


Anatomy of Corruption in the Nigerian Public Sector: Theoretical Perspectives and Some Empirical Explanations

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Abstract

Corruption is a clog in the wheel of progress in Nigeria and has incessantly frustrated the realization of noble national goals, despite the enormous natural and human resources in Nigeria. The article reviews the concept of corruption in line with its forms and effects on the Nigerian State, as well as corruption in public service from Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa's era to President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. The article examines the idealistic, resource curse, two public, low risk–high benefit and anomie theories, and consequently adopts resource curse, low risk–high benefit theories to explain causes of corruption in Nigeria. Also, some personal observations and data from Transparency International are utilized to explain corrupt practices in Nigeria. The article concludes that there is corruption in the Nigerian Public Sector because of societal pressure, tribalism, nepotism, low risk–high benefits of involving in corruption among others. The article recommends some measures to combat corruption in Nigeria.

Keywords

corruption, anti-corruption crusade, public sector, ethnicity, nepotism, bribery

Introduction

Corruption is the misuse of entrusted power or a dishonest use of one's office or position for personal gain. It is a cancerous global phenomenon, which has continued to cripple the developmental efforts of Nigeria. Corruption in Nigeria manifests in the form of misappropriation, kickback, overinvoicing, bribery, embezzlement, tribalism, nepotism, money laundering, outright looting of the treasury, and so on. In Nigeria, most of the elected and appointive public office holders and top bureaucrats use their position of authority to actively engage in corrupt practices (Obuah, 2010a).

In many African states, particularly Nigeria, corruption is a clog in the wheel of progress, as well as a malaise that inflicts every aspect of the society. Corruption drains African countries more than US\$140 billion yearly (Ribadu cited in Obuah, 2010a). Corruption deprives enabling environment for potential investors to invest; it distorts public expenditure, increases cost of running businesses, cost of governance and diverts resources from poor to rich nations. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa; it has an estimated population of 160 million people. The economy is mainly dependent on oil, which sustains corrupt practices. According to the Transparency International (TI; 2005) Report, corruption drains Nigeria, about 20% of her gross domestic product (GDP). Corruption is Nigeria's worst problem; it is responsible for all kinds of

woes, such as election rigging, failed promises, abandoned projects, poor quality of implemented projects, dilapidated infrastructure, nepotism, instability in the Niger Delta, and impediment to flow of foreign direct investment (Obuah, 2010b). However, the former Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Chairman, Nuhu Ribadu, claims that the over US\$400 billion that had been looted from Nigeria by the leaders is “six times the total value of resources committed to rebuilding Western Europe after the Second World War” (Ademola, 2011, p. 312). Political corruption has derailed meaningful developmental goals, resulting in high level of unemployment and disconnection of the people from the leaders with attendant insecurity such as youth restiveness, arm-robbery, and kidnapping for ransom.

Over the years, successive governments in Nigeria have evolved various measures, policies, and programs to combat the menace of corruption, the most important of these measures according to Ijewereme (2013) are Murtala/Obasajo's

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Jaji Declaration/confiscation of assets illegally acquired by Nigerians of the 1970s, Shagari's Ethical Revolution to fight corruption through the introduction of code of conduct for public servants of 1981, and the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) by the Buhari/Idiagbon administration in 1984 and the ethical and social mobilization crusade by the Babangida regime in 1986 as well as WAI and Corruption (WAI-C) by Abacha's administration in 1994. These efforts were largely cosmetic and remained at the level of rhetoric, and did not result in any significant change.

Similarly, in recognition of corruption as the worst problem of Nigeria when Obasanjo came to power in 1999, his government immediately put in place different anti-corruption institutions to curb the problem. These include among others, the EFCC and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC).

The institutionalization of these anti-graft agencies, at the inception of Obasanjo's administration, raised the hope of Nigerians with the expectation that the changes will bring to book corrupt public officials and also act as a deterrent on others (Ijewereme, 2013). Unfortunately, these programs and strategies made little impact in the war against corruption in the face of enormous political corruption in the Nigerian public sector. For instance, for three successive years, 2001, 2002, 2003, TI ranked Nigeria as the second most corrupt country in the world (Ijewereme, 2013). Subsequently, when Nuhu Ribadu became the chairman of newly created EFCC in 2003, Nigeria's corruption profile started declining gradually. In 2007, prior to the exit of Ribadu, TI ranked Nigeria 32nd position out of 147 countries surveyed in the world (Eme & Okoh, 2011; Ijewereme, 2013; TI, 2007).

Furthermore, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua frequently reaffirmed his determination to fight corruption and proclaimed respect for the rule of law and due process, but the actions and body language of Yar'Adua depicted the opposite (Aderonmu, 2009; Ijewereme, 2013). Yar'Adua's administration did not sustain the impressive performance of Nuhu Ribadu. During Yar'Adua's administration, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation, Mr. Micheal Aadoanka, worked fervently to undermine effort in the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

Similarly, corrupt practices have continued to increase at a worrisome level since President Goodluck Jonathan assumed office. Jonathan's administration displayed lack of political will, a high degree of lethargy and cluelessness in the fight against corruption in the face of many corrupt practices reported frequently against government officials.

Despite the depth of literature on corruption in the Nigerian public sector, it is only few studies that have interrogated Nigerian political corruption from theoretical and empirical perspectives, for example, "Political Corruption in Nigeria: Theoretical Perspectives and Some Explanations" (Ogundiya, 2009). Although Ogundiya interrogated corruption from theoretical perspectives, his work was not complemented with some empirical explanations.

Therefore, the purpose of this article was to examine political corruption in Nigeria from theoretical perspectives and some empirical explanations. The article reviews corrupt practices in the Nigerian public sector from Alhaji Tafawa Balewa's era to President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. The article employs idealistic, resource curse, two public, low risk-high benefit and anomie theories, and consequently adopts resource curse, low risk-high benefit theories to explain corrupt practices in Nigeria. Also, some personal observations and data from TI are utilized to explain causes and state of corruption in Nigerian public sector with a view to developing insights to reduce the vices in public service.

Literature Review and Conceptual Analysis

Corruption is a social phenomenon that is difficult to define, and it does not have a universally accepted definition. The definition varies depending on the inclination of the scholar and perception of the concept. Andrig and Fjelstad cited in Mohammed (2013) are of the opinion that corruption is a "complex and multifaceted phenomenon with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and contexts" (p. 120). Similarly, Tanzi (1998) is of the view that while it is hard to define corruption, the crisis that is linked to corruption is not difficult to identify.

The United Nations Global Programme Against Corruption (GPAC) defines political corruption as the "abuse of power for private gain." In a similar vein, TI also put forward a lucid definition of the concept as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain." Waziri (2010) views corruption as a pervasion or a change from the generally accepted law or rules for personal benefit.

Azelama (2002) defines corruption as any action or omission enacted by a member of an organization, which is against the rules, regulations, norms, and ethics of the organization, and the purpose is to meet the selfish end of the member at the detriment of the organization. The World Bank (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group, 2006) defines corruption as "the abuse of office for private gains." Public office is abused for private gain when an official accepts, solicits, or extorts a bribe. Agbu (2003) observes that public office can be abused for selfish gain even if bribery does not take place. This implies that political corruption could be defined in the form of patronage, election rigging, and voters register manipulation, favoritism in the award of contract, procurement scam, tribalism and nepotism in recruitment and promotion, unfair punishment/sanctions for public officials.

Given the above definitions, corruption or political corruption implies any action that violates electoral rules/the formal duties of any public role, rules, or norms with regard to public trust.

