

ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADE IN NIGERIA: MORE WORDS THAN DEEDS

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ABSTRACT

It is generally agreed that corruption is an evil wind that affect everyone and retard societal progress. While there are several theories that explain its prevalence in society, the point to emphasize is that it has become a way of life in Nigeria. This explains why it has been difficult to combat its rising profile. Within the framework of nature of society, neo-patrimonialism, prebendalism, economy of affection, and political god-fatherism theories, an eclectic approach. The paper examines the structural basis of corruption in the country and efforts' being made by anti-graft agencies to combat the scourge. It is the position of the paper that given the effect of corruption on national development, the fight against corruption is a war that must be won. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to expunge this scourge from the nation's body polity. The first fundamental step among other measures to redress the prevalence of corruption in the polity is to transform the state from an alien force to an entity that caters for the welfare and well-being of the people. Yet, the need for patriotic and visionary leaders that will show the way out in the fight against this common enemy (corruption) through personal example, irrespective of whose ox is gored cannot be overemphasized.

Keywords: Corruption, Economy, Development, Nigeria, Politics.

Contribution/ Originality

This study is a contribution to the existing literature on corruption and the fight of corruption in Nigeria. The study's contribution to knowledge can also been in the area of interrogation and integrating some of the theories explaining the nature and prevalence of corruption in Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption has been a recurring decimal in Nigeria. Indeed, it has become a crime that has made victims of everyone. While corruption in government is not a recent phenomenon, however, in contemporary times, it has grown out of proportion to the extent that it has arrested socio-economic and political development in the country. It is therefore, understandable why in recent time this social scourge has received so much attention from intellectual quarters, domestic and international observers', governments and civil society organizations. After a critical analysis of the rate of corruption in Nigeria, [Achebe \(1983\)](#) posits that:

Anybody who can say that corruption in Nigeria has not become alarming is either a fool, a crook or else does not live in this country. Corruption in Nigeria has passed the alarming and

entered the fatal stage; and Nigeria will die if we keep pretending that she is only slightly indisposed).

In spite of the fact that the country, boast of one of the most resourceful citizenry and natural endowment in the world, these potentials have often been frittered away through corruption and mismanagement. [Olugbade \(1992\)](#) quoting Diamond argued that the Nigerian state “can command and expend vast resources, but it cannot get things done. Thus, the state has become the primary means for the accumulation of personal wealth”. It has been argued that the “ politics of competition over allocation of resources, or what in Nigeria is called ‘the national cake’, has its most dire consequences in the transformation of offices of the state into prebends” ([Joseph, 1987](#)). However, successive governments in Nigeria have made concerted efforts to address the issue of corruption. But their antidotes, where applied, have often fallen short of the required impact to turn the state of corruption around for good ([Akhakpe, 2014](#)). It would appear that the nature of the Nigerian society makes corruption a persistent and lucrative business. For examples, during the colonial administration, stealing from the government was celebrated. Yet, years of military autocratic regimes made accountability by public officers difficult if not impossible. The effect of this development is a cynosure of all eyes; virtually all sectors of the economy are at varying degree of decay.

Nigerian rulers at all levels of government since independence have been enmeshed in looting of the common wealth. Indeed, Nigeria has suffered from government that have looted the resources of the state; that could not or would not deliver services to their people; that in many cases were predatory, corruptly extracting their countries’ resources, that maintained control through violence and bribery; and that squandered and stolen aid. Nigeria’s contemporary and literary icon Chinua Achebe was more emphatic in his exposition of Nigerian leaders and their corrupt tendencies. [Achebe \(1983\)](#) argued “the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership”.

In consequence, mass poverty, insecurity, unemployment, disease, social dislocation, etc, have been on the increase. However, under the present administration, the growth of official corruption has not gone without attempts by governments to combat its ascendancy. But, the anti-corruption crusade perhaps, has not been speedy and drastic enough to ensure that the big corrupt and corrupters are brought to book while corrupt acts by public officers are persistently and consistently fought. It is against this backdrop, we seek to interrogate the current campaign by the President Goodluck Jonathan’s administration against corruption.

The administration has declared zero-tolerance on corruption and promised to fight the war through the instrumentality of the rule of law. Yet, there are reasons to be apprehensive of its ability like other governments before it, to combat bureaucratic corruption going by its body language and actions. The paper therefore, seeks to examine the nature and structural basis of corruption in Nigeria, its effects on national development, efforts being made under the present regime to combat the scourge, the challenges militating against these efforts and how anti-corruption crusade can be strengthened and deepened in order to realize their aims and objectives.

