LEADERSHIP, CORRUPTION AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA (1999-2013)

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Abstract

The interface among leadership, corruption, and governance could be likened to the chicken-egg controversy in that while some commentators attribute the pervasive corruption that has bedeviled Nigeria's body politic to bad leadership and irresponsible governance practices, which they say have corrupted the polity, others view corruption as systemic and therefore prior to inept leadership and irresponsible governance. In this sense, corruption is seen as engendering low levels of transparency and accountability and as being the major source of development failure in most of the developing world. Be that as it may, the place of leadership in curbing corruption and the institution of good governance cannot be overstated. In view of this, this paper examines the role of leadership in tackling corruption in Nigeria between 1999 and 2013, and how the meager achievements recorded in this quest had a debilitating impact on the provision of dividends of democratic governance during Nigeria's first ever full decade of democratic experiment. The study is anchored on the theory of the rentier state and employed qualitative descriptive method for the collection and analysis of data.

Key Words: leadership, Corruption, Governance, Development.

Introduction

Corruption in Nigeria has quite a long history. So long that the executors of the first ever military coup in Nigeria way back in 1966 had justified their actions on the grounds of the pervasive corruption that characterized Nigeria's body politic in those hay days of Nigeria's political independence. In like manner, corruption also provided the raison d'etre for the subsequent military coups that were to become the norm in Nigeria for many years to come. But even the military rulers were not immune to the lures of corruption and often times ended up more corrupt than the regimes they had ousted. The cumulative effect was that at the time of Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999, hospitals which were said to have become 'mere consulting clinics' at the time of the Babangida/Abacha coup had become virtually non-existent, mass poverty had become unconscionably high by every conceivable indicator, and life had become 'brutish, nasty, and short' in a country awash with petro-dollars. In sum, the country had become a pariah in the comity of nations owing in large part to the pervasiveness of corruption as manifested in the mindless looting of the treasury by the military rulers and their civilian cohorts.

Fully conscious of the negative impact of corruption on Nigeria's development and the damage it had inflicted on her international image, the drafters of the 1999 constitution, desirous of redressing the malady, provided in Sections 15(5) that: "Government must eradicate all corrupt practices and abuse of power." And ostensibly to give effect to this provision, the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo that came into power in 1999 soon pursued the enactment of anti-corruption legislations such as the Independent Corrupt Practices and (Other Related Offences) Commission Act (ICPC Act), and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Act as well as the Money Laundering Prohibition Act. The administration in some instances also embarked on the prosecution and conviction of high ranking public officials on charges of corruption and recovery of proceeds of corruption. In addition, the administration also pursued the reform of the civil service and the banking sector of Nigeria's economy as well as on the massive privatization of public enterprises ostensibly to curb public sector corruption and enhance efficiency.

In spite of these laudable measures however, the incidence of corruption in Nigeria remained undiminished. On the contrary, it could be said to have actually increased, prompting Adesote and Abimbola (2012) to observe that considering various cases of financial corruption being perpetrated in governance since 1999 till date, one can easily conclude that financial corruption has actually been institutionalized in the country. This, they say, is attested to by the various ratings of the country since 1999 by Transparency International and others as either the most corrupt, second most corrupt or among the top ten most corrupt countries of the world. Ogbeidi (2012) on his part stated that "it is an incontrovertible fact that corruption has been the bane of Nigeria's development and that, without mincing, words the phenomenon has ravaged the country and destroyed most of what is held as cherished national values". Unfortunately, the political class saddled with the responsibility of directing the affairs of the country have been the major culprit in perpetrating this act. It is therefore widely contended that owing in large part to the pervasiveness of corruption, commentators who have subsequently defined it in various ways so much so that an agreement on the exact meaning of the term has become somewhat difficult. In its simple form, leadership has been defined as 'a body of people who lead and direct the activities of a group towards a shared goal. It also denotes the ability to lead, direct and organise a group.' Taking conceptualization further, Norman Schwarzkopf describes leadership as a potent combination of strategy and character and strongly emphasised that, of the two elements, character is the most preferred for leadership. While John Gardener explains leadership in terms of 'the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers'(Ogbeidi, 2012:4). Consequently, leadership is a process of social influence by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organisation in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent (Chemers, 2002). A leader therefore is expected to demonstrate qualities, which embrace but not limited to good character, vision, tact, prudence, and ability to lead by example because people basically ascribe leadership to those who they feel can most enable them achieve important goals or objectives.

