



**CAUSES AND FORMS OF CORRUPTION IN NIGERIA:
A CASE STUDY OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perpetual causes and forms of corruption rooted in the socio-cultural, economic, and political practices of Nigeria. In Nigeria, corruption is regarded as notorious syndrome and contagious epidemic that has grossly affected Nigeria in its entirety. Many consider corruption the largest obstacle causing Nigeria's stagnation on every front and stifling economic growth by undermining her economic potential and development despite the nation's rich resources. The problem of corruption has reached such heights that Nigeria is often considered by many to be the very image of corruption. It devalues the quality of human life, deprives people of their alienable rights and basic quality of life. This dissertation aims at exploring the perceptions of public officials concerning the causes and forms of corruption in Nigeria. Doubtless, corruption impedes reforms thereby making Nigeria's reform policies ineffective. In sum, corruption practices in all strata in Nigeria can be attributed to high levels of poverty, high unemployment rates, low-remunerations, delays in the payment of wages by the government, over concentration of power, nepotism, tribalism, and dishonest leaders. There is a clear and urgent need for Nigeria to reverse the prevailing culture in which corruption is viewed as a permissible practice. Meanwhile, Nigerians should be educated and re-oriented on the malaise of corruption, and excessive wealth and culture of "get rich at all cost". Data for this study are drawn from both primary and secondary sources in the form of books, reports, scholarly journals, magazines, and occasional papers, proceedings of relevant conferences, newspapers and internet sources. Questionnaires and interviews were conducted to complement the quantitative and qualitative methodology upon which this study is grounded. The research concludes by suggesting remedies among which are effective administrative reforms, hard-line punishment, e.g. death penalty, leaders with strong political will, inculcating religious cum cultural value and social ethics to assist the government in combating corruption in Nigeria. Likewise, civil service mechanisms such as transparency, legislative control, judicial, press and popular controls on officials should be streamlined as effective checks on corrupt practices.

خلاصة البحث

تبحث هذه الدراسة في أسباب تجذر مشكلة الفساد وآثارها المتوطنة في الممارسات الاجتماعية، والثقافية، والاقتصادية، والسياسية بنيجيريا. أخذ الفساد في نيجيريا سمة متلازمة للوباء المعدي الذي انتشر في أرجاء نواحي البلاد، ويرى العديد من المراقبين أن الفساد يعد العقبة الكبرى للفساد، وإيقاف عملية النمو الإقتصادي في البلاد بالرغم من الموارد الطبيعية الضخمة التي تزخر بها نيجيريا. لقد تفاقمت هذه المشكلة بشكل كبير جعلت نيجيريا مثالا صارخا للفساد. إذ أنه يحط من الكرامة الإنسانية، ويحرم المواطنين من حقوقهم الأساسية. تستكشف هذه الأطروحة تصور قيادة الخدمة المدنية بشأن أسباب الفساد وأشكاله في نيجيريا. ومما لاشك فيه أن ظاهرة الفساد تقف ضد أي مسعى للإصلاح مما جعلت محاولات الإصلاح غير مجدية وغير ذات فعالية. اختصارا يمكن أن نعزو ممارسات الفساد المنتشرة في جميع طبقات المجتمع النيجيري إلى ارتفاع مستويات الفقر، وارتفاع معدلات البطالة، وانخفاض الأجور، والتأخر في دفع الأجور من قبل الحكومة للعاملين، والتحكم الكبير للسلطة والمحسوبية، والقبلية، وعدم أمانة القادة. مما أدى إلى حاجة ماسة لتصحيح النظرة الثقافية السائدة التي تنظر للفساد بحسبانه ممارسة مشروعة ومقبولة. في الوقت ذاته يجب تثقيف النيجيريين وتعليمهم بآثار مشكلة انتشار الفساد، والنتائج الفظيعة المترتبة لذلك، ومحاربة ثقافة الحصول على الثراء بأي ثمن ممكن وبأي وسيلة كانت. استمدت الدراسة المعلومات الخاصة من المصادر الأولية والثانوية، حيث استفاد الباحث من الكتب، والتقارير، والدوريات العلمية، والمجلات، والمصنفات، ووقائع المؤتمرات، والصحف، والمصادر الموجودة في الشبكة الإلكترونية. استخدم الباحث طرق الاستبيان والمقابلات الشخصية لاستكمال المنهجية الكمية والنوعية التي استندت عليها الدراسة. ختمت الدراسة باقتراح بعض الحلول في مقدمتها الإصلاحات الإدارية، وتشديد العقوبات وتغليظها حتى تصل إلى حد إعدام مرتكبي جريمة الفساد، وتقوية الإرادة السياسية للقادة. كما ينبغي الاهتمام بغرس القيم الروحية، والثقافية، والأخلاقية التي من شأنها مساعدة الحكومة في مناهضة ومحاربة الفساد في نيجيريا، وكذلك ينبغي تقوية عناصر الخدمات العامة، مثل: الشفافية، والرقابة التشريعية، والقضائية، والإعلام، وتشديد الرقابة الشمولية على الخدمات العامة للحد من ممارسة الفساد.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Sherif Abdul Raheem Ajiteru

