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## **PATTERNS OF CORRUPTION AND THE NIGERIAN STATE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Divergent views on corruption agree that it is a bad behaviour in Nigeria. Corruption is an endemic problem that has posed many problems and hardships. Corruption due to its conscious and unconscious institutionalization in Nigeria have become a hydra-headed monster and what to be done in combating the increasing spread of its tumor to all fibres of socioeconomic physiology of the country tend to defy solutions. Using the survey research design and documentation analysis, the paper defined Corruption and examined some theories of Corruption. It also discussed the patterns obtained in Nigeria. The paper went further to find out the most corrupt leaders in Nigeria and the effect of such corrupt leadership on the Nigeria state. The paper was concluded by suggesting solutions to corruption in Nigeria as a country.*

**Keywords:** *Corruption, Looting, Political Independence, Socio-Economic Transactions, Monopoly Power*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Corruption may not be easy to define but according to Tanzi (1998) it is generally not difficult to recognize when observed. The most simplified and popular definition adopted by the World Bank is the abuse of public power for private benefit (Tanzi, 1998; Gray and Kaufmann, 1998). The different perspectives through which corruption is viewed notwithstanding a common ground of opinion conceives it as the perpetration of vices against the well-being of the society. Lip-set and Lenz (2000) defined corruption as an effort to

secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense. Tanzi (1998) defined it neutrally as the intentional noncompliance with arm's length relationship which aims at deriving some advantages from this behavior for oneself or for related individuals, this definition takes care of the exclusion of vital issues, such as corruption in the private sectors and in private activities. Tanzi believes that corruption occurs in every human endeavor and is often difficult to observe because any act of corruption do not typically take place in broad day light (Tanzi, 1998). According to Ribadu (2006) the history of corruption in Nigeria is strongly rooted in over 1 years of military rule, out of the 44 years of her political independence in 1960. Successive military regimes subdued the rule of law, facilitated the wanton looting of the public treasury, depilated public institutions and free speech of instituted secrecy and a plague in culture in the running of government business. Corruption becomes the dominant guiding principle of running the affairs of the state.

The period witness a total reversal and destruction of every good thing in the country. Consequently, corruption in Nigeria has become a habitual part of everyday life, an expected element of every socio-economic transaction. Despite the existence of many institutions and laws, corruption has remained a serious threat to Nigeria national security and development. Part of the reason is because the government has compromised with well-known corrupt persons by using various tactics to protect them. The implication is the inability of the government to go in to offensive against corrupt persons using the existing laws arid institutions as effective weapons.

In Africa the root causes of corruption are traceable to prevalence of dictatorial rules, monetized or materialized economies, poor economic and educational empowerment and the absence of national ethical and moral values and true patriotism (Suwunm, Reufu, Oketolpan, Salako and Usifuh, 2010). In Nigeria, according to Anyo (1998) there are many dimensions of corruption some of which include: abuse of power, ill-treatment of people's needs, self-award of contracts, malicious withdrawal or carpeting of personnel files, fraudulent distortion of facts, misappropriation, ghost worker syndrome, 10% syndrome, transfer of public funds to private accounts, over-invoicing, over- pricing of contracts and deliberate arson usually to cover up corrupt practices.

Again Ake (1981) believed that corruption in Nigeria was caused by promotional activities of unscrupulous multinationals, with the active

connivance of local politicians to encourage useless industrial ventures in order to sell plant and machinery. To explain the dynamics of corruption, Kutgaard (1996) developed a simple model — C (corruption) = M (monopoly power) + D (discretion) — A (accountability).

According to him the extent of corruption ends on the amount of monopoly power and discretionary power at the disposal of an official. Monopoly power is larger in highly regulated economies, whereas discretionary power is often larger in developing countries and transition economies where administrative rules and regulations are often poorly defined and which are plagued by a weak rule of law. Accountability may also be weak either as a result of poorly defined ethical standards of public service, weak administrative and financial systems and ineffective watchdog agencies.