Forms of Corruption in Nigerian Public Sector

Although political corruption is perceived differently from one territory and geographical location to another, the following behaviors are regarded as forms of political corruption in Nigeria: acceptance of gratification; succumbing to inducement and undue influence; embezzlement; conflict of interests, for example, the award of contracts by public office holders to cronies, family members, and personally held companies; bribery; fraud; nepotism and tribalism in recruitment/appointment, promotion; kickback on contract; rigging of elections; misappropriation and conversion of public funds for personal gains; procurement scam; leaking tender information to friends and relations; diversion and misappropriation of funds through manipulation or falsification of financial records; payment for favorable judicial decisions, and so on (Azelama, 2002; Ijewereme, 2013; Waziri, 2010).

Electoral Corruption

This refers to buying of votes with money, intimidation of agents of opposition parties at the Polling units, obstructing the freedom of election, and engaging in ballot snatching and stuffing (Idada & Uhumwuangho, 2012). It involves manipulation of voters' register, brigandage, and all manner of electoral violence leading to killing and maiming of people. It also involves multiple thumb printing on ballot papers, the announcement of votes in areas where votes were not cast, and winners of elections ending up as the losers.

Nepotism

This is a highly biased method of distribution of state resources where a public officer prefers his or her relatives and family members or friends in awarding contracts, job recruitment, promotion, appointment to public positions, thereby ignoring the merit principle; this may lead to the downgrading of the quality of the public service (Amundsen, 1997; Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management, 2010). It also includes exemption of once relatives and friends from the application of certain punitive laws or regulations, and this may disrupt esprit de corps and trust. Nepotism provides room for "preferential treatment of one individual over another, without taking into accounts the relative merit of the respective individuals; this represents nothing but victimization of an individual or individuals" (Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management, 2010).

Favoritism

This is a form of corruption where a public servant gives undue preference or favor to his or her friends, family, and anybody close and trusted in recruitment, promotion, and so on.

Procurement Scam

This refers to overinvoicing of government contracts or corruption related to purchases. That is,

the purchase price of an item is inflated so that the difference between the inflated price and actual price is shared between the person who does the purchasing and the sellers or it is taken by the purchaser alone with the seller conniving. (Azelama, 2002, p. 92)

Ghost-Workers Phenomenon

This is a practice where the management of a public organization deliberately inflates the payroll by including fictitious names to get more subventions for salary. The excess is siphoned by the members of management in connivance with some members of governing councils or boards (Azelama, 2005).

Budgeting Corruption

This is a form of corruption where management of a public organization in connivance with governing council or board minister/commissioner bribes some members of the legislature to approve inflated estimate for the institution during budgeting. In a situation where the budget is already approved, the management is expected to give tips or gratifications to the government functionaries whose duty it is to release money to the institutions (Azelama, 2005).

Effects of Corruption in Nigeria

The effects of corruption in Nigeria are outrageous. The effects range from under development, absence of basic infrastructure such as potable water, good road networks, misappropriation of national resources leading to massive poverty, mediocrity in leadership and cluelessness in professionalism, deficient leadership outputs, high unemployment and youth hopelessness, continuous widening gap between the rich and poor, and falling standard of education leading to production of low-quality graduates (Waziri, 2010). Corruption has made students and products of the tertiary institutions suffer from loss of self-confidence, hopelessness, and loss of confidence in handwork and societal value. It has lowered the image of academic and non-academic members, as well as governing councils of most public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Corruption denies access to basic education and health services, fuels political violence, generates popular anger that threatens to further destabilize societies, and exacerbates violent conflict (TI, 2012). It distorts public expenditure, increases cost of running businesses as well as cost of governance, and diverts resources from poor to rich nations. It has frustrated research efforts, derailed administrative goals, instigated organizational goals displacement, and it has also drastically reduced the image of Nigeria in the

international communities to mention just a few (Azelama, 2005; Waziri, 2010).

Corruption in the Nigerian Public Sector

Corruption is responsible for the collapse of Nigeria's First and Second Republic. Government officials in Tafawa Balewa's government in the First Nigerian Republic looted public funds with impunity. Balewa did not take any policy position to wipe out the menace (Ijewereme & Dunmade, 2014). The history of electoral corruption in Nigeria started in 1964 and 1965 elections. The 1964 and 1965 elections of the Nigerian First Republic were flagrantly rigged by the ruling Northern People's Congress (NPC) government headed by Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa (Ajayi, 2008). Dudley (1982) observes that the ruling party abused the electoral procedure to the detriment of the opposition parties, especially the Action Group (AG). The result of the election was completely rejected by all the opposition parties and consequently resorted to widespread violence such as killing, arson, and destruction of properties in the western region of Nigeria (Ogundiya & Baba, 2005). Corruption, massive rigging of the 1964 and 1965 elections, violence in the western region, avarice, internal strife, and drifting of the country were said to be the reasons middle-ranked army officers sacked the Nigerian First Republic politicians from power through a coup d'état on January 15, 1966 (Ijewereme & Dunmade, 2014).

The cry against corrupt practices in Nigeria became public glare and worrisome under General Yakubu Gowon's administration. Gowon's administration was unashamedly corrupt to the macro-level, and corruption was not hidden from the public gaze (Lawal & Tobi, 2006). According to Nigerian Tribune August 1st, 1975 (cited in Lawal & Tobi, 2006), his promise to enact anti-corruption decree like other promises was never fulfilled. The level of corruption under Gowon's regime came under intense public scrutiny when Murtala Mohammed became the head of state and set up Assets Investigation Panel to probe the governors and other public officers that served under Gowon. The panel indicted 10 of 12 military governors, and so their assets were confiscated. The anti-corruption crusade spread to the entire public service; thus, the purge of the public service led to the retirement and dismissal of more than 10,000 public servants nationwide (Anazodo, Okoye, & Chukwuemeka, 2012).

Accordingly, one would have expected Murtala war against corruption to enthrone deterrence in Nigerian public service. Unfortunately, it is disheartening that the politicians of the Second Republic during Shehun Shagari's administration were not deterred, despite the ignominious ways the indicted governors that served under Gowon were treated. The politicians of the Second Republic engaged in all forms of corrupt and unethical practices of different shades. The period was marked by fragrant abuse of power by virtually

all public officers—career and political office holders. The political office holders used their offices to siphon and misappropriate public fund (Lawal & Tobi, 2006).

The military administration led by Major-General Muhammed Buhari who took over power from the Shagari's administration was extremely determined to eradicate corruption from Nigeria through the WAI crusade. Various tribunals both at the federal and state levels were instituted to probe the political actors of the Second Republic. The Paul Omu-led tribunal found most of the politicians guilty and sentenced them to long jail terms (Lawal & Tobi, 2006).

The Babangida administration that ended the Buhari's administration through a coup d'état on August 27, 1985, did not show any commitment to the anti-corruption drive of its predecessor. Maduagwu cited in Lawal and Tobi (2006) listed the following as some of the highlights of Babangida corrupt practices:

1. US\$2 billion Gulf war wind fall in 1991.
2. 30% of oil revenue diverted to frivolous uses throughout the time.
3. Huge extra-budgetary spending: 1989 = N15.3 billion, 1990 = N23.4 billion, 1991 = N35 billion, 1992 = N44.2 billion, 1993 (by August) = N59 billion.
4. US\$200 million siphoned from the Aluminum Smelter project.
5. N400 million wasted on the Better Life Project.
6. Colossal Corruption at the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), for example, US\$101 million for the purchase of strategic storage facilitation.

The Okigbo panel set up by the General Sani Abacha-led administration to look into the Babangida administration indicted General Babangida and the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) of a frivolous looting spree and clandestine spending (Anazodo, Okoye, & Chukwuemeka, 2012; Ijewereme & Dunmade, 2014).