To address the issues raised in the paper, it is organized into six sections. The first examines conceptual and theoretical issues relevant to the paper. The second discusses corruption impasses. The

third examines the nature and causes of corruption in Nigerian that has made it a dominant activity. The fourth focuses on the effect of bureaucratic corruption on national development. The fifth x-rayed efforts by the previous and present administrations to reduce the prevalence of corruption in the country. The sixth chronicled challenges facing the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria and the way out of the squirmier for a better and prosperous society.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Corruption like every other term in the social and management sciences belong to the 'tribe' of disputed concept as social and political analyst strive to explore its variegated nature and meaning. However, in an enterprise of this nature, definition of major concepts has to be undertaken in order to avoid ambiguity in the interpretation and understanding of certain terms. It is therefore imperative that concepts used in the study should be clearly defined for a better understanding of the issue under interrogation; by analyzing the views of various scholars and commentators as well as the way in which one's research is integrated into the body of existing theory and research.

Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Transparency International, 2013). It hurts everyone whose life, livelihood or happiness depends on the integrity of people in a position of authority. Corruption can also be defined as the breach of ethical rules that bind the conduct of official duties (Akhakpe, 2014). Every official position is guided by ethics. These ethics are meant to regulate official conduct. Ethics then can be defined as rules and regulations, public officers are expected to conform within the discharge of their official obligations. Corruption as a concept varies in scope and nature. Corruption can be seen as "the conscious or well-planned act by a person, or group of persons to appropriate by unlawful means the wealth of another person or group of persons" (Kanu and Osunbajo, 1999). In this definition, an explicit conversion of power and authority into cash or kind, takes place.

The definition of corruption as an act of self or group enrichment at the expense of society perhaps is the most popular understanding of corruption. However, sub-type of corruption has since emerged. These include bureaucratic or administrative corruption; social corruption; political corruption; economic or financial corruption; legal corruption; technological corruption and cultural corruption. However, our venue of study in this paper is bureaucratic corruption. In this regard, bureaucratic corruption refers to a form of exploitation by those in position of authority. While the meaning of corruption is still in dispute in many respects, however, there are certain universal generalizations about the concept of corruption. These include:

- a. Corruption varies in origin, incidence and importance among different geographical regions, sovereign states, political cultures, economies and administrative arrangements;
- b. Corruption has been found in all political systems, at every level of government, and in the delivery of all scarce public goods and services;
- c. Corruption is facilitated by unstable polities, uncertain economies, misdistribution of wealth, unrepresentative government, entrepreneurial ambitions, and privatization of public resources, factionalism, personalism and dependency;

- d. Corruption persists substantially as long as its perpetrators can coerce participation, public attitudes towards it vary widely, and it greatly benefits a privileged few at the expense of the disadvantaged population;
- e. Corruption is facilitated or impeded by the social context (including international and transnational influences) in which public power is exercised;
- f. Corruption favours those who have (over those who have-not), illegal enterprises, underground economies, and organized crime;
- g. Corruption can be contained within acceptable limits through introduction of new and more relevant rules, reform of existing laws and institutions, provision of more effective and relevant incentive structures, and enforcement mechanisms to reduce the profitability of opportunism, although its complete elimination is still beyond human capability (Caiden, 1988).

Several theoretical approaches can be useful when applied to explain the phenomenon of corruption in the public realm. Within the framework of nature of society, neo-patrimonialism, prebendalism, economy of affection, political god-fatherism, an eclectic approach, some scholars have attributed the rising tide of corruption in Nigeria to the colonial imposition of political authority on the people, their alienation from and subsequent protest against a "rogue" state (Ake, 1993; Osaghae, 2011) (Ekeh, 1975; Mamdani, 2001). According to Adebayo (1981), the manner in which the colonial state was imposed and the structure of power it bequeathed, generated protest from the people who see the state as an alien force whose resources are inexhaustible. To survive therefore, people evolve several strategies either to punish the state or to earn a living. For example, civil/public service was seen as a white man's job, anything done to frustrate it is a welcomed idea. Yet, stealing from colonial government was celebrated and encouraged. With this perception of the state, upper most in the minds of Nigerians, it would seem that the crusade against corruption may not make appreciable impact on the populace except there are attitudinal and behavioural changes amongst them (Akhakpe, 2012).

However, all theories are born refuted, nature of society, neo-patrimonialism, prebendalism, economy of affection, political god-fatherism theories not an exception. The exponents fail to recognize that corruption as a phenomenon is in-born in man. For example, "man has dominated man to his injury" (Ecclesiastes, 8:9). This statement aptly describes the history of human ruler-ship. In all ages, well-intended people who have tried to establish a more just society were constantly foiled by greed and corruption (The Watctower, 2012).

