004: 347).

ILORIN: THE SPACE AND LOGIC OF NEOPATRIMONIALISM

In this chapter, I use primary and secondary data to reflect on charismatic leadership and patron-client relations in one of the most important cities in Nigeria. I conducted interviews with purposively selected respondents in Ilorin, who cut across ardent followers and opponents of the late Abubakar Olusola Saraki. The interviews centered on providing an empirical basis to analyze his leadership role as a patron in the politics of Ilorin, in particular, and Nigeria, in general. Questions were posed in order to unearth how his dominance of the political landscape of the state for almost five decades was legitimized and sustained, how he managed the opposition, and the impact of his legacy.

Ilorin, the setting of the study was established in the third decade of the nineteenth century (Danmole 2012) and its emergence has etched itself as a permanent subject of interest to historians, anthropologists, political scientists, and students of diplomatic relations and peace studies.

In a review of Ann O'Hear's work, *Power Relations in Nigeria: Ilorin Slaves and Their Successors*, Adejumobi (1998) points out that O'Hear presents the legacy of unequal socioeconomic relationships in the political awareness and growth of the social and economic underclass. This informed the emergence of the populist trans-ethnic commoners' party (Ilorin *Talaka Parapo*). The Commoners' Party provided an umbrella for the descendants of the underclass to temporarily resist their exploitation in their relationship with the hegemonic party, Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), controlled by the urban elite, which practically set "the gold standard of electoral malfeasance for the country based on its sharp tactics" (Kew 2010: 502). The NPC personalized modern administrative power, a modern police force and judicial system (Islamic and Western), and in many instances used sheer brutalization in undermining a sustained relationship between the commoners and the progressive Action Group (AG). This action defined the sociopolitical and economic relations in Ilorin along the lines of the master-slave relationship (Adejumobi 1998).

CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

The gap left by the demise of such charismatic leaders in Africa as Julius Nyerere, Obafemi Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe, and Kwame Nkrumah remains unfilled decades after their passing. Since the end of the era of charismatic leaders, most of whom championed the nationalist struggles that led to independence in many African countries, there has been a crisis of succession, as Sylla and Goldhammer (1982) have pointed out. The short supply of these men of stellar qualities perhaps informed the conclusion by Bienen (1993) that the absence of elders in Africa is a major cause of instability and chaos on the continent, occasioned by a rabid quest for power, with little or no concern about its legitimacy.

The yawning gap between expectations and realities in the post-colony has increased the search for good leaders. This search has provided the opportunity for opposition leaders, military adventurers, strongmen and warlords to exploit the disappointment of unfulfilled hopes and expectations in seizing power and imposing themselves on the people under the guise of redemptive leadership. Leaders like Abdel Nasser of Egypt, Muammar Gaddafi of Libya, General Murtala Mohammed of Nigeria and J. J. Rawlings of Ghana are examples of the latter (Osaghae 2010). Osaghae (2010: 407) lists the qualities of good leaders, which have eluded many African countries, including Nigeria: altruism, patriotism, moral uprightness based on conspicuous religiosity in the case of Nigeria, sense of historical mission, comprehension of developmental challenges and how to overcome them,

courage, boldness and determination. These features largely define the charismatic leader.

According to Weber, the charismatic leader emerges in a relational context and rests on a form of bond between such leaders and their followers. Although largely associated with religious leaders, because of the myths and mythologies attributed to them, it is desirable in many countries in Paul Collier's "Bottom Billion," where poverty, deprivation, disempowerment, oppression and exclusion are the lots of the majority. In such places, leaders who provide solutions to these problems automatically become messiahs, liberators, or revolutionaries (Beyer 1999; Jones 2001). Osaghae (2010: 409) enumerates traits such as "sense of mission, oratorical skills, exemplary leadership and boldness" as definers of charisma outside the scope of religion. Achebe (1983: 10–45), quoted in Osaghae (2010: 409), encapsulates the qualities that a charismatic Nigerian leader must possess, including "exemplary leadership, mental or intellectual rigor, patriotism, capacity for just rule, ability to treat every group equally, meritocracy and incorruptibility." Going by the position of Eisensadt (1968: 223) that moments of crisis provide the opportunity for the emergence of such leaders, and given the conflict and instability that have defined the experiences of most countries in Africa, the continued expectation of a charismatic leader possessing the virtues enumerated by Osaghae may not be unfounded after all.

Strange and Mumford (2002) provide a detailed analysis of the charismatic and ideological leadership. They argue that leaders who emphasize personal values, standards to be maintained, and the derivation of meaning based on adherence to these standards are "ideological leaders." On the other hand, leaders who place the highest premium on social needs, events to change, and interpersonal meaning derived from those changes might be referred to as "charismatic leaders." Furthermore, Strange and Mumford (2002) offer a distinction between personalized and socialized leaders using the criteria advanced by O'Connor et al. (1995). Socialized leaders are those who initiate actions for the betterment of society or institutions, and are unconcerned with personal gains (e.g., Woodrow Wilson), while personalized leaders are those who initiate actions to acquire, maintain and extend power (e.g., Joseph McCarthy), without considering the implications of their actions for others or the social institutions. While most of these analyses were derived from examining leadership at the formal and macro-level, their generalization becomes limited because they are largely devoid of instances drawn from the informal spaces and micro-practices that largely determine what happens at the formal spaces in most of Africa – which Bratton and Van de Walle (1994: 459) argue

defines life, "from the highest reaches of the presidential palace to the humblest village assembly."

