Identity And Leadership Conceptualisations In Obasanjo's *My Watch*

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Abstract

This paper explores leadership identity construction in Olusegun Obasanjo's memoirs. Identity defines an individual or societal construction of self and is considered as a product of such individuals' socio-cultural and political realities. The study purposively examined leadership identity and conceptualisations in two volumes of Olusegun Obasanjo memoirs. The study adopts a theoretical triangulation of Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory of intergroup behaviour, Fetzer (2004) model of context and Sbisa's (2006) notion of speech act theory. Findings reveal that fence-mender, game-player, and self- sacrificing leadership identity types, evidently nuanced by the social, economic, and historical contexts play out as intervolving identity types and contexts and culminate in two pragmatic implications of political discourses in Nigeria: negative representation of others' identities, and gamification of leadership acts. The study implicates that memoirs are tools for the construction of the subject realities of ideological polarised positive-self and negative-other conceptualisations.

1. Introduction

Leadership as a construct defies unified definition in its scholarship. This is predicated on the varying understanding of the phenomenon due to the multifaceted factors that influence people's understanding of the concept. Conceptualisation of leadership takes two groups of people – those with leadership experience and those without, such that experience is considered the crux of leadership as it leads to a higher-level understanding and does so through identity (Lord & Hall, 2005; Francavilla, 2019). Identity, the index of self, is deemed a resource for learning as one's interests, preferences, beliefs and views affect the stimuli an individual chooses to direct attention to and efforts towards (ibid.). In other words, an individual's leadership traits and beliefs are spurred by the experiences they have. Boateng (2012) equates leadership with power, authority, management, administration and supervision. By implication, when a leader defines leadership, he defines it in accordance with the type of power, management prowess, administrative acumen and supervisory strategy he adopts to handle issues affecting the people he leads. In this respect, political memoirs provide the platform for interrogating how political actors recount their experiences and construct their identities in line with how and what they conceived as the art of leadership.

Political actors, in their narratives, most often, conceptualise the art of leadership differently. Their variegated conceptualisations are usually grounded on their personal realities during and after holding certain political offices or influenced by their encounters with other political actors at the helm of governance. In essence, most politicians define leadership in line with the shared social political realities and independent historical records. Memoirs are one major source through which political actors define leadership and establish leadership identities. Hence, there is the imperative need of engaging further scholarly exploration of memoirs that interrogate how these political actors construct identity and leadership in their works. This study is, therefore, aims to tease out the typologies of leadership and identity conceptualisation, the underlying contexts and the pragmatic implications of their construct in Obasanjo's memoirs, *My Watch* (Volumes 2&3).

2. Conceptual Clarifications

This section of the study examines the concepts underpinning the study in order to give the readers' the background knowledge of the subject under investigation.

2.1 Political Discourse and Leadership Representation in Africa

The term political discourse as a macro genre is closely knitted with the understanding of the social domain politics. Politics revolves around the

affairs and concerns of the institutions of government, parliament and (political) parties. Politics is concerned with the struggle for power in political domains or institutions "through elections, parties, parliamentary procedures and propaganda" (Kirvalidze & Samnidze, 2016). In other words, politics evokes 'the relationship between the power- wielding and power-affected group who mutually act and react within the context of governance (Odebunmi & Oni, 2012), while political discourse is associated with actors or authors; who are politicians. Political discourse as a broad macro genre in this sense, therefore, refers to all talks and texts in the domain of politics (van Djik, 1997). However, defining political discourse by its actors and authors is misleading and narrow-given that there are many people involved in political communicative event aside politicians. This, therefore, means that politics and its discourses in the public sphere are wide-ranging to accommodate many actors and recipients within the political communicative events. Indeed, this clearly indicates that political discourse does not only handle the public affairs that concern the citizens but also with the way in which citizens produce and use political discourse to construct and interpret different messages, ideological arguments, and opinion.