The Abacha administration that took over from the interim National Government followed the pace set by the Babangida administration in looting the government treasury. The entire country became an extension of his personal estate within a space of 5 years, amassed so much wealth than the wealth of most countries in Black Africa put together (Ebegbulem, 2012; Ijewereme & Dunmade, 2014). A total sum of N63.25 billion was said to have been recovered from the Abacha family. In fact, parts of the Abacha legendary stolen wealth are still being recovered from his family till date (Ijewereme & Dunmade, 2014).

The Abdusalam administration is not an exception from the mass looting of the public treasury. The Christopher Kolade panel set up to review contracts, licenses, and appointment made under the Abdusalam administration came out with shocking revelation. The panel found beyond imaginable proportions that, though Nigeria was already

neck deep in corrupt practices, the Abdusalam administration made a mockery of any sense of discipline and probity and at a scale that practically made saints of his predecessors (Anazodo, Okoye, & Chukwuemeka, 2012; Lawal & Tobi, 2006). The panel specifically reviewed 4,072 contracts, 576 licenses, 807 appointments, 768 awards, and 111 approvals all made within 5 months. The panel submitted that the 4,072 contracts cost Nigeria N635.62 billion as against the N88 billion budgeted in 1998, this representing a deficit of N551 billion. The panel also revealed the depletion of the foreign reserve, which at the end of 1998 stood at US\$7.6 billion but shrank to US\$3.8 billion by May 1999.

In a similar vein, when Obasanjo came to power in 1999, he told Nigerians that corruption was the major clog in the wheel of Nigeria's progress and, until the social menace is eradicated, development will continue to elude Nigeria. Accordingly, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo signed the anti-corruption bill into law that established the ICPC and EFCC that are in the ongoing political dispensation in the Fourth Republic (Aderonmu, 2009; Ijewereme, 2013). Unfortunately, these institutions made little impact in the war against corruption in the Nigerian public sector. For instance, some western diplomats were of the opinion that Nigeria lost between US\$4 billion and US\$8 billion annually to corruption during the 8 years of Obasanjo's regime (Human Rights Watch, 2007). In a similar vein, TI scored Nigeria very low for 4 consecutive years; the scale showed that, on the scale of 10, Nigeria scored 1.6 in 1999, 1.2 in 2000, 1.0 in 2001, 1.6 in 2002, and 1.4 in 2003 (Ijewereme, 2013). However, when Nuhu Ribadu became the chairman of newly created EFCC in November 2003, Nigeria corruption profile started declining gradually, as reflected in *TI (2008)* scale 1.6 in 2004, 1.9 in 2005, 2.2 in 2006, 2.2 in 2007, and 2.7 in 2008. But Ribadu's legacy has been diminished by widespread belief that his anti-corruption agenda was selective, dictated by the political whims of the presidency to deal with perceived opponents and enemies, while the cronies and heavily corrupt officials in the good books of the then president Olusegun Obasanjo were untouched. Obasanjo's administration was lucidly described by Oluwasanmi (2007) as follows:

Corruption became all pervading; electoral fraud common place, personal insecurity and unresolved assassinations characterized his regime just as much as disobedience of court rulings. Many infrastructures were left to decay while he pursued an attempt to stay longer in office by trying to amend the constitution. He pursued to jail or impeachment those governors who did not agree with him using corruption as the weapon: On corruption those who agreed with him were unscathed. Though, he tried to reorganize some arms of government—The civil service and finance.

Obasanjo's administration was characterized by unthinkable greed, hatred for the rule of law and human rights, selective investigation of corrupt public officials, and inefficient handling of the economy (Aderonmu, 2009). Furthermore, the

revelation after the end of his government showed that he waived due process for awarding of contracts; he sold government property to himself and his cronies below the cost price (Aderonmu, 2009; Ebegbulem, 2012; Imhonopi & Ugochukwu, 2013; Oluwasanmi, 2007).

In addition, Yar' Adua's government constantly reaffirmed his administration's determination to combat corruption and proclaimed respect for the rule of law and due process, but his actions and body language revealed the contrary (Aderonmu, 2009; Ijewereme, 2013). Yar' Adua's government through the office of Attorney General of the Federation made frantic efforts to (undermine the fight against corruption) prevent James Ibori, the former governor of Delta State, from being prosecuted and jailed. James Ibori was a close associate of Yar' Adua as well as one of the major financiers of Yar' Adua's election. Umaru Yar' Adua forced Ribadu from office just 2 weeks after he tried to prosecute powerful former Delta State Governor James Ibori (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

However, president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's administration could not show the courage and tenacity to fight corruption in the face of many allegations of corruption perpetuated and reported often about public officials. Recent audit report on Goodluck Jonathan's administration discovered unprecedented ghost employees in the Nigerian Federal Civil Service. The fraud of ghost employees on payroll is also common to many states in Nigeria. Billions of Naira are wasted to fraudsters on monthly bases, and there are more than 45,000 unaccountable workers on the federal payroll alone, and government is spending over N100b annually (Okekeocha, 2013). The most worrisome is that Nigerians have not been informed or given account on what is being done to the perpetrators of this heinous crime. In a similar vein, the board of NNPC and the Minister of Petroleum supervising NNPC, Diezani Allison Madueke, were indicted of corruption; the president sacked the board of NNPC without sacking the Minister of Petroleum. "Mrs Daziani Allison Madueke has been indicted by five different investigative panel Committees reports at different time, yet she confidently remains in charge of the Ministry unperturbed" (Melaye, 2013a, p. 2). This is simply because she has family ties with president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan. An international tax and audit firm, KPMG, audit report indicted the NNPC, Petroleum Product Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPPRA), and the Ministry of Petroleum of large-scale corruption and absence of transparency. According to Melaye (2013a), "the Farouk Lawal Report of the House of Representative Investigative Committee: Spoke elaborately of unprecedented Corruption between bureaucracy and the marketers of petroleum products" (p. 2). The marketers cannot put their hands into government treasury to pay themselves without approval from appropriate authorities such as NNPC, PPPRA, Minister of Petroleum, CBN, and of course Minister of Finance (Melaye, 2013a). It is disheartening that, till date, no government official in these ministries and agencies has

been invited by the anti-graft agencies or police on these excessive subsidy scandals (Melaye, 2013a). According to Melaye (2013b), the government of President Goodluck Jonathan is yet to convict one corrupt political official; not one politically exposed person has been convicted of corruption under Jonathan's administration. Corruption is flourishing in Nigeria because there is a complete lack of political will to combat the monster by successive governments, especially President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. Melaye (2013b) is of the opinion that the situation would continue, except the power to appoint the EFCC, and the ICPC chairman is removed from the president.

The fight against corruption in Nigeria has completely become a lost battle. In the First Republic, corruption was 10%; in the Second Republic, it snowballed to 20%; during the general Ibrahim Babangida era, corruption was institutionalized, President Obasanjo's administration strengthened corruption, and for reasons best known to President Umaru Yaradua, he allowed the ICPC and the EFCC leadership to be occupied by corrupt officials (Falana, 2012).

Falana further opines that corruption was perpetuated with impunity under President Goodluck Jonathan's administration to the extent that the war against corruption lost completely. According to Falana (2012), "the Auditor-General of the federation disclosed that 4.2 trillion Naira collected by Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) was not remitted to the Federation Account from 2006 to 2009." The Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative reported that oil companies have failed to pay into the Federation Account about 10 billion dollars from 1999 to 2008. The Nuhu Ribadu-led Petroleum Revenue and Special Task Force revealed that Nigeria has been robbed to the tune of almost 100 billion dollars. All the indicted leaders in the cases of Siemens, Halliburton, and other scandals are walking freely and still dictating who gets what and how in the Nigerian political arena.