In Nigeria, the nationalists provided the core of the first set of charismatic leaders. Osaghae (2010) traces their emergence and legitimation to the nationalist struggles for independence. Woven around them were narratives of mystifications and deification in some cases based on their extraordinary and supernatural abilities. For instance, Nnamidi Azikiwe was worshiped as a spirit of sorts whose speaking prowess surpassed that of the Europeans; Obafemi Awolowo epitomized personal discipline, a born leader who his followers believed had the solution to human needs (Osaghae 2010). Adebani (2009: 37) recounts that one night he was woken from sleep to come and see Baba (Awolowo) in the moon. Awolowo's admirers saw the man's "appearance" in the moon as a manifestation of spiritual powers.

Also, Bola Ige, the late former governor of Oyo State in South-Western Nigeria described Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa as having a "golden voice," adding that "when he spoke, everyone listened" (Ige 1995: 37). Ige (1995: 40) also identifies the features that legitimized the charisma of Ahmadu Bello, the Sarkin Sokoto, which included not only "his birth [but also] the struggles he had had earlier in life and an agreeable disposition." The emergence of Chief Obafemi Awolowo was equally legitimated by an overwhelming acknowledgment of his stellar qualities, as reported by Ige (1995: 326), who was physically present when Awolowo was elected "Leader of the Yorubas."

The preceding examples cited illustrate the emergence of leaders legitimated by the appreciation and acceptance of their sterling qualities by peers, followers and adversaries.

On the other hand, negative forms of leadership are analyzed by Jackson and Rosberg (1982: 73–82), who characterize such leaders as "princes," "autocrats," and "tyrants." As summed up by Hyden (2006: 99), the prince is a clever observer and manipulator of lieutenants and clients. He seems to rule jointly with others by leading their struggle for benefits, which he encourages, as he is aware that it constitutes the source of his legitimacy. The princely leadership instrumentalizes the politics of accommodation; its prime example could be seen in Senegal's first president, Leopold Senghor. The autocrat contrasts with the prince because he commands. The autocrat considers the state as his personal estate and uses state apparatus to his satisfaction, based on personal discretion. Party and government institutions basically function to carry out his wishes and instructions. Such forms of leadership could be seen in Presidents Banda of Malawi, Bongo of Gabon, Arap Moi of Kenya, Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast and Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo. The tyrant rules through fear, by rewarding agents and collaborators, then converting them into

mercenaries. This type of leadership is impulsive, oppressive, and brutal, without any respect for personal and property rights.

The fourth category of leaders analyzed by Jackson and Rosberg is a positive one: the prophets. Prophet-leaders are visionary. Africa has had very few of such leaders. Hyden (2006) describes them as typically socialist in orientation and eager to reorder their societies. However, they are faced with more and stiffer challenges than the other three types because they often do not possess the brutal and deceptive means of removing obstacles to their vision. The prophet could be seen to have been exemplarily personified by the likes of Tanzania's Nyerere, Ghana's Nkrumah and Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo.

PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONS IN TIME AND SPACE

Helmke and Levitsky (2006: 5) define informal institutions as "socially shared values, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels." This is applicable to the study of informal relations and institutions which Douglas (1990: 140) draws attention to by arguing that "informal constraints matter. We need to know much more about culturally derived norms of behaviour and how they interact with formal rules." However, as Piattoni (2001) observes, studies analyzing Latin America and Southern Europe make use of "clientelism" or "political clientelism." In Europe and North America, scholars use patronage to capture the same phenomenon, while "neopatrimonialism" is the term scholars use in studies focusing on Africa. Historically, all of these concepts can be described as derived from "euergetism"—that is, a situation in which wealthy individuals willingly donate funds for the construction of public facilities as munificent gifts to the city public (Barnard 2011). This stemmed from older practices of civic and religious gift-giving, when the gifts served as means of communication, legitimation and mediation between benefactors and cities dating back to the Archaic period (Ibid.). According to the French historian Boulanger, in whose work the concept first appeared, in 1923, euergetism was coined from the Greek word *euergetes*, meaning "benefactor," at a time when wealthy individuals, rather than the demos (people), provided money for public facilities. However, all of these describe the subordination of bureaucratic rationality to informal relations. Euergetism is comparable to other forms of patron-client relations, like Homeric gift-giving and Hellenistic patronage systems, because it is derived from a sociostructural model that is characterized by the redistribution of wealth in the form of gifts, donating funds, or philanthropy, functioning as a tool for the wealthy to raise their position and society through ostentation, while reinforcing

a mutually beneficial relationship with the society (Ibid.). Euergetism and patron-client relationships are defined by patrons' placing of gifts in highly noticeable areas to show their munificence. In appreciation, the clients or recipients of such gifts give votive offering or mount a statue in their honour.

In a detailed study of patterns of patronage in the Eastern Roman Empire from (31 BCE–600 CE), Kalinowski (1996) traces the phenomenon to the relationship between high-ranking Romans and migrant communities, which is described as "patrocinium," with the Roman elites functioning as *patronus* to the community, known as *cliens*. Muno (2010) traces the etymology of clientelism to the Latin word, *cluere*, meaning "to obey and listen." In ancient Rome, a client was a person who had a lawyer representing his or her interests in a trial, while *clientela* was a group of persons who had someone speaking publicly in their interests.

Based on realities in Sicily, Boissevian (1966) argues that patronage differs from friendship because it involved two unequal parties and the exchange of different kinds of goods and services based on what could be obtained in medieval Sicily. Also, the gifts given by a patron were things that the client did not have the wherewithal to obtain; thus, the patron placed certain obligations on the client. These included public expression of gratitude and attending early morning salutations in the patron's residence. The grand motif of patron-client relations is visible in the words of Cicero, quoted in Kalinowski (1996: 21):

As the stoics hold, everything that the earth produces is created for men's use and as men are born for the sake of men, that they may be able to mutually help one another; in this direction we ought to follow the nature as our guide, to contribute to the general good by an interchange of acts of kindness, by giving and receiving thus by our skill, our industry, and our talents cement human society more closely together, man to man.