It is significant here to state that leadership is a stimulant for the development of a great nation. Little wonder that leadership position is generally thought of as a position to be occupied by people with desirable attributes (Randell and Yerbury, 2020). As Agbaenyi and Owuamanam (2021) opine, effective and productive leadership requires transparency, and accountability among others for good governance, national growth and development. In line with this study, the definition of leadership is narrowed "to the government or to the leadership of an organised state, the totality of the political class that has the capacity to exert influence on the machinery of government even from behind the scene"(Ogbeidi, 2012).Therefore, political leadership is likened with governance (UNDP, 1997). In line with the foregoing, political leaders as ruling class are saddled with the responsibility of managing the affairs and resources of a nation. As leaders, they are involved in the policy and decision making for the orderly development of a nation or territory. In this wise, developed nations are recorded as having political leaders with character at the helm of affairs Agbaenyi and Owuamanam (2021), while the trouble with many underdeveloped nations is failed leadership which largely stemmed from poor character.

It is incontrovertible that leadership crisis has impeded Africa, from realising its full potential. This is consequent upon the fact that most African political

leaders have exhibited lack of vision (Ogunsiji & Ogungbemi, 2018, Akinola, 2019). which is an impediment to good performance as well as good governance. It is in this direction that Rotbeg (2003, p. 28) concedes that "leadership in Africa is typified more by disfiguring examples – the Idi Amin's and Robert Mugabe's – than by positive role models such as Nelson Mandela and Seretse Khama". Surprisingly, scholars have equally shown that most nations of the world have experienced the pair of good and failed political leadership (Ogbeidi, 2012). Regrettably, in the words of Saidu et al. (2019), 'Nigeria, the most populous country and biggest democracy in Africa, is one of the nations that has [sic] consistently faced the challenges of leadership'. This is to say that, characteristically, political leadership in Nigeria like many other African countries can hardly exonerate itself from the bane of poor leadership.

3. Memoirs Scholarship

Memoir evolves from a French word 'Memoria' denoting memory or reminiscence. This literary genre offers the author the opportunity to bring the past to life through a detailed account of stories and the myriads *of* events: socio-cultural-—cumpolitical. Through this literary medium, memoirists project their voices (Saidu, et al., 2018), engage political arguments (Adegbenro, 2021), comment on epoch adventures, histories and events (Adegboyega, 2021) and let slip of some contentions about a nation (Odebunmi, 2019). A long list of memoirs has been written by Nigerian political leader-writers, namely: Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Command* (1980), *This Animal Called Man* (1998), *My March through Prison* (1985), *Not My Will* (1990) and *My Watch*, a three- volume text; *The Autobiography of Chief Obafemi Awolowo* (1960) by Obafemi Awolowo, *My Transition Hour* (2018) by Goodluck Jonathan, *Beckoned to Serve: An Autobiography* (2001) by Shehu Shagari, *The Accidental Public Servant* (2013) by El Ruffai; *My Participations* (2021) by Bisi Akande, and *My Odyssey: An Autobiography* by Nnamdi Azikwe, among others which expound largely on Nigeria's politics and leadership. Aside blurbs, newspaper commentaries and book reviews, the major scholarship engagement of these political memoirs are: Saidu, et al. (2019), Odebunmi, (2019), Adegboyega (2020), Ugoala (2021), Adegbenro and Osisanwo (2021) and Adegbenro (2022) from both the literary and linguistic perspectives.

Focusing on *My Watch*, Ajala (2017) examines the illocutionary acts, implicatures, presuppositions and, indirect speech acts, contexts and face maintaining strategies in selected utterances of Olusegun Obasanjo. The author claims that the intention of the encoder, mutual intelligibility and the

context of the speech event are the three vital elements that enhance effective communication. Specifically, Odebunmi (2019) attempts a conceptual reading of Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch*. He uncovers how the concept of de/responsibilisation has been deployed to reveal the significant political value that the society ascribes to the image of what an individual is, while Adegbenro and Osisanwo (2021) focus on the pragma-dialectal reading of the text. These authors identify five presentational devices: positive pragmatic argument, practs, presuppositions, negative lexicalisation, passive construction; and six strategic maneuvering techniques: blame game, smokescreen techniques, prerogative argument, fallacious appeal to authority, adhominiem attacks, and ethotic appeal. They confirm that the presentational and strategic manoeuvring techniques tilt towards the beliefs and preferences of the audiences. Yet, to the best of our knowledge, notwithstanding the efforts of the above scholars from the pragmatic lens, memoir pragmatics scholarship in Nigeria has not attended to the construction of leadership identities, and particularly in Olusegun Obasanjo's *My Watch*, which the present study is concerned with.