All the foregoing shows the enormity of corruption and unethical practices in the Nigerian state. The issue is, "What are the major causes of these corrupt practices in Nigeria?" Different arguments have been put forward to explain the pervasiveness of corruption in the Nigerian state. These include poverty, personalization of public office, political culture, and inability of leaders to overcome their colonial mentality with respect of their perception of public office (Lawal & Tobi, 2006). Moreover, the magnitude of corruption in Nigeria since Gowon's regime to Goodluck Jonathan's administration has been attributed to political economy growth of Nigeria by some scholars, that is, the movement from dependence on agriculture in the 1960s to total dependence on oil and oil revenue (which became the major source of Nigerian wealth) from the 1970s, among other factors.

Theoretical Review

Many theories have been advanced by different scholars in an attempt to explain the causes of unethical practices, lack

of accountability, and corruption in Nigeria. This article presents an overview of the most important theories.

Idealistic Theory

This theory is based on the proposition that it is people's ideas that influence their culture, behavior, organization of their society; therefore, corruption is the nature of social and moral values prevailing in the society (Nkom, 1982). This theory explains corruption in terms of some selfish ideas, which are prevalent in the value system of the society (Anazodo, Okoye, & Ezenwile, 2012). A simple extension of this logic leads to perception of corruption as emergent perversion of morality and value system in the society. This argument sets the platform on which the positions of two different schools of thought were built. These are the traditionalist school and the modernist school.

The argument of the traditionalist is that corruption and unethical practices in Nigeria are symptoms of perversion of traditional values, beliefs, norms, ethics, and so on (Azelama, 2002). This school blames corruption on invasion of African culture by the West; that is, Europeans need to bring civilization to Africa. During the colonial era, civilization was highly regarded as Europeanization of African societies, so whether the adopted strategy was that of indirect rule or principle of assimilation, a cultural transformation was aggressively pursued by the colonial masters in the areas of pattern of education, religion, value system, governance, politics, language, administrative and legal systems, and so on. They believed in cleansing the cultural elements and attributes that they saw as substandard to those of European societies; they would enthrone a cultural revolution that was indispensable to the development of African societies (Azelama, 2002). The cultural contact between Western Europe and African traditional societies produced a cultural change in Africa. Africans embraced some aspects of the European culture and value. Embracing European culture did not lead to rejection of their traditional values; this led to a "culture conflict." Before the advent of colonization, African societies had their conventional way of preventing and penalizing corrupt practices. Azelama is of the opinion that, to a varied extent, Nigerians continue to be influenced by traditional religious beliefs, even those who claim to be devoted Christians, Muslims, and educated elites, which is regarded as the "culture conflict." The resultant effect of culture conflict today is that African traditional values have proved too weak while adopted European values proved insufficient in restraining and preventing corrupt practices in Nigeria (Azelama, 2002, 2005). The African traditional value that was based on communal life was eroded by the western value of monetized economy, materialism, capitalism, without Africans or Nigerians fully internalizing corruption control mechanisms in the new system evolved in Africa by the West. Therefore, the people's moral value became perverted, leading to endemic corruption. This implies that culture contact led to materialism that

occasioned greediness, reduced devotion to communal services, and so on. According to this school, the antidote and recipe to the diseases of corruption are crystal clear. It is to go back to the African traditional values of hard work, honesty, communal lifestyle, neighborliness and celebration of good characters and track record in governance, and so on (Azelama, 2002). However, this school of thought is flawed on the ground that it fails to direct its focus on corruption in traditional African societies. Nevertheless, it is doubtful, however, whether corruption in traditional African societies was not far lower than what we have in Nigeria since independence.

The modernist perspective is that corruption in Nigeria is a remnant of the unyielding attitude, institution of the African traditional societies. The modernist idealists associate corruption with certain traditional practices such as offering of gifts, ethnic loyalty, and other parochial tendencies (the obligation to protect members of your kinship and your nation), which tend to encourage corrupt behavior and which may be overcome by modern rationalist values (Anazodo, Okoye, & Ezenwile, 2012; Azelama, 2002).

Theory of Resource Curse

Two of the exponents of resource curse, Auty (2004) and Ross (2001), observe that since the 1960s, the resource-poor countries have outperformed and grown higher than resource-rich countries. Extant literature reveals that oil dependence leads to a skewing of political forces. It concentrates revenues from resources to geographic enclaves and power into the hands of few elites; this reduces their incentive to develop the governance mechanisms that enable general taxation. Empirical studies reveal that oil-dependent nations especially in developing African countries that have at least 25% of their exports from natural resources are more likely to have conflicts (Bamiduro, 2012). Bamiduro further opines that “resource conflicts seem to be driven by poor governance, greed and corruption.” Oil-dependent-rich states often lack basic ethics, transparency, and accountability, and are also characterized with poor people (Abubakar, 2004).

It has become axiomatic that countries rich in natural resources, especially oil and gas, grew slower than those without (Ross, cited in Otaha, 2012). “Major oil producers such as Algeria, Angola, Iran, Saudi-Arabia and Venezuela have experienced fundamental decline in per capita income in recent decades” (Otaha, 2012, p. 85). In 2004, Nigeria’s Relative Poverty measurement of Nigerians living in poverty stood at 54.4% but increased to 69% (or 112,518,507 Nigerians) in 2010; while in 2004, Nigeria’s Absolute Poverty measurement of Nigerians who were living in poverty stood at 54.7% but increased to 60.9% (or 99,284,512 Nigerians) in 2010 (Yemi, 2012), even though the country earned more than US\$340 billion in oil revenues since the 1970s (Otaha, 2012). It is disheartening that of all the oil companies operating in the Niger Delta region, none of them

were owned by Nigeria or Nigerians; hence, the so-called national cake is not even baked by Nigerians but by multinational companies owned by foreigners (Otaha, 2012), and this often leads to capital flight to home countries of the multinationals. Observation shows that

in Angola where 90 percent of government revenues come from oil and two thirds of the population have no access to clean water, good schools, and medical facilities while its autocratic president is the richest in the country; a recent IMF audit reveals that US\$4.2 billion oil revenue of Angola went missing between 1996 and 2001. (Otaha, 2012, p. 85)

TI ranks Angola 151 on its Corruption Perception Index (CPI) in 2006. In fact, a majority of resource (oil)-dependent-rich countries rank very low in the World Bank’s Voice and Accountability Index. Most of these governments are red-dened in corruption, and their leaders often have a seat-tight syndrome to stay in power for life. For example, Zaire’s President, Mbutu Sese Seko, stayed in power for 32 years (from 1965 to 1997; Otaha, 2012). In Nigeria, General Gowon attempted it in 1975, Shagari in 1983, Babangida in 1993, Abacha in 1998, and Obasanjo in 2006; the story is the same in most oil-producing states (Otaha, 2012). In oil-dependent states (as opposed to non-oil dependents), nutrition and life expectancy is often low, child mortality is high, unemployment is often rising, literacy rate increases at decreasing rate, and food importation is prevalent, even though they have the capability to produce food in abundance.