Even though, historically, patron-client relations are not exclusively African in origin, as Taiwo (2011) points out their persistence there explains why Africa cannot fully modernize. However, I suggest that patron-client relations in modern Africa are part of the colonial legacy on the continent, using Nigeria as a referent. This is because patron-client relations can be seen as sociohistorical and sociostructural. Illustrating the perversion of bureaucratic ethos with the institutionalization of political godfatherism, which prioritizes outcome over processes, especially during elections, Taiwo (2011) traces the practice to colonialism, which bequeathed a system in which "those who tried to keep to the noble aims of politics fell victim to the grabbers."

The consequence was the evolution of politics into “a zero-sum game marked by impatience, lust for, and gargantuan misuses of power” (Taiwo 2011: 161).

However, in showing the seeming universal and power-oriented nature of patron-client relations amongst the Yorubas, Taiwo (2011) draws attention to the Janus-faced nature of the concept of a *Babanigbejo*,¹ because having such men subverted and ensured proper dispensation of justice. On the one hand, a *Babanigbejo* is someone whose word is occasionally law and who carries a lot of weight in the assembled council of the community. On the other hand, as a concept, *Babangbejo* is close to clientelism because “it is an institution that is often personified in the individuals and groups that deploy it to secure their advantage in [the] relevant situation” (Taiwo 2011: 163). Scott (1972: 92) provides a definition of clientelism that reflects the concept of Taiwo’s *Babanigbejo*:

an instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or benefits or both for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part reciprocates by offering general support and assistance including personal services to the patron.

As an enduring informal institution, clientelism thrives on informal rules; this has informed the view of some scholars that it is based on rational choices, while those of the Weberian persuasion emphasize its vertical link with authority and dominance, just as some have underscored the preponderance of loyalty and reciprocity as its girding principles (Eisenstadt and Lemarchand 1981). Muno (2010: 4) enumerates the features of patron-client relations to include being dyadic, asymmetric, personal and enduring, reciprocal and voluntary. Of particular relevance in my context is the personal and enduring nature of patron-client relations, which is visible in the case of the Kim dynasty in North Korea and the Sarakis in Ilorin, Kwara state. Mainwaring (1999) explains that patrons and clients are not involved in impersonal relationships because they know one another. The relationship endures because they are inherited; by sons and nephews of patrons, especially in medieval clientelism. The modern variants of the concept also mirror some traits of the past. While some hold that it serves as a means of stabilizing the society, its antithetical effects on peace and justice are well documented (Harmand 1957).

In understanding the web of relations and complex hierarchies of leadership in Africa, particularly Nigeria, the concept of patron-client relations provides a useful guide. This is because the patron-client network depicts a peculiar mode of organization and mobilization.

Similarly, claims of unorganized systems of political successions might be valid to the extent of a lack of respect for written rules. However, the phenomenon of hereditary or dynastic successions, as seen in distant places like North Korea (Park 2011) and elsewhere, as defined by by Virginei Grzelczyk in his *In the Name of the Father, Son and Grandson: Succession Patterns and Kim Dynasty*, can be found in a place like Ilorin, where the late Oloye Saraki’s first son, Dr. Bukola Saraki, succeeded him. Hereditary patterns of patron-client networks such as this challenge the description of successions in formal and informal leadership as chaotic and unorganized.

Toward a robust scholarship on leadership in Africa, Agbaje et al. (2009: 3) instructively draws attention to the need to transcend focus on political leadership and direct intellectual enquiry toward leadership in Africa at the informal level as well. This is because leadership in Africa revolves around “a web of relations involving several complex theaters of hierarchies of leadership invested in persons, groups, networks and institutions” (Agbaje et al. 2009). The potentials of this insight are huge, because it provides an opportunity to deepen understanding of the perpetually inchoate nature of the state on the continent, and its informal character, which blurs the line between what is private and public. Also, it provides a veritable source of understanding for why institutional structures are weak, and why institutional rules are less constant, ambiguous, and yet, generally accepted by the people in developing countries (Heather 2008). However, the types of theories adopted must take due cognizance of the African philosophies and sociological context of these philosophies (Agbaje et al. 2009: 8). This backdrop reinforces the justification for this chapter.

OLOYEE: EMERGENCE, LEGITIMATION AND LEADERSHIP STYLE OF THE CHARISMATIC LEADER

A big void in most discourses on political processes is the scant attention paid to leadership outside formal structures or contexts. The dominant views on leadership within discourses and theories on democracy have often been restricted to the emergence of leaders through elections. Most of these views are rooted in the works of Max Weber and Joseph Schumpeter. Abrahamsen (2000: 69) states that Weber’s position on democracy is that it should be a basic means of “producing effective political leadership in conditions of a modern bureaucratic society.” According to Weber (1946 99, 113) modern democracy entails the “soulessness of the masses” and the categorization of citizens into “politically active and politically passive elements.” Schumpeter

(1976: 269) argues that the electorate lose leverage once elections are concluded; thus, "Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them." However, this was limited to the emergence of leaders through formal processes like elections.

This does not, however, hold for the social structure in many African countries, where investment in reciprocal relations, described by Goran Hyden (1980) as "the economy of affection" doubtlessly shapes the social structure. In such communities, emerging as a leader within the social structure is not rigidly based on written rules but based more on affective relationships. Emerging as a leader is, therefore, contextually and relationally determined. Within such structures, two types of leaders have also emerged. These are the charismatic and the ideological leader, separated by the fact that the former is more interested in meeting the existential needs of his followers, while the latter focuses on setting a vision and shaping the collective will of his or her followers (Strange and Mumford 2002).

