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Democracy and the Performance of Power: Observations from Nigeria

Moses Ochonu

Abstract

Since Nigeria's transition from military to civilian "democratic" rule in 1999, there has been a debate among Nigerian and international commentators about just how democratic (or undemocratic) governance and the exercise of power has become in the country. This essay contributes to this important debate. Relying on observed incidents and phenomena and on newspaper reports and informal conversations between the author and a cross-section of Nigerians, this essay brings to the front-burner the contradiction between the emphasis on popularity and acclamation in democratic dispensations and the undemocratic actions and discourses of elected government officials, which are aimed, however dubiously, at portraying the appearances of popularity, ubiquity and acclamation. Using several examples from the last five years of civilian "democratic" rule in Nigeria, I analyze this dilemma, which I advance as a problematic of democratic discourse and advocacy—one which contributes to the neglect of actual governance and promotes abuses and excesses of power.

Introduction

In the early 1990s, Cameroonian scholar, Achille Mbembe, wrote a classic essay analyzing the insidious and subtle ways in which political power and its accompanying discourses become so banal as to be appropriated, sometimes unconsciously, by a wide segment of the population of African states. In *Provisional Notes on the Postcolony* (1992), Mbembe argued that power in postcolonial Africa is so pervasive and ubiquitous that it invades even the most sacred domains of life, resulting in what he calls "the intimacy of power."

At such levels of power, even indisputably private and innocuous decisions such as the desire to wear a beard or bear the nickname "president" could bring one into confrontation with the state. In such situations, the limit of state power is occluded, and the state is able to exert influence, direct and indirect, on both mundane and politically consequential matters. In such semi-permanent states of political "excess," the postcolonial *commandment*, as Mbembe calls it, routinizes itself through "daily rituals that ratify [it]."¹

The most interesting aspect of this banality of power is the way in which citizens consciously, unconsciously and sometimes inevitably appropriate the terms and linguistic and semiotic devices through which power is disseminated and wielded. The result of this is that no aspect of life escapes the reach of the state and no domain is too mundane to accommodate the performance of power by postcolonial autocrats and pretending democrats. This last contention applies vividly to what has obtained in Nigeria since the current government of Olusegun Obasanjo came into power in 1999. The situation in the Nigerian polity, where new

mediums of personalizing power and of creating the appearance of popularity and ubiquity have taken hold, bears an uncanny resemblance to the Cameroon and Africa of Mbembe's eloquent narrative. In this encounter, words, symbolism and images have become powerful as agents of power.

This brief essay relies on the author's observations while conducting doctoral field research in Nigeria in 2001-2002. I use these observations, newspaper reports and popular discourses to sketch the contours of a fast-growing phenomenon in Nigeria: elected state officials exercising power through multiple, seemingly contradictory apparatuses, and engaging in clearly autocratic political practices, while seeking, at least rhetorically, to cast the present dispensation of power as a departure from its military predecessors. This preliminary sketch and analysis uses insights from Mbembe's influential essay and from Michel Foucault, whose works vividly capture the subtleties of power by arguing that power in the modern world, unlike in preceding eras, is wielded, not only in crude structural forms in which overt force is implicated but through the deployment of knowledge, discourses, and incentives that are laden with power implications (Foucault 2000). In Foucault's episteme, the contests of power tend to move to new registers, which are themselves indexed by regimes of knowledge, discourses and signs.

One of the insights from Foucault's theorization of power that is relevant to the following analysis is his argument that resisting power or authority must sometimes be understood as an unconscious submission to that which is purportedly being resisted, and a fulfillment of the wishes of the power wielder. For instance, if a Nigerian says "President Obasanjo has no power over me," "I cannot be

influenced by President Obasanjo” or “I cannot be controlled by President Obasanjo,” he or she indirectly is acknowledging the prevalence and reality of Obasanjo’s power. Denying or resisting this power, as implied in the statements above, paradoxically confirms Obasanjo’s power as something that is potent and dangerous, and hence something that can/should be resisted or escaped. You have to acknowledge the dangerous reality of a thing before you can seek to escape or resist it. Denial or resistance here works to affirm that which is being denied or resisted. This think-piece examines novel manifestations of power in “democratic” Nigeria in light of these multiple insights.