Nigeria present a veritable case of understanding the connection between corruption and political malaise. Ribadu (2006) gave a graphic summary of the situation he termed the period between 1979 and 1998 the darker period in Nigeria’s history of corrupt regimes. The civilian administration of 1979-1983 was bedeviled with profligacy, wanton waste, political thuggery and coercion, disrespect for the rule of law, bare faced free for all looting of public funds through white elephant projects (Ribadu 2006).

Corrupt public servants and others in private sector bestrode the nation, masquerading as captains of business and power brokers with tainted glasses and stolen wealth and demanded the rest of us to kowtow before them, the period of military regime was pathetic. Under the regime corruption has become the sole guiding principle of running affairs of the state. The period witnessed a total reversal and destruction of every good thing in the country (Ribado 2006).

There are many factors influencing corruption in Nigeria, the table below summarizes the factors:

<p><b>1 / Wage consideration</b></p>	<p><b>a. Inadequate pay</b> <b>b. Fringe benefit and other financial incentives</b></p>
<p><b>2 / Inefficiency internal control</b></p>	<p>a. Inadequate supervision and control system b. Lack of explicitly standard of performance for employees and organization c. Poor recruitment and selection for personal.</p>

		d. Too few or many few (non-transparent) rules and procedures (rep tape)
3	Inefficient external control	a. Law and order tradition check and balance b. Law of information made available to the public and freedom of press c. Mechanism for citizens participation and complaint d. Difficulty of proving cases in court e. High social acceptance of corruption
4	Statutory penalty rate.	a. Amount of fine, prison sentence b. Administrative of sanctions c. Prohibition of being ever re-employed in the public sector d. Penalties of relatives
	Amount of distortion or opportunities in the economy	a. Pervasive government regulation b. High statutory tax rate, no transparent tax regulation c. Provision of government services short of demand (government monopolies)
6	Other factors	a. Cultural factors b. Cultural of bureaucratic autism and education of civil servant c. Leadership d. Ethnic diversity

Source: Rijckhemand Water (1997) cited in Sowumin, Ranfu, Solako and Osifuh (2010)

### Theories of corruption in Nigeria

There are several theories that seek to explain corruption in Nigeria. According to Nwolise (2010) these include the following:

- Idealism School —this school blames western materialistic and individualistic values and attitudes
- The functional school- this point to too high standard which people tend to circumvent their rules

- The human psychology school — which looks at human innate tendencies toward indiscipline
- The role incompatibility theory — that focuses on the conflict between the traditional reward system based on patronage and the modern reward system based on merit and achievement.
- Bureaucracy and patrimony theory- which holds that corruption opportunities arise when modern parliamentary government interact with traditional ones.
- The exchange theory- this explain corruption from perception of mutual reciprocity of gifts in contract transaction or (funding) winning party election. Lastly capitalist/Marxist school — which argues that capitalism is responsible for corruption in Nigeria. There is no single theory that does explain corruption in Nigeria rather a combination of some or all of these theories enable us to understand corruption in Nigeria.

### **PATTERNS AND EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA**

Different patterns of corruption exist in Nigeria based on the roles of internal “stake holders” as well as external actors.

Corruption arising from role of internal stake holder’s manifest in the following ways:

1. Electoral fraud; electoral fraud has been the bane of Nigeria’s political development since after independence. In fact there had hardly been any free, fair, transparent and credible election in Nigeria which in the main was the reason for military incursion into politics in the country. For example the April 2007 elections in Nigeria were rejected by International Monitoring Organization as a rape on democracy, even the late Nigerian president who was declared winner of the said election described it as a sham. The nation’s apex court have since up turned a good number of election results. For example recently according to Osundefender (2009) 11 collation officers and 20 presiding INEC officials on duty in Ido Osi local government during the inglorious rerun of governorship election in Ekiti state were “invited” afresh by the police to give account of how they got monetarily induced by a former government official in the state to “change the electoral result” in the governorship election.