Prior to the emergence of Oloyee, Jimoh (1994: 305) recalls that a man known as Alhaji Yusuf Amuda Gobir was the first indigene of Ilorin to be appointed a Federal permanent secretary in 1962. He was an amiable philanthropist and patron who through his efforts,

silently in most cases, several Ilorin indigenes, in particular... secured Federal appointments and were with his encouragement, able to make impressive advancements in the Federal Public Service. He also obtained for several other people various forms of public patronage, including contract awards in different sectors of the economy. Unfortunately, the man died in a ghastly road accident while holidaying in Spain in 1975.

Jimoh (1994) recounts that around this time, Oloyee was already making generous donations to the execution of community projects that included tarring of roads, sinking of boreholes, establishment of bakery, a cinema, feeding indigents and doling out money with fabrics to all and sundry, from all the nooks and crannies in Ilorin, who thronged to Oloyee's house, first at Agbaji, and later at Ile-Loke in the Government Reserved Area (GRA). While Gobir's death perhaps truncated his emergence as a full blown patron, Oloyee enjoyed longevity, which enabled him to build what Aina and Bhekinkosi (2013: 5) describes as "social relations of assistance and institutionalized giving."

So, undeterred by the first election defeat in 1964, Oloyee ran again and was elected as a member of the constituent assembly that produced the 1979 constitution of Nigeria. By the time the Second Republic began in 1979, Saraki was elected a senator and emerged as

the Senate Leader on the platform of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN). Since then, Oloyee has emerged as the main factor in the politics of Kwara state, in general, and Ilorin, in particular, enthroning and dethroning political clients as he pleases (Ojo and Lawal 2012). Adedoyin (2013) lists the following: Adamu Attah in 1979 (NPN), Chief C. O. Adebayo in 1983 (Unity Party of Nigeria, UPN), and Alhaji Mohammed Lawal in 1999 (All Peoples Party of Nigeria, APP). Saraki's son, Bukola Saraki, of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), had a falling out with his father, as had happened with Bukola's predecessor as governor, Governor Mohammed Lawal. However, Bukola installed the incumbent, Alhaji Abdufatah Ahmed, in spite of his father's support for his sister, Gbemisola, who later became the candidate of another party. Some described the father-son disagreement as a ploy between them to divide the votes of the strongest opposition to their anointed candidates in the 2011 gubernatorial elections in the state. Olusola Saraki was a political patron and a charismatic leader who has even been described by one of his admirers as "immortal" (Adedoyin 2013).

Ayoade (2008) provides an insightful analysis into the changing status of the Oloyee under each of the clients or godsons he installed. In terms of leadership, Ayoade (2008) recounts that the leaders in the political parties of the first, second and truncated third republic were thrown up by the constitution of the political parties. This conferred legitimacy on them while their charisma strengthened their control over the parties. Therefore, they deserved the respect of their followers and did not have to demand it; it came as a sign of submission to a superior. In this context, three types of characters emerged, and Oloyee, at different times, personified each of them.

The first is a mentor, defined by Ayoade (2008: 89) as "a senior person who is desirous of guiding a junior to acquire expertise and competence in the same profession or vocation." Here, mentoring has a noble and positive connotation for the parties involved. A benefactor "puts his/her resources at the disposal of the beneficiary. Such resources include goodwill, support and finance." Financiers are in another category that contrasts with the mentors and benefactors, because they want to remain anonymous and often ensure they cover their tracks. In contrast, while political mentors and benefactors do not expect rewards, financiers do. Similar to the financiers are the money-bags, who overtly fund the political process for the sole purpose of personal advantages. All of these represent different forms of the patron-client relations. However, Ayoade is wrong in stating that mentors and benefactors do not expect reward, and that financiers want to remain anonymous. As the cases of Saraki, Adedibu (in Ibadan and Oyo State, in relation to Governors Rashidi Ladoja and Christopher Alao-Akala), and Andy Uba (in Anambra State,

in relation to Governor Chris Ngige) show, benefactors and mentors, in many cases, not only expect, but also demand, rewards, while financiers such as Saraki, Andy Uba and Emeka Ofor do not always crave anonymity.

In his relationship with the first governor he installed, Oloyee was a financier as well as money-bags to Alhaji Adamu Attah, who was governor of Kwara from 1979 to 1983. Owing to irreconcilable differences over the sharing of political offices and the refusal of Governor Attah to award Oloyee's company a huge contract for the supply of drugs to the Kwara State government, they had a falling out. Reiterating that Kwara State was "contracted out" (Obadare 2007: 12) to him within a clientelistic political economy, Saraki shifted his resources and network to support Chief Cornelius Adebayo, who belonged to a different political party (UPN). Subsequently, Chief Adebayo won the election in 1983. Their relationship could not be tested, as the military seized power barely three months later. In 1999 when the Fourth Republic began, he repeated the same feat at both federal and gubernatorial levels when on February 25, 1999, he vengefully directed his supporters to vote for Chief Olusegun Obasanjo in the election of February 27, 1999 in a move that contradicted his backing Commodore Mohammed Lawal (rtd) with money and his political network to become the governor of the state at a time they both belonged to the same party: the All Peoples' Party of Nigeria (APP). This speaks to Oloyee's understanding of the neopatrimonial character of Nigeria's presidential system with which sub-national patrons must cooperate if they must remain relevant. The relationship between Lawal and Oloyee later turned sour, owing to differences over the sharing of spoils of office; Saraki formally decamped to the People's Democratic Party (PDP), where he made his first son, Bukola Saraki, the candidate. Bukola won election as the governor of the state for two-terms of eight years and has since emerged the scion of Oloyee's political dynasty, albeit within the context of intra-family crises.

