

Governance and Prebendalism in Nigeria: The Past, the Present and the Future

ONI, Emmanuel Oluwole

PhD., International Development, University of Edinburgh, UK

Abstract: Since the end of the Cold War and the subsequent shift in political and economic relationships between the global North and South, the demand for *good governance* has become the shorthand for changing the scope of exercise of authority in aids-seeking nations from ‘government’ towards ‘governance’ with transparency, accountability, inclusiveness and wider scope for human rights, all becoming recurrent vocabularies. What is also often encoded in *good governance* is the fight against corruption. In response, most Sub-Saharan African governments have experienced decades of anti-corruption programmes initiated with the support of multi-national agencies. While it is acknowledged that much progress has been made, the pace is however, discouragingly slow especially in countries like Nigeria and Kenya. This paper argues that understanding the differential foundational structures which breed corruption in various African states is central to achieving substantial progress in anti-corruption fights by designing the appropriate counter-mechanisms. In the light of current corruption scandals and political events in Nigeria, the paper examines prebendal politics in Nigeria as theorized by Joseph (1987) to postulate the trajectory of Nigeria’s political economy into the future. It concludes by recommending the practice of full fiscal federalism in Nigeria. This would reduce concentration of excessive economic resources that promotes patronage politics at the Nigeria’s central government.

Keywords: Good governance, Prebendalism, Patronage Politics.

1. INTRODUCTION

From Governance to Anti-Corruption Agenda:

The coincidence of the period of the failure of aids-seeking Sub-Saharan African countries to turn around their economic woes after years of SAP implementation, with the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s provoked a new way of thinking in the North-South political and economic relationships. In fact, a 1989 World Bank report blamed a “crisis of governance” in Sub-Saharan Africa for lack of effective use of development aid in the region. (World Bank 1989). Since the early 1990s, the World Bank has been directly engaged in bringing political concepts into its development strategies under the rubrics of governance. (Harrison, 2005).

It is therefore not surprising that good governance and institutional reforms soon became recurrent vocabularies as conditions for granting aids; a practice that Nanda (2006) describes as “selectivity”. Selectivity, Nanda (2006) continues, is a means of requiring a recipient state to demonstrate the seriousness of its commitment to economic and social reforms. In justifying the grounds for good governance in development agenda of the World Bank, the bank conceptualized governance to indicate the manner in which power and authority are exercised for development “in the management of a country’s economic and social resources” (World Bank 1992:1).

Governance paradigm is a complete shift away from the concept of government. It is a move away from the overbearing architecture of who gets things done- the government (structures and institutions) to the process of how things are done, who are the actors involved and what are the outcomes achieved. Government uses sanctions to enforce compliance,

governance is people-centred and the ultimate outcome is only achieved when people's voice is heard and their plights assuaged. World Bank (1994) elaborates on governance reform as the promotion of a more efficient public administration, promotion of accountability, the establishment of the rule of law and a capable judiciary, and transparency. A critical examination of these qualifiers of governance reveals the determination of the World Bank to counter all the indices of mal-governance or mis-governance which have rendered African states weak and ineffective in the years under review. At the core of bad governance in every Sub-Saharan African country is endemic corruption. To this end, every intervention of the International Financial Institutions in sustaining good governance in Africa was not only aimed at institutional reforms and democratization but also at establishing a mechanism of monitoring – the anti-corruption institutions.

Most countries in sub-Saharan Africa in collaboration with western donors and creditors have experienced a decade and half of widely publicized anti-corruption campaigns. Yet, the results are mixed. Where little progress has been recorded, the pace has been discouragingly slow while regime changes and policy reversals have eroded their credibility. This paper is an attempt to explain the failures of anti-corruption programmes in Nigeria as the manifestation of non-robustness and non-resilience of the anti-corruption programmes designs to cope with an ever-dynamic corruption terrains in Nigeria. The paper elucidates the chronology of Nigeria's corruption profiles and offers policy intervention to minimize incidence of the sleaze with a view to building a prosperous economy in the most populous black nation on earth.

2. CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA – A DEFINITIONAL EXPLORATION

Corruption lacks a universally accepted definition (Peters 1978, Johnston 1991, Izibili and Aiya 2007) and it is “importantly a moral, political and legal issue” (Ogundiya, 2009), with blurred definitions and conflicting interpretations. This is because corruption is subjective to social, political and legal dimensions in its perception and reality. Any attempt to make meaningful definition of the term has either included too many acts that are illegal but socially and politically accepted or excluded too many acts that are legal but are socially and politically reprehensible depending on time and jurisdictions.

Corruption is ubiquitous (Ogundiya, 2009) but because of centrality of public policy and management to national social, economic and political outcomes, most academic discourses on corruption focus on political corruption – corruption in government sector while relegating corruption in the private sector to the background. This present paper is not an exception and the definitions briefly discussed here are targeted at political corruption – the issue which the author seeks to examine in chronological detail with reference to Nigeria.