Corruption

Oyelowo (nd) made a very important point when he stated that "understanding the existence, growth and impact of corruption within the Nigerian state, requires the definition or conceptualization of corruption within the context of first, the legal system and administration of justice, and second, the international legal normative expression of the term, since there is no universally acceptable definition of the term". The World Bank and similar inter-governmental institutions define corruption as "the abuse of public office for private gain". Here, corruption is said to involve "the seeking or exacting of a promise or a receipt of a gift or any other advantage by a public servant in consideration for the performance or omission of an act, in violation of duties required of the office'. This is also the view adopted by Transparency International, the foremost global anti-corruption coalition.

This definition has however been criticized on the ground that it is public sector-centred and therefore reflects an unstated assumption that corruption is a disease that attacks mainly a nation's public service and spares the private sector (Asobie, 2006:4). The definition has therefore been modified somewhat by a group of three authors namely: Peter langseth, Rick Stapenhurst and the then chairman of the Board of Directors Transparency International, Jeremy Pope who defined it as "the abuse of power for personal gain or for the benefit however the African Union Convention on Combating Corruption and related offences define acts of corruption21 in such pragmatic and broad manner that can be applicable to existing corrupt practices in an African country like Nigeria. He therefore enjoined the Nigerian Government to ratify and domesticate the Convention in order to give impetus to the "Anti-Corruption" policy and campaign of the government.

Governance

The word *governance* derives from the Greek verb κυβερνάω [*kubernáo*] which means *to steer* and was used for the first time in a metaphorical sense by Plato. It then passed on to Latin and then on to many languages. In its generic sense, Governance is the act of governing. It relates to decisions that define *expectations*, grant power, or verify performance. It consists of either a separate process or part of management or leadership processes. These processes and systems are typically administered by a government. In the case of a business or of a non-profit organisation, governance relates to consistent management, cohesive policies, guidance, processes and decision-rights for a given area of responsibility. It is however with the first sense of the tern that we are concerned.

In this sense, the World Bank defines governance as: "the exercise of political authority and the use of institutional resources to manage society's problems and affairs." While the World Governance Indicator, a project of the World Bank, defines governance as: "The traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised". This considers the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies and the respect of citizens and the state of the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.

According to the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Project on Local Governance for Latin America:

> Governance has been defined as the rules of the political system to solve conflicts between actors and adopt decision (legality). It has also been used to describe the "proper functioning of institutions and their acceptance by the public" (legitimacy). And it has been used to invoke the efficacy of government and the achievement of consensus by democratic

Theories of the rentier state come in different forms and emphasize different causal links between resource rents and poor economic governance. Mahdavy who first advanced the rentier state concept argues that resource rents make state officials both myopic and risk-averse. Upon receiving large wind-falls, he suggests, governments grow irrationally optimistic about future revenues and devote the greater part of their resources to jealously guarding the status quo instead of promoting development. Others like Shambayati (1994), Chaudhry (1989), and Anderson (1987) take a more institutional approach. Specifically, Anderson argues that rentier states adopt policies that are exceptionally risk-averse, favouring 'egalitarian current consumption' over development policies that, while furthering social and economic transformation, risk provoking social conflict.

Schwarz (2007:10-11) submitted that the importance of this rentier effect on state-formation is threefold. Firstly, excess oil revenue in the hand of the state reduces the state necessity to extract resources from its own population (taxation). Rentier states have secondly the privilege to distribute and allocate excess oil revenues according to political considerations and without reference to economic consideration. Thirdly, a high level of rentierism has a negative effect on the human, social, and economic development of a country. While the economic benefit from oil revenues may be only short-lived, the long-term consequences are market distortions, corruption, unproductive economic sectors and the absence of autonomous social groups. All three considerations underline that rentier states differ drastically from states whose role is to collect taxes (Schwarz 2007:10-11).