The Banality of Power in “Democratic” Nigeria

The way in which power is wielded and exercised in the current political dispensation in Nigeria bears out and complicates Foucault’s thesis of subtle and stealthy power; at the same time it is at once crudely physical and invisibly subtle. It is so brutally real that one only can speak of a power-knowledge regime with some intellectual trepidation. At the same time, it takes such subtle and discursive forms that it makes contemporary Nigeria some kind of ethnographic present for Foucault’s thesis. Nigeria’s political leaders, especially state governors, have been employing the carrot and the stick in a strategic exercise of power. On the one hand they sponsor projects that seek to engender consent and popularity. They have been gently but steadily planting their persona and their image on the landscape by inscribing their names on any edifice with the most remote connection to their tenure—a seemingly innocuous thing to do, but an act that is packed with power implications that I will discuss later. On the other hand, they hire thugs and

intimidate opponents and dissenting members of the public. Elected officials have been building little armies of cohesion. And, most recently, as I will show shortly, they have resorted to the use of blackmail (employing state resources and state-funded programs) to force obedience and conformity. This recent addition to the behavioral repertoire of Nigerian political leaders has serious implications for how citizens engage with power. In fact, it has implications for whether or not they engage with power at all. I will return to this theme later.

The theatrics of power unfolding in Nigeria mirror a dangerous escalation of a familiar trend—an abuse of power that is so entrenched it renders alternative forms aberrant. It is a form of power that Foucault's thesis could not have captured in all its ramifications. It is dangerous because it employs any method, direct or indirect, brutal or gentle, to insinuate political leaders permanently or semi-permanently into the consciousness of citizens. To be sure, the object includes the maximization of consent. But in contemporary Nigeria the aim is broader. The political behavior of Nigeria's present power elite borders on megalomania, a trait that Foucault consigned to the pre-modern era. Events of the last four years, as we shall see, have illustrated this drift towards megalomaniacal displays eloquently; elected officials have immersed themselves so deeply in the thrills of domination that they are no longer capable of imagining themselves outside the confines of governance. Some state governors are clearly committed to the project of making their names interchangeable with those of their states. Increasingly, the state governors have come to see the states they preside over as extensions of their persons. They have been working insidiously towards concretizing this vision,

hoping to make their image coextensive with that of their states, and vice versa.

This process was in full swing in 2001 when I resided in Nigeria to conduct doctoral field work. Elected officials, especially state governors, were in the process of naturalizing their leadership, and of making themselves the staple of popular political discourse. This project succeeded with stealthy brutality. In 2001 it was impossible, for instance, to think of Kogi state without thinking of Abubakar Audu, its governor at the time. The ways in which the governors have been pursuing this project are a bewildering mix of discourse-based forays and brutal, predatory politics.

Let me expatiate and clarify. What are the forms that the discourse and manifestations of power take in contemporary Nigeria? Some of them are so banal, so insignificant in their occurrence that we risk missing their import. Let us start with the federal government. When the phrase "dividend of democracy" came upon the Nigerian political scene in 1999 after the end of military rule, many did not realize its power to affect and infect the possibilities for political perception in Nigeria as well as Nigerians' view of obligations and responsibilities in a democracy. Today, however, the phrase sits atop the hierarchy of politically significant and oft-deployed concepts; it enjoys the acceptance of pro-government propagandists and opposition intellectuals alike. As recently as June 2004, the respected Cardinal Olubunmi Okogie, Catholic Archbishop of Lagos, who is widely regarded as a critic of the current government, was quoted in the national media as having "rated the Federal Government low on democracy dividends."²

The expression has come to abide in the political lexicon as a reminder of the agenda-setting, self-interested discourse

of the ruling elite. As I argued elsewhere (*Ochonu* 2002), the phrase soon acquired notoriety, especially after it was used as an ideological anchor for a countrywide media tour organized by the former Information Minister, Mr. Jerry Gana,³ a tour which was advertised as a showcase of “the dividends of democracy.” As I argued further, it soon came to acquire a comical dimension, making a transition into the realm of popular discourse and national humor, a transition which underlined its ubiquity. For example, a woman who delivered a baby was told that that was her own dividend of democracy. A man who got bullied by the Nigerian police in the familiar display of police brutality was said to be reaping his own dividend of democracy. So, in this light, one could say that this phrase, which originated from the power elite, was turned on its head and mobilized in mockery of the state.