For clarity and analytical purposes, Peters (1978) cited in Ogundiya (2009) identified three dimensional approaches to the definition of political corruption. These are definitions based on legal criteria, public opinion and public interest. From the legal dimension, political corruption is connected to any behaviour that violates some formal standard or rule of behaviour set down by a political system for its public officials. One of such definitions was given by Nye (1967:417, 419) who defines political corruption to mean misallocation of public goods to private ends or an act which “deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private regarding (personal, close family, private clique), pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private– regarding influence”. In addition, Bardhan (1997) defines corruption as the “use of public office for private gains”. In this regard, corrupt acts include but not limited to bribery, embezzlement, fraud, nepotism, amongst others.

In Nigeria's case, even though scholars have traced the history of corruption back to the colonial era (Ekeh 1975, Osaghae 1988)¹, the definition of what constitutes corruption has remained contestable. Parliamentary acts, military decrees and proclamations tend to describe corruption in the terms of prevailing socially and legally unacceptable behaviours in public roles at different periods. In this regard, the following extract from Nigeria's Criminal Code² and the Criminal Procedure Act³ both of which prohibit and seek to punish corruption, remains elusive and limited in content as to what constitutes corruption:

¹ See Osoba (2006) and Ogunyemi (2016) for the detail historical perspective of corruption in Nigeria and historical evidence of colonial corruption in Nigeria respectively.

² CAP 77, *Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990*. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Justice.

³ CAP 80, *Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990*. Lagos: Federal Ministry of Justice.

Any person who – (1) corruptly asks, receives, or obtain any property or benefit of any kind for himself or any other person on account of anything already done or omitted to be done, or to be afterwards done or omitted to be done, by him or any other person, with regard to the appointment or contemplated appointment of any person to any office or employment in the public service, or with regard to any application by any person for employment in the public service; or (2) corruptly gives, confers, or procures or promises or offers to give or confer, or to procure or attempt to procure, to confer upon, or for any person, any property or benefit of any kind or account of any such act or omission; is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for three years.

This quotation irrespective of its length describes just the act of giving and taking of bribes. Corruption is wider in scope than just bribery. In the Nigerian context, the quotation omits other very serious acts of misuse of public office such as unauthorised retirement of funds in the budget, deliberate over-padding of expenditure votes, fraudulent encashment of cheques, charging of private expenditure to the public treasury, outright refusal to answer audit queries on discrepancies in the record of public finances, non-remittance of funds collected on behalf of the government, over-invoicing of government purchases, diversion of funds from approved projects and contracts, cronyism, etc

Irrespective of the inadequacy of the legal definition of corruption in Nigeria, there is surfeit of research evidence on the deleterious effects of corruption on national economic performance, political stability and government effectiveness.

Corruption is described as a social virus (Osoba, 1996) which is responsible for the tragedy of underdevelopment of Nigeria (Ogundiya, 2009). Corruption undermines democratic institutions, retards economic development and contributes to government instability. (Waziri, 2011). Corruption is an insidious ‘crime’ which has no direct victim like other crimes – armed robbery and murder for example. However, its victims are the generality of public interest and indeed the masses with no direct access to power – economic and political. Corruption ultimately breeds the vicious cycle of poverty, ineffective service delivery system including criminal justice and law enforcement which all have direct impacts on the poor. It is the razor that has torn the moral fabric of Nigerians apart - creating a sense of opportunism in every citizen in a position of power, authority and influence no matter how little. Corruption rewards indolence by rent-seeking thereby reducing economic productivity. In practical terms, it is hard to dissociate the prevalence of corruption from the incidence of surging economic crimes (even beyond public domain) that pervade the nation. This has adverse effects on the country’s image and its inability to mobilize the much needed foreign direct investment especially at this time of volatile crude oil prices.

Nigeria’s Corruption: A Selection of Theories:

Theoretically, two seminal works – Peter Ekeh’s 1975 Theory of Two publics and Richard Joseph’s 1987 theory of Prebendalism have been very profound in shaping the understanding of Nigeria’s corruption dynamics. Ekeh traced the roots of Nigeria’s corruption to the days of colonialism whereby African people had little commitment to services in colonial bureaucracy. Most educated Africans (Nigerians) are citizens of two public realms and one private realm. The two publics are identified as the amoral civic public and the moral primordial public. The civic public describes the entity of the state while the primordial public describes non-state groupings on the basis of “sentiments and activities which nevertheless impinge on public interest.” (Ekeh 1975:92).

On the one hand, citizens expect benefits from the civic public but gives grudgingly back to it. On the other hand, citizens are expected to give substantially to the primordial public and they do so without any material benefits in return. What complicates the dynamics of African politics is the social norms and acceptance of the dialectical relationship of taking largesse from the civic public to support the primordial public. According to Ekeh (1975:108):

A good citizen of the primordial public gives out and ask for nothing in return, a lucky citizen of the civic public gains from the civic 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.