The resultant succession of crises within his family lends credence to the prediction of Ayoade (2008: 90) that "The election of 2011 when [Saraki's] son would have completed the mandatory two terms would be a very interesting political event." Tumultuous as that later turned out, it still did not diminish the status of the man in the minds of his followers. The eventual winner of the 2011, Alhaji Abdul-Fatah Ahmed, Bukola's candidate and former commissioner, alluded to this by saying "we have all benefited from Olusola Saraki" (Lucas 2011a, b: 57). This is a testimony to Saraki's philanthropy and charismatic leadership. Also, Senator Simeon Suleiman Ajibola, the gubernatorial candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the State, who ran against the incumbent, Governor Fatai Ahmed, a protégé of Senator Bukola, scion of Saraki's

dynasty, was for long a member and beneficiary of the political dexterity and financial support of the late Oloyee. This is evidenced by the fact that he seconded the motion that the airport in Ilorin be renamed after the late Oloyee (*National Mirror*, November 20, 2012). He later distanced himself from the "dynasty."

This trajectory also reveals a constant feature in patron-client relations and conflict. In managing such conflicts, Olooye usually waited strategically for (re)election periods to throw a sucker-punch at his renegade political sons or clients, as seen in the instances presented above, with the exception of the proxy war between him and his biological son, in which he could be described as having been floored (Ojo and Lawal 2012). Where and when there was a conflict between him and his client-candidates or client-governors, Saraki often waited until the eve of elections before directing millions of his supporters on whom to vote for. On each occasion, he succeeded, except when he was confronted by his biological son in 2011. However, the fact that he participated in a reconciliation process, which led to the reintegration of his loyalists into the political camp of his biological son, speaks of his dominant role in the politics of the state, while lending credence to those who suspected the feud between him and his son was a ploy to divide the votes of the opposition against their preferred candidate.

THE PEOPLE'S OLOYEE

I solicited responses from Saraki's followers to the following questions: What attracted respondents to him? What is his style and role in the politics of Ilorin and Nigeria as a whole? What is his relationship with the opposition? How did he touch you personally? Do you miss him? Of those opposed to Saraki's leadership style, I specifically asked, Why were you opposed to him? How did he relate with the opposition?

Out of the ten purposively selected interviewees, none, including those opposed to his style of politics, denied Oloyee's philanthropy, which dated back to the 1960s, when he first ventured into politics. All the respondents agreed that his philanthropy, more than anything else, attracted them to him because they saw in him a good, merciful and cheerful giver who did everything to meet the existential needs of his followers. Specifically, they listed his philanthropic gestures—providing educational support, daily feeding of the poor, sponsoring people to perform the Holy Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj), distributing rams during Muslim festivals, and, despite his status, being accessible to all, anytime, without any formal protocol—as factors that attracted them to him. Also, they were unanimous about the fact that he never abandoned his people, even after winning elections. According to a respondent,

During a fracas at a campaign that we had in the southern senatorial district of Kwara during the Second Republic a woman lost her an eye and after Oloyee was informed, he built a three bedroom bungalow for her, gave her a reasonable amount of money and a grinding machine to eke out a living in front of the house.

Another interviewee who worked closely with him viewed gestures like this as the source of spiritual strength and blessing for the Oloyee, whom he described as sometimes "eccentric." According to the respondent, "He could select a few, especially the aged, and very young ones for special blessings like unimaginable amount of money, scholarships, expensive clothes, and (he) might build houses for (a) selected few."

According to a respondent, a constant factor in Saraki's house was that "he ensured that as many as thronged his house were fed and at least a cow was slaughtered daily and he ensured each person got a transport fare back home." All the beneficiaries nostalgically recounted that, at a time bread was unaffordable in Ilorin, Saraki established a bakery, which, all agreed, folded because a lot of people were receiving free loaves of bread. A key informant was of the view that Saraki's belief in unlimited philanthropy must have contributed to the eventual liquidation of a commercial bank in which he had substantial stakes, because he was always drawing money to give to his followers even on Sundays.² According to the respondent, "Baba only put a call through or gave you his complimentary card for money to be released [by the bank]." A respondent who was with him for close to 40 years recounted that he did not start as a politician but a provider of social and economic means for the people before venturing into politics. Therefore, most people were attracted to him because of his philanthropy, which, overtime, created a mass following that could not be ignored by those seeking elective offices especially the seat of the government in Kwara state.

Regarding his style, another respondent who was with him for close to 40 years recounted:

Before he [emerged as leader], the different sub-ethnic groups in Kwara state such as Ilorin, Igbomina, Nupe and Ibolo were sworn political enemies but he substantially succeeded in bringing them together politically. He extended this to the traditional rulers in these places by placing them on monthly salaries after renovating their palaces. As a result of this, the traditional rulers were the ones who prevailed on their people to team up with him.

Thus, for the people, Saraki exhibited a very important quality of leadership—that is, the ability to bring people together, achieve unity of purpose, and reconcile different groups. Even though he did all these in

the service of his role as a patron, most of the people recognized his role as that of a leader.

Also, respondents revealed that he took the welfare and the opinions of women seriously. He often joined them in merrymaking and dancing within his compound. He also personally ensured that they were all well-fed. In addition, he personally gave them transport fare to travel to and from his home. Respondents revealed that irrespective of the socio-economic status of his followers and where they lived within Kwara state, Oloyee ensured that he was personally present to felicitate and commiserate with them, depending on the occasion. In addition to the preceding, another key informant opined that he understood the attachment of the Ilorin people to Islam because during his first electoral outing, many saw him as a stranger and alien because he did not identify with Islam in any way. Therefore, subsequently, he presented himself as a devout Muslim and observed all the performances of that self-identification and public presentation.

On his role in the politics of Kwara state, respondents described Saraki as a unifier, a grassroots' politician, a stabilizer, and a mobilizer. All of these must have resulted in his emergence as a bride well-courted by the military regimes that Nigeria has had since the mid-1980s. Suberu and Agbaje (1998) argue that Nigeria's post-colonial history is a study of military rule which can be divided into two. Within the two phases delineated either as that of *hegemonic exchange* (1966–1979), during which the country's military rulers encouraged the military governors in the states to exercise a modicum of autonomy which led to the infusion of notable civilian politicians, including ethno-regional elites into the structure of military rule, and the second phase (1984–1999), defined by abusive personalization of power and even the *pacted*³ Fourth Republic, Oloyee was central to the politics of Kwara state.