4. Previous Works on Political Leadership

A number of studies with different foci on political leadership in Africa exist from political science, history and strategic studies, psychology and linguistics. Ogbeidi (2012) asserts that political leadership in Nigeria cannot be absolved from the travails of socio-economic underdevelopment in the country. In view of this, the scholar from a historical perspective examines corruption and political leadership in Nigeria since 1960 and its implication for socio- economic development. Of significant relevance to this current study is Ogunsiji and Ogungbemi (2016). These scholars unveil how the identities of political leaders are constructed in selected poems of Niyi Osundare using critical stylistic tools. This paper is relevant to the current study as it brings up the issue of leadership identity; however, the study differs in its theoretical orientation aside its limitation of the primary data to poetry. Again, Saidu, et al. (2018) examine leadership perception and self-construction in the autobiographical narrative — My Odyssey – by Nnamdi Azikwe. The study concludes that the memoir substantiates the claim that autobiography is more often than not brought forth by crisis. This study by Saidu et al. (2018) apparently differs from the present study in focus, theoretical orientation and data source.

Still in a work of art, in the conjoin movies — *"Saworoide"* and *"Agogo-Èèwò"*, Olaiya, (2020) examines the realities of leaders who rely on

natural recourses income. The study reveals issues such as political violence, criminality, state-organised assassination, and annihilation of opposition, elitism, and patrimonial politics as the out-turn of the resources on the governance of the community. The current study differs as it is not limited to movies. Beyond this, the focus is on identity construction as against leadership crisis in natural resource-dependent state. As political scientists, Agbaenyi and Owuamanam (2021) study leadership character with attention on─ human rights abuse, corruption and democratic dictatorship as it influences human security. The study reports that Nigeria's leadership character from 1999 to 2021 was drawn on abuse of human rights, official corruption and democratic dictatorship. As such, the paper suggests that Nigerian Government scales up in good leadership character. While Agbaenyi and Owuamanam (2021) examine leadership character and its adverse effects on Nigerians, it differs from the present study which is linguistic- based, and also uncovers how leadership identity is constructed in memoirs through pragmatic tools.

5. The Synopsis of the Selected Memoirs

My Watch written by Olusegun Obasanjo and published in 2015 is a trilogy. The first volume- *Early Life and Military* details Obasanjo's early life experiences which began from the village-to the city and runs through to his military service. The second volume ─ *Political and Public affairs* ─ covers his affairs during his second coming as the Nigerian president in the Fourth Republic and, lastly *My Watch Volume 3: Now and Then* captures his reflection on the state of Nigerian political affairs after his presidency. The focus of the current research is on Volumes 2 and 3; hence, the overview runs through these two volumes. *My Watch Volume 2* gives an account of his visions and strategies as Nigerian president. He recounts his experience after his release from the prison to the period of his emergence as the president of the country. He reveals the contentious socio-political issues that prevailed during his administration. Thus, as a watch-man, with facts and figures, he exposes all the villains. Some of these political leaders presented in this volume include: Abubakar Atiku, Bola Tinubu, Tony Anenin, Nuhu Ribadu Nasir El Rufai, among others. He presents some of what he considered as the characters and personality traits of these political leaders. For instance, he describes Atiku Abubakar as a blatant and shameless liar; he presents El Rufai as being 'economical with the truth' and Muhammadu Buhari as one who 'would not be a good economic manager'. The political -leader-writer presents the various key areas of his administrations as well as his efforts in these regards: welfare, finance, economy, and civil service, conflict resolutions and so on. In Volume 3 of *'My Watch'- Now and thereafter*, the

author bluntly condemns the 'siddon look' disposition of the Nigerian people to political affairs particularly which he considers as unacceptable. He unveils the problem of bad leadership in President Goodluck Jonathan's administration which brought the administration to a monumental failure.