Meanwhile, Obi (2009) further explained that the rentier thesis characterizes states that receive external economic rent or unearned income that is not related to entrepreneurial, innovative or meritorious activities. Such states, he said, are defined by being part of an enclave of externally-oriented oil industry that alienates the from the society, making her aloof from the people, partly because she does not rely on their taxes and is therefore not accountable to the people, and also because externally earned rents are concentrated in a few hands (the political class), making for a particular kind of political economy that feeds corruption and subverts democracy and development. Thus, within this entire mentality, rewards and wealth in the rentier class are regarded as the result of rentier opportunities, which s why rentier states are particularly vulnerable to the problem of patronage and corruption, as well as bribery and nepotism (Sandbakken, 2006: 138).

such as natural gas (See for instance NEITI audit reports for various years beginning from 1999).

Furthermore, the report by the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) indicated that 445,000 barrels of crude oil sold by the NNPC between January and July 2002 was not accounted for in its financial report. The report further indicated that within the seven-month period, there was a shortfall of N302 billion as undeclared revenue. The request by Haman Tukur, the then Chairman of RMAFC, to the Presidency to compel Jackson Gaius-Obaseki, former Group Managing Director of NNPC, to refund the remaining money into government's coffer was never heeded. It is further alleged that the joint panel of the National Assembly set up to probe the matter was also hindered by the Presidency and top hierarchy officials of the People Democratic Party on the ground that the probe would send negative signals abroad about corruption in Nigeria, particularly because the Presidency directly oversees the petroleum ministry (Adekeye, 2003:30-31; Shettima, 2009).

Again, it was reported that during the first four years of the Olusegun Obasanjo administration, federal ministers allegedly stole more than N23 billion from the public coffers. An audit report released by Vincent Azie, acting Auditor-General of the Federation, showed that the amount represented financial frauds ranging from embezzlement, payments for jobs not done, over-invoicing, double-debiting, inflation of contract figures to release of money without the consent of the approving authority in ten major ministries. Rather than cautioning the ministers whose ministries were named in the fraud or invite the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) to further investigate the veracity of the alleged fraud, Vincent Azie was hastily retired by the Presidency for procedural offences (Adekeye, 2003: 31; Haruna, 2009).

The National Identity Card scandal is another case of high profile corruption perpetrated by the top echelon of the nation's political leadership. In 2001, the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo awarded the $214 million National Identity Card project to SAGEM S.A., a French company, under controversial circumstances because the Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Company (NSPMC), which bided for the same contract at a lower rate, was not obliged. It was alleged that seven prominent public servants collaborated with SAGEM S.A. to scuttle the $214million project. Records of the investigation into the matter indicted Hussaini Akwanga, who until December 4, 2003 was Nigeria's Minister for Labour and Productivity, Chief

Consequently, on assumption of office in 1999, former President Obasanjo revoked eleven blocks given to senior military officers and their allies by the previous military government. Ostensibly to end such sharp practices, the Obasanjo civilian administration that doubled as de-facto Minister and later senior Minister of Petroleum (1999–2003 and 2003-2007) attempted to introduce competition and transparency into the Nigeria's oil block bidding processes. Specifically, the 2000, 2005, 2006, and 2007 oil bid were to some extent publicly advertised by the government, indicating the available blocks and selection criteria and as well, disclosed the various bids received. However, the whole processes suffered serious shortcomings so much so that it has been said that "between 2001 and 2006, there was no open bidding for oil blocks, but only selective bidding authorized by the Presidency".

And to lend credence to such allegations, at the wee hour to the tenure of the Obasanjo presidency in 2007, in what The *Nation Newspaper* described as "oil block bazaar", the former president arbitrarily and unilaterally allocated oil block to his cronies and political associates as tabulated in Table 1 below as "a parting gift" for those who supported his failed "third term" agenda without due process (Newswatch, 2008; The Nation, 2008 cited in Usman, 2011).

Table 1: The last minute award of oil block bazaar during Obasanjo tenure (1999-2007)

S/NO	Name of Companies	No. of Blocks	Amount ($)
1.	Essar Energy Exp. And Prod.	Block 226	$18.5 million
2.	Monipulo	Block 231	$17.999.980 million
3.	Conoil	Block 290	$49. 999. 975 million
4.	Global Energy Coy Ltd	Blocks 2009 & 2010	$11. 499. 949 million
5.	Continental Oil	Block 2007	$54. 999. 982 million
6.	Sterline Global Oil Res.	Blocks 2005 & 2006	$5. 150. 000
7.	Bayelsa Oil Coy	Block 240	$5. 599. 949 million
8.	Abbey Courts/Coscharis	Block 293	$50. 167. 510 million
9.	Deltagate/Petrodel	Block 258	$12. 500. 000 million
10.	Sahara Energy	Block 228	$ 2. 500. 000 million

Source: The Nation Newspaper, Thursday June 19, 2008, Pp. 1 – 2 cited in Usman, 2011: 301

(Newswatch magazine, 2008). These revelations of monumental corruption have been further complimented by subsequent audits of the oil and gas industry commissioned by NEITI and released in 2009 and 2011 respectively. As a matter of fact, the latest NEITI audit report of the oil and gas industry which has just been released as the final touches are being put on this paper shows that Nigeria lost N272.9billion to various forms of graft between 2009 and 2011.

