

Corruption, Politics and Governance in Nigeria

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Introduction

A release some years ago by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), puts the cost of corruption in Nigeria since 1960 at a staggering figure of 220 billion pounds. This probably explains the slow pace of development as the adverse effect of corruption on national development is phenomenal. This chapter thus examines the implication of corruption for governance in Nigeria since independence. It argues that corrupt and other related acts would inevitably thwart democratic governance, pollute the political space and create a spatial economy and lead to a “massification” of the poor. The chapter hinges its argument on the fact that corruption throws spanners in the wheels of national development and hinges its argument on the fact that governance of Nigeria has suffered lack of accountability, transparency and honesty for too long. It is recommended that anti-corruption agencies should rather be controlled and answerable to the judiciary, be made up of persons with records of integrity, and be led by a judge with a track record of forthrightness and fearlessness.

Concept of Corruption

Broadly speaking, corruption is a term used to describe acts that are considered immoral, such as fraud, graft, bribery, stealing, perjury, lying, dishonesty, indiscipline, and debased act like sexual immorality or perversion. Corrupt acts also include economic and financial crimes, nepotism, favoritism or discrimination and partiality in decision-making or allocation of values. Corruption thus represents degeneration from the normal, that is, an anti-social behavior (Okojie and Momoh, 2005:1). By inference therefore, corruption goes beyond the narrow definition of the World Bank as the use of public office for private gain (Hulter and Shah, 2000).

Our operational definition of corruption will however be flowing from the United Nations guideline in its ‘Manual on Anti-Corruption Policy III’, which distinguishes two important corruption typologies namely, grand and petty corruption. Grand corruption represents such anti-state acts as looting, 419 scam, money laundering and operation of illegal foreign bank vaults by public officers and private individuals. Such other acts as immorality, dishonesty, perjury, though related to grand corruption, will be considered as

petty corruption. Grand corruption is thus another term for public corruption; while petty corruption may refer to private corruption. However, both are not mutually exclusive as aspects of one can be gleaned from the other.

In their study, Okojie and Momoh (2005:2) define grand corruption as an act which is widespread and systematic in nature and damaging to the local economy. To commit grand corruption is to commit economic crime and those who commit it are being regarded as 'economic criminals'.

However, there is also the phenomenon of political corruption that further explicates the term, grand corruption. Political or grand corruption has brought much social decadence upon the Nigerian State, carrying along with it, such rotten baggage as godfatherism, influence-peddling, rigging of elections, manipulation of and buying of votes, manipulative political financing, embezzlement in office, and fraud. Aiyede (2006) defines political corruption as the abuse of public or governmental power for illegitimate private advantage. For Lipset and Lenz (2000:112), political corruption is an effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private benefit.

The Nigerian anti-corruption law has identified as corrupt practices, the use of pecuniary advantage, insincerity in advice with a view to gaining advantage, less than a full day's work for a full day's pay, tardiness and laziness towards public office or tasks, failure to report cases of inducement to the anti-corruption bodies, among others (Akanbi, 2004; Aiyede, 2006: 39). For our purposes therefore, in view of the fact that we are examining the Nigerian public life, grand corruption, that is the use of public office for private advantages, will be our framework.

Manifestations of Corruption

Private Corruption

By private corruption, we mean people outside government, private individuals engaging in unethical acts. These could be individuals outside institutions who commit acts of immorality (perversion, show of dementia, and acts of fraud or scamming). The other

group of people is persons in the organized private sector who may loot or carry out other acts of fraud in their companies or who colludes with those in government to perpetrate sharp financial practices.

Private corruption has manifested in Nigeria as everyday bribery to obtain a desired objective, breaking of traffic laws, piracy, plagiarism, alteration of school grades, illegal inflation of petroleum pump prices by dealers, robbery, sexual gratification for higher grades or promotion, et cetera.

Public Corruption

This is the familiar corruption that takes place in government or by government officials and their accomplices in the private sector. Another name for public corruption is official, grand or institutional corruption. This is the kind of corruption involving public office holders. In this case, persons in position of authority exploit the position to take from the commonwealth. Let us briefly look at the manifestations of public corruption.