1.   Methodology

The data for this study are two volumes *My Watch Volume 2: Political and Public Affairs and My Watch Volume 3: Now and Then* out of the three volumes of Olusegun Obasanjo's My Watch. The selection of the two volumes is informed by the apt depiction of leadership characters and implications in Nigeria. A descriptive qualitative design was adopted in the study. It is anchored on the theoretical underpinnings of: Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory of intergroup behaviour, Fetzer's (2004) model of context and Sbisa's (2006) notion of speech act theory. Tajfel and Turner's model of social identity theory situates the construction of identity as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and their membership.

In other words, the theory prioritises that social categorisation that defines the in-group and out-group difference. Accordingly, the two authors opined that social categorisations are conceived as tools segment. They also classify, and order the social environment and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action. In this of undertaking these actions, such individuals provide a system of orientation for self-reference by creating and defining their place in that society. Three theoretical principles govern the realisation of this social identity conception: 1) individual strive to achieve or maintain positive social identity; 2) positive social identity is based on favourable comparisons that exist between in-group and why that should be positively perceived distinguished from out-groups; 3) when social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals will strive either to leave their existing group and join a more positively distinct group or make their existing group positively distinct.

It is from this structure that identities of individuals are constrained by the tripartite: individual mobility, social creativity and social competition. Fetzer's (2004) model of context helps to explain the actions that defined the conceptualisation of leadership in the memoirs. According to Fetzer (2004, p. 1), references to context and references to meaning have the communicative

function of modifying the force of an argument and its propositions by deliminating their domains of validity. In her study, Fetzer (2004) emphasises cognitive, social and linguistic contexts. The cognitive context aids the interpretation of assumptions, propositions and mental representations that underlie the identities constructed and the type of leadership conceived. Language materials that sum up the lexical choices made constitute the linguistic context while the extra-linguistic realities imported to enhance these representations project the social context. These not only aid the interpretation of the text but also help track the intention of the author through the instrumentation of speech act. Sbisa's speech act theory, particularly the aspect that focuses on the trend of performatives' shift to the naturality of inferences.

This idea that Sbisa extracted from the trends of speech act is informed by the argument that 'the conventionality of illocutionary acts, apart from clearly ritual performatives, was linked to the linguistic conventionality of illocutionary force indicating devices' (Strawson 1964 cited in Sbisa 2006, p. 15). Conversely, 'when the force suggested by the illocutionary indicators is inappropriate or irrelevant, the real force of the utterance is inferred by the hearer, with a procedure drawing on the notion of conversational implicature (Grice 1975 cited in Sbisa 2006, p. 13). It could be drawn from the foregoing that this study, in its analysis, not only interprets the illocutionary acts of the political actor but also ascribes meaning to its propositions through the power of inference. The synergy of these theoretical resources offers an in-depth revelation of how leadership is conceived by Olusegun Obasanjo generally, and how his stance on leadership in turn constructs certain kind of identity for his person in the memoirs. The thrust of the analysis thus rests on the principles of pragmatics wherein the top-down analytical approach is utilised to first top-load the topical issues, contexts and identities with their resources of enactment.

2. Analysis and Discussion
2.1 Leadership Identity Types and Context in Obasanjo's Political Memoirs

Three leadership identity types persist in Obasanjo's political memoirs: fence-mender, game- player, and self-sacrificing identity leadership types. These are evidently nuanced by the social, economic, and historical contexts of the memoirs.

2.1.1   Fence-mender Leadership Identity (Political Context: Election and Governance)

The fender mender identity construes the ideal national leadership that brings about national integration as an act of getting on board people of different sociocultural, ethnic and political differences. Contextual instantiation of this identity type in OBPM cuts across the political contexts of election, governance and conflict management. Excerpts 1 and 2 are demonstrative of this leadership identity constructed in OBPM.