In Ekeh's submission, it is this practice of normative but unwritten law of the dialectics that fostered public corruption and stealing.

Richard Joseph's prebendalism treatise which forms the core of this paper could be linked to Ekeh (1975) because of the normative tolerance that the two publics dialectic has for public officials who disregard rules of conduct in their duties. In analytical term, prebendalism as theorised, illuminates the nitty gritty of how the primordial public network works to sabotage the working of an ideal Weberian bureaucracy in the civic public thereby rendering the Nigerian political structure a site of mere struggle for power and "sharing rights". The only exception is that the sharing network does not apply only to the narrow definition of non-state actors captured by Ekeh's primordial public.

Prebendalism denotes the prominence attached to the "struggle to control and exploit the *offices* of the state" (Joseph, 1987:1, italics from source). Because the state occupies the central position in the economy, providing access to material goods, wealth and power, it becomes attractive for competitive access through which the Zero-Sum game entitles the winner(s) to the exclusive rights to exploit the state office. This practice corresponds to what Morris Szeftel (1982) refers to as the use of the state as "a resource in itself."

Historically, Nigeria's modern democracy was built on the foundation of pre-colonial traditional institutions under the British indirect rule system. In fact, these traditional institutions were created by the British where none existed.⁴ The pre-colonial traditional institutions which are deeply based on patron-client relationships⁵, eventually overshadowed the modern Weberian bureaucracy to produce institutions which may not consistently function according to legal principle but serving as spaces for collaboration between "social positions inherited from the past" (Bayart 1993:169).

The resulting 'pseudo-modern' institutions of the Nigerian state capture perfectly, the intricacies of prebendalism as Joseph (1987:67) further defines it:

"a prebendal system will be seen not only as one in which the offices of the state are allocated and then exploited as benefices by the office-holders but also as one where such a practice is legitimated by a set of political norms according to which the appropriation of such offices is not just an act of individual greed or ambition but concurrently the satisfaction of the short-term objectives of a subset of the general population"

What is particularly intriguing about this theoretical formulation is the fact that the prebendal system that is considered to satisfy "*short-term objectives of a subset of the general population*" is "*legitimated by a set of political norms*" thereby informally making illegality legal and there appears to be a consensus. It has however been sanctioned to have with ruinous consequences for economic development and democratic consolidation (cf. Suberu, 2013:83).

To distinguish prebendalism from the existing terms usually applied to theorise on similar political economy such as Nigeria namely: patrimonialism, clientelism, patronage systems, patron-client clusters which are used interchangeably to refer to the same phenomenon, Joseph (1987, 63) defines clientelism as "the nature of individual and group relationships within the wider socio-political sphere, while prebendalism is primarily a function of the competition for, and appropriation of, the offices of the state".

What makes prebendalism an enduring theory of Nigeria's political economy is its insightful analysis of how the prebendal system has gained acceptance in the wider political concept both on written legal codes and unwritten normative practices. Terms like zoning, federal character, revenue allocation formula, etc are legally designed to "share" the state in terms of recruitment of personnel into the civil service, military and para-military services, appointment of heads of government parastatal, admissions to Universities and other training institutions. One clear violation of Weberian ideals is that meritocracy is sacrificed for mediocrity in preference for candidates to fill bureaucratic positions of the state. To worsen the situation, each individual holding state's office is constantly aware of his route of ascension to such position and in most cases, primordial interests supersede national interests in decisions that should be taken on their merits.

⁴ For instance, in the Eastern region where there was no centrally co-ordinated traditional institutions. Joseph (1987:65-66).

⁵ For example, the Hausa-Fulani traditional system where patron-client relationship legitimizes personalization of political office and proprietary management of public resources. See Umar (2013:193)

In practical terms, to what extent has the practice of prebendalism manifested in Nigeria's political economy? The next section briefly traces the incidence of corruption in Nigeria from pre-independence era to the present scandals which are daily exposed in Nigeria's media. This will be done to juxtapose the theoretical underpinnings with the reality of corruption in Nigeria.

Nigeria's Corruption: The Past and Present:

The reality of what Nigerians face today in terms of corruption is just the realization of the fact that the pre-colonial traditional system of administration which was deeply rooted in patrimonialism and under which authority was personalised and rulers governed on the basis of patronage and without accountability is no longer acceptable if the Nigerian economy is to have competitive edge in a globalised capitalist system.

In 2006, the then Nigeria's Anti-Corruption Chief - Mallam Nuhu Ribadu revealed that leaders of the country stole about \$380 billion of its oil revenue between 1960 and 1999 (BBC News, 20/10/2006; McFerson, 2009). In a similar narrative, Nigeria's current information Minister Mr Lai Mohammed said in January, 2016 that 55 Nigerians stole over 1.3 trillion naira of public funds between 2006 and 2013. (Premium Times, 2016a). It is however not difficult to reconcile this pattern of thievery with Nigeria's consistent rank as one of the most corrupt countries in the world by Transparency International since its inception in 1995 till date⁶. The devastating effects of this on the economy include the parlous state of the country's infrastructure, poor public service delivery, insurgency and poor human development indices amongst others.