Oloyee was a recurring decima in the political equation of the country, through all phases, from the period of post-Second Republic military rule through the Third to the Fourth Republic. During the Second Republic, he participated actively in the formation of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN), which gave him the platform to emerge as the Senate Leader in that Republic. According to a respondent "despite the huge amounts of money he spent during party primaries in the Second Republic compared to the paltry resources expended by the eventual candidate Alhaji Shehu Uthman Shagari, Saraki still gave his unflinching support to Shagari campaigns [when the latter won the party's ticket]."

In the Fourth Republic, Saraki was part of what Herskovit (2007) described as "ad hoc coalitions" bereft of any unifying programmes or ideologies that emerged as political parties. Oloyee emerged as a force in the All People's Party (APP), which included the five political parties

formed under General Sani Abacha. Oloyee's influence, as usual, was based on his patron-client network in Kogi and Kwara states (Kew 2010). Just as he parted ways with Adamu Attah in 1983 to support Chief C. O Adebayo on the stable of another political party, he also parted with late Mohammed Lawal whom he installed in 1999. Adebani (2012a) provides an account of the corruption of the police in the crises prior to the 2003 elections which speaks to magnitude of respect the Oloyee enjoyed from the federal government under President Obasanjo (1999–2007). During the supremacy tussle between Saraki and Governor Mohammed Lawal, it was reported that three million pounds was paid to Tafa Balogun to ward off Oloyee from Kwara state. Thereafter, Oloyee was advised to stay away from the state by the state's commissioner of police because his safety could not be guaranteed. Consequently,

Saraki ran to his allies in Abuja who were in charge of federal power. Since Obasanjo and the PDP were desirous of capturing the Middle-Belt state of Kwara from the opposition ANPP, Balogun's scheme ran into trouble. President Obasanjo asked that the Police Commissioner, Ghazali Lawal, be transferred from the state. He replaced him with M.D Abubakar. Balogun tried to get the new police commissioner to do his bidding, but the man obviously had a different briefing from Aso Rock Villa. Balogun then tried another trick. He announced the transfer of eight commissioners of police including that of Kwara. Aso Rock reversed the decision in the case of Kwara (Adebani 2012a: 191).

This speaks to the assertion of Utas (2012: 20) that state corruption in non-conflict countries is not random corruption; in many cases, it is the way government works; it is not incidental, but structural. The roots of such practices have been traced to colonial rule that established and designed African administrations as "instruments of command and control" (Englebert and Dunn 2013: 162) within which institutions like the police served as enforcement wings of incumbents rather than providing service to the public.

All the respondents stated that Saraki touched their lives positively in that he built houses and bought cars for some of them, placed them in high political and bureaucratic offices in the three tiers of local, state and federal governments, and even sponsored the education of their children locally and abroad. A respondent recounted an occasion when his father disowned his elder brother for refusing to support Oloyee's candidate during a local government election.

On the other hand, there were respondents who decried Oloyee's type of politics, amongst them septuagenarians, octogenarians, and people in their forties drawn from Asa local government area, his first place of electoral contest, ex-public office holders in Kwara state and his staunch political opponents. Their resentment stemmed from

allegations that he was a "usurper" because he was not an autochthon of Ilorin, and on this, one respondent drew my attention to the existence of an area in Abeokuta capital of Ogun State known as "Saraki-Adigbe" to buttress his claim that Oloyee was not an autochthon of Ilorin or even Kwara State. Alhaji AbdulGaniyu Folorunsho Abdurazak, a former Nigerian ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire, claims that he met Mukhari Saraki, the father of Oloyee, in Abidjan and Mukhari Saraki told him they hailed from Abeokuta in Ogun State, so if Oloyee's father was from Abeokuta, his claim to be from Ilorin cannot be true (Johnson 2010).

Respondents also dismissed the idea that annual New Year celebrations, at which Saraki doled out goodies, including cash and fabrics, were a diabolical means by which the man spiritually controlled the people. Those opposed to Saraki's style of politics suggested that the distribution of the gifts was actually an occult ritual, in which the recipients would lose their lives so that Saraki could prolong his own and renew his wealth. In the same vein, a septuagenarian who never saw eye-to-eye with Oloyee linked the penury that characterized the lives of Oloyee's estranged beneficiaries to the plausibility that he might cast spells on them. The respondent made reference to Adamu Attah, who was fed and clothed by Oloyee after he left office as an executive governor of Kwara State. The respondent revealed further that Senator Shaba Lafiaji, who had a short stay in office as governor at a time Nigeria practiced diarchy (1991–1993), became so insolvent that he could not afford to pay electricity bills until he reconciled with Oloyee, who again facilitated his election as a senator in 2007. The respondent also linked the death of Commodore Mohammed Lawal after a protracted illness, as resulting from a spell cast on him by Oloyee.

When former governors who were considered ungrateful to Oloyee lost wealth and prestige, it was interpreted as a consequence of a spell cast on them. Respondents opposed to his style of politics also cited as demeaning the arrangement in the "great hall" referred to as Ile-loke, meaning "the house on top," where Oloyee held court with his clients: there was only one seat in the hall, for Oloyee alone. Practically, this means every other person had to sit on the floor while Oloyee assumed a magisterial and royal position. According to a former local government chairman of Edu, decisions or instructions handed down in the great hall were to be obeyed without question. He cited an instance in which he was reported by the elders of his local government for opting to construct roads instead of "taking care of them," and he was summoned. On arrival at Oloyee's apartment, he and his accusers were all taken to the great hall, where he was told his "offense," and instructions were given to him to always "take care" of the elders in the local government before thinking of constructing roads. He revealed that

ordinarily he would have contested such an instruction, but because it was given to him in the great hall, he dared not object. The former local government chairman alluded to insinuations in the quarters of Oloyee's opponents that Ile-Loke has some hypnotic powers that made it impossible for anyone who stepped into the hall to refuse any order Oloyee gave.