Like an incurable hereditary disease, corrupt tendencies reside or are dwelling within man. For thousands of years, corruption has ruled over mankind like a king. Sinful (corruption) inclinations lead many to put their own interest first or centre their lives on gaining material possession and authority at the expense of others. The world is characterized by greed and selfishness. This explains why even in the developed societies, corruption still thrives. Driven by selfish ambition, people become power hungry and thus, develop a strong desire for more money and possessions than they really needed. Within this context, people are willing to behave in a dishonest way to achieve those goals. Corruption thrives on manipulating human and craftily exploits a person's natural desire for material comfort and financial well-being to the extent that the person acts deceitfully (The Watctower, 2012).

Yet, various forms of corruption exist in every society. There is no empirical evidence to suggest that there is more corruption in developing societies than the developed once. In developed societies, it has been discovered that there are horizontal corrupt practices. For example, corrupt practices exist between industrial and financial sectors on one hand and the political classes on the other hand. Such underground practices lead to the illicit financing of political parties and other institutions of state. Perhaps, what makes the African variety different is that corruption seems to take place among different groups and individuals in society. This can be regarded as vertical form of corruption.

3. CORRUPTION IMPASSE IN NIGERIA

According to [Apter \(1998\)](#), Nigerian politics since the discovery of crude oil, has been largely a scramble for petrodollars. Corroborating this submission, [Afiekhena \(2005\)](#) contends that:

About 80 percent of Nigeria's oil and natural gas revenues accrue to one percent of the country's population. The other 99 percent of the population receive the remaining 20 percent of the oil and gas revenues, leaving Nigeria with the lowest per capita oil export earning put at \$212 per person in 2004 (see for example [\(Human Development Index \(HDI\), 2013\)\)](#)).

Yet, most of the wealth that accrues one to percent of the Nigerian elites who have ransacked the common wealth for private use ends up outside the country. Also, [Afiekhena \(2005\)](#) gave a vivid picture of the situation that "Nigeria had an estimated \$107 billion of its private wealth held abroad." [Obi \(2010\)](#) argued that oil is more of a curse than a blessing to Nigeria. An examination of these submissions reveals that, not only are most Nigerians excluded from the profits of the collective wealth, most of the wealth has been kept or invested outside the country thereby contributing to the high rate of poverty, insecurity and other social maladies the country is currently witnessing, leaving most people as destitute.

Since discovery and sale of oil in commercial quantity, oil has dislocated agriculture as the main stay of the Nigerian economy. For example, from less than 1 per cent in 1960, the contribution of oil to gross domestic product (GDP) rose to 14.6, 21.9 and 26-29 per cent in 1970, 1975 and 1979, respectively. By 1992, it had reached a height of 46.8 per cent. The contribution of oil to Nigeria's export earning has been much higher: For example, from 58.1 per cent in 1970; it rose to 95.6 per cent in 1979. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, it remained very high, accounting for N210 billion or 96.1 per cent of total export earnings in 1996" ([Omotola, 2006](#)). Instead of oil serving as a blessing to Nigeria and Nigerians, it has become a curse to the people. [Watts \(2008\)](#), domesticated the situation when he argued that by any measure of social achievement the oil states in Nigeria are a calamity characterized by nestled shacks, broken-down canoes, and children who will be lucky to reach adulthood.

It has been argued that since gaining independence in 1960, most Nigerian leaders have not clearly demonstrated sense of genuine national development. According to [Adebanjo \(2008\)](#), "an estimated \$380 billion of the country's collective wealth was stolen by its post-independence

leaders: about two-thirds of all economic aid given to Africa during this period.” The administration of Ibrahim Babangida was unable to account for \$12.4 billion of missing oil revenues that were part of a windfall from the Gulf War of 1991 (Apter, 2005).

It was observed that during the regime of Sani Abacha, he used to send trucks round to the central bank with orders that they be filled with banknotes. After his demise, records showed that he and his cronies had stolen over \$6 billion – more than a million dollars for every day he was in office, including weekends. He also awarded \$1 billion in contracts to front companies, and accepted another \$1 billion in bribes from foreign contractors (Guest, 2004). Yet, Obasanjo’s civil regime is indicted for spending \$16 billion on generating darkness for the country while the same regime is yet to account for \$20 billion diverted from the federation account. In the same vein, Obasanjo, Yar’Adua and Jonathan’s administration has been indicted for mismanaging the federation account to the tune of 1.5 trillion (Falana, 2013).

The issues of corruption are multi-faceted and complex. Thus, the hydra-headed monster called corruption is a repugnant virus that should be cleared. It is a bug that has eaten deep into institutions of government at all levels. The National Assembly members, the NNPC, Security and Exchange Commission (SEC), the Nigeria Pension Board, among others are some of State institutions at the federal level which have been entangled in the mucky waters of corruption in recent times. The judiciary is not left out of this pernicious phenomenon (The Nation, 2012). Recently, thirteen (13) Federal Ministries, Agencies and Departments (MDAs) were indicted for cash-for-job scam (Daily Sun, 2013). It would appear the same obtains at state and local government levels.