- i. Political corruption: This is the kind of corruption that obtains in the three arms of government in a democratic rule, namely, executive, legislative and judiciary. Corruption at this level is the highest because it involves state fund. The issues of personal and primordial attachments in appointment, award of contracts; as well inflation of contract monies, embezzlement of funds, and misappropriation of fund are critical examples of public corruption in the executive. The legislature in Nigeria has in recent times been in the news for high profile bribery scandals (the Hembe-Oteh bribe scandal and the Farouk Lawan-Femi Otedola bribery allegations) in which the chairmen of the House of Representatives probe panels were indicted by the persons they were probing for demanding and collecting bribes from the suspects. The judiciary becomes vulnerable when it looks away from an obvious case of crime, tries to downplay the veracity of a crime, or commits travesty of justice for a particular political interest. The Federal Court of Appeal has been in a state of crisis for sometime leading to the suspension of its president on alleged

complicity in election cases involving some western states which the president was said to have served the interest of a political party (Ketefe, 2012).

- ii. **Bureaucratic corruption:** Corruption here is still at the level of government. It involves the technocrats and civil as well as public servants who implement government policies. These include the leadership and personnel in ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs). The corruption at this level is the worst as the allocation, release and use of money is executed by these government offices. The staff are the ones that propose and submit financial needs of the units or projects and they are the ones that transfer and effect payment. Corruption becomes rife at this point. We have had cases of heads of ministries and parastatals busted and arraigned before competent courts and tribunals on charges of high profile stealing and fraud. Bureaucratic corruption also manifests in favouritism and nepotism in appointment, promotion and reward systems in public offices. Some persons get rapid promotion and rewards on the basis of family, friendship, ethnic or religious affiliations to the boss; while some never get promotion because of such frivolous considerations.
- iii. **Military corruption:** This was obtainable in Nigeria during military dictatorship. Ironically, the military was an institution that saw itself as a corrective regime in the face of bad leadership and festering corruption. That was the original intention of the army when they struck in January 1966. But we also know that the counter-coup of July was an ethnic-motivated coup meant to avenge the assassination of some persons of northern extraction in the first coup. With this mentality, professionalism that formed the fulcrum of the “corrective” notion of the institution began to fade out as corruption gradually crept in. By 1971, the military had become debased as all sorts of allegations were raised against General Gowon’s military ministers and state governors. It got worse with the Babangida and Abacha regimes which came under the spotlight as the two most corrupt leaderships in the country (TI, 2004).

iv. Other forms of institutional corruption: The other forms of institutional corruption include that in the media and entertainment industries and even in the labour movement. The media is particularly known for the graft or ‘brown envelope’ syndrome in which news reports are only publishable when certain individuals or groups in the story pay their way; or when an image polishing is done for those who can pay the reporter for it; or negative stories are stepped down when money has been paid to destroy such story. In the entertainment industry, persons for musical or movie auditions may have to “sort” or “settle” with money or sexual gratification to be given roles in films even when they are good or very bad. Labour groups are sometimes compromised by government not to embark on industrial action or to betray the cause of the movement by “sorting” labour leaders through the fattening of their accounts.

Nigeria’s Corruption Profile

Corruption has been identified as a major challenge to national development in Nigeria (Seteolu, 2004). For the past fifty years or so, corruption has manifested in bribery, graft, treasury looting, subsidy and pension theft, money laundering, advance fee fraud, general indiscipline, favouritism and nepotism. The deep-seated nature of corruption and its drawbacks have earned Nigeria all manner of rankings by the eagle-eyed and whistle-blowing global corruption monitoring agency, Transparency International (TI), which once placed Nigeria as the fifth most corrupt nation among over 100 countries of the world sampled (TI, 2005). The corruption culture became so etched in the social life that certain catchphrases have entered the social lexicon of the country. These include “sorting” (2005-date), “kleptocracy” (1990s-date), “settlementocracy” (1980s to 1990s) and “contractocracy” (1960s to 1980s).

The embarrassing rate of corruption has continually brought Nigeria into global spotlight and made it feature in the news for the wrong reasons. This has led to the attempts by successive administrations to fight public and private corruption. Notable among these attempts have been Ethical Revolution by the Shagari administration, War Against

Indiscipline (WAI) by the Buhari-Idiagbon regime in the 1980s, War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC) by the Abacha regime in the 1990s; and the recent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act of 2000, which berthed the ICPC (ICPC, 2006); as well as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission set up in 2002 by the Olusegun Obasanjo administration to tackle economic and financial crimes, including advance fee fraud (419), overt looting of public treasury, and money laundering (EFCC, 2002).