Excerpt 1:

> I went to visit to visit Chief Bola Ige with whom I had struck close friendship when I was in Ibadan in 1967 as the Area Commander: Bola said, "If it would happen, there would be fences to mend." **I told him that he would be a fence mender with me** (*MY WATCH*, VOL. 2, p. 10)

Excerpt 2:

> Alhaji Aminu Dantata is soft-spoken, unassuming, thoughtful and well respected. I called on him at about nine o'clock at night. After the usual pleasantries, I stated my mission. Alhaji listened to me attentively and said, **"I am very concerned about one thing; I don't want to get a visa to go to Enugu, Lagos or Port-Harcourt."** I told him that I had accepted to yield to pressure to have a go at the job because like him **I did not want to have to get a visa to go to Kano or any other Nigeria cities he mentioned.** (*MY WATCH*, VOL. 2, p. 24)

The construction of the fence-mender identity in excerpts 1 and 2 is borne out of the visits of OBJ to different political stakeholders while declaring his intention to contest as the President of Nigeria. In excerpt 1, for instance, OBJ paid a courtesy visit to Chief Bola Ige, one of the Yoruba elder statesmen in Ibadan in 1967 to register his intentions to run for President. In the course of their engagements, Chief Bola Ige informed him of fences to be mended, meaning that there were broken relationships that the aspirant should reconcile. The propositional content of the lexical choice "fences to mend" which both interactants share adequate knowledge of, implicates that OBJ's task should be targeted at national reconciliation. This relies on the historically shared knowledge of variously destroyed relationships as it was a period Nigeria was still recovering from the bloody Civil War. Hence, the illocutionary force of the act of fence-mending dually issues warning and advising. Obasanjo also aligns himself to the social construct and ideological

identity of a fence-mender by smartly admitting and assuming the fence-mender identity by his tactful response "I told him that he would be a fence- mender with me."

One of the projected broken "fences" in Nigeria is regional unrest and the constant quest for secession led by the Easterners which drastically threatened the national unity and cohesion of the country. As illustrated with Excerpt 2, OBJ's meeting with Alhaji Aminu Dantata also forayed into the actions that should be put in place to avert disintegration of the nation. After OBJ revealed his mission to him, Alhaji Dantata simply expressed his concern in the locution "I am very concerned about one thing; I don't want to get a visa to go to Enugu, Lagos or Port-Harcourt." With this indirect act, the speaker, who is from the north implicates that he does not want any region of the country to divide in such a manner that each would become an independent nation that one has to obtain VISA to visit. Obasanjo again aligns with this stance of Alhaji Aminu Dantata through the illocutionary act of assuring by equally stating that **"I did not want to have to get a visa to go to Kano or any other Nigeria cities".** By this, a mutual identity of fence mending that frowns at separation is prioritised. As can be fetched from the **historical context**, the period of this political tour of expression of interest by OBJ was a period of identity creation and agenda projection – a platform for him to sell his political leadership mission and ideology.

7.1.2 Game-Player Leadership Identity (Political, Social and Economic)

The game- player leadership identity type depicts political leadership as an exercise of tact and strategies aimed at manoeuvering and getting at set goals. It is the identity of a strategic planner that feasts on the political, social and economic contexts of the polity. OBPMs reel off this leadership identity of Nigerian politicians as a core factor engendered by the national diversity of the Nigerian cultural and political space. It is thus typical of leaders to embrace strategic planning to get the representation of each region in governance. This plays out in excerpts 3 and 4 below.

Excerpt 3:

> Before I left government finally, six of us-Yar Adua, Jonathan, Tony Anenih, Ahmadu Alli, Bode George met and take [sic] some decision on zoning the remaining **three offices to be zoned**, with the President, vice president and secretary to the government of the federation (SGF) having been zoned by election and Umaru's appointment of Baba Kingigbe. We had Senate President to a zone for which two people from the North Central showed interest and appeared before the six of us. **We**

interviewed both - David Mark and Abubakar Sodangi. We all settled for David Mark. Next, was the speaker zoned to the South West and for which only one candidate showed interest (I came to understand later that **necessary groundwork** had been down). Folake Patricia Eteh appeared and we all endorsed her. The only office left was the chairman of the party, which was zoned to the south east and for ~~W~~which Governor Sam Egwu was **slotted**, pending Ahmadu Bello **stepping down**... (*MY WATCH*, VOL. 3 , pp. 11- 12)

Excerpt 4:

There was no doubt that the thoughts the leaders in the North and the political leaders across the board had realised that the interest of all Nigerians will be best served if **power shifted** to the South, particularly in the light of June 12 and Abacha saga. It was much later I came to learn of the **game plan** (*MY WATCH*, VOL. 2 p. 8)