4. NATURE AND CAUSES OF BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

Corruption in general, is often seen as a social, economic and political canker-worm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the Nigerian society. Yet, efforts to combat and curtail its spread remain largely ineffectual. What explains its persistence? This is the focus of discussion in this section of the paper. Economic condition of society induces corruption. In countries where there is egalitarian distribution of wealth, corruption is reduced to the barest minimum. So central is the issue of egalitarian distribution of wealth that Laski argued that: A State divided into a small number of rich and a larger number of poor will always develop a government manipulated by the rich to protect the amenities represented by their property (Isumonah, 1994).

To maintain this pattern of order in the society, the rich and those desiring to be rich, pilfer government resources in order to maintain the status quo. Relatedly, those who eventually get the opportunity to hold official positions would want to remain there because to return to the bottom is to suffer social humiliation.

Also, given the uncertainty surrounding the macro-economic context in Nigeria, public officers if given the opportunity offered by political and administrative positions, would first and foremost struggle to keep some money aside against the rainy day.

Colonialism created centres of power and authority hitherto unknown to African traditional political processes. It distorted and undermined indigenous mechanisms of checks and balances in the

exercise of political authority. This was the case because some of the political institutions under colonial rule which came from the West without ethos and norms that sustained them in Europe and America. In African states therefore, it is possible for public officers to abuse their positions without existing rules and regulations being invoked by relevant authorities, to punish such violators of the law. While rules, values and norms that regulate Western political institutions could be found in the statute books guiding political institutions in Nigeria, they are not applied to mediate the operations of public offices.

Stealing of public funds has also been rationalized by some scholars on the grounds that it is a form of protest against a state that lacks legitimacy. One of the ways to protest against such state it is argued is to pilfer government coffers. A state that is not only imposed but has become an alien force that brutalizes its people rather than provide basic social amenities to make their life meaningful, is certainly a hand-binger of corrupt practices. Bureaucratic corruption under this school of thought becomes a means of punishing the "rogue" and pristine State whose resources are assumed to be inexhaustible (Ekeh, 1975; Ake, 1993).

Furthermore, in a society where the state is the major source of wealth for individuals, groups and social classes, all kinds of tactics could be deployed to get hold of its machineries. In the struggle for this source of wealth and affluence, due process is undermined and the rule of law is not given the pride of place. Some of the immediate outcomes of this pattern of behaviour is that the political system becomes inherently unstable; the economy suffers stagnation and at the macro-social level, poverty, disease, insecurity and hunger, run high among the populace. Evidently, the country's political system is highly monetized. Politics in Nigeria is a game of money and only the rich in most cases, has the chance to win elective post.

The foregoing arguments nosedive into the contention that corruption thrives because society tolerates it. Those holding official positions are often urged by their kinsmen to "make it" and a public officer that fails to use his/her opportunity to amass wealth is regarded as a failure and a social outcast. Social demands and expectations are so high on public office holders that a high ranking government officials once lamented that "those who refuse to be corrupted and are poor are called failures... so what, use is it to be righteous" (Diamond, 1991). This helps to buttress the popular axiom that bureaucratic corruption and corruption in general is increasingly becoming a way of life among public office holders and Nigerians in general.

Another angle from which bureaucratic corruption can be understood is the pre-colonial political culture of giving gift in support of and appreciation for work done by those holding important positions in society. The higher your position in the community or machinery of government, the more gifts you receive from the people. Many scholars have used this to justify the giving and receipt of gifts as part and parcel of Africa tradition of benevolence and respect for constituted authority. However, the giving and receipt of gratification of all kinds in now seen as corruption because they impact negatively on government efficiency and effectiveness.

Another salient perspective to corruption in Nigeria is the material gain thesis which posits that in amoral socialites, people seek public offices because of what they stand to gain. In society such as Nigeria where there is severe material shortage, the quest for and use of public office is motivated by

the desire for material gain. This thesis has been well argued. Osaghae (1994) quoting Bandfield observes that in amoral society, no one will further the interest of group or community except as it is to his private advantage to do so. In other words, the hope of material gain in the short run will be the only motive for concern with public affairs. Thus, in societies where such mind-set dominates the instinct of the people, corruption is the unavoidable consequence. This view is similar to that shared by Kanu and Osunbajo (1999) citing Lacassage who identifies environmental factors as some of the reasons of corruption in public life. For them, societies have criminals they deserve and the social environment becomes the incubator that breeds the "criminal" or "big corrupter" and the "big corrupt" and provides a fertile ground for them to blossom.