Pre-Colonial Era

Corruption in Nigeria has sometimes been traced to the pre-colonial era, when the forerunners to colonial masters created Afro-European conversations that were premised on falsetto. It has been argued by some scholars such as Davidson (1960), Ikime (1985) and Anene and Brown (1966) that the colonialists established an empire on the foundation of scam or fraud. Their “carrot and stick” approach was itself manipulative and deceptive. It was not different from offering grafts in exchange for favours, which falls within our conceptual framework of corruption. The acquisition and establishment of colonies were fraudulent and questionable. In some places, they had offered “protection”, sealed in questionable “protectorate treaties” that turned out to be outright scamming of local chiefs to let off their kingdoms without knowing it. King Jaja of Opobo had questioned the meaning of “protectorate”, for which he was dethroned and banished (Alagoa, 1980). King Shaka of the Zulu kingdom had queried the real intentions of the European offer of military alliance and “protectorate” over the Natal Province, for which his kingdom was subsequently infiltrated with traitors even from Shaka’s royal family, who eventually secured the alliance of the Europeans to tear the great Zulu kingdom apart (Golightly, 2011).

Historical records show that Africans once lived together and had their traditional conflict and peace times which further bound them. But with the coming of the Europeans shortly after the Berlin settlement of colonial interest in 1885, the approach the Europeans came with were not far from corrupt practices as we have defined it. For instance, the missionaries had brought the message of sublimity and meekness through the teachings

of the scriptural beatitudes but which the colonial masters seemed to have manipulated to make “zombies” of the subjects, apparently preparatory to a fraudulent change of land and state ownership.

In some cases, Europeans resorted to playing Africans against one another. In the Niger Delta area, the Dappa Pepple Ijaw kingdom was pulled down by a fraudulent siding with Anne Pepple with men and material to prosecute an insurgency that would topple Dappa, a recalcitrant leader who despised European encroachment. The Efiks were played against the Ibibios just for the purpose of winning the Efiks to gain control of the coastal trade (Alagoa, 1980).

Colonial Era

During colonialism, the *divide and rule* and *carrot and stick* systems did not change. It was this pattern of public corruption that the colonial masters directly bequeathed to the political class. While the southwest sought early decolonization and the north preferred a much later date, it was the north that power was eventually handed over to. The northern political class thus began to see power as their birthright and would adopt the strategy of divide and rule like their European protégés at independence.

A process of recycling northern elements in power, populating the political system (and government) with northern elements and empowering the younger political class with plum and strategic positions in government, sharing huge contracts among the elite for financial empowerment, using the military to seize power and consolidate the northern hold on to power, as well as manipulating census figures to reflect a demographic superiority of the north over the south, would follow. The raising of Warrant Chiefs in eastern Nigeria during colonial rule was a probable attempt at deepening divisions in the Igbo society, while the extension of the tax policy to include women paying tax was considered a rip-off. Also, the use of Warrant Chiefs, use of persons from the *Osu* Caste system as chiefs and tax collectors and the taxing of women were alien to traditional Igboland. But the deliberate introduction of this was considered by the people at the time

as a means to defraud them and corrupt the system for self interest (Columbia Encyclopedia, 2012).

Post-Colonial Era

The corruption profile during military and civilian rule was not different. Characteristics of corruption remain “kleptocracy” (stealing in high government places with or without the connivance of individuals in the private sector); “contractocracy” (a recurring act of distributing bloated capital projects construction monies among friends and family members; such contracts may remain undone and as such constitute white elephants); “settlementocracy” (a chop-I-chop government where national wealth goes round a personnel in government and their cronies; they can also buy off people considered potential or real opposition); and of course the regular money laundering, drug peddling, and embezzlement of public fund.

Indeed the history of Nigeria from 1960 has been the accounts of misappropriation of funds, embezzlement or looting of treasury, prebendalism and “settlements” through grafts and contracts (Awoshakin, 2006). One of the reasons why the administration of Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was overthrown by the military in 1966 was alleged crass materialism among his ministers and “corruption in high places” (Nzeogwu, 1966). According to Nzeogwu, the “enemies” were those “corrupt ministers, VIPs... in high places... the ten percenters (from fat contracts)...who have turned development back by several years...and who have made Nigeria big for nothing in international circles” (paraphrased) (cited in Obasanjo, 1987).