Nigeria with a total dependence on oil revenue is doomed because resource wealth often floods governments with more revenue than they can effectively manage, thereby providing incentive for corruption (Dietz & Eric, 2005). Oil revenues in Nigeria tend to be collected by governments in ways that are unusually difficult for citizens to track and unusually easy for crooked officials to divert; hence, some revenue end up in off-budget accounts or the pockets of government officials, and is never heard of again (Ross, 1999). Mehlum and Ragner (2002) observe that governments that depend on oil and that get their revenue from natural resources become less democratic and hence less accountable than countries that rely on other income sources such as taxation. In some cases, governments of resource-dependent countries use their largesse to prevent the formation of independent social groups that might eventually demand political rights (Isham, Pritchett, Woolcock, & Bushy, 2004). Although there are examples of countries that broke the oil curse, others avoided it altogether (Otaha, 2012). The United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, Canada, and so on consist predominantly of states that were already democratic with effective application of the rule of law before oil came along. Another group, however, has successfully moved from oil doom to oil blessed; these include Mexico, Dubai, Indonesia, and so on (Otaha, 2012). Indonesia economy has tripled over the last 20 years. Since the mid-1990s, it has been using its oil

receipts to build world-class infrastructural facilities in areas of education, health, agriculture, and social services (Otaha, 2012). The country is growing at 16% per year, and oil, once its primary source of income, is now around 6% of the GDP (Ross, 2001). Three decades ago, Indonesia and Nigeria had comparable per capita incomes. Today, Indonesia is 10 times better than Nigeria. Today, per capita income in Nigeria has declined at a worrisome level because of corruption being sustained by oil revenue.

Theory of Two Publics

This theory was canvassed by Ekeh (1975); according to him, in Nigeria, two publics can be identified. These are the primordial public and the civil public. The primordial public is associated with kinship, tribe/ethnic group, while the civil society relates to the society outside kinship either in the public sector or in the private sector where individuals work. That is, the individual in the civil public views his duties as moral obligations to benefit and sustain a primordial public of which he is a member. Nigerians tend to show loyalty to their kinships higher than the civil societies. Therefore, any circumstance where there is a conflict of interest between the primordial public and the civil public, Nigerians tend to protect primordial interest at the expense of the civil public (Azelama, 2002). This explains why many Nigerians involve in unethical practices within the civil public for the gain and satisfaction of their primordial public. A good example from the analysis of Ekeh is a situation where a public servant corruptly enriches himself in the public sector and utilizes a greater part of the loot for his primordial public (tribal people or his ethnic nationality).

Ekeh cited in Ogundiya (2009) is of the opinion that only rights (i.e., benefits) are expected from the state by her citizens, who owe duties (responsibilities) to a native sector or primordial and ethnic nationality. The ethnic nationality forms the basis of a “moral primordial public realm.” It was amoral civic public realm in which cheating the system was considered a patriotic duty (Ifidon, 1996). The implication of this phenomenon is that as the same actor operates in the two realms, the state apparatus is employed to better the lot of the primordial public, resulting in pervasive corruption in the civil public (Osaghae, 1995). According to Ekeh quoted in Ogundiya (2009),

A good citizen of the primordial public gives out and asks for nothing in return; a lucky citizen of the civil public gains from the civil but enjoys escaping giving anything in return whenever he can. But such a lucky man would not be a good man were he to channel all his lucky gains to his private purse. He will only continue to be a good man if he channels part of the largesse from the civic public to the primordial public. That is the logic of the dialectics. The unwritten law of the dialectics is that it is legitimate to rob the civic public in order to strengthen the primordial public. (p. 283)

Ekeh (1972) explains the issues that are inevitable confrontation between the two publics as follows:

Tribalism: This is a term used to denote animosities between or among the members of different ethnic groups. Tribalism is the major problem of Nigeria. It breeds corruption in the civil public for the benefit of primordial public; it is responsible for lack of objectivity and inefficiency in Nigerian public service.

Corruption: Ekeh (1975) is of the opinion that corruption often occurs directly from the amorality of the civic public and the legitimation of the need to seize largesse from the civic public to benefit the primordial public. In Nigeria, corruption takes two major dimensions—the embezzlement of public fund from the civil public and the solicitation and acceptance of bribes from individuals seeking services provided by the civic public by those who administer these services (Ogundiya, 2009). The two forms of corruption carry little moral sanction and may well receive great moral approbation from members of one’s primordial public; however, these forms of corruption are completely absent in the primordial public (Ekeh, 1975). Ekeh further opines that an individual may risk serious sanctions from members of his own primordial public if he seeks to extend the honesty and integrity with which he performs his duties in the primordial public to his duties in the civic public by employing universalistic criteria of impartiality.

A critical review of Ekeh’s two public theories shows that politics of identity/citizenship and tribalism have aided the thriving of corruption in the civic public and strengthening of primordial public. In contributing to Ekeh’s theory, Adebayo (1999) is of the opinion that ethnic relation in Nigeria is “cohabitation without marriage” (p. 137). This implies that Nigerian ethnic groups are not united for the development of our nation. Similarly, Ifidon (1996) also submits that “while a Nigerian Nationality is non-existent properly speaking, citizenship is operating at the homeland level” (p. 102). It is axiomatic without contradiction that there is no true Nigerian. For example, in 1947, Obafemi Awolowo, one of the foremost nationalists (cited in Coleman, 1986), provided an apt description of Nigeria: “Nigeria is a mere geographical expression . . . The word Nigeria is a mere distinctive appellation, to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria and those who do not.” The purpose of agitation for political representation by various ethnic groups is to have unbridled access to state fund. The entrenchment of federal character in the Nigeria’s constitution and rotational or zoning arrangement in political parties in Nigeria are not meant to promote sense of belonging and national unity but rather to entrench corrupt tendencies. The reason there is high-level kleptomaniac in Nigeria is because the North and South do not believe that the union of the federal republic of Nigeria

will last long; therefore, every ethnic group, especially the northern region that contributes little or nothing to the federation account, is interested in what they can grab and fall back on when Nigeria eventually disintegrates.

A Gap in the Literature of Two Publics

However, Ekeh's theory has assisted us to have a detailed understanding of the endemic and pandemic nature of corruption and unethical practices in the civic public in Nigeria. But Ekeh could not explicitly explain how greed and obsession made public servants to selfishly accumulate wealth in the civic public with little or nothing to show in the primordial public. It is important to set the present dispensation record of corruption and unethical practices right on the premise that the robbery in the civil public is presently not being used to strengthen the primordial public but rather pauperizing it. A sentiment to the primordial ties is nothing but of political deception and manipulation in the hands of few elites for selfish aggrandizement. It has been observed that a vast majority of Nigeria's stolen wealth by the politico-bureaucratic elites are siphoned abroad to acquire estates in advanced countries and store in European banks, and buy honorary PhD awards including chieftaincy titles across Nigeria while the people in the primordial public languish in poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation. If money stolen in the civil public, as strongly argued by Ekeh, was used/is being used to strengthen the primordial public, there would not have been illiteracy, alarming poverty, the prevalence of preventable diseases, and so on at the primordial public. A typical example is the observation of alarming poverty, unemployment, and infrastructural decay in (Okhara, Delta State) the home town of former Delta State Governor, James Ibori who looted and syphoned the State money abroad for acquisition of personal estates. The political and bureaucratic elites use primordial sentiment to fulfill their greed and obsession with stealing public fund (oil money).

This political and bureaucratic hegemony constitutes a powerful cult, and they have unbridled access to state wealth. They are in every ethnic group and sector of Nigerian public service. They can instigate, rig election, assassinate any perceived political enemy or obstacle to their way in the quest to have unlimited access to state fund. It is clear from the work of Ogundiya (2009), Ijewereme (2012), and Ijewereme (2013) that the political elites are popularly known as godfathers, that right from independence, power has been rotating round these groups and their recruited children; they strive to maintain and consolidate this status quo by ensuring politicization of ethnicity. The political elites use social identity such as ethnicity for particularistic purpose. The ethnic identity becomes a mobilizing mechanism to access political power, consolidate dominance and economic control (Dudley, 1973; Osage, 1995). With the politicization of

ethnicity, that is, primordial ties, the bureaucratic, and the political elites found an avenue to siphon and squander state wealth (Ogundiya, 2009) for personal enrichment without strengthening the primordial public.