Yet, in the competition for public offices, everything is done to win because to win means having access to public funds. However, not everyone in society benefits from such act but individuals, group of friends and relatives. Joseph (1987) in his theorising on prebendal politics and the role it plays in bureaucratic corruption argues that it is a system predicated on "pattern of political behaviour which rest on justifying principle that such office should be competed and then utilized for the personal benefit of office holders as well as of their reference or support group". Perhaps, bureaucratic corruption has become the dominant pattern of socio-economic and political behaviour because official rules and regulations are not enforced. This makes people strive to save for the "rainy day". Thus, the struggle for power and resources in the contest of resource scarcity, insecurity and lack of confidence in official norms and regulations breed corruption (Joseph, 1987).

Another well tested theory on corruption emphasized the nature of the Nigeria state. This perspective contains three not unrelated variables; the colonial legacies, federal arrangement and economic dependence. Given the centrality of the state and mal-distribution of power and resource within its confines, there is intense and persistent struggle by individuals and groups to capture and exploit their offices not for the good of the generality but for personal gains. Thus, since the state is so central to societal life; class formation and configuration, bureaucratic corruption becomes an inescapable outcome.

Furthermore, years of authoritarian rule fuelled the appetite for bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria. For example, the country has spent greater part of its post-independence years under military autocratic rule with its emphasis on kleptocratic politics. Some high profile corrupt practices were uncovered under military rule, notable among which was the 12.5 billion dollars oil wind fall siphoned from government coffers and squandered under the administration of General Babangida. The alleged Abacha loots are yet to be fully uncovered.

The military stultified the evolution of democratic political culture such as respect for the rule of law, constitutionalism, transparency and accountability and popular participation in decision making. In the absence of democratic political culture and adaptation of customary norms against corruption, it has assumed frightening dimension in contemporary Nigeria. What is the effect of bureaucratic corruption on national development? This is the subject of discussion in the section that follows.

5. THE EFFECT OF BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTION ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Bureaucratic corruption is not entirely a contemporary phenomenon. Indeed, the advanced democracies at various points in their political evolution had corruption as part of their political process. Scholars have argued that corruption is a social lubricant as it helps to fast-track work. Yet, bureaucratic corruption in particular and corruption in general, is an evil wind that blows no one good. Its effect has been devastating on national life. Its cost has arrested development at all levels of government and debilitating on the general populace.

Bureaucratic corruption has resulted in financial haemorrhage in government, some of the country's vast revenue earnings, since independence put conservatively at over 400 billion dollars have been pilfered and squandered by public officers mostly on conspicuous consumption and extravagance life-style. These are monies that could have been used to provide the populace with the basic necessities of life but are diverted into private purses and accounts, thereby robbing the society of much needed funds for development. One need not look too far to domesticate the effect of corruption on society at large. Over sixty-five (65) per cent of Nigerians live on less than one dollar per day and about the same percentage live below the poverty line.

In spite of the fact that Nigeria is the largest producer of oil in Africa and the 10th among world oil rich nations, it is one of the twenty-fifth poorest country in the World. Many Nigerians die of preventable diseases because of the absence of basic drugs in hospitals that have turned to mere consulting clinics. Basic infrastructural facilities such as roads and electricity are at various stages of dilapidation thereby increasing the stress placed on the ordinary citizenry. For example, in the aftermath of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) more Nigerians have been forced into the poverty bracket. While the rich get richer, the poor get poorer. Babawale (1996) paints a concise picture of Nigerians thus:

A sharp deterioration in the living standard of the majority of the people, worsening problems of urban housing and transportation, growing incident of hunger and starvation, decline in public health services standard, with most hospitals, including specialist ones, shortages of the most elementary drugs and equipments and educational sector steeped in deep crisis, collapsing standards, and extremely low morale among lecturers and students are some of the macro- social hallmarks of the adjustment programmes.

These macro-social problems have gone hand in hand with continuing and in some cases worsening problems in the economy. Many policy specialist and scholars regard corruption as one of the reasons why the economy has failed to respond positively to the SAP therapies. The state managers mismanaged monies that accrued from the SAP policy. Corruption has crippled the economy thereby creating high rate youth unemployment as 54 per cent of Nigerian youths are unemployed (Agboola, 2013). Corruption will hinder the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (Obayuwana, 2013). In recognition of the harm corruption has been doing to the nation, several policies and institutions have been established to fight the scourge.

6. AN OVERVIEW OF ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCIES AND FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA

The rise and spread of bureaucratic corruption has not gone unchallenged by successive governments in Nigeria. Different governments have recognized the negative impact of corruption on societal growth and development. In pursuant of the anti-corruption crusade, several institutions and agencies have been set up by different administrations to fight corruption in the country. The most recent ones are the Independent Corrupt Practice Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC). These commissions are created to combat the rising tide of corruption, which has dented the country's image in the comity of nations. However, bureaucratic corruption has been on the ascendancy in spite of efforts of previous and present government. What is the nature and effectiveness of the campaign against corruption and its impact on this social scourge? This is the focus of the section that follows.