The exact breakpoint at which corruption as it is conceptualised today was first reported in Nigeria could not be ascertained. However, Osoba (1996) traced the emergence of corrupt practices to the colonial system whereby only those identified with politics and patronage of the colonial administrators were successful in accumulating finance capital. The predominance of politics as the major source of wealth accumulation, Osoba (ibid) argues played out in all the subsequent cases of corruption till the last decade of the 20th century. Politics is therefore seen as another form of 'business enterprise' such that politicians recoup their investments by 'sharing' the state. What makes Osoba's account interesting is that both the military and the civilian governments in Nigeria's history were culpable of the charges of corruption against them.

The first notable case of corruption was against Dr Nnamdi Azikwe, the premier of Eastern Nigerian government (1954 – 1959) who used his privileged position to divert government resources into his private bank – African Continental Bank (ACB). He was investigated by the Foster Sutton Tribunal of Enquiry (1956) and was made to forfeit all the assets of the bank to the regional government. In the western region, G.B.A Coker's Commission of Enquiry (1962) investigated Obafemi Awolowo's mismanagement of Six Western Nigeria's public Corporations. He was found guilty of using public funds – surplus from marketing boards operations to his private ends. In the northern region however, where the Northern People's Congress with party's slogan *One North* and directly led by the monolithic Sultan's emirate council from Sokoto, there was no visible opposition like the West and East to challenge the party leaders and probably expose internal corrupt practices within its government.

With rising incidence of allegations and counter allegations of corruption among the political leaders, the 1962 Action Group Crisis in the West, 1962-63 national census crisis, Federal Election crisis of 1964, Tiv Rebellion of 1964-65 and Western Election crisis of 1965 almost turning Nigeria into a pariah state, provided a justifiable grounds for the military to seize power through a technically abortive coup because those that masterminded the coup were not the ones that eventually assumed the government. Patrick Nzeogwu's speech on the day of the January 15, 1966 coup is worth quoting here:

Our enemies are the political profiteers, the swindlers, the men in high and low places that seek bribes and demand ten per cent, those that seek to keep the country divided permanently so that they can remain in office as ministers or VIPs at least, the tribalists, the nepotists, those that make the country look big for nothing before the international circles, those that have corrupted our society and put the Nigerian political calendar back by their words and deeds.

⁶ Transparency International ranks Nigeria 54th of 54, 90th of 90, 147th of 179, 134th of 178, 144th of 175 and 136th of 168 countries surveyed in 1996, 2000, 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2015 respectively. See <http://www.transparency.org/> for details.

- *Nzeogwu, January 15, 1966 extract from Ademoyega, 1981:89)*

All subsequent military coups would later use the same rhetoric of corruption charges against their predecessors before taking over power. Ironically, many of them who came as physicians would later leave as patients (Ogundiya, 2009).

In July 1966, a counter coup was launched and Gowon assumed power. He was in government for nine (9) years. His government epitomised a typical case of a prebendal state as the bureaucrats who represented different interests groups in his government were prominent in using state resources towards private ends. Murtala/Obasanjo regime succeeded Gowon in a palace coup on allegation of wanton corruption and dwindling economic prospects for the nation. Murtala before his assassination retired sizeable numbers of civil servant and military personnel indicted by the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau set up to review the administration of his predecessor (Joseph, 1987:88). Obasanjo who assumed power on February 13th 1976 handed over to Sheu Shagari, a civilian president on October 1st 1979.

With the politicking and political re-alignments that brought Shagari to power, it was not surprising that vested interests that ran his administration exhibited the full scale of prebendal system that eventually made it to collapse in a bloodless coup that brought Muhammad Buhari to power on December 31st 1984.

Buhari ascended power on the promise to eradicate corruption. He arrested major politicians alleged to have corruptly enriched themselves in the Shagari's government. Trials were done in military tribunals and those indicted were sentenced to terms ranging from hundreds of years to life imprisonment. Others were simply incarcerated without trials. However, Buhari's inability to turn-around Nigeria's economic fortunes amidst dwindling oil funds, rising foreign debts and spiral domestic inflation, scarcity and rationing of essential consumables built up massive resentment against his government among the citizens. Buhari was ousted by a counter-coup which brought Ibrahim Babangida's to power on August 27, 1985.