Political leadership as a game is anchored on the foundation of strategic planning and representation of the political, social and economic interests of one region, and political party to another. In the two excerpts used for illustration, the game-player identity is situated in the assignment of political offices as a precursor for power shift among the major geopolitical zones in Nigeria. In excerpt 3, for example, the referents and political players – Yar Adua, Jonathan, Tony Anenih, Ahmadu Alli, Bode George – were making decisions on behalf of their party and the nation by extension. The author in *MY WATCH*, VOL. 3 pp. 11-12, remarks that "Next, was the speaker zoned to the South West and for which only one candidate showed interest (I came to understand later that necessary **groundwork** had been down). Folake Patricia Eteh appeared and **we all** endorsed her." The locution of *necessary groundwork* indexes the leadership construction and conceptualisation of Nigerian politics as a game that is well thought-out to satisfy regional or party biases. Obasanjo also lexicalises the collectiveness of the decision-making process by the deployment of plural pronominals such as "we" and selecting verbs such as "slotted" to concretise the deliberateness of the decisions made. What further stamped out the game-player identity in the OBPMs is the propositional act in Excerpt 4 "if **power shifted** to the South, particularly in the light of June 12 and Abacha saga. It was much later I came to learn of the **game plan**" where power shift was carefully planned as part of a game-plan to address lopsided political power distribution. Nigeria operates a multi-party

system and by reason of his widely diverse frame in terms of population, culture, ethnicity and religion, there is always the ready need for circumspective political strategising which informs the eclectic political manoeuverings that characterise leadership acts as shown in OBJ's memoir. Every region wants to be ably represented and politicians draw different game plans to realise their goals.

7.1.3 Self-Sacrificing Leadership Identity (Social Context)

Self-sacrificing leadership identity conceives leadership as a selfless means of rendering one's service to the electorate. It typifies social roles performed by an individual who believes in satisfying the interest of the people he or she represents rather than personal gains and interests. In OBPMs, this leadership identity is constructed for self and other allies, and it is grounded in the social context.

Excerpt 5:

> I personally gained nothing from being chairman of the (BOT). **If anything, it cost me in terms of time, resources, and efforts to settle quarrels and feuds within the party** (*MY WATCH*, VOL. 3 p. 19)

Excerpt 6:

> Ribadu deserved every special promotion given him. He was courageous and trepid [sic] and I fully backed him up. He was even poison [sic] at one time, only God saved his life. **The war against corruption must be seen as life and death matters, as those deeply involved resort to killing the one who fights corruption.** Many people did not believe we could start to wage a war against corruption, we showed we could, but in the end, Nuhu had to step on many toes including Yardua's. (*MY WATCH*, VOL. 3 p. 10)

Excerpt 7:

> Here, General Danjuma was spot on in his advice. "Go to T.Y Danjuma", he said. I phoned Yakubu and I visited him at five o'clock one morning. He came down to receive me in his Victoria Island house. When I briefed him, he said, "I salute your courage, I will not do it because I value my freedom." I told him he could not fully appreciate the value of freedom as he had never lost his freedom. I told him, **"I have lost mine** and I appreciate the value of freedom, **but whatever is needed to sacrifice for the good of Nigeria, I will."** (*MY WATCH*, VOL. 2 pp. 10-12).

That leadership is a bundle of self-sacrifice is entrenched as an identity trait in OBPMs and this is captured in excerpts 6 and 7, Obasanjo in these memoirs defines leadership as a freedom- costing adventure because of the numerous enemies it generates. Like in excerpt 5, the author highlights the sacrifices he made as a leader to include time, and resources. This invariably construes the social and economic context of the sacrifices made in leadership. He also maintained that he personally gained nothing from these sacrifices. The self-sacrificing leadership identity in excerpt 6 involves other-narrative in that the author narrates the sacrifice one of his loyal allies, Nuhu Ribadu. The illocutionary force was both commending and informing. The propositional content reveals that leadership sacrifice is a matter of life and death and, therefore, is a risky adventure. Here, Obasanjo creates the self-sacrificing identity in the dual context of governance and fight against corruption which attracts stepping on toes and incurring more enemies in the system. The third illustration is demonstrated in excerpt 7 in a conversation between the author and General Danjuma. In their communitive act, the two political actors centred their interaction on the context of freedom and how freedom itself is a victim of service. The illocutionary force of the locution "but whatever is needed to sacrifice for the good of Nigeria, I will" amplifies the self-sacrificing identity OBJ created for himself and people who have denied themselves in the service of the country. This is a positive self-representation for OBJ. It gives the impression that he is a patriot that can lose anything for the sake of his country.