This would accord with Mbembe’s thesis of popular mockery of state power in the African post-colony through political humor, linguistic inversion, and vulgar caricature. It is, however, this obsession with the strategic and perverted use of the myths and discourses of power that could lead us to miss the salient point in this case. The point is that through the “invention” of this phrase by the powers that be, the idea that there can indeed be a democracy dividend and that democracy can acquire a benevolent character, in which key figures—patrons—dispense favors and benefits to expectant clients, has been permanently and irreversibly introduced into Nigerians’ political universe. For a long time to come, it will inform the ways in which key figures in the country’s democratic project are perceived and held accountable—or not. This is one example in which the intimacy of power achieved through the unwitting popular validation of state power rituals and discourses supplants

actual political resistance. The concept of resistance becomes meaningless in contexts like these, for as Mbembe contends, rather than extrapolate the resistance paradigm to contemporary African political encounters, “the emphasis should be upon the logic of ‘conviviality,’ on the dynamics of domesticity and familiarity, which inscribe the dominant and the dominated within the same episteme” (Mbembe 1992: 10).

Personalization of Power

The Nigerian federal government did indeed set the precedent in the personalization of power and in the employment of not-so-subtle strategies to perpetuate certain political personalities in the public consciousness. The upsurge in officially backed projects of personal promotions, notably the emergence of the Obasanjo-Atiku Success Movement (OASM) in 2001, brought into sharp focus the gradualism with which the project of naturalizing personal power operates. The movement started quietly, creeping up on Nigerians by stealth. An interview here, some television footage there, was all there was to it. Within a short time, it came to command national attention, as did all the other organs for popularizing the president. The seriousness with which Nigerians regarded such organs is not the issue here; I doubt if anyone outside the circle of Obasanjo lackeys paid these organs any mind. The issue, rather, is that for good or ill, Nigerians were assaulted daily by such organizations with discourses and publicity paraphernalia (such as the then near-ubiquitous OASM badges and pins) centering on the person of the president and his deputy. Nigerians were sooner or later overwhelmed. Because the propagandists stayed at it long enough, irritation gave way

to toleration and ultimately an unconscious assimilation of the Obasanjo persona occurred. How Nigerians eventually chose to interpret the persona being marketed is another matter entirely. The point is that they had become unwitting participants in the effort to maintain the Obasanjo mystique in the popular imagination. That is how subtle power can be in its unconventional operation.

When power is fully personalized, as is gradually becoming the case in Nigeria, the result is that the political destiny of the leader and that of the state are conflated. And this is manifested not just in the occasional rhetorical outbursts of self-interested political officials, although that is the domain where it occurs most frequently. In 2001, as officials of Mr. Obasanjo's government launched a concerted effort to promote their boss's candidature for the 2003 presidential elections, Nigerians were inundated with talk about Obasanjo being the only person who could rule Nigeria without the risk of the union dissolving or self-destructing. He was routinely portrayed as a stabilizer and a unifier. Without analyzing the merit of these claims, one must realize that these are deliberate, carefully crafted discourses designed to translate the political fortunes or misfortunes of the president into the salvation or ruination of the very soul of the union.

At the peak of the Obasanjo-marketing enterprise, the president himself said publicly that not continuing in the office of president for another term would throw Nigeria into chaos. This patently demonstrates that he himself was privy to, if not the originator of, this discourse of irrational political continuity that was being foisted on the national political consciousness. Of course, many Nigerians scoffed at the idea that Obasanjo's political destiny had deterministic implications for the health of the nation. But such views

had more to do with their perception of Mr. Obasanjo as a person or as a politician than with their discomfort with the idea of intertwined destinies. Most Nigerians, including those who ridiculed the president's narcissistic statement, had unconsciously imbibed the theoretical possibility that, depending on the personality of the president, he/she could indeed determine the survival of the union and serve as the archetypal unifier and stabilizer. The idea of the president being a unifier or stabilizer was itself left unquestioned. Nigerians thus became unconscious victims of the discourse of power that is aimed, in this case, at tying the president's political persona to the fortunes of the nation, and vice versa.

If the federal political leaders have largely exercised power in ways that validate Foucault's formulation on the subtleties of power, the affairs of state governors in this "democratic" dispensation have realized the essence of a much broader theoretical postulate. The state governors have exercised power in brutal and subtle ways, alternating craftily between the two. In North-Central Kwara State, for instance, there was in 2001-2002 a new political movement sweeping through the state, which revolved around the person of the then-governor, Alhaji Mohammed Lawal. It was signposted by the branding of state-owned commercial transport buses with the inscription "up Lawal." My own first encounter with the "up Lawal" phenomenon was during a research trip to Lokoja, when I happened on one of the "up Lawal" buses. The scope of the project soon was expanded. The inscription soon was put on all public works projects that the state government, under Lawal's governorship, had executed or refurbished.