After the civil war in 1970, the three “Rs” (Rehabilitation, Reconciliation and Reconstruction) were massively embarked upon by the Gowon regime with the huge oil revenue that had characterized the war years. The oil fortunes soon became a minus as it prompted the arbitrary and careless Udoji Salary Awards that over-monetized the economy, discouraged rural farming and constructed spatial inflation. The resultant situation was the over-prizing of money ahead of social values, which caused infidelity of

market forces, embezzlement for increased financial capacity and gratifications (Adele, 1998).

The oil boom and windfall predated the era of jumbo and “white elephant” projects and inflated contract awards. Subsequently, the “Rs” era witnessed declining national morality with Gowon’s Supreme Military Council members accused of unprecedented personal aggrandizement and arbitrary awards of jumbo project contracts to friends, relations and foreign partners (Diamond, 1998).

The military regime of Murtala Mohammed and Olusegun Obasanjo benefited from a tremendous influx of oil money that increased 350% between 1973 and 1974, when oil prices skyrocketed, to 1979, when the military stepped down. Increased revenues permitted massive spending that, incidentally, was poorly planned and concentrated in urban areas. The oil boom was marred by a minor recession in 1978-79, but revenues rebounded until mid-1981. The increase in revenues made possible a rapid rise in income, especially for the urban middle class. There was a corresponding inflation, particularly in the price of food, as rural dwellers, who were the major producers of food, had begun to move to the urban centres in search of white collar jobs to benefit in the oil money (Eker, 1999). The urban centres soon became glutted and places like Lagos began to produce slums, shabby environs and criminally minded unemployed youth (Folarin, 2006).

The sudden wealth arising from oil, which dominated Nigeria’s exports, encouraged greed, corruption and berthed the new trend among the political and military class to seek power by all means because of the opulence occurring from it. About #2.8 billion of oil revenue was allegedly declared missing from the state affairs in 1978 as reckless spending characterized an unaccountable governance (Nwankwo, 1999). This prompted the Obasanjo Declaration at Jaji in 1977 sign-posting the commencement of the battle against the creeping culture of corruption, bribery and indiscipline.

Shagari’s Ethical Revolution was to transform the society in which corruption and financial indiscipline had become pandemic. The term “revolution” denoted the gravity

of the decadence, which could not be handled by Obasanjo's Jaji Declaration. The period of Ethical Revolution was marked by state officials amassing wealth from public parastatals, boards and ministries to stave off as much as possible in an emergent era of "oil doom" (that is, a time fortunes on oil revenue had declined considerably) with an interface of inflation and deflation. The Shagari administration responded by introducing Austerity Measures, a policy that caused severe social and economic hardships that encouraged treasury looting, bribery, fraud and social crimes like robbery. It was this era that witnessed the phenomenon of arson-after-looting by officials in a bid to offset all records that could trace culprits. The Nigerian External Telecommunications (NET) buildings, among others, were the early examples of this new dimension of corruption.

War Against Indiscipline (WAI) was a practical approach to corruption and immorality pursued in 1984 by Generals Buhari and Idiagbon. Setting up military task forces, the "war" ranged from forcing market prices down, raiding illegal and informal "black-market" sales outlets, arresting and detaining corrupt politicians, sentencing corrupt offenders to life imprisonment or death; to compulsory environmental sanitation, maintenance of decorum at public places, queuing to board buses, trains, planes, to buy stamps at post offices, in making telephone calls, and even fetching water from public pipes.

The measures were however considered too high-handed, stifling social life and used as a weapon to eliminate political and military opposition. The task forces were also accused of excesses, such as raiding to loot markets, assaulting "bloody civilians" and intimidating their petty foes or folk alike (Ake, 1987).

General Babangida overthrew the Buhari administration on charges of "high handedness" among others. Babangida thereafter relaxed the "war" and rather commenced a social and economic reengineering policy, culminating in Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The programme, badly implemented, gave Nigeria away to foreign profiteers who collaborated with local capital cliques (including leadership and the economic class) to make fortunes through deregulation (privatization and commercialization). Soon the

middle class paled into extinction, the gulf between the rich and the poor widened significantly, naira lost its value remarkably, and the social situation became unbearable for the masses (Osoba, 1993).