On assumption of office in May 1999, Obasanjo's administration made the anticorruption crusade a major plank of its administration. The anti-corruption agenda had as its major objectives; to reform, strengthen and modernize institutions whose duty is to foster and enforce compliance with the law; to step up measures to check economic and financial crimes, including the legal provisions for the exposure and punishment of unethical behaviour; to adopt a firmer code of ethic for all organizations and sectors; to institutionalise the process of training staff in ethical behaviour; and to fast-track the process of reform in governance codes at the corporate level and at all tiers of government (see [Federal Government of Nigeria \(FGN\), 2004](#)).

Perhaps, the EFCC is more pronounced in the crusade against financial crimes because of the nature of its mandate. The EFCC is an addition to several institutions set up to combat corruption. In our statute books, some of the laws against corruption are: the Advance Freed Fraud and other Fraud Related Offences Act 1995. The Failed Bank (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices Act 1994 as well as the Banks and other Financial Institutions Act 1991, the Miscellaneous Offences Act and lately the Freedom of information (FOB) Act 2011, are some previous legislation along with the criminal and Penal codes.

The functions and powers of the EFCC are clearly spelt out in Part 1 of the enabling laws of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (Establishment) Act (as amended). The powers and functions of the commission are defined in section 6 and 7 of the law. Without doubt, the EFCC has wide powers of investigation and persecution of economic crimes though subject to regulations and rules made for it by the Attorney General of the Federation, further to section 42 of the enabling Act. While the commission has succeeded in persecuting and convicting some highly placed Nigerians and recovered from them stolen public funds and properties thereby giving the country some respect in the comity of nations, critics have also pointed to some gray areas in its operation. Its mode of operation and the wide powers it enjoys make it a parallel body to other anti-graft agencies. Also, the commission appears to be selective in its operations. Certain alleged corrupt act of some highly placed Nigerians have not been investigated and persecuted. Besides, there is need for the commission to be fast and drastic about its duties because justice delayed is justice denied.

Under years of authoritarian rule in Nigeria, corruption was elevated to a fundamental objective and directive principle of state policy as government used public funds to buy political support for an increasingly illegitimate regime. Ethnic warlords and political jingoists were either bought over or kept mute with the use of state funds. The Pious Okigbo Panel report on the operations of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) during General Babangida's regime was instructive. It noted that: \$12 billion dollars oil windfall put in a dedicated account of the CBN outside the budgetary provision, was squandered. The report noted that "the monies in the accounts were spent virtually as fast as they were accumulated" ([The Punch, 2006](#)). For Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to operate a foreign account that the Central Bank and the Ministry of Finance do not know how it is managed is the height of state criminality meaning there are groups and institutions bigger than the Nigerian state.

Thus, the anti-graft war of the federal government in the past fourteen (14) years has been a mix bag of fortunes and misfortune. The government has put forward a well-orchestrated and elaborate campaign boosted by international support for the war against corruption. As reward for its steadfastness, the country has since dropped to the 121 position in 2008 from 147 it was ranked in 2007. However, these geometrical progressions have not been sustained if the recent ranking of Nigeria by Transparency International is anything to go by (see for example ([Transparency International, 2013](#))).

On the domestic front, some alleged corrupt governors have been arranged in court. While former Governor DSP Alamiyesiegha of the oil rich Bayelsa State was arrested, tried and convicted, former inspector General of police Tafa Balogun and Bode George were investigated and convicted. However ex-governors Joshua Dariye of Plateau state; Chimaroke Nnamani of Enugu state; Jolly Nyame of Taraba State; Bonny Haruna of Adamawa state; Peter Odili of Rivers state; Abubakar Audu of Kogi state and a host of others under trial are still moving free men while some of them are members of the hallo chambers (National Assembly).

But informed opinions are sceptical of the sincerity of the campaign. It would seem that those, under persecution are regarded as enemies of the ruling class. Perhaps, this could be one of the reasons behind the recent state pardon granted Alamiyesiegha and court reversal of Bode George conviction. Also, observers frown at the way and manner the anti-corruption campaign has been conducted so far. While on one hand, government is seemed to be pursuing the anti-corruption war, on the other, it is neck-deep in corrupt practices thereby accentuating the view that the anti-corruption crusade is selective. Besides, there are interesting revelations of bureaucratic corruption in the highest seat of government that have not been brought to court. Notable among which are the misappropriation of Petroleum Technology Development Funds (PTDF) by former President Obasanjo and his Vice Atiku, Abubakar, the former speaker Patricia Eteh House Renovation scandal, Hallibuton, Siemens bribery scandal, recently Faruk Lawan, Herman Hembe and a host of others.