Babangida's regime would later turn out to be a period of transition from prebendalism to predation. (Lewis, 1996). He typically personalised the Nigerian state. In a bid to gain legitimacy and sustain his reign, he constantly gave largesse to interest groups, professional organisations, and the traditional institutions. (Apter, 2005:224). During his reign, corruption became legitimized and to some extent, a directive principle of the state policy. He reversed every bit of gains by the Buhari's regime by setting -up tribunals to re-try previous cases of corruption and setting free prisoners or commuting long term sentences in other cases. Within the period of Babangida's reign, he transferred the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) into the presidency to facilitate his command structure of the economy. Babangida financed most of his economic recklessness not only from direct sales of crude oil but also by ordering the CBN to print currency notes. Between August 1985 and August 1993, total money in circulation in the Nigerian economy rose from 11.8 billion naira to 100.5 billion naira (Osoba, 1996) without visible economic productivity to match. The resultant spiral inflation, unemployment and lack of economic opportunities for teeming population of young people worsened the living conditions of Nigerians. Consequently, corruption spiralled out of the state structure to assume a new dimension –

obtaining under false pretence (a crime named 419 after the exact section of the Nigeria's criminal code which spells out its punishment). (Apter, 2005:226). Nigeria's image fluttered internationally and that continued till date. About 12.4 billion dollars oil revenue windfall during the 1990 gulf war could not be accounted for under Babangida. (Osoba, 1996).

With some tricky games of political gambling on the promises of returning power to civilian administration, he annulled a presidential election results which observers said was clearly won by M.K.O Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Babangida's regime came to an ignominious end on August 26, 1993 when he handed power over to an interim government led by Ernest Shonekan. In November 1993, Sani Abacha took over power from Shonekan in a palace coup. Abacha's would later turn Nigeria into a pariah state.

Abacha's regime has been reported as being the worst case of military dictatorship in Nigeria's political history. He was reputed for stealing billions of naira and dollars of Nigeria's money and stacking same in foreign accounts. Decades after Abacha's demise in June 1998, his loots are still being repatriated to Nigeria from the foreign banks. In addition to millions of dollars already repatriated, Nigeria has just signed a memorandum of understanding with the Swiss government to return another \$312 million. (Premium Times, 07/03/2016b).

With a brief period of Abdulsalam Abubarka's government, Nigeria transited into civilian government on May 1st 1999 under Olusegun Obasanjo. With much promises of taking Nigeria back to path of economic recovery, rule of law, transparency, accountability, respect for fundamental human rights and all other qualifiers of good governance, Nigeria

has experienced 17 years of unbroken civilian governments, a change of governing party and transition of leadership among four presidents.

In a show of failed promises, Nigeria's democratic experiment has not demonstrated that corruption under democracy is anything less prevalent and less ruinous than under the military regimes. Nigeria's experience under democratic governance could be explained by what Anders (2009:124) describes as "democratisation of appropriation" in Malawi after the country's civil service and political reforms increased the number of people with direct access to state resources. With democracy in Nigeria, more people have access to state offices either by political appointment, employment into the civil service or more broadly by winning elections. Instead of the secretive trials by tribunals and summary convictions under the military government, cases of alleged corruption are now tried in conventional courts with some technicalities of getting off the hooks especially as the corruption cases tend to span over years of adjournments in courts.

A few cases of corruption allegations from 1999 to 2015 will suffice here to buttress the above assertion.

(a) Olusegun Obasanjo (May 1999 – May 2007)

Obasanjo started his administration with the enactment of the bill establishing the Independent Corruption Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) in 2000. In 2002, another bill establishing the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission was enacted. With these two anti-corruption agencies, Nigeria was poised to tackle the malaise head long. The following are some of the cases of corruption allegations, trials and convictions recorded as well as those still pending in courts till date. These are by no means the exhaustive list of such cases.

- i. Nearly all the 36 state governors of Nigeria (1999 – 2007) had one charges of corruption or the other against them. Some could not be tried under Obasanjo because of the constitutional immunity accorded to the President, Vice President and all the state governors in Nigeria as much as they remain in office (Ocheni and Nwankwo (2012));
- ii. Mr Tafa Balogun, the then Inspector General of Police (IG) in Nigeria. He was charged with mismanagement of police budget, tried and convicted on plea bargaining, forfeited assets worth of 2.2 billion naira to the government and served 6 months jail term (BBC News Channel, 22/11/2005, The Nation 14/09/2013);
- iii. Cecilia Ibru, M.D of Oceanic Bank. She was charged with the mismanagement of \$1.2 billion Oceanic bank's funds and assets, tried and convicted on plea bargaining, forfeited the cash and assets to the government and served 6 months jail term (BBC News Africa, 09/10/2010);
- iv. Patricia Olubunmi Etteh. She was alleged to have spent a sum of 628 million naira on the renovation of her official quarters. She was never tried in court. She stepped down from her position as the Speaker of the House of Representative ignominiously. (Sahara Reporters, 25/09/2007).
- v. Halliburton Scandal. This involves a bribery scheme of \$182 million dollars paid by KBR – a subsidiary of Halliburton (USA) to three successive Nigerian Presidents between 1995 and 2004 in exchange for a \$6 billion contract to build the liquefied natural gas facilities.(Vanguard 24/02/2012, Adebawo, 2012:xxv). The KBR and its officials involved in paying this bribe have been tried, found guilty and convicted in the US. In Nigeria, the investigations are still ongoing.