The arrangement in the great hall depicts the unequal nature of patron-client relations because every other person must seat on floor while only the Oloyee had the honor and right to sit on a chair. This contrasts with the practice in the residence of the late Lamidi Adedibu, who was the main patron in Ibadan politics while he lived, as observed in an earlier study by Animasawun (2013). The difference in the ways these two major patrons held court speaks to the need to understand "contemporary clientelism from a historical and cultural viewpoint" (Chabal 2009: 92). Adedibu held court in his vast premises with dignitaries and other "big men" and women on his left and right in an hierarchical manner. Although there was a provision for others to sit, there were hardly enough seats, which eventually meant some stood while many sat on the floor. In the great hall, only one chair is available, and this has been inherited by Senator Bukola Saraki, in a manner akin to inheriting a royal stool. This arrangement portrays the description of Chabal (2009: 93) that patron-client relations were "rooted in a very direct and palpable way of life shared between rulers and ruled who lived by cheek by jowl." However, such rulers or patrons emerged in specific socioeconomic, political and military contexts, depending on the needs in each setting, which determined and conferred legitimacy on the emergent patron (See Falola 2012).

Another respondent, who was in his fifties and a former aide to both father (Oloyee) and son (Bukola), decried Oloyee's selfish nature by recalling that "at a point, Bukola Saraki was the governor, Gbemisola Saraki was the Senator of Kwara Central Senatorial district and when a nominee was requested from Kwara as a Special Aide to President Obasanjo, the governor (Bukola) nominated Laolu Saraki." In the respondent's view, this was the height of selfishness and contrasted with the style of the late Gobir, who gave equal opportunities to all Ilorin indigenes.

DECODING OLOYEE'S CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP: EXCHANGE RELATIONS AND RELIGION

For a man who personified the definition of politics as a way of determining who gets what, when and how for close to five decades in Kwara State, it is important to investigate what made Saraki powerful. In doing this, cognisance must be taken of the sociocultural and sociostructural nature of patron-client relations. As revealed by Szeftel

(2000), clientelistic leaders have always relied on mass support for political clout which is translated into opportunities for accumulating personal wealth at the expense of the development of the state, social entry and enhanced class position in the broader political economy of such states. For clients, such accumulations are often rationalized as God's blessings bestowed on such patrons for subsequent distribution to them. This applies to Oloyee because one of the constant factors in the conflicts he had with his political clients was that they were not remitting money to him to enable him to provide for the horde of dependants in his network (For a similar case (Adedibu-Ladoja's) in Oyo State, see Obadare 2007).

As a sociocultural practice, patron-client relation is not recent in Ilorin. According to O'Hear (1986), political intermediaries called *Baba-Kekere*⁴ were prominent in Ilorin in the nineteenth century. They represented the interests of subjects or inferiors to the ruler, higher authority or those who held traditional power and got paid for performing such functions. A similar figure also existed in Ibadan known as *Baba-Ogun*, while amongst the Hausa they were referred to as *Kofa*⁵ (O'Hear 1986). In Ilorin, the *Baba Kekere* emerged often from among the chiefly families or the titled slaves. They provided access to justice and land and protected the interests of clients in legal cases and any other areas where they had interests. Economically, each craft had its own *Baba Kekere* through whom taxes were passed to the emir. In both political and economic relations, the *Baba Kekere* received no salary but received gratuities, and in both cases, clients were free to choose and change their *Baba Kekere* if he was found not to be delivering as expected. O'Hear (1986) captures this phenomenon, which was the norm in nineteenth century Ilorin and most of the Hausa emirates under the control of the Sokoto Caliphate of the nineteenth century, as institutionalized corruption.

Szeftel (2000: 436) analyzes three types of clientelism: coercive dependence, political identity and exchange relations. Exchange relations were based on meeting the needs of clients in exchange for loyalty. In the case of the Oloyee, he made use of exchange relations by meeting the needs of all and sundry, thereby fulfilling the functions of a charismatic leader, particularly in providing for their existential needs. This also portrayed him as a philanthropist.

Also, Oloyee mobilized religion to sustain his legitimacy amongst the masses while cautiously allowing religious identity to be the fundamental determinant of the candidates he supported or promoted for elective positions. For instance, in the defunct Kwara State, he supported a Christian, Chief Cornelius Adebayo, to be the governor of the state, cognizant of the reasonable demographic strength of the Christians. However, following the creation of Kogi state, excised

from old Kwara State, and cognizant of the dominant demography of Muslims in the current Kwara State, Saraki consistently supported mainly Muslim candidates in order not to offend the sensibilities of the majority of the population and to ensure the marketability of such candidates.

Since his death, his hegemonic hold on the state has been bequeathed on his son, Senator Bukola Saraki, also a one-time governor of the state who installed the state's current governor. A respondent in his seventies affirmed and rationalized the continued loyalty to Oloyee's hegemony by political constituents in Kwara State as loyalty to Allah and memory of the Oloyee because there is no household in Ilorin and Kwara whose member can claim not to have benefited from the generosity of Oloyee. Going philosophical and proverbial, he argued, "It is a sign of betrayal to abandon the chicks after the death of the mother-hen and asked rhetorically: 'What will I tell Bukola's father when I meet him in the hereafter as one of the people he left behind.'" As an attestation to his relevance, even in death, and an attempt at monumentalizing a cult-hero, the state-owned university was renamed after Saraki, and when there were reactions against the decision by opposition parties in the state, the Commissioner for Tertiary Education in Kwara state, Mohammed Laide, upbraided those who were against the monumentalization: "If it is possible to rename Kwara State as Olusola Saraki state, I think the late Baba Saraki deserves it. All of us sitting here today and those of us not here, Baba has contributed one way or the other to what we are today" (Jimoh 2013: 57).