Inability to bring high ranking public officers to books is a major draw-back to the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria. It would appear there are some sacred cows or untouchables in the Nigeria society that the long hands of the law cannot get to or apprehend. Without doubt, bureaucratic corruption has become systemic and it will take a consistent and persistent effort by all

to make any appreciable impact on the war. What are the challenges confronting anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria and how can they be managed? This is our concern in the next section.

7. CHALLENGES FACING ANTI-CORRUPTION CRUSADE IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is a plural society with several nationalities merged in a fragile unity. Many years after independence, there is still low threshold of national unity and the national question remains unresolved. It is against this back drop that bureaucratic corruption is seen as a way of coping with a state that is alien, oppressive, unjust and unresponsive to the demands and expectations of the people.

The perception of corruption as an amoral act stems from the fact that to many Nigerians, the state is still an abstraction meant to brutalize and not to cater for the socio-economic and political well-being, of its citizens. The absence of a system of legitimate government based on equal exchange lies at the very heart of political disorder in Nigeria (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Perhaps, the phenomenon of corruption in general has persisted because the practice of prebendal exploitation, for example it is mutually profitable (in a neo-patrimonial society) provided those who profit redistribute appropriately. Such is the efficacy of the existing social, political and economic system in Nigeria.

Corruption has continued to defy all possible solutions in Nigeria because the cost of corruption is too cheap and the political will to implement anti-corruption laws is absent. A typical example is the recent conviction of John Yusuf of the pension fund under a plea-bargain arrangement where he was sentenced two years in prison with an option of seven hundred and fifty thousand naira fine after embezzling billions of naira belonging to pensioners. Poorly and inappropriate institutional frameworks are responsible for a significant level of the opportunism that has pervaded the Nigerian state since independence. As North (1990) argued "institutions are the humanly devised constraints that shape incentives in human exchange, whether political, social, or economic. Institutional change shapes the way societies evolve through time, and hence, is the key to understanding historical change."

Given the poor state of the economy and the conspicuous display of wealth by the few privileged ones in the society, one cannot but understand why vertical corruption pervades all facets of society. As Ake (1993) put it, "people cannot continue to reproduce themselves at the level of poverty without doing something to help themselves in order to survive" Over the years, real income has continue to decline in value as the economy becomes characterized by run-away inflation. This prompted the Academic Staff Union of University (ASUU) popular cliché that "my take home pay cannot take me home". In view of the above challenges confronting the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria, how can the campaign be persecuted to achieve the desired result of reducing the spate of bureaucratic corruption in particular and corruption in general? This is the subject of prescription in the section that follows:

8. THE WAR AGAINST BUREAUCRATIC CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA: THE WAY FORWARD

Given the effect of bureaucratic corruption in particular and corruption in general on national development, the fight against corruption is a war that must be won in Nigeria. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to expunge this scourge from the nation's body polity.

The first fundamental step that has to be taken to redress the prevalence of corruption in the polity is to transform the state from an alien force, to an entity that caters for the welfare and well-being of the people. The nonchalant attitude of the Nigerian state over well-being of its people has made it difficult for it to command obedience from and support of her citizenry. Yet, the national question has to be resolved positively in the interest of the federating units of the Nigerian state, particularly in the areas of access to power and resources, participation of all in decision-making, among others (Ihonvbere, 2005). The ongoing National Conference could be an avenue for such discussions.

Political transplants from the West to Africa mostly lack enabling ethos and norms that make them functional. As has been argued; "state limiting doctrines that had grown in tandem with the jural philosophy of the state constitutionalism such as civil liberty, liberalism-where carefully left behind" at independence (Suberu, 1995). This makes it possible for their operators to apply particularistic framework in their operations. The uncritical adaptation of Western political institutions has left their operators with little or no customary structures that supported traditional political/administrative systems (Mamdani, 2001). Therefore, there is need for remodeling of political institutions to help strengthen and deepen these institutions and structures of the state. This will eventually lead to political institutionalization in Nigeria. Once this is realised, political corruption will be reduced.

Also, there is need for moral tension in the operation of state affairs. Indeed, there is a moral crisis in our society today. As we have observed in the opening section of this study, in an amoral familist society, material gain is the main consideration for seeking public office. Efforts to combat bureaucratic corruption have been ad-hoc and discontinuous. This is because there is lack of moral tension in running the affairs of the state. As Senghor, former President of Senegal lamented, African perception and behaviour toward the state is:

We lack a moral tension... a true commitment to the service of our country. It is this that I consider the most difficult task among all those, I have undertaken (as President). To instill in my people that taste for work well done... that sense of public good, without which nothing lasting can be accomplished (Osaghae, 1994).