2. Grand corruption: this is identifiable in the procurement of goods and services in the allocation of permits of mining and large public contract, particularly in road building anti public construction. For instance, Sowunmi et al (2009) opined that recent revelations in the ongoing probes of especially N1.3 trillion Power and Aviation probes are strong indication that the last civilian regimes (1999-2007) which claimed zero tolerance to corruption, may not after all be free from corruption. It is the same story with the current regime where the National Security Adviser raised alarm over non-execution of military contrpts by previous service chiefs.
3. Bureaucratic corruption: this is wide spread in Nigeria and a serious nuisance that had subverted effective service delivery in the country. It is found in the police, the judiciary services and in all the social sectors. This type of corruption is the main source public of discontent in Nigeria because it affects most members of public for example the chairman of Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) Board along with other members was recently sentenced to 25 years imprisonment following NPA probe. According to This Day Newspaper (November 4th, 2009) the chairman's instituted travail began in 2003 when an audit in N P A discovered several items running into millions of naira was ordered repeatedly during a short period of time in NPA. The exercise also revealed a huge differential in pricing within the authority such that different department purchase the same items at vastly different prices. For instance the five departments purchased barrettes (caps) at a unit price of Ni i, 804.77 while the Police department bought same item at a unit price of N750.00.
4. Corruption by External Actors: not all cases of corruption in Nigeria involve only Nigerians, there are other cases with foreigner's collaboration. A good example is the award of contract of LNG to Halliburton, a US construction firm by the Nigerian government. Adebowale and Ali (2009) reported that the firm won the contract after giving #180 million bribes to top Nigerian politicians and government officials, including those of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). Three former Nigerian presidents were also said to have benefited allegedly spanning the period from 1995 when the nearly \$7 billion contract was awarded to 2004 and possibly beyond. After more than five years of investigation a man was arrested in 2009 and accused of being the "big man" who conveyed the \$ 18Cm bribes

to Nigerian officials. Cellular News (2009) also reported that a court in Munich found Siemens guilty of bribing officials in Nigeria and two other countries for lucrative contract of telecommunication equipment. The report further showed that four former telecommunication ministers as well as other officials in the country received bribes, totalling FDUR 12 million, or about \$17.5 million. There was another monumental case tagged “Dasuki Gate” which funds for arms purchase was diverted.

5. Customs, Police, Immigration, Civil Defense, NDLEA officers’ fraud: there are examples of both loss of revenue and corruption. The uniformed officers’ corruption can be of various types including extortion, under declaration and under payment of taxes and dues. These type of corruption are symptomatic of national political institutional failure. For example driving from Onitsha to Lagos or from Lagos to the borders in Bnin republic, the travelers are likely to encounter at least four dozens of costumes for more road blocks, manned by different Police, NDLEA, Civil Defense, Customs, Immigration and Army Corps as well as local authority officials each duplicating the same control papers and documents. In the airports officials (passports, health, customs, baggage, drugs, etc.) want his/her cut making progress to the exit difficult. There is as it was, no one off payment but, interminable series of negotiations with an endless number of petty officials.

### **EFFECTS OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA**

The effects of corruption on the developmental process at several levels of administrative, political, economic and social life has been devastating (Hope Chikulo (2000), World Bank - 1997, 1996. 1979, cited in Igwe (2010). Ribadu (2006) opined that corruption is responsible for the perpetual collapse of infrastructure and institutions; it is the cause of the endemic poverty in Africa, it is behind the under development and cyclical failure of democracy to take the root in Africa. Corruption is worse than terrorism. Public officials who are corrupt should receive worse treatment than reserved for terrorists. In fact, corruption had been endemic, pervasive and corrosive in Nigeria.

### **CONCLUSION**

Corruption in a place where there is systemic corruption hesitation, values and norms of behaviors have already been adapted to a corruption modus operandi

with bureaucrats and other agents following the predatory example of or ever taking instructions from the principals in the political arena. Effective action against corruption has to involve effective determination of developing countries against corrupt individuals who engage in corrupt practices and greater political transparency to remove the secrecy under which corruption flourishes. Some economic policies when changed may reduce opportunities for corruption enforcing prudential banking like use of civil service reforms, proper financial management and tax administrative strengthening of basic laws and judicial system, prosecution of corrupt prominent figures to serve as deterrent for future officers with the same inclination.

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