1. **Discourse Implication of the Leadership Identity in Obasanjo's Political Memoirs**

Going through the discourses of OBPMs, there are underlying pragmatic implications that are accruable from the identities constructed for the various leadership acts of the author and other political actors that constitute the discourses from which leadership was conceptualised. Two pragmatic implications are identified in this study: negative representation of others', and gamification of leadership acts. These are examined below.

8.1 Evocation of Potential Negative-Other (Identity) Representation

A major implication of the narratives that maps out the identity of OBJ is negative-other representation that he often resorts to, when constructing self. Evocation of potential negative- other identity representation involves the amplification of the negative acts and features of ideologically opposite social actors. This invariably portends implications for unity among political actors in the Nigerian space. In the volumes of OBPMs that were studied, the

narrator adopted the strategy to create social identification and categorisation in order to price self above others and also construct favourable identity for self and spotlight the weaknesses of others. It connects with the game-player and self-sacrificing leadership identities. Excerpts 8 and 9 exemplify this strategy:

Excerpt 8:

> The most outrageous is the allegation by **el-Rufai** that I said, No third term, no Nigeria." Under no circumstance would I have said anything like that. Those who know me very well know that I would not pursue anything in my life to the extent of destroying Nigeria or not wish Nigeria well. ..... People asked me what I feel about Nasir's book. I always replied that if his so-called friend, Nuhu Ribadu, could claim **"There is a huge integrity deficiency in el-Rufai's book."**…The best I could do is to have a great pity for him when I realised El-Rufai's **psychological and potential upbringing problem**, **I tried**, as he dramatically and exaggeratedly narrated on pages 329-354 of his book, **to fill some of the void** (pp. 117-118)

> Excerpt 9:
> For Nigeria, **Buhari would not be a good economic manager**. I know him well enough that he would be strong and almost inflexible, courageous and firm leader. If Nigeria would avoid **a stubborn mismanagement of the economy,** what should be done to a possible Buhari emergence as an elected president? I agonised on this issue, but came to the conclusion of pairing Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala's technical competence and experience in economic management with Buhari's strong political leadership. (p. 117)

Two instances (excerpts 8 and 9), among several in the texts that strategically evinced plausible negative-other identity representation of social actors, have strong implications for the political imaging of the affected social actors and capable of generating discord among these individuals and the writer. Entrenched in the socioeconomic contexts, OBJ in excerpt 8 addressed former Kaduna State governor, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai's personality in reaction to Nasir's book in which the latter made some claims about a supposed Obasanjo's third term agenda that was making rounds. The reaction of OBJ was both constructed in the defending and condemning acts geared towards defining the personality of el-Rufai. In his proposition, OBJ,

referencing el-Rufai's memoir, stated reported the direct locutions of the former governor in the allegation which he OBJ reportedly claimed "no third term, no Nigeria". This allegation was deemed as a misrepresentation of OBJ's identity and, therefore, in his defence, he had to also represent el-Rufai in the negative sense to stamp why he should not be taken seriously, hence describing him as having "psychological and potential upbringing problem." He further went ahead to now revalidate his personal identity of self-sacrificing for the nation, Nigeria. In excerpt 9, OBJ provided a negative evaluation of the economic prowess of Buhari who was vying to become the president of Nigeria. Using the illocutionary acts of informing and recommending, OBJ opined that Buhari is incomplete to manage the economy but he agreed to his other leadership traits.

These evaluative acts simply reveal the negative identities of the social actors and also present the evaluator as having the best ideas in government. This kind of pragmatic implication spells distrust among the political gladiators of the nation.