A high-ranking Chief in the emir's palace, the Moggaji Nda of Ilorin Alhaji Saliu Mohammed, opined:

I heard somebody was saying he is objecting to the renaming of KWASU after Saraki... The Commissioner was so kind by saying we can name the state after Saraki. We can name everybody after Saraki. I am proud to call myself Saraki. Let me tell you if there is politics in heaven, we are going to queue behind him. (Ibid.: 57)

However, in an interview with an estranged former aide of Bukola Saraki, the scion of Oloyee's political dynasty, the aide likened the renaming to naming a university after the late Lamidi Adedibu—the strongman of Ibadan politics—and bemoaned the credibility burden it would place on the identity of the university.

In kicking against the renaming of Kwara State University (KWASU) after Oloyee, political parties and sociocultural organizations decried the action on different grounds although with a shared concern. The Afenifere Renewal Group (ARG) in the state contented: "The 'leader' had no dominant idea on government like Chief Obafemi Awolowo and

Nnamdi Azikiwe; had no sagacity of Sir Ahmadu Bello; had no privilege of heading a government like Tafawa Balewa and S.L. Akintola and had no courage like M.K.O. Abiola" (Ibid.: 57).

The above instances speak to the analysis of Shore (2002: 13) that "monumentalizing the past" is one of the strategies used by elites to maintain power and authority over the present (Herzfeld 2000: 234), and the attendant crises that it can generate from opposing elites in such spaces. Further, it alludes to the observation of Adebani (2012b: 5) about the centrality of place naming to the everyday life of Africans and how it constitutes a source of conflict and cooperation.

Also, the performance of Oloyee's burial also polarized religious clerics in the state, given the non-observance of the mandatory Islamic burial rites, specifically the spreading of the corpse on a mat on the floor, after which Muslim adherents pray before its interment in plain white clothes. In the case of Oloyee, some Islamic scholars condemned the non-observance of these rituals as a flagrant disdain for a core aspect of the religion, which lead them to question the validity of his claim that he was a Muslim.

Given the strong influence of Islam on the consciousness of most Ilorin people, sustaining relationships with the children of the dead is seen as a spiritual means of sustaining relationship with the departed one. This is premised on a popular hadith of Prophet Mohammed that assures children and friends of a departed Muslim of enormous reward (Lahda) from Allah if they sustain the relationship initiated by the departed as an obligation. In the context of Oloyee's hegemony and Ilorin politics, loyalty is seen as obligatory from both African and Islamic perspectives. While this points to a core aspect that defines being and belonging in many African societies, it brings to minds the assessment of Kearsley and Rinaldi (1983: 1) that "death reveals the fundamental sociocultural structures and dynamics in any society." The interaction of Islam and indigenous African belief system provides a discursive rationalization for sustaining relationship with Oloyee's son, and by extension, his political hegemony. Perhaps the people are guided by the words of Antigone, quoted in Adebani (2007: 10) that "I owe a longer allegiance to the dead than to the living: in the world I shall abide forever." Therefore, the Moggaji Nda of Ilorin Emirate must have spoken from a rationality girded by a mix of the Islamic and African believe in the certainty of life after death.

CONCLUSION

Alterman et al. (2005) have observed that philanthropy's attendant institutions, such as patron-client relations, provide a reliable window

for comprehending the dynamics of and values of Muslim societies, such as Kwara state, and Ilorin, in particular. Alterman et al. (2005: viii) observes further that "Muslims tend to favor direct charity to an individual recipient over channeling their donations through an established institution," which makes the emergence and legitimation of charismatic leaders and patrons like Oloyee comprehensible. This position is cognizant of the contrast between gift-exchange and commodity-exchange. This lends credence to the quotations at the introduction of this article in explaining the emergence, legitimation and "immortality" of Oloyee.⁶ In the case of Oloyee, he could be described as a philanthropist who established and bequeathed a peculiar form of philanthropy, built as a form of social relations of "care," by making meeting the needs of others a means to expand his own self-interest (See Aina and Bhékinkosi 2013: 5-7).

Studying Oloyee offers an insight into how philanthropy and clientelism as sociocultural and sociostructural practice can be implemented to present some people as charismatic leaders in and outside of formal political office. Oloyee bestrode the political space like a colossus, and in death, handed over his political structure and control of the state to his biological son, Bukola Saraki, which depicts dynastic succession, even within a democratic context. Now, Bukola is the "new Oloyee," running Kwara State like an extended kinship group, rewarding clients and punishing opponents.

NOTES

1. A *Babanigbejo* is "an influential sponsor at the hearing. He usually is one who has considerable influence in the community concerned and whose word is occasionally law."
2. In the book, *Paradise for Maggots The Story of a Nigerian Anti-Graft Czar*, Adebaniwi provides accounts of instances of sleaze involving Olooye and his son, Bukola, which culminated in the eventual liquidation of the Bank. See pages 334, 335, and 345.
3. Description of Nigeria's fourth-republic as a product of a pact between the political class and top military brass see, J. Bayo Adekanye, *The Retired Military as Emergent Power Factor in Nigeria* (Heinemann Educational Books, 1999).
4. *Baba Kekere* means smaller or younger father, but schematically he could be likened to an extra-official intermediary conveying the orders of the ruled to the ruler.
5. *Kofa* means door or gate.
6. However, Appadurai (1986) cautions against the trivialization of gift-behaviour or its interpretation as peculiarly African by drawing attention to examples of exchange transactions typical such as the culture of exchanging Christmas gifts in Western societies.

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