Such moral tension elaborated above is lacking in Nigeria because the modern state institutions are not administered according to democratic principles and values. Besides, the appropriate political culture that engender political effectiveness has to be imbibed and activated for corruption and other unethical practices to be reduced in the public and private domains. Past social and political engineering efforts of governments aimed at reducing corruption have not

change the dominant behaviour of the people. Therefore, it is time to promote a new political culture drawn from the people's historical and cultural specificities to sustain the war against corruption under the nascent democratic system in Nigeria. Democracy surely has its in-built checks against corruption which must be promoted by all in society (Diamond, 1991). But such in-built checks must be autochthonous for them to make sense to the people. Part of the efforts to instill democratic political culture in the citizenry is to separate the state from society so that particularistic framework of social relations prevalent in society is not integrated into state affairs. This will discourage patron-client relation that has become a common feature in public and private relations in Nigeria. It is only then that the state can boast of a compulsory jurisdiction to regulate the affairs of the larger society.

Unlike what obtains in advanced economies, inflation is controlled and people are rest assured of the support of the state in times of needs through social welfare schemes, subsidies and relief materials. These are facilities hardly found in Nigeria and where available, they become a conduit pipe through which monies are stolen such as the petroleum subsidy scandal. Therefore, for corruption to be minimized, the country must enter the middle level economic stratum, where people would be confident of what the future hold for them. The state as presently constituted is not autonomous of domestic and foreign interests. This explains why it cannot regulate the economy for the benefit of all in society. This pattern has to change for the economy to improve in a significant way, to make corruption unattractive. The present economic situation tends to favour unequal exchange of goods and services to the benefit of the rich in society. Resource distribution has to be more equitable and just to all for the people to have confidence in the system.

All these measures will be impossible to implement, if the right type of leadership is not in the helms of affair in both the public and private domains. This is where all hands must be on deck to put in the right places, visionary leaders that will serve the public interest selflessly. The democratic channels have to be explored to bring about this type of leaders. Only leaders with exemplary character and respect for the rule of law can fight and win the war against corruption in Nigeria. Here lies the acid test of the current anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria. Ability of state managers, to show commitment to the rule of law, constitutionalism etc., will determine the degree of success to be realized in the anti-corruption crusade. One other strategy that can be used to reduce bureaucratic corruption is by democratizing the development process by bringing to the front burner those voices of the poor, to the policy making table. This can be done through consultation with major stakeholders at the grassroot such as Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Civil Society Organizations (CBOs), rural and minority representatives, labour unions and elected institutions.

Also, greater separation of power amongst the branches of government would give each arm of government opportunities to carry out their oversight functions. The present cleansing in the judiciary which is the watchdog of the constitution and the society at large is commendable and should be strengthened and deepened. In this regard, there should be some degree of complementalism among the organs of government while they maintain their independence. Furthermore, the international community and commissions do have an important role to play in

combating corruption in Nigeria. There are indications to this effect but they must step up their efforts by giving both moral and material supports to governments efforts.

9. CONCLUSION

We commenced this discussion by firstly having a look at the meaning of corruption as captured by scholars and commentators with an attempt at clarifying the intellectual “cobweb” surrounding the issue of corruption in general and bureaucratic corruption in particular. We are relying on the various theorist in this study because the summarized views taken together isolate six types of corruption, i.e. bureaucratic or administrative corruption, economic corruption cultural corruption, legal corruption, technological corruption and social corruption. Thus, different theories on the concept of corruption such as nature of the society, neo-patrimonialism, prebendalism, economy of affection, and political god-fatherism have been examined. The definition of corruption based on these theories enable us have basis for accessing the anti-corruption agencies as regards the anti-corruption crusade in Nigeria. The theories relating to the causes of corruption enable us direct our search for possible causes of corruption in the Nigerian polity. What constitute bureaucratic corruption which our literature review touched on is also relevant because our venue of study is bureaucratic corruption. A brighter picture of bureaucratic corruption in Nigeria which is the concern of this paper was presented through a combined use of the theories of corruption in general and bureaucratic corruption specifically .An attempt has also been made to establish the interface between corruption and national development.

It is generally agreed that corruption is an evil wind that affect everyone and retard societal progress. While there are several theories that explain its prevalence in society, the point to emphasize is that it has become a way of life in Nigeria. This explains why it has been difficult to combat its rising profile. But, it is not unmanageable. Several recipes have been suggested. The present democratic dispensation provides avenue to bring about patriotic and visionary leaders that will show the way out in the fight against the scourge “bureaucratic corruption in particular and corruption in general”.

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