Indiscipline intensified in the polity: crime rate escalated; short-cuts to wealth through drug peddling, money rituals and reckless aggrandizement took dangerous dimensions; and money laundering and advance fee fraud (419) became phenomenal in the country. Three of these variants of corruption and indiscipline namely, drug peddling, money laundering and advance fee fraud or 419 were not only issues that made Nigeria lose its goodwill in the global community, but were also the triumvirate that became associated with the country during the Babangida regime of SAP. It was the combination of the Babangida and Abacha mismanagement of the regime of corruption in Nigeria that galvanized the international standing of the nation in 2000 as one of the most corrupt nations. Speculations were made that the two military rulers corruptly enriched themselves and so could not have controlled the malaise because they were beneficiaries of it. The disappearance of the \$12.4 billion Gulf War oil windfall from 1991 to date added some credibility to this speculation; while government has confirmed reports in the case of Abacha that most of his loots have been recovered (Okojie and Momoh, 2005). This has been the story of Nigeria before the intervention of 2000 and 2002.

Theoretical Explanations of Corruption

While examining the dynamics of corruption in Nigeria, Nwolise, in a lecture in 1992, described “dynamics” of corruption as the systematic causation of corruption to its phenomenal level. Put differently, dynamics have to do with the scientific explanation of the causes corruption among public office holders.

Among the forces, poverty is identified as the most fundamental. In a study of an average Nigerian society (Ogbunwezeh, 2005), the fear of or the quest to quit poverty has been the driving force behind acts of corruption. Those in high places do not want to return to abjection after service. In a similar vein, people seek public office to initiate a change of financial state or fortunes. The escalating rate of poverty in the country caused by poorly

implemented economic policies, misappropriation of funds, among others, culminate in state and mass poverty the fear of which drives people to capitalize on opportunities for enrichment. Other acts such as 419, drug peddling and laundering are 'private' manifestations of the poverty mentality syndrome.

Second, the enormity of social or societal pressures on public office holders or an affluent individual imposes a burden that could compel acts of corruption. Merton (1957) notes that much pressure is exerted on a public office holder or rich family member by members of his nuclear or extended family to assist them in one way or the other. This is as a result of the fact that a public office such as Local Government Councilor or Senate President or Accounts Manager, or Director-General or Chief Accountant is considered as a goldmine and proximity to the 'national cake' that should be wisely shared among family members, who could either be sent to school, or for whom businesses could be set, or rehabilitated, among other pressures. These encourage tendencies toward official and political corruption, in the same way individuals considered wealthy may be tempted to engage in fraud, money laundering or drug peddling in order not to disappoint his kinsmen (Ekeh, 1995).

Third and yet closely related is the 'social responsibility' paradigm in the functionalist model (Chinnoy, 1967). Naturally, as status changes or increases, social responsibilities are bound to increase as more expectations, like pressures and demands, are coming from people. An elected House of assembly member is not only expected to "deliver" at his ward and local government, but also to "take care" of a growing number of political associates, friends, political thugs, concubines or wives, and retinue of personal staff. A little inflation of contracts and figures here or there may thus be considered not be out of place; or adding '419' to his source of income for the non-public office holder may become desirable not to lose his status.

Political instability engenders political corruption. Frequent changes of power threaten security of office and by extension source of income. The political class, like their military counterparts, is tempted to steal as much many as possible while they last in

office, as they are not sure of tenure of office anymore. Even under democratic rule, the frequent military-like appointment and dropping of Ministers, directors-general and other public office holders tacitly encourage corruption.

Other variables explicating corruption in Nigeria include the lingering impact of SAP, economic mismanagement, legacies or examples of past corrupt rulers and individuals, lack of accountability and transparency, lack of empirical outcome or tangible evidence of punishment of past corruption offenders, flaunting of ill-gotten wealth by individuals who seek political power with such means, abundance of sacred cows that walk freely in and out of corridors of power, and of course the culture of crass materialism that has no bounds of age gender and experience in the Nigerian value system (Azelama, 2002).

Major Corruption Cases in Nigeria

Among the old inconclusive cases of corruption were the 1956 Foster-Sustton Inquiry into the Affairs of the African Continental Bank, 1960 Elias Commission of Inquiry into the Administration, Economics and Industrial Relations of the Nigerian Railway Corporation, 1965 Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into the Affairs of the Nigerian Ports Authority, 1970 Inquiry into the Apapa Road Project fraud, 1980 Tribunal of Inquiry into fraudulent crude oil sales, 1983 Ayo Irekefe Panel on alleged N2.8 billion from NNPC's bank account in the UK, 1983 Tribunal of Inquiry into the Republic Building Fire Incident, 1999 Christopher Kolade Commission into the Award of Government Contracts, and the Idris Kuta Panel Report on the Award of Contracts by the Senate between June 1999 and July 2000 (Okojie and Momoh, 2005:18).