One of the major reasons corruption is rampant in Nigeria is attributed to the greed and obsession to share the national cake by the component units without concern on how the cake would be baked. This attitude is further attributed to the façade nature of the nomenclature called Nigeria, because citizenship exists at federating unit/tribal or ethnic level. Therefore, every ethnic group of political and bureaucratic elite is interested in what they can grab with a deception of the need to develop their (primordial public) ethnic region/state rather mainly for selfish aggrandizements and building of personal estates.

The godfather's slogan in every ethnic group to their political godsons is "ensure you steal the state wealth and give a certain percent to the godfathers." A typical example is late Lamidi Adedibu, a political godfather in Ibadan, Oyo State, who publicly disclosed on a national television program that his godson, former governor of Oyo State, Rashidi Ladoja was ungrateful for failing to give him 30% of the State's monthly security vote after making him governor. Consequently, Lamidi Adedibu used his influence to impeach him.

Ayoade cited in Ogundiya (2009) apt description of the *modus operandi* of godfatherism in Nigeria is worth quoting:

The godfather is not in the business of philanthropy . . . The godfather gives support to install the godson oftentimes by devious antidemocratic means . . . They are merchants of fear. They dispense violence freely and fully on those who stand in their way. In this, they play the additional role of Warlord. They establish, train and maintain a standing personal "army" which they ostensibly supplement with a sprinkling of the official police detachment. In order to effect electoral change, they bribe election officials to deliver the winning election figures. They also bribe the police and other security agents to look the other way when they traffic in ballot boxes and sack opponents strongholds. The godson, having taken office, returns the gesture hundredfold to the point that the godfather becomes an "intractable parasite" on government. The initial support given by the godfather then becomes an investment with a colossal rate of returns because the godfather becomes the "de facto" governor. (p. 286)

Also, Ekeh claims that individual honesty and integrity in the performance of his or her primordial duties is flawed. This is because observation shows that individuals in the civil public who also serve as heads of community development projects in the primordial public had been found to have dishonestly embezzled community's money and in most cases implemented poor projects after collecting kickbacks.

Table 1. Beneficiaries of Lenient Sentences in Nigeria.

Name	Offense	Sentence	Date	Court
Cecilia Ibru, former CEO of the defunct Oceanic Bank Plc.	25 counts of bank and security fraud	Six months' imprisonment and forfeited 190 billion naira (US\$1.2 billion) assets and cash	October 2010	Federal High Court Lagos
Tafa Balogun, former Inspector General of Police.	Failing to declare his assets & his front companies were convicted of Eight counts of money laundering.	Six months' imprisonment and seizure of his assets—reportedly worth in excess of US\$150 million.	November 2005	Federal High Court, Abuja
Lucky Igbinedion, former Governor of Edo State.	Failing to declare his assets and his front company was convicted of 27 counts of money laundry.	Six months' imprisonment with an option of N3.5m fine and seizure of some of his assets acquired with proceeds of corruption. Igbinedion immediately paid the fine in the court room & agreed to forfeit some of his assets.	December 2008	Federal High Court Enugu
Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, former Governor of Bayelsa State.	Failing to declare his assets & his front companies were convicted of Money laundering.	Two years' imprisonment & forfeited some of his assets.	July 2007	Federal High Court Lagos

Source. Adapted from Aderere (2013, p. 2) and Human Rights Watch (2011, p.15, pp. 22-24).

Low Risk–High Benefit Theory

This theory has a resemblance with the principle of deterrence. In a situation where punishment for unethical and corrupt practices is light, premised on plea-bargaining (as in the case of the convicted former Edo State governor, Lucky Igbinedion), people will not be deterred from involving in corruption (Ijewereme, 2013). But when the punishment is severe, public servants will be scared in engaging in corruption and unethical practices (Azelama, 2002).

Recent development in corruption charges on high-profile cases shows shame in the application of plea-bargaining. A plea bargain refers to an agreement in a criminal case between the prosecutor and the defendant, whereby the defendant agrees to plead guilty to a particular charge in return for some concession from the prosecutor (Aderere, 2013). That is, the defendant will plead guilty to one of several charges, in return for the dismissal of other charges with a more lenient sentence. The conviction of a former director in the police pensions office, Mr. John Yusuf, alongside six others, for converting public fund (police pension fund) in the sum of US\$203,726,708 (N32.8 billion) to their personal use, with a light sentence of 2 years imprisonment with an option of fine in the sum of US\$4,658 (N750,000), which the convict Yusuf immediately paid, is a typical example of low risk–high benefit theory of involving in corruption in Nigeria (Aderere, 2013).

Beneficiaries of Lenient Sentences in Nigeria

The above convicts are a show of shame and a mockery of justice. The convictions cannot restrain people from involving

in corruption when it is compared with what is obtained in advanced nations, like America, where 150-year jail term was recently served by Bernard Lawrence Madoff, American former businessman, stockbroker, investment adviser, and financier who pleaded guilty to 11 federal felonies for defrauding thousands of investors billions of dollars with his wealth management business massive ponzi scheme (Aderere, 2013). (For more information about Beneficiaries of Lenient Sentences in Nigeria, see Table 1 below).

However, bureaucratic corruption flourishes and grows best in an environment like Nigeria where people believe that the risk of engaging in corrupt practices is low—as it is quite easy to bribe the law enforcement agents and thus escape prosecution, while the gain is high because corrupt people make a lot of monetary proceeds from corruption, enjoyed unfettered privileges in the society. Corruption tends to be higher in public sector where public office holders can dupe the state and use their influence to cover up (Aluko & Adesopo, 2003; Ijewereme, 2013).

The Anomie Theory

The thrust of the anomie theory sought to explain the pressures that society exert on its members as many of the reasons individuals are disposed to engage in antisocial and/or illegal behaviors. Those under the societal pressure are conditioned to enact corrupt behaviors. This theory is associated with R. K Merton and E. Chinoy. Merton (1957) and Chinoy (1967) argue that the society sets goals for groups and individuals and the same society prescribes the means of attaining these goals. There are individuals whose means are not enough to attain the goals set for them by the society, leading to breeding of corrupt and unethical behaviors. Merton is of

the opinion that individuals in the society receive messages of what is normal—in addition to acceptable behavior—from societal institutions. From the perspective of Merton as cited in Murphy and Robinson (2008), normal is that which is the “psychologically expectable, if not culturally approved, response to determinate social conditions” (p. 503). Most people, most of the time, abide by society’s rules of behavior, thereby remaining “normal.” Yet, pressures from social institutions, specifically from expectations associated with the societal goal, can lead some “to engage in nonconforming/unethical behaviors among which is corruption rather than conforming conduct” (Merton, 1957, p. 132; Murphy & Robinson, 2008, p. 503).

The central theme of Merton’s theory with regard to deviance and criminality asserts that criminality is a function of an overemphasis on the goals associated with accumulation of wealth, as well as a disjuncture between the goals valued by society and the means available to individuals to achieve them (Merton, 1957). Therefore, the primary instrument through which deviance and criminality are fostered has its origin in goals—means discrepancies (whether because of an overemphasis on cultural goals or goal blockage; Murphy & Robinson, 2008).

Nigerian society institutes value system and attitudes, which dictate expectation from its citizens and employees without considering income differential. This pressure could lead to the sufferers enacting corrupt and unethical behavior in an attempt to meet the expectations of the society. Educational elite, politicians, bureaucrats, religious elite, traditional rulers, managers of public enterprises, contractors, and so on are sufferers of this phenomenon in Nigeria (Azelama, 2002). In Nigeria, the society does not accept any reason as good enough for an employed graduate not to have a good car and a good visiting home. Political leaders, contractors, managers in a public sector, and so on have no acceptable reason to the society for not living in affluence, donating much money at launchings (Azelama cited in Ijewereme, 2012).