8.2   Gamification of Leadership Acts

Gamification of leadership acts is a pragmatic implication that underscores the competitiveness of the politics of the state. In this strategy, the multifaceted steps taken by OBJ and other social actors in the texts towards either advancing their leadership philosophies and agendas or edging others out of the scene/stage are given prominence. It relates directly to the game-playing identity of political agents in the contexts of election and governance. Excerpts 10 and 11 establish these implicated imports of leadership conceptualisation.

Excerpt 10:

> At this point, President Yar'Adua's illness had taken a toll on his work. Tanimu confided in his friend, saying that they all realised that it was only a matter of time; the centre would not hold. **Everybody** then decided to make money for themselves **before the centre collapsed**; and they did so while the No 2 man in government knew nothing about what was going on. My adversaries **tried** other means to get to me. If Obasanjo could not be cut down to size, they must have thought, what about those close to him, including his daughter (*MY WATCH*, VOL. 3, p. 18)

Excerpt 11:

> Before embarking on the tedious energy-sapping campaign, I had

> earlier called on Alex Ekueme to say that we would have a good and strong four pillars to hold the party, the government and the nation together. Again, taking into account his commendable reaction after the primary, suggested that he should **contest a Senate seat** and take over as the President of the Senate. **I promised to persuade** the Party to **zone the Senate presidency to the South-East,** which would put the presidency in the South-West, Vice-Presidency in the **North East** and Senate presidency in the **South-East** and Party Chairmanship in **the North Central**, with Speaker of the House in the **North-West** and Secretary to Government from the South-South. (*MY WATCH*, VOL. 2, p. 34)

Gamification of leaders' acts has intense implication for the representation Nigerian political terrain. In this depiction, OBJ constructs the desperation of politician underlined by serial acts of gamification. Excerpt 10 demonstrates the gamification of politicians when Late Yar'Adua was at the point of death. These politicians adeptly resolved to looting money by taking advantage of their ill-health of the president. The corruption and governance contexts mapped out how gamification impacts political morality. This was extended to the agential person of OBJ who was considered a threat to their plots to illegally enrich themselves. Hence, OBJ construes them as "adversaries". Excerpt 11 implicates regional gamification where candidates jostle for placement in the guise of party zoning spearheaded by OBJ himself. This distribution of offices to different zones happened before the election and, therefore, implicates that the political sphere in Nigeria promotes the game-player identity and is marked by the context of elections. The overall import of these discourses as represented in OBJ's memoirs reveals that politicians in his era considered it a game to take advantage of situations to either enrich themselves or engage in politicking that favours either their regional or political divides. They often rely on diverse acts of promising [I promise to persuade] and conspiring others' downfall [If Obasanjo could not be cut down to size, they must have thought, what about those close to him, including his daughter] as the strategies ingrained in their game-plan to realise their goals.

Conclusion
As established in this study, memoirs – the active accounts of individuals' representation of their realities in writing – embody a gamut of experiential relation, identity and leadership conceptualisation. In the world of politics, this is more evident. Considering OBJ's *My Watch* in this study, it is revealed

that the former President of Nigeria captures his encounters in the Nigeria politics in these volumes which consequently revealed his understanding of leadership in the Nigerian context and his identity as an active political leader. The study which relies on the resources of Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory, Fetzer's contextual orientation and Sbisa's thesis of speech act, identifies three dominant leadership identities: fence-mender, game-player, and self-sacrificing. These principally unravel the Nigerian social political realities and project interventionary measures of leadership that OBJ considered apposite in addressing them. In this light, leadership is conceived as one's ability to build relationship across the nation, engage in skilled politicking and avail oneself for selfless national service.

These leadership identities are again grounded on the contextual indices of election, governance and economy of the nations. Noticeably, the autobiographer's deployment of appropriate illocutionary force and acts of defending self, condemning others and evaluating others' actions ultimately evoke clear implications for the overall discourse of memoir's literature and political identity of Nigeria and beyond. Two predominant pragmatic and discourse implication of these discourses project: negative representation of others' identified, and gamification of leadership acts. In ordinary terms, OBJ's memoirs implicate politicians' ideological negative framing of others while projecting positive self and also promoting the game-playing mechanics that underlie the political operations across party and regional divides.

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