The Acting Director of DPR, Alhaji Mohammed Aliyu Sabo while testifying before the House of Representatives panel, disclosed that while the sharp practices were on, sensitive documents relating to the oil block allocations were said to have been missing. In Sabo's words, "we can only give out what we have.....because we can't find some of the documents". In addition, the probe panel further discovered how Shell had, in December 2003, paid $210 million as signature bonus, but only the sum of $1 million was reflected in the records (Louis, 2009). In fact, the probe panel equally discovered that some signature bonuses were in 2005 paid in naira against the guidelines, resulting to a short fall in the payment of signature bonus from $2bn to $1.6bn. The suspended Director of DPR admitted before the probe panel that, "I received signature bonus in naira based on instructions from above" referring to the instruction from the then Minister of state for Petroleum. In addition, it was equally revealed that the sum of $2.5 million paid for OPL 257 in June 2003 by Vintage Oil was spent five years before it was receipted on July 8, 2008 (Louis, 2009).

In a petition dated July 28, 2003 and forwarded to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), by a concerned petroleum consultant, it was alleged that the former Group Managing Director (GMD) of NNPC, Jackson Gaius – Obaseki and former Managing Director (MD) of PPMC, Dan Nzelu and their associates had between the first and third quarter of 2003 bought fuel oil from the PPMC, "at the subsidized domestic rate of N8.30K per liter ($60.00 per ton) and exported same at $165.00 per ton" (Newswatch, 2008). Instead of accruing $250 million income to the government during the period, only $90 million was remitted losing about $160 million dollars to the corrupt deal.

In fact, the late President Umar Musa Yarádua had, during a press briefing on May 12, 2009, acknowledged that there was a powerful cartel in the Nigeria oil sector, which he described as "the greatest institutional corruption in this country" (This Day Newspaper May 13, 2009). The newspaper equally documented extensive and dynamic nature of corruption

Table 2: The Halliburton Scandal indicating the beneficiaries and the amount

S/NO.	Period	Beneficiaries(Company/Individual	Amount
1.	1994 - 1995	General Sanni Abacha (former Nigeria Military Dictator)	$40 Million
2.	1998	General Sanni Abacha's brother, Abdulkadir Abacha	$1.887 Million
3.	1996 - 1998	Dan Etete (former Minister of Petroleum under Abacha)	$2.5 Million
4.	1996 - 1998	M. D. Yusuf (Former Inspector General of Police and Chairman of LNG)	$75.000
5.	1999 - 2000	Atiku Abubakar (former Vice President, 1999 – 2007) and Don Etiebet, ex Petroleum Minister)	$37.5 Million
6.	2001 - 2002	Olusegun Obasanjo and Atiku Abubakar, and Funsho Kupolokun(Former President, Vice President and GMD, NNPC respectively)	$74 Million
7.	2001 - 2002	Bodunde Adeyanju, ex personal assistant to Obasanjo.	$5 Million
8.	2001 - 2002	Ibrahim Aliyu, a retired federal permanent secretary (Urban Shelter and Intercellular)	$11.7 Million
9.	2001 - 2002	Mohammed Gidado Bakare, a retired Chief Planning Officer	$3, 108, 675
10.	March, 1999	Nasir Ado Bayero, Son of the Emir of Kano (Gosmer International, Risers Brothers)	$600.000
11.	1999 - 2000	Shinkafi and Glosmer International	$195.000
12.	March, 1999	Edith Edeghoughou	$290.000
13.	March, 1999	Zertasha Malik and Grety overseas	$600.000
14.	March/June, 1998	Grety Overseas and Riser Brothers	$1.12Million

Source: Usman, 2011: 304

It is clear from Table 2 above that the bribe "transactions" has been going on in Nigeria since 1994 - 2002 and treated as "top most" secret among the indicted powerful Nigerian leaders and officials and could have remained so, until it was blown open outside the shore of the Nigeria soil in 2004. This indicates that corruption in the Nigeria oil sectors, like other sectors in Nigeria, is indeed a cartel business in which only non-members or fall-apart members are persecuted for corrupt practices.