Nigerian society tends to overemphasize the individual goal attainment at the expense of the legitimate means of achieving these set goals (Anazodo, Okoye, & Ezenwile, 2012).

In Nigeria, people hail you when you have accumulated wealth, material acquisition has virtually become the ultimate goal and the society does not appear to be concerned with how one “makes” it. “Born again Christians” say it is a break through. They pretend not to know that you have acquired the wealth through illegitimate means. Those who are yet to make it are regarded as those whose miracles are on the way if they are “born again Christian.” These value systems in our society invariably exert pressure on people, which leads to various forms of corruption such as embezzlement and misappropriation of public fund, offering and acceptance of bribe, overinvoicing, armed robbery, illegal

road blocks by police officers, rigging of elections, examination malpractice, resorting to magical practices by many pastors of new generation churches to attract crowd for monetary gains, and so on, which in all acts as a clog in the wheel of development in Nigeria.

Merton anomie is highly operational in Nigeria, but the theory mainly attributes criminality/corruption to an array of social causes/societal pressures. The theory fails to explicitly link criminality as a function of personal states of egoism and selfishness.

Two Specific Frameworks of Analysis

Having interrogated corruption with idealistic, resource curse, two public, low risk–high benefit and anomie theories, this article adopts the resource curse and low risk–high benefit theories. The movement from dependence on agriculture in the 1960s to total dependence on oil and oil revenue from the 1970s reduced the ingenuity and creative ability of Nigeria as a nation. This is because oil is a natural resource which does not require human ingenuity to produce. Money derived from crude oil (a free gift of nature) discourages hard work, reduces a man’s or a nation’s strongest instinct for greatness. Availability of oil money, which a nation did not really work for, retards innovativeness, breeds corruption, and reduces accountability and the tendency for the people to demand accountability from the government. Environments where the culture of democracy and rule of law are yet to be established before oil exploration and exploitation usually have multiple crisis, namely, fueled political violence, popular anger that threatens to further destabilize societies with violent conflict (TI, 2012), and endemic corruption. This partly explains why corruption is endemic in Nigeria because rule of law and democratic ethos are yet to be deeply entrenched. The United States, the United Kingdom, Norway, Canada, and so on consist predominantly of states that were already democratic with effective application of the rule of law before oil came along (Otaha, 2012).

The theory of low risk–high benefit is also adopted because people in Nigeria who are about to carry out corrupt practices first weigh and compare the risk involved in it to the benefit. It is when they find that the benefit outweighs the risk that they go ahead to enact corrupt practices. The risk includes the possibility of getting caught, the social implication for the culprit, and so on. The benefits, however, include the monetary proceeds, privileges enjoyed in the society, increased standard of living, and so on (Azelama, 2002; Ijewereme, 2013). However, when democratic ethos and rule of law are well established, risk of involving in corruption is high, and punishment attached to corrupt practices increased, nepotism and tribalism, which are the trust of the two public theory, will be drastically reduced, oil money will become a blessing, and public servants will not bow to the pressures that society mounts on them as explained by anomie theory.

Table 2. Empirical Analysis of TI Corruption Perception Index Rankings of Nigeria From 1996 to 2014.

Year	Rankings
1996	54 of 54
1997	52 of 52
1998	81 of 85
1999	98 of 99
2000	90 of 90
2001	90 of 91
2002	101 of 102
2003	132 of 133
2004	144 of 146
2005	152 of 158
2006	150 of 163
2007	32 of 147
2008	121 of 150
2009	130 of 150
2010	134 of 178
2011	143 of 183
2012	139 of 176
2013	144 of 177
2014	136 of 175

Source. Adapted from Eme and Okoh (2011, pp. 57-58).

Note. TI = Transparency International.

Some Empirical Analyses of Corruption

a. The Trajectory of Political Corruption

TI is renowned for compiling an annual global CPI based on vast surveys of public opinions about corruption within various public sectors. The respondents are usually entrepreneurs and analysts who are conversant with each environment. A country's points reflect perception of the extent of public sector corruption. In 2014, Nigeria came 136th of 175 countries and territories ranked, and she scored a paltry 27 points out of a possible 100 points. This implies that Nigeria is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. In 2013, Nigeria was ranked 144th of 177 countries that were assessed, and we scored 25 points out of possible 100 points. A score of 0 denotes extensive levels of corruption, while a score of 100 means "highly clean" status. Table 2 captures Nigeria's ranking since 1996:

b. Personal Observations and Interaction With Stakeholders on Corruption

This researcher's frequent observations and interactions with public servants/politicians and Nigerian youths in Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Edo, and Delta states since 2006 to date reveal that corruption is becoming deeper by each passing year. The most notable aspect of the interactions was when this researcher asked chieftains of leading political parties such as Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressives

Congress (APC), and Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN): Precursor of APC in the aforementioned states, "Why is it our leaders do not have political will to fight corruption with sincerity?" Their responses showed a similar pattern, such as "corruption is utilized to win primary election, canvas for vote, gain electoral support and win election in Nigeria." They also disclosed that "corruption is part of what is utilized to influence judges to deliver favorable judgment on electoral cases in tribunal, Court of Appeal and even Supreme Court." They said,

It will be tantamount to political suicide for a politician who won election through the financial investment of political godfathers and party stalwarts to now refuse to enrich himself and his sponsors in hundred fold or even more to secure permanent financial security.

They went further, "How will such a leader has a political will to probe, prosecute and jail his corrupt benefactors (who made him or her)?" Many of the Nigerian Youth interacted with including the former and current executive members of National Association of Nigerian Student (NANS) revealed that Nigerians are born and bred in corruption, and that anyone in the leadership position uses it to enrich himself or herself including his or her family and close friends, and that they are not excepted from the culture.

Experience shows that civil servants do not see anything wrong in using their offices to enrich themselves as long as the politicians are corruptly acquiring wealth on daily basis. This researcher's observation shows that most civil servants demand for bribe before rendering services to their clients (members of the public). They involve in job racketeering, that is, some top public servants sell vacant jobs to highest bidders (applicants) and throw merit to the winds. The most worrisome aspect is that most of our government universities, particularly federal universities, frequently involve in nepotism, tribalism, favoritism in recruitment, selection, and appointment of staff. They anoint prospective academic staff before putting up recruitment advert. In many cases, those applicants with intimidating credentials and academic publications are deliberately not shortlisted for interview; not to impair the chances of already anointed candidates. The interview for academic staff becomes a charade, that is, it is stage manage, a candidate with least credentials and the least performer in the interview turns out as the successful and selected candidate. Tribalism, nepotism, and embezzlement with impunity are frequently observed corruption in our public sector.

The president of Nigeria fails to show leadership by example on most occasions and has demonstrated lethargic and lack of tenacity in the fight against corruption. The lack of political will on the part of government to fight corruption is a source of worry to Nigerians, specially the inability of the anti-corruption crusade to jail past governors being arraigned for corruption since 2007.