(b) Umar Musa Yar Adua (May 2007 – May 2010)

Yar Adua was challenged by ill health. Throughout the three years recorded on his name, he was mostly hospitalised. However, his administration took a dramatic turn on the progress recorded by the EFCC under the Obasanjo's tenure. Specifically, prosecutorial powers of the anti-corruption agencies were withdrawn and they were made to directly report to the office of the Attorney General of the Federation. Many of the pending corruption cases in court suffered setbacks including that of Mr James Ibori – a former governor of Delta State.

(c) Goodluck Jonathan (May 2010 – May 2015)

Jonathan assumed power after a little constitutional crisis of leadership succession at the death of President Yar Adua. Overall, he was perceived to be less-stringent on the fight against corruption. He lost the 2015 general election probably because of his stance on the pervasive corruption in the country and his perceived inability to tame the monster.

- i. The alleged case of missing 20 billion dollars unremitted crude oil sale receipts. The whistle blower who was the Central Bank Governor, Lamido Sanusi was summarily suspended and dismissed from his post. (BBC News Africa, 20/02/2014)
- ii. Stella Oduah. This allegation involved the purchase of two bullet proof cars at the cost of ₦255 million for the use of the officials at the aviation ministry. The actual cost of the cars was estimated to be far less than this. The case has been charged to court on allegation of theft, the accused sought court injunctions to stop trials. The application for injunction was dismissed. The trial continues. (Sahara Reporters, 17/02/2016)
- iii. Diezani Alison - Madueke, a former petroleum minister was alleged to have spent 10 billion naira of government money to maintain a private jet. The House of Representatives ordered her probe. She applied for court injunction against the probe. The injunction was granted and the probe was suspended. (Eniayejuni and Evcan, 2015)
- iv. Farouk Lawan, Chairman House of Representatives Adhoc Committee on fuel subsidy was alleged to have collected \$160,000 from Femi Otedola – one of the accused beneficiaries of fuel subsidies mismanagement scheme in Nigeria. He was charged to court. The trial continues. (The Punch, 08/03/2016)

(d) Muhammad Buhari (May 2015 -)

His campaign for return to power after 30 years of his military regime garnered support on his record for, and promise to fight corruption. He has re-activated the nearly moribund anti-corruption agencies during the administration of Goodluck Jonathan. Series of corruption allegations and scandals are unveiled daily in the Nigeria's mass media. Some of these cases are already in courts and the trials are ongoing.

- i. Ibrahim Lamorde, Former EFCC chairman. He was alleged to have diverted about one trillion naira – part of the funds repatriated from Abacha's loots by the Swiss government. He was invited by an investigative panel set up by the National Parliament. He has refused to appear before the panel. Subsequently, an arrest warrant remains in force against him. (Vanguard, 30/08/2015).
- ii. Mr Babatunde Raji Fashola. He was alleged to have spent 139 million naira on digging two boreholes while he was the governor of Lagos State. Petitions were submitted against his nomination to be a minister in the current cabinet. This allegation was never investigated. He is the current minister of a tripartite ministry of Works, Power and Housing. (The Guardian UK, 08/09/2015).
- iii. Mr Rotimi Amaechi. He was alleged to have squandered 70 billion naira funds of Rivers State while he was the governor of the state between 2007 and 2015. This allegation was investigated by a panel of inquiry set up by the state government. He was indicted. A petition was submitted against his nomination as a minister in the current cabinet. He was however confirmed as the current minister of Transport in Nigeria. (The Nation, 08/10/2016).
- iv. Col. Sambo Dasuki Rtd. Nigeria's ex-National Security Adviser (NSA). Undoubtedly, this is the biggest scandal rocking the Nigeria's political atmosphere at the moment. He was accused of diverting 2.1 billion dollars arms budget for military hardware in pursuit of the war against insurgent group Boko haram. A list of beneficiaries of the said diverted funds have been made available by the EFCC. The case has been charged to court and the trial continues. (Vanguard, 08/12/2015).
- v. Haliru Mohammed. He is a former People's Democratic Party Board of Trustees chairman. He was accused jointly with his son - Bello Abba Mohammed, of benefiting a sum of \$1.5 million from the 'Dasukigate' – a term used to describe the case iv above in the Nigerian parlance. He has been charged to court. The trial continues. (BBC News Africa, 06/01/2016)
- vi. Budget padding. This is perhaps the major setback for the current government on its anti-corruption campaigns. After close scrutiny, the 2016 budget submitted by the Buhari's government to the National Parliament was exposed to have included frivolous expenditures, over-estimation of contracts, repeated expenditures amongst others. For a government which promised change from the ways things are done in the past, Nigerians believe that the budget has not sufficiently captured their expectations. The review of this budget continues. In the meantime, the president has sacked top level bureaucrats in the budget office of the finance ministry. (BBC News Africa, 24/02/2016)