In a bold attempt to sanitize the operations in Nigeria's oil industry and curb the monumental corruption that is characteristic of that sector, the

Also, in 2010 Nigeria placed number 134 on the table with a score of 2.4 out of a maximum 10 points. And even though the Nigeria retained the score of 2.4 in 2011, her ranking fell to 143, reflecting a relative improvement in the performance of some other countries during the period. Finally in 2012, the country's position upped slightly to 139 with a score of 27, this time on a scale of 100 (TI-CPI for the various years). By this marginal increase, the country equaled a fit she had achieved only once in the past, in 2008 with a score of 2.7 then on a scale of 10. Nonetheless, its performance remains quite abysmal overall.

The Impact of Corruption on Human Development in Nigeria between 1999 and 2013

As has been rightly observed, the effects of corruption on a nation's socio-political and economic development are myriad. Among other things, it reduces public spending on education according to Mauro (1997). The effect of corruption on education comes from the fact that the government spends relatively more on items to make room for *graft* (Shleifer & Vishny, 1993; Lipset & Lenz, 2002). And corrupt government officials would shift government expenditures to areas in which they can collect bribes easily. Large and hard-to-manage projects, such as airports or highways, make fraud easy. And development projects are often made unnecessarily complex in Nigeria to justify the corrupt and huge expense on it (see, Dike, nd). In addition, poverty and income inequalities are tied to corruption while the effect of corruption on growth, is in part, a result of reduced level of investment as it adds to investment risk according to Lipset & Lenz (2000).

With respect to Nigeria, it has been contended that it is difficult to think of any social ill in the country that is not traceable to the embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds, particularly as a direct or indirect consequence of the corruption perpetrated by the callous political leadership class since independence. The cycle of poverty keeps growing with all its attendant consequences even as the rate of unemployment remains perpetually high. By giving mediocrity advantage over intelligence through nepotism and cronyism, intellectual capital, which is the bulwark of development and advancement, has continued to drift abroad in search of greener pasture. Paradoxically, the scourge of corruption has left the country straddling two economic worlds at the same time. To state the obvious, the country has found itself in the quagmire of a country too rich to be poor and

Table 4: Nigeria's HDI indicators for 2012 relative to selected countries and groups

	HDI value	HDI rank	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (PPP US$)
Nigeria	0.471	153	52.3	9.0	5.2	2,102
Ethiopia	0.396	173	59.7	8.7	2.2	1,017
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	0.304	186	48.7	8.5	3.5	0,319
Sub-Saharan Africa	0.475	—	54.9	9.3	4.7	2,010
Low HDI	0.466	—	59.1	8.5	4.2	1,633

Source: Human Development Report 2013

Also, data from the World Economic Forum as presented in the table below shows that Nigeria's scored below the Sub-Saharan African average in the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), 2012-2013. For a country endowed with the quantum of Nigeria's human and natural resources, this is certainly a crying absurdity; a curse which needs to be urgently exorcised.

Table 5: The Global Competitiveness Index 2012–2013: Africa and selected comparator economies

	GCI 2012–2013			GCI 2011–12
Economy	Rank/144	Direction	Score	Rank
Sub-Saharan African average			**3.6**	
Ethiopia	121	↓	3.6	106
Cape Verde	122	↓	3.5	119
Uganda	123	↓	3.5	121
Nigeria	115	↑	3.5	127
Mali	128	→	3.4	128
Malawi	129	↓	3.4	117
Madagascar	130	→	3.4	130
Côte d'Ivoire	131	↓	3.4	129
Zimbabwe	132	→	3.3	132
Burkina Faso	133	↑	3.3	136
Mauritania	134	↑	3.3	137
Swaziland	135	↓	3.3	134
Lesotho	137	↓	3.2	135
Mozambique	138	↓	3.2	133
Chad	139	↑	3.1	142
Guinea	141		2.9	n/a
Sierra Leone	143		2.8	n/a
Burundi	144	↓	2.8	140

Sources: World Economic Forum 2011, 2012

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