The above observation is further corroborated with the opinion of Akeredolu, quoted in *National Mirror*, April 29, 2012. Akeredolu aptly described the situation as follows:

All of us are worried. It is because the Nigerian government is not making efforts to fight corruption and it cannot be able to do it. And the president Jonathan led government, though not only his government, but from former president Obasanjo's time, they have glove in hand with those perpetuating corruption. They are hand with those who commit these frauds. The leadership of the ruling People Democratic Party PDP is part of it and that is why it is not easy for them to fight corruption. So many of the former governors who made away with public funds are still there, nothing has happened to them. James Ibori was jailed abroad, why can't we do this at home? That is part of the problems we are facing. The government is part of the corruption and so it is not easy for them to fight it. (*National Mirror*, 2012, p. 5)

An Overview of Why the War Against Political Corruption Has Failed in Nigeria

Many successive governments in Nigeria, both military and civilian rulers have attempted to fight corruption with various measures. What is worrisome is the fact that most of the Nigerian rulers who came in as physicians have come out as patients (Ijewereme, 2013; Ogundiya, 2009). Various measures have been put in place since 1976 till date, such as Public Officer Investigation of Asset Decree No. 5 of 1976; Forfeiture of Assets Decree No. 53 of 1999; the use of tribunal like the failed bank tribunal set up by Abacha military administration; the Code of Conduct Bureau and the Code of Conduct Tribunal in 1979; and the fifth schedule Part 1 of 1999 Nigerian constitution, Ethical revolution of 1979 to 1983, WAI (1983-1985), WAI-C (1993-1998), ICPC in 2000, and EFCC in 2003, among others (Ijewereme, 2013; Ogundiya, 2009).

Irrespective of these measures, Nigeria is rated as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Brinkerhoff cited in Ogundiya (2009) is of the opinion that successful anti-corruption efforts depend on political will. According to him, it includes both the political will to initiate fight against corruption in the first place and subsequently the will to sustain the battle over time, until results are achieved. However, a number of factors are responsible for poor political will in Nigeria. In the first place, corruption is used to acquire political position and sustain it. Returns to political godfathers can only be raised through corruption. It will result in a political suicide for a politician who acquired the political position with the help of political godfathers and allies to now turn around and prosecute them.

Many corrupt cases have been stalled for years in the courts because of the slow pace of the court system. Many rules of evidence and procedure have for the most part been left practically unaltered since colonial administration, with

absurd results; in a similar vein, most courts lack the formal mechanism to admit electronic document into evidence (Human Rights Watch, 2011). Judicial impropriety has been noticeable, particularly in cases involving high-profile past political figures. The reputation of

Nigeria's court system was bartered when Oyo Salami, the former president of Federal Court of Appeal, publicly accused former Supreme Court Chief Justice, Katsina Alu, of trying to pressurise him to decide a key electoral petition in favour of the ruling party. (Human Rights Watch, 2011)

The most astonished aspect was the U.S. diplomatic cables (leaked to the whistleblower site Wikileaks), revelation that Dimeji Bankole, the former Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representative, claimed to U.S. diplomats that he had proof supreme court justices took bribes to validate Umaru Yar'Adua's election as president in November 2008. Obasanjo cited in Punch, May 23, 2012 opines that the Nigerian Judiciary is corrupt. He said, "If the judiciary becomes corrupt, where is the hope for the Nation? Justice no doubt will go to the highest bidder."

It is the role of the legislature to act as a watchdog over the executive in the management of public finance to ensure good governance and accountability. Unfortunately, the legislature both at the state and federal levels in Nigeria has been enmeshed in corruption in the course of performing this role. A few examples of this fact are the allegation of bribery between the former Director-General of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Ms. Arunma Oteh, and the former House of Representatives Chairman of Committee on Capital Market, Herman Hembe; former House of Representative Chairman of Committee on Power, Mr. Ndudi Elumelu (electricity bribery scam); and former House of Representative Chairman of Abhor Committee on Subsidy Regime Probe, Mr. Farouk Lawan, alleged receiving bribe from Otedola to remove his company's name from the indicted list in the subsidy probe result. Obasanjo questioned the integrity of Nigeria lawmakers when he called them rogues and armed robbers. According to Obasanjo quoted in Punch, May 23, 2012, "integrity is necessary for systems and institutions to be strong." He said, "Today, rogues, armed robbers are in the state Houses of Assembly and the National Assembly, what sort of laws will they make?"

Ezugwu, a chieftain of the All Progressive People Party (APGA), was quoted in the *National Mirror* of Wednesday May 16, 2012 as saying that "the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which should be fighting corruption was mentioned as beneficiary of the fraud in the pension scam, so where is the transparency when the anti-corruption agency is itself corrupt." In a similar vein, Rabe Nasir, the former head of the House of Representative committee that oversees the EFCC, alleged that there was "pervasive corruption" in Waziri-led EFCC. He told Human Rights Watch (2011) that he received numerous petitions

from fraud victims who explained how they had approached the EFCC for help only to have its operatives demand a large cut of any assets ultimately recovered. But he did not provide the petitions to Human Rights Watch, or explain what he intended to do with the information.

Concluding Remarks

The article examines corruption in the Nigerian Public Sector; this is in a view to analyzing forms and effects of corruption, rhetoric in the fight against corruption and emphatically analyzing theoretical underpinning of the causes of kleptomaniac and pervasive corruption in the Nigerian public sector. The article focuses on corruption in Nigerian public service from Tafawa Balewa's administration to President Goodluck Jonathan's era, and discovers that corrupt practices have been on an alarming rate. The article employs idealistic, resource curse, two public, low risk–high benefit and anomie theories, personal observation and data from TI, and subsequently adopts the resource curse and low risk–high benefit theories. The resource curse theory explains that the movement from dependence on agriculture in the 1960s to total dependence on oil and oil revenue from the 1970s reduces the ingenuity and creative ability of Nigeria as a nation. This is because money derives from crude oil (a free gift of nature), discourages hard work, retards innovation, breeds corruption, and reduces the tendency of the people to demand accountability from the government. Resource curse theory also argues that oil money breeds corruption because democratic culture and rule of law are yet to be deeply entrenched in Nigeria. Low risk–high benefit theory argues that people in Nigeria who are about to carry out corrupt practices first weigh and compare the risk involved in it with the benefit. It is when they find that the benefit outweighs the risk that they go ahead to enact corrupt practices. The article discovers that corruption is endemic in Nigerian public service because of societal pressure on public servants, perverted moral order, greediness, weak anti-corruption crusades, bribery and embezzlement, tribalism and nepotism, low risk–high benefit of involving in corrupt practices among others.

However, this article suggests the need for reforms in all sectors of Nigerian public service; the public institutions must be characterized by meritocracy and professionalism, a high morale cum reform-minded public servants, with a sense of patriotism and commitment to fighting corruption, as well as ensuring transparent management and instituting more effective corruption-reporting mechanism. The anti-corruption agencies must not only be made to function independently of government apparatus but must also have the capacity to institute and effectively execute sanctions, without recourse to the personality involved. Anti-corruption institutions should be strengthened with good funding and appropriate legislation. Punishment on corruption should be severe to act as deterrence. That is, our laws should be amended to

relate the magnitude of offenses with punishments/imprisonments and fines. Rule of law should be deeply entrenched. This is because, when democratic ethos and rule of law are well established and risk of involving in corruption is high and punishment attached to corrupt practices increased, nepotism and tribalism, which are the trust of the two public theories, will be drastically reduced, oil money will become a blessing, and public servants will not bow to societal pressure as explained by anomie theory.

Besides, there should be a reform on criminal procedure and evident rules to remove archaic laws and incorporate electronic evidences. Special court should be established and designated for corruption cases, and judges working on high-profile corruption cases should be provided with adequate security and financial incentive.

Emphasis should be placed on age-long value of hard work, honesty, and integrity as well as due process, accountability, and transparency in the public service. The public should frequently demand accountability from public servants through the utilization of Nigerian Freedom of Information Act. Finally, there should be constitutional amendment that will take the power to appoint the chairmen of the anti-graft agencies to the National Judicial Council (NJC).

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