There was the high profile corruption case involving former Vice President Abubakar Atiku which led to hot verbal exchange between Obasanjo and Atiku in August and September 2006. The former President was openly accusing his Vice President, Atiku of gross acts of corruption, including illegal transactions, bribery, fraud and embezzlement with the view to enrichment (*The Sun*, 2006). This showed the leadership's culpability. The Obasanjo-Atiku episode opened a new vista in the corruption situation, showing the

extent to which such governmental thievery and irresponsibility had eaten deeply in the national fabrics.

There was also the scam of the \$214 million National Identity Card project that involved the Internal Affairs Ministry and SAGEM. SAGEM had supplied as new, fairly used and disused data-capturing machines for the 2002/2003 national identity card project at such a prohibitive cost. Yet the Ministry had declared that the machines were new, which brought the Minister to the spotlight as it was apparent that there was a collusion between SAGEM and the Ministry to defraud the government. The case did not however last long as it soon died out. Similarly, there was an allegation by some ministerial nominees in 2003 that the Senate screening committee demanded N54 million bribe to be given clearance. There were also the Abacha loots that were traced to local and international banks (Jason, 2005).

There was the case of the arrest and trial of a serving Saki East Local Government chairman, Mr. Ogunmola for fraudulent contract awards between 2004 and 2006 (*Punch*, 2006). Some government officials in Akwa Ibom, Ekiti, Sokoto, Kano and Ondo states were busted for corrupt related offences totalling N227 million. Also, by 2006, there were already petitions on stealing, money laundering and fraudulent contract awards against 24 serving state governors in the federation (ICPC, 2006).

One of the biggest cases of public corruption in Nigeria was that involving a serving Inspector-General of Police, Tafa Balogun who was exposed and arrested on multiple charges, including using his office to embezzle \$128 million dollars. There was also the case of a serving Bayelsa State Governor, Diepreye Alamieyesegha who was accused of many charges, particularly that of multiple money laundering abroad. He was arrested in London and detained, but he jumped bail and escaped to Nigeria from London, only to be impeached and arrested by the EFCC for prosecution (*ThisDay*, 2006)

There has been the recovery of N640 billion and arrest of over 500 people in money laundering battle in the last 12 years. There was the case of the busting, arrest and

prosecution of a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Ricky Tafa over financial scam and demand for the sum of over 200 million dollars as bribe from the Chairman of Obat Oil Limited between 2005 and April 2006; findings and charges against former Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau state over multiple cases of money laundering abroad; investigation of former Ekiti State Governor, Ayo Fayose, former Abia State Governor Orji Uzor Kalu, Otunba Mike Adenuga of Globacom and Conoil, Mohammed Babangida, son of the former military President Ibrahim Babangida, former Governor George Akume of Benue state (*The News*, 2006), and in recent times, the trial and conviction of Chief Olabode George, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Nigerian Ports Authority for multiple frauds as Board Chairman, and the indictment of former Governors Gbenga Daniel and Alao Akala of Ogun and Oyo states respectively.

It was discovered that part of the N1.6 billion ecological fund mismanaged by Plateau State Governor, Joshua Dariye was donated to the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (Aiyede, 2006: 50). The EFCC also uncovered the N50 million scandals involving a Minister of Education, Professor Fabian Osuji in allocation deals with the National Assembly and the National Universities Commission (NUC), which eventually led to his removal and the illegal sales of government's landed property. This illegal sale and allocation of public estates declared for sale which was investigated found a Minister, Mrs. Osomo culpable which led to her removal from office (Anwana, 2006).

On September 27 2006, the EFCC levelled allegations of varied cases of grave acts of corruption against 31 serving state governors at the floor of the National Assembly. The Commission's Chairman, Nuhu Ribadu made a case against the governors challenging them to waive their immunity so that his agency could be enabled to prosecute them (*The Guardian*, 2006). This allegation, although lampooned and described as baseless, constituted the first major confrontation of corruption at the very top in Nigeria.