There emerged an even more farcical dimension to this project of personal promotion. Most of the water taps in

Ilorin metropolis, the state capital, had run dry and the residents had been forced to rely on state-owned water tankers for their drinking water. To get the attention of the tankers as they drove through neighborhoods one had to shout “up Lawal.” The tanker operators bypassed those who were too proud or simply unwilling to say the words—mostly, but not exclusively, supporters of rival politicians and political parties. Were these tanker operators acting on their own whim or doing the bidding of superior authorities, notably the governor? We may never know for sure as the governor is likely to deny that he authorized such brazen displays of political blackmail. Everyone I spoke to believed that the governor was behind it and that it was a way to humiliate his literally thirsty opposition and its equally thirsty supporters.

The “up Lawal” slogan came to dominate the Kwara landscape like a colossus. The name “Lawal” was, for a time, synonymous with “Kwara.” Then, as if to consolidate the gains of this project of personal adulation, a faceless group known as the “up Kwara project” began placing advertisements in major national newspapers extolling the “achievements” of the Governor Lawal administration. If “up Lawal” has an uncanny rhyme with “up Kwara,” it is not a rhythmical coincidence as it appears to be; power, once inscribed in texts and visual symbols, works in ways so common as to remove all suspicions of calculated intentions. Those who came up with “up Kwara” were aware of the ubiquity of the “up Lawal” slogan and were merely, it seems, following up on its success. If Alhaji Lawal had not lost his re-election bid in April 2003, the name Lawal and Kwara might have become interchangeable, just like “up Kwara” and “up Lawal” did.

Whether the Kwara people admit it or not, their political imagination was significantly reshaped, and their unconscious coming to terms with the naturalness of Lawal's rule in Kwara stealthily assured. This project was much more successful than the proud Kwara people would admit in retrospect. Nor could one make the argument that Mr. Lawal lost his re-election bid in 2003 because he was punished by the Kwara people for his political excesses. He lost, everyone agrees, because he fell out with his political godfather, Mr. Olusola Saraki, who has been the acknowledged "kingmaker" in Kwara politics for more than two decades and whose son, Dr. Bukola Saraki, is now the Governor.

The profundity and subtlety of this power project was matched by the willingness of Governor Lawal to substitute force and muscle for symbolic appeal and subtle blackmail, especially where the latter failed to extract obedience or conformity from the public or from dissenting rivals.

Those who were not cowed or awed by the Lawal mystique were attacked violently in a ruthless battle for political supremacy. The violent clash in February 2002 between Governor Lawal's thugs and those of Olusola Saraki, his estranged mentor, can be explained within this context. As the April 2003 general elections drew closer, Governor Lawal grew more desperate, seeking to demonstrate to Olusola Saraki, the most powerful politician in the state, that he was now a political equal, making up for a lack of grassroots acceptance with a well-oiled machine of intimidation and violence. For a time, it was rumored that Mr. Saraki moved away from Kwara state, residing in the "neutral" political environment of Abuja to perfect his strategy to wrest power from a Governor he had helped enthrone but who was now showing "disrespect" to him.

More Tales of Political Vanity

In Nigeria's North-Central Kogi state, former Governor Abubakar Audu (Abubakar Audu also lost his re-election bid in the April 2003 general elections), who was once voted the best-dressed governor by a Nigerian tabloid, relished having his majestic pictures (taken in flowing and glowing *Agbadas*) adorn major junctions in the state capital, Lokoja. This is a small part of a broader project of personal promotion aimed at entrenching the name and image of Abubakar Audu permanently in the popular imagination of the state. Passersby laughed at the billboards, made sarcastic comments on both the aesthetics of the pictures and the vanity of the governor. These were indeed amusing and irritating spectacles, but no amount of scorn poured on this project or on its sponsor, the governor, undermined the message the billboards were designed to disseminate and to insinuate into the minds of passersby: the image of a majestic, omnipresent and seemingly omnipotent governor. Another obsession of the governor was the naming of state infrastructures and edifices after himself and members of his family, including his late father. Defying popular outcry, he named the nascent Kogi State University, which was established by his government in 2000, after himself. Every major project in Lokoja was either named after the governor or a member of his family. In Ogbonicha, his hometown, the College of Education, although government-built and government-funded, is named after the former governor's late father, Audu Oyidi.