At any rate, it is not difficult to notice the continuities and discontinuities in validity of Peter Ekeh and Richard Joseph's treatises on Nigeria's corruption. The ethnic tension at the central government has spurred the emergence of a cult of Nigerian political elite and bureaucrats who played the cards of primordial sentiments to attain position of power and influence. However, what has become very clear is that from the cases cited here as well as the multitudes of others, abuse of public office has been for private gains at the expense of primordial groups. There is hardly any trickle down effects of corrupt practices along the primordial lines as Ekeh and Joseph suggested. (Othman, 1989; See also Oguniye, 2009). Further, Oguniye contends that "the primordial sentiment is nothing but an instrument of political deception, trickery and manipulation in the hands of privileged political and bureaucratic elite for personal aggrandizement and less for group benefits". Politicians accused of corruptly enriching themselves in the present day Nigeria rarely keep their lucre in the bank accounts of relatives or friends. They are now introducing their children into the system to make sure they maintain their strongholds from generation to generation while the masses suffer in perpetuity. (see case v above under Muhammad Buhari). In the ongoing trials especially on cases iv and v in (d) above, funds have been traced to foreign accounts, personal investments in real estates both at home and abroad making any claims on primordial interest an illusion.

Nigeria's Anti-Corruption Campaigns: An Assessment:

Social issues are mostly subjective and the debate over the success or failure of anti-corruption programmes in Africa and Nigeria in particular remains one of such contentious topics. Relatively, it is acknowledged that progress has been made in anti-graft war. However, the pace has been discouragingly slow and in more worrisome cases, the little progress made has been reversed especially in countries like Nigeria and Kenya. (Lawson, 2009). The argument this paper makes in respect of the Nigeria's case is that anti-corruption programmes being implemented are mere inorganic structures set up to address the symptoms of more serious national underlying political problems. If there is going to be any efficacious commitment to reforming Nigeria's political dysfunctionality, there is much more to be done than trying to mollify international creditor nations and aids agencies in the name of anti-corruption agenda.

From the independence era till date, Nigeria has not been lacking in terms of anti-graft mechanisms and legislations. It has enacted a series of legislations and decrees, and instituted various tribunals, commissions of inquiry and agencies, etc – all set up to monitor and prevent abuse of public offices, investigate and prosecute offenders and impose sanctions whenever conviction is secured. What has been lacking is the character and goodwill to take necessary actions when the situation arises. Notable periods include the Ethical Revolution campaign of Sheu Shagari (1979 – 1983) and War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC) instituted by Gen. Sani Abacha. These leaders did not live to the tenets of their anti-corruption messages. Many a times, political leaders lack the will to implement the anti-graft policies of their governments.

Aside this, anti-corruption campaigns have a huge political cost. Given that there are very few (if any) powerful individuals who are not guilty of corruption in a predominant neo-patrimonial political system (Lawson, 2009) and in the case of Nigeria where the government is central in managing the heavily mono-cultural economy in which political patronage remains the surest source of contracts and favourable trade waivers, elected leaders are constantly held in the web unavoidable quandaries. It is usual to find accusations of political victimizations against any government which tries to decisively extirpate graft. In most cases, the accused may have serious charges to defend in the courts but their cries have always been that there are other individuals with similar charges who are protected by the government. (See cases ii and iii under (d) above). Meanwhile, any attempt by a government to 'step on toes' of the 'big men' that brought it to power ultimately affects its stability and chance of being re-elected. The current situation in Nigeria under which those with allegations of financial impropriety are appointed as ministers lends credibility to Lawson (ibid) findings on Kenya's President Kibaki anti-corruption campaign that forced Githongo – the Chief Executive of Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) to exile in 2004. Despite Nuhu Ribadu's (Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission's Chief Executive 2003 – 2007) attempt to champion an internationally acclaimed anti-corruption campaign in Nigeria, similar circumstances sent him out of office in 2007.

Moreover, anti-corruption campaigns in Nigeria are inorganic – they are not set up based on the knowledge about the foundations of corruption in Nigeria. First, they are set up to respond to external pressure and demand for a more transparent and corruption-free government by the international institutions (see above). Commitment to the challenges that Nigeria's image posed to the flow of foreign direct investment spurred President Obasanjo to set up the ICPC in 2000 shortly after his assumption of office. Ribadu (2010:5) gave the details of how the blacklisting of Nigeria from

international financial system by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) served as catalyst to the establishment of the EFCC in 2002. To confirm lack of total internal commitment to the fight against graft, the EFCC became operational in 2004 two years after was created with neither an office nor any budgetary provision (Adebanwi, 2012:24-25). Ribadu, the pioneer Chief Executive built the commission from the scratch, achieved remarkable progress amidst accusations political victimization (Ribadu, 2010:52) and when it appeared he was working out of political command of President Yar Adua in 2007, he was eased out of office and the prosecutorial powers of the EFCC was withdrawn under the new leadership.