Weaknesses in the Anti-Corruption Crusade

The institutional weaknesses of the ICPC, EFCC and the Due Process Commission are the first set of brickwalls in Nigeria's fight against corruption. The intuitions, by their

acts of omission and commission, appear to lack complete independence. The ICPC is very slow to act and cannot, *strictu sensu*, prosecute; while the seemingly effective EFCC can prosecute but appears incapable of penalizing. The close affinities ICPC and EFCC have with the presidency that created them in the first place, have made the two to appear like instruments of state coercion and victimization of perceived and real enemies of the civilian administration.

The above scenario is made credible by the selective investigations and prosecutions by both commissions, particularly in handling cases of corruption involving politicians and those in the private sector who condemn federal government policies or opposed to the recently aborted third term bid by President Olusegun Obasanjo. Among those who were in the Federal government's white list until they took side in the opposition camp in one way or the other, are Tafa Balogun, Fabian Osuji, Alamiyesegeha, Joshua Dariye, Bola Tinubu, Orji Uzor Kalu, Mike Adenuga and more recently Ibrahim Babangida and Abubakar Atiku (*The News*, 2006). The EFCC and the entire anti-corruption machine seem to overlook corrupt cases and corrupt persons and groups until they begin to oppose the president on his policies and personal decisions affecting governance (Jason, 2006).

This brings us to the issue of certain ignored or "closed" or "forgotten" cases of alleged corruption. For instance, the allegations by Nasir El-Rufai, Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja) that two senators close to Obasanjo, Deputy Senate President Ibrahim Mantu and Senate Majority leader, Jonathan Zwingina asked him for a bribe of N54 million to secure approval for appointment (Dike, 2005) appear consigned in the waste bin of history. Again, the whereabouts of recovered Abacha loots declared by the Presidency since 1999-2000 are not known nor can what it has been used for be ascertained. Also, the \$12.4b Gulf War oil windfall made under General Ibrahim Babangida's regime, which cannot be traced to date, is an obvious case of embezzlement that neither the EFCC nor ICPC has investigated or shown any willingness to take up. Moreover, there are also the copious cases of jumbo contracts, "white elephant" and abandoned projects between 1976 and 1983 that are no longer mentioned.

The overt politicization of the anti-corruption crusade has made the fight against corruption a means to witch-hunt people the presidency may not want to succeed it. The Abubakar Atiku case is apposite to locate within this frame of argument. Until Vice President Atiku made it apparent that he would like to succeed Obasanjo and demanded the latter's exit in 2007, the two of them were trusted political allies. From 2005 however, Atiku vehemently opposed President Obasanjo's third term bid which he considered as an obstacle to his ambition. Shortly, the relationship between the two collapsed and soon after, EFCC and president Obasanjo himself, laid charges of corruption against Atiku (*The News*: 20). This development, like many others in which "anti-Obasanjo" politicians (*Independent*, 2006) are involved, have made observers to call ICPC and EFCC government's bulldozers against political enemies (Makarfi, 2006).

The victims of the political witch-hunt are themselves culpable, which explains their successful investigation and removal like Balogun, Osuji, Alamiyesegeha, Osomo, etc; but these are also many allegations and cases not looked into as earlier mentioned, because such cases involve those supportive of the administration. (*ThisDay*, 2006).

There are also constitutional constraints. First, the number of the convicted by the courts is quite small in comparison to the allegations. Both the ICPC and EFCC have been tinted that they have *prima facie* evidence of wrong-doing against a majority of state governors, but have been unable to prosecute them because of restraining legal frameworks. The EFCC claims that the state governors, altogether, hold assets worth \$175 billion in foreign accounts. Under the current law, serving governors cannot be the subject of criminal action until they cease to hold public office (George, 2000; Newsweek, 2005).

According to the 1999 Federal Constitution, immunity is conferred on 74 public office holders, including the President, Vice-President, 36 state governors, and 36 deputy governors, who can neither have criminal proceedings instituted against them or be arrested or imprisoned while in office. These provisions have been blamed for hindering anti-corruption because it is mainly top public office holders that commit heinous economic and financial crimes who yet hide under immunity throughout their tenure

spanning four years or eight years if they get a second term. For instance, Nigeria's Former Finance Minister, Okonjo-Iweala claimed that most governors embark on foreign trips immediately after allocations from the Federal Government and yet cannot be arrested or prosecuted (*Independent*, 2006).