All of these namings happened on the authority of the governor. The ideological linkage between this project of naming and renaming and that of pictorial propaganda

should be all too apparent by now. Again, Audu did not lose his re-election bid because the people of Kogi state voted him out, although this is the (former) opposition's rhetoric. He, too, had squandered his goodwill with the political kingmakers in Kogi and had embarrassed the Federal Government through his involvement in several real estate deals that were leaked to the press. Thus, Audu's excesses were not necessarily responsible for his failed re-election bid.

In 2001-2002, Governor Audu enjoyed an additional advantage, being the only civilian governor to have ruled Kogi since its creation in 1991. He could project his political beginning onto the state's own beginning. He could point to a long trajectory of personal presence in the state's political life, a presence that he now sought to make inseparable from the state's landscape. Resistance to and criticism of Audu, of which there was no shortage, might in fact have been a victory for his project of personal promotion. After all, the point of the project was to make him the central political issue in Kogi state; to keep people talking about him (whether positively or negatively); to mystify his political persona and thus enable him to achieve cult-figure status.

Like governor Lawal, Audu was stealthily planting his name indelibly in the soil of Kogi, but he recognized that in Nigeria, leaders' survival and political longevity could not be guaranteed by such subtle forms of power. He therefore did not hesitate to employ coercion and intimidation to cow opponents and non-conformists. He demonstrated this tendency time and again during his tenure as governor.

In Southeastern Abia State, Governor Orji Uzor Kalu, who won re-election in April 2003, insists on having his name on signposts of government public works projects.

Asked by a newspaper reporter about such a brazen personalization of power, he argued that his action was necessary to distinguish projects executed under his administration from those of his predecessors. The actual reasons are more profound. They are not different from the reasons adduced above for the personal promotion projects of governors Lawal and Audu. He seeks to suggest himself powerfully into the political consciousness of Abia, and to subsequently dominate the political imagination of the people of the state. To say that a school was constructed under the administration of Orji Kalu does not possess the same amount of political capital as saying that Orji Kalu constructed the school. The difference, even if a convoluted one, is politically significant and must be stressed. The folks who benefit from state-funded projects must be made to think that the benevolence of Orji Kalu, and not necessarily the financial strength and revenues of Abia state, a separate non-personal entity, facilitated the projects that are affecting their lives positively. This is the crucial difference that underlines the strategic calculation in Governor Kalu's seemingly inane act. It is about reshaping the electorate's consciousness and branding the minds of Abians (as they like to call themselves) with his name and image. It is a subtle way to negotiate and routinize power. But Governor Kalu, too, resorts occasionally to the use of the vigilante thugs known as Bakassi Boys as well as other violence-inclined hirelings to push his agenda and to force his rivals to submit to his authority.

Insights

The ways in which Nigerians have engaged with these new manifestations of power have been interesting and

instructive. The public sphere has been so overwhelmed by the appearance of these multi-fangled forms of power that it has largely surrendered its critical vibrancy. For the most part, Nigeria conforms to Mbembe's arguments about the mockery of the power of the state through an inversion and bastardization of the latter's own discourses. The use of political cartoons in newspapers and magazines, popular songs, and crude beer parlor discourses to mock and critique the state continues unabated in Nigeria as in other African countries instanced by Mbembe.

However, one must ask whether in Nigerians' actual confrontations with the might of the state, they can exhibit any significant resistance, launch any sustained criticism, dare the powers that be—or whether in fact resistance is valid as a descriptive category for engagements with power expected of the politically dominated. The answer, going by the analysis here, must be in the negative. Let us go back to the case of Kwara. Faced with a choice between shouting "up Lawal" and carrying on without potable drinking water, how many will opt for the latter? And how many will remain adamant? These are crucial questions. In real, material situations of everyday life, the power elite can and do use state resources to extract consent and stifle dissent.