Second, they constitute mere political responses to symptoms of some more serious underlying structural problems of the country – lack of patriotism and commitment to an ideal national cause. The superstructure of graft that is rocking Nigeria is captured by Carl Levan's (2015) Veto players' theory analytical approach to Nigerian politics. These players occupy the positions of the patrons to run the affairs of the country. These individuals hold the grip of political and economic decisions and ultimately may hold the internal workings of the nation to ransom when they clash. They are made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds, ethnicity, and religions amongst others. Ironically, they pursue no real national developmental agenda that can put Nigeria on a prosperous path. Their behaviour is a confirmation of the very unfortunate but truthful revelations of Chief Obafemi Awolowo and Sir Abubarka Tafawa Balewa on the lack of patriotism and true citizenship amongst Nigerians. Ogundiya (2009) reproduces the quotes from Awolowo and Balewa cited in Coleman (1986:320):

Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no "Nigerians" in the sense as there are "English", "Welsh", or "French". The word "Nigerian" is merely a distinctive appellation to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not. (Awolowo, 1947). And;

Since 1914 the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their backgrounds, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any sign of willingness to unite ...Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country. (Balewa, 1948)

With this underlying struggles and continuous tension to control the centre for selfish gains, the cycle of anti-corruption campaigns may not serve any meaningful aside merely mollifying the international community. Nigeria certainly needs a political restructuring that will extirpate the political tension at its central government.

Nigeria: Some thoughts about the future:

In a concluding chapter of the book *Democracy and Prebendalism in Nigeria: Critical Interpretations* edited by Wale Adebanwi and Ebenezer Obadare, Joseph (2013: 276) painted a gloomy future for Nigeria unless the prebendalised system takes a detour. He was sceptical to use moderate optimism – the same term he used to describe Nigeria's future in his 1987 book. He submitted that Nigeria was at "injury time" and was worried if Nigeria could salvage itself.

Research evidences based on African politics have debunked one of the strongest previously held explanations for dismal performances of African states – the resource curse syndrome (McFerson, 2009; Levan, 2015). McFerson (2009) in a study of Hyper-Corruption in Resource Rich African states submits that resource curse syndrome cannot solely explain the failure of African states. Abundance of mineral resources is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for public corruption. Corruption according to McFerson (ibid) is widespread most African states without resource wealth. The success of Botswana (a resource rich mono-ethnic/mono-cultural state) was cited to stress the potency of the imaginary colonial boundaries which created multi-ethnic nation-states in other African states, as the bedrock of their failures. Identity politics played out in the form of the power tension and patronage system that produced political corruption and weak governance in most African states, Nigeria inclusive.

Moreover, at every political rally during electioneering campaigns, there is a usual symbolic message that is passed across by contemporary Nigerian politicians. Each from the various ethnicities tries passionately to identify their political ideology and values with the Nigeria's past political leaders – Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Abubarka Tafawa Balewa and Dr Nnamdi Azikwe. It is understood there was some sort of corruption in Nigeria under these leaders, yet, everyone appears to agree that these leaders were comparatively more committed to responsible leadership style in their days. It is important to also understand that these were the leaders during the years of Nigeria regional system of government. Each region practised a system of governance that suits its people and culture, managed its revenue source and paid taxes to the

central government and there were better provisions for infrastructural and human capital development in magnitudes that exceed what the present federal system delivers to the country.

In view of this and returning to Joseph (2013), a gloomy picture might not objectively project the future of Nigeria. Nigeria could flourish yet again if it could embark on a rigorous political restructuring that would put true federalism into practice and decongest the heavy financial resources at the centre. True federalism will reduce the commanding powers of central political elite and bureaucrats, provide more opportunities for the civil society at regional/state levels to monitor government officials, engender regional/state healthy competition for the actualization of development projects.

This submission does not guarantee complete eradication of corruption in Nigeria. It however suggests based on evidence that corruption will become minimal as the veto players become decentralised and there are more opportunities for the civil society to monitor the decentralised government.

3. CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the shift of public administration from government to governance. It has explored Nigeria's political corruption profile using the prebendal theoretical framework of Joseph (1987) and its anti-corruption campaigns in response to international waves against corruption.

Nigeria like other African countries has made progress in its efforts to extirpate graft no doubt, but the paper submits that the anti-corruption campaigns are just mere responses to the more serious underlying problems of Nigeria as a nation-state – diversity tension, lack of true citizenship and dearth of patriotic leadership. Anti-corruption campaigns in Nigeria as experiences have shown, exhibit a cycle of ups and downs dictated by individual leaders held in contrasting political commitments and institutions which lack the tradition of continuity that would guarantee leveraging on their achievements in the long term.

The paper recommends the practice of true federalism to decongest financial resources which encourage identity politics and predatory leadership style of political corruption at the central government.

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