Signature _____

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LIST OF SYMBOLS

£	Pound Sterling
₦	Nigerian Currency (Naira)

LISTS OF ABBREVIATION

AU	African Union
ADP	Agricultural Development Programmes
ACGS	Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme
ASUU	Academic Staff Union of Universities
ATR	African Traditional Religion
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BLP	Better Life Programme
BMPIU	Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit
BPI	Bribe Taker Index
BPI	Bribe Payer Index
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
CCB	Code of Conduct Bureau
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFI	Country Forecast Index
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CMV	Common Method Variance
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
ECN	Energy Commission of Nigeria
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West Africa State
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crime Commission
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
EU	European Union
FAAN	Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FCTC	Federal Capital Territory Court
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FEAP	Family Economic Advancement Programme
FIRS	Federal Inland Revenue Services
FSP	Family Support Programme
GCB	Global Corruption Barometer
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GI	Governance Indicators
GII	Ghana Integrity International
GR	Green Revolution
HDI	Human Development Index
HRW	Human Right Watch
IAI	Ibrahim African Index
ICPC	Independent Corrupt Practices Commission
ICRG	International Country Risk Guide
II	Integrity Initiative
IIUM	International Islamic University Malaysia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPPs	Independent Power Projects
Kwh	Kilowat

LPI	Legatum Prosperity Index
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MNE	Multinational Enterprises
MMcf/d	Million Cubic Feet a day
MW	Megawatt
NAPEP	National Poverty Eradication Programme
NBS	National Bureaus Statistic
NCE	Nigerian Customs and Excise
NDE	National Directorate of Employment
NDLEA	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency
NEEDS	National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy
NEPA	National Electric Power Authority
NHCM	Nigeria High Commission Malaysia
NIS	National Integrity System
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
NPF	Nigeria Police Force
NPHCDA	National Primary Health Care Development Agency
NSPMC	Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Company
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OFN	Operation Feed the Nation
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PAP	Poverty Alleviation Programme
PHCN	Power Holding Company of Nigeria
RBDA	River Basin Development Authorities
REC	Rural Electrification Scheme
RMAFC	Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SON	Standard Organization of Nigeria
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SSA	Sub-Sahara Africa
TAM	'Turn Around' Maintenance
TI	Transparency Index
UNGCP	United Nation Global Compact Principle 10
UK	United Kingdom
WAI	War Against Indiscipline
WB	World Bank

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Since Nigeria's independence in 1960, the military has ruled the country for approximately thirty of the fifty-one years of its postcolonial history.¹ The successful military coup through which the military assumes political power in Nigeria has been the venality of the previous government. As such, from the first successful coup in 1966 to that of 1985 the primary justification for every coup has been the same. There is a popular view that each and every new regime always promises to clean up corruption, and seemingly inevitably, each administration eventually loses its legitimacy because of its venality. Nearly every successful coup in Nigeria has been initially welcomed by an apparent majority of the public, as people hoped that the new government would exhibit greater empathy and ensure good governance. Even as Nigerians came to disregard military rule after more than a decade of unprecedented looting of the state treasury by the Babangida and Abacha regimes,² a certain nostalgia for military government still surfaces in the twenty-first century. This is worrisome, as people have apparently become disappointed by the endemic corruption of the current civilian administration, which has failed woefully to deliver the expected dividends of democracy.

Therefore, it is probably not a coincidence that the two military regimes Nigerians remember most fondly are those that were short lived.³ General Murtala

¹Daniel, J.S. *Culture of Corruption Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), 112.

² Ibid.

³Why a high profile anti –corruption crusade will always generate popular acclaim in Nigeria, it does provoke anger and frustration among Nigeria's political class with vested interest in the *statusquo*. Thus,

Muhammad's reign lasted only a few months. He was brutally assassinated in 1976, and to this day, he is the most beloved and adored of Nigeria's past military rulers. Many Nigerians believe that had General Muhammad lived, he would have put Nigeria's house in order.⁴ Many things happened after his untimely death. The International Airport in Lagos is named after him because of his major contributions to the economic growth and development of the country. Additionally, he is the only former military head of state whose face is inscribed on Nigeria's currency. His speeches along with some historical and biographical accounts suggest that Muhammad was more of a maverick than other generals who have ruled the country. Thereby, given how entrenched corruption is in Nigeria, it seems likely that his indelible mark and legacy is mostly due to the fact that he was assassinated before he could govern long enough to destroy his good reputation.