At the heart of the quagmire, then, are two interlocking issues: the *inability* of the governed to demand accountability and to launch sustained critiques of the state; and (at times) their *refusal* to ask questions of those in power. The second problem may start as a manifestation of economic desperation, rendering the governed practically incapable—from a purely existential or survivalist perspective—of resisting the seduction of political patronage or the temptation to compromise. But it can quickly take on a life of its own, becoming a normative socio-cultural reality, and

creating a semiotic universe which enables compulsion to metamorphose into an alibi. In such systems—and Nigeria is a good example—the discourse of compulsion and economic desperation becomes merely a retrospective rationalization of political retreat, inertia and compromise, a convenient tool of self-exoneration in the hands of co-opted subjects of power. The problem thus is a complex one.

Still, the impossibilities of engaging with power, which can be as analytically significant as the possibilities of doing the same (the latter has attracted a lot more scholarly attention than the former, thanks to the burgeoning popularity of civil society studies), must not be discounted. At a pragmatic, quotidian level of political engagement, the self-preservationist maneuvers of power elites can render the governed impotent and choiceless. In the Nigerian presidential palace, popularly known as Aso Rock, no one except President Obasanjo and perhaps Adams Oshiomhole, the President of the Nigerian Labor Congress (NLC), can be called president. I had read many years ago that in Kenya no one in the entire country except Daniel Arap Moi was allowed to bear the title of president, whether of an alumni association, a women's organization or of a business association. I had thought that this was an exaggeration. Last year, a Kenyan friend of mine confirmed it. So, the Aso Rock rule is not a novelty. In fact Nigerians are to be grateful that the rule has been restricted to Aso Rock; that the president of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) can still be called president outside the confines of the presidential palace in Abuja. But what would happen if the NUJ president were to visit Aso Rock with his executive members on a courtesy call, which happens fairly frequently? This question brings to the fore the practical impossibility

of actually engaging with power in Nigeria. The truth is that if the NUJ president must proceed on the courtesy call and get the attention of President Obasanjo, he must abandon a title that is legally (by virtue of the Union's constitution) and democratically (by virtue of the election he contested and won) conferred on him and shop for another title that is alien to his personality and to the integrity of the union.

Conclusion

The unfolding democratic experience in Nigeria provides a template for examining the ways in which forms of power supposedly alien to democracy and intrinsic to autocracy craftily are being deployed along with other performances of power that bastardize or mimic the democratic concepts of popularity, consent and public acceptance. This bewildering mix of symbols and force, blackmail and insinuation, ubiquity and discourse enables an understanding of how democracy as a political act and its emphasis on image, acceptance and popularity leads elected officials to invent and reinvent ways of performing power that are a depressing throwback to military rule and one-party dictatorships. How can Nigerian democracy be stripped of the emphasis on "performance," popularity and appearances of acceptance—which have paradoxically been responsible for elected officials' abuse of power—without compromising the need for accountability, popular acclamation and popular support, which are key ingredients of a democratic system? This is a contradiction that cannot be resolved easily, a challenge that requires careful handling. If officials do not have to "deliver" the "benefits" of democracy, do not have to be popular to continue to lead

and do not have to seek popular acclamation, democracy will cease to mean anything to Nigerians. On the other hand, an undue emphasis on these elements of the democratic process makes them the primary objectives of elected leaders, while the *actual* business of governance languishes in neglect, fostering disillusionment with democratic civilian rule.

The current President of the Nigerian Senate, Mr. Adolphus Wabara, has compounded our analytical quandary by recently stating that in addition to elected officials preoccupying themselves with forging impressions of popularity, ubiquity and popular acclamation, their tenure is also spent recouping "investments" made in the course of running for office.⁴ Mr. Wabara raises yet another knotty question: How can we as scholars and intellectuals justify a system that, in practice (at least in Nigeria), seems to exist only for its own perpetuation and nothing more—in a self-replicating cycle of vertical and horizontal mobility by politicians?

Notes

¹ Achille Mbembe, "Provisional Notes on the Postcolony." *Africa*, 62(1), 1992: 10.

² *Thisday* (Nigeria), June 16, 2004. "Okogie Rates FG Low on Democracy Dividends."

³ The nationwide media tour lasted for three months and, according to the government's own official proclamation, was designed as a way to showcase the benefits and positive changes which two years of democracy had brought to the country. At the end of the tour, awards were given to states in different categories as reward for their governors'

“democratic performance,” that is, for delivering “democracy dividends” to the indigenes of their states.

⁴See “Wabara’s Confession,” by Reuben Abati, *The Guardian* (Nigeria), June 11, 2004.

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