The other problems of anti-corruption in Nigeria include perjury on the part of culprits and distortions in fact-finding by panels of inquiry, manipulation of information and records, and destruction of records or traces of corruption; and general lack of cooperation with the crusade either for lack of faith in it or because of the overwhelming culture of corruption across the nation.

Impact of Corrupt Practices on Governance

Corruption is the altar on which national development is slaughtered. The cost of corruption goes beyond the financial implications as revealed by the BBC. It has social, cultural and political drawbacks that have overall consequences on the development of the nation. The social, cultural and political backlashes have graver consequences for a nation's existence. Let us examine some of these effects.

Poverty and the Burden of Governance

The immediate impact of stolen wealth is bankruptcy of a state. This creates a major problem of wealth creation and distribution as it also impedes job creation. The ultimate impact is mass unemployment and poverty of the majority. The burden of governance escalates as there are limited resources to carry out developmental projects or run government.

Economic and Structural Underdevelopment

The fewer the resources as a result of emptying treasury, the more the yawning gaps in structural development. Resources meant for multitude have been shared among a few. The result is economic backwardness and underdevelopment.

Inability to Control Other Kinds of Crime

Another structural problem corruption creates is that a corrupt government, institution or individual would not have the moral and legal justification or the boldness to control others or prosecute them. It thus leads to a situation of multiplication of corrupt practices that cannot be checked.

Indebtedness to Other Nations

The drained resources would require replenishment. The state could go a-borrowing again and again thus increasing indebtedness. This has manifested in the draining of Nigerian domestic and foreign reserves and the borrowing of more money from abroad. Nigeria's external debt profile at March 31, 2013 is 6.6b USD, combining debts owed the World Bank, African Development Bank, Exim Bank of China, French Development Agency, among other agencies and bonds (DMO, 2013).

Failure of institutions to work

The fact that institutions and individuals are compromised would mean that the institutions will not be able to work or function and serve their purpose. This will lead to a buffeted system and a perpetual state of disorder. There will surely be erosion of institutional capacity of government because of disregard for procedures and due process. Such lack of capacity owing to mismanagement of office and fund explains the failure of such institutions as the Nigeria Airways, NITEL, National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), commercial banks, among other groups.

Poor Service and Productivity

Again the compromised system engages personnel based on sentiments and not merits. As such, mediocrities are engaged, which have direct impact on quality of service delivery and output. The important issues here include nepotism and favouritism in public office and appointment and value distribution. The qualified personnel to execute excellent tasks are denied while incompetent friends, family members or those who have bribed to get the jobs are engaged, thus leading to poor service delivery.

National Security Risks

Compromised security personnel can do little or nothing to protect lives and property. Where corruption has affected the health and food sectors, the citizens stand the risk of consumption of fake or adulterated drugs. In terms of national security, it has been reported severally that the Boko Haram security menace and other cases of armed gangs on rampage beating the security system have either been aided by bribed security personnel or have been able to beat a corruption-weakened security network (Abraham, 2013).

Other serious social and political consequences of corruption include compromising of the rule of law by the judiciary, unfair and inefficient provision of services of public administrators, undermining of the legitimacy of government and democratic values of trust and tolerance, and of course a consequent poor external image of the country. These are the situations Nigeria has been suffering for years as a result of festering corruption in the land.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the phenomenon of corruption in Nigeria, identifying the concept as it applies to the country; the causes, manifestations and implications for national development. The chapter also examined some cases of corrupt practices in high places and how these have affected governance and politics of Nigeria since independence. It did a historical search of corruption, establishing the fact that corruption in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial era of western incursions into Africa, and that the Post-Colonial State has degenerated more as a result of certain social factors, including poverty, greed, selfishness, and the likes.

The strengths and weaknesses of the anti-corruption crusade were identified, with the devastating effects on nation-building highlighted. The dangerous consequences of corruption for the nation make it imperative that the anti-corruption war should be intense and backed by new and systematic strategies. Anti-corruption agencies should no longer be under the control of the Executive arm of government. They should be independent of political corruption. Such agencies should rather be controlled and answerable to the

judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court, which is often independent of the Presidency or Executive. Also, the anti-corruption agencies should be made up of persons with records of integrity, who have never identified with any political party, and should be headed by a judge of the Supreme Court who has a track record of forthrightness and fearlessness

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