The other military regime that evokes considerable nostalgia is the regime of Muhammad Buhari who ruled for less than twenty months from 1983 to 1985. General Muhammad Buhari led a coup on December 31st, 1983 to overthrow the four-year old civilian administration of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, a government that had been eroded by widespread corruption and gross mismanagement.⁵ On this note, Nigerians enthusiastically accepted Buhari's coup and initially supported his famed slogan "War against Indiscipline" (W.A.I). Muhammad Buhari and his deputy, General Tunde Idiagbon, officially launched the War against Indiscipline with the familiar promise of weeding out corruption, but also extended the fight to include a campaign against all

the two leaders who had pursued what could be regarded as an aggressive campaign against corruption in Nigeria in the past did not last in power General Murtala Muhammed was brutally assassinated after only 6 months in power, while Mohammed Buhari which regarded itself as off short of the Murtala regime managed to govern Nigeria for only 18 months before another Military, Babangida toppled their government.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ochulor, Chinenye, Leo, Metuonu, Iheanacho et al. "Corruption in Contemporary Nigeria, the Way Out", *American Journal of Social and Management Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2011, pp. 91-99.

kinds of petty forms of indiscipline, such as coming late to work, failing to queue for public transportation, urinating in public places and many others.⁶ At the end of the day, Nigerians came to realize that even as the War against Indiscipline cracked down on ordinary people's behaviour, it did little to change the culture of corruption at the top levels. Albeit, Nigerians generally welcomed the loosening of military repression brought by Babangida's bloodless coup of August 27, 1985, in the decades since the War against Indiscipline, ordinary people often speak nostalgically of the Buhari regime as part of a common discourse in which Nigerians view their society as deeply corrupted and considered themselves as disorderly people in need of leadership with strong determination. At times, it seems a national fantasy that only the military regime can provide the kind of strategy that can curtail corruption.

Nevertheless, by the time the military finally administered the most recent successful transition to a civilian government in 1999; popular sentiment had long swayed in favour of a new democratic dispensation.⁷ Through a combination of his military background and democratic credentials, Obasanjo swept to victory in the 1999 polls.⁸ Notwithstanding, it was widespread that there were irregularities in the election that brought ex-president Obasanjo into power. However, the popular consensus in Nigeria was that Obasanjo was legitimately elected, and that even without rigging he would have easily defeated his main opponent. Obasanjo ruled for eight years. His first time in office began with a plethora of promises, most prominently cleaning up corruption as well as improving the country's economy and other basic infrastructures. In his inaugural address, he assured the nation that before

⁶Ibid.

⁷Magbadelo, J.O. *"Nigeria's Transition to Democracy and Development: Contributions of the Obasanjo Administration"*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 2006), p. 46.

⁸ Ibid.

the year 2000, they would be witnessing a significant improvement.⁹ However, many Nigerians still perceived that the nation's economy was worse, the essential basic amenities had further deteriorated, corruption remained endemic, and the leaders were not accountable.¹⁰

Nigerian experiences with democracy suggest that the structures of political parties, elections, and the bureaucratic institutions created to oversee the process are not doing enough to address the scourge of corruption.¹¹ The elites have managed to hijack democracy in the same ways that they have benefited from the wagon of military regime, the facades of bureaucratic officialdom, and the institutions of development. However, in the discourses of complaint that have emerged in the process of the transition to civilian rule, in the public airing of political misdemeanours, and even in the failed and seemingly abortive efforts of defectors, electoral corruption, public expectations, greater transparency, and accountability are fuelled.

In light of the foregoing, it would therefore be a mistake to underestimate the degree to which such discontent is generating aspirations for change. In sum, ordinary Nigerians express their growing concerns about their government. Therefore, it is essential to pursue specific studies on corruption in Nigeria.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem in this study is that Nigeria, a country in Sub-Saharan Africa, faces leadership challenges as to how to harness abundant resources wisely and

⁹Obasanjo, O. "Inaugural Address Was a New Dawn." Delivered on handing over ceremony (1999).

¹⁰Okeola, O. G. & A. W. Salami, "A Pragmatic Approach to the Nigeria's Engineering Infrastructure Dilemma", *Epistemic in Science, Engineering and Technology*, Vol.2, No. 1, 2012, pp. 55-61.

¹¹Paul, D. O. "Law and Social Change: A social –Legal Analysis of Nigeria's Corrupt Practices and Related Offences Act 2000", *Journal of Africa Law*, Vol.45, No. 2, 2000, pp. 174-177.