

Corruption and the Challenges of Socio-economic Development in Nigeria's Public Space, 1999-2007

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Abstract

This paper undertook a critical assessment of the extent to which corruption in the Nigeria public space has impinged on the country's development between 1999 and 2007, under Obasanjo's two-time administration. An historical research based on secondary data and analysed through logical induction, this paper unravelled the institutional, behavioural and environmental factors that facilitated corruption in Nigeria within the time under review. The paper revealed the degree to which the unwholesome indulgences of public office holders in mismanaging state funds has slowed down the pace of socio-economic development of the Nigerian state between 1999 and 2007 when former President Olusegun Obasanjo was in power. The paper aptly captured poor state of the nation's infrastructural development as well as the decline in social service delivery as major the bane of the country's corrupt practices and misappropriation of public funds by public office holders under the

Obasanjo's administration. The study further uncovered the degree to which other components of corruption like nepotism, cronyism and favouritism characterised the overall administration of the Nigerian public space during the period under study. Social learning and Social disorganisation theories on which this study is anchored, suggest that the propensity for corruption are both socially and systemically influenced. Hence, the theories corroborated the finding of this paper that corruption in Nigeria, during former President Obasanjo's eight-year administration, was institutionally permissible. The paper also examined the various milestones recorded by a major anti-graft agency - the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in tackling corruption, as well as the institutional constraints to its operations. The paper finally recommended a holistically systemic and institutional overhauls that would be fundamentally essential in tackling institutionalised corruption in Nigeria's public space with a view to achieving maximum socio-economic development. The paper concluded that except stern measures are taken to address the pervasively institutionalised corruption perpetuated under the Obasanjo's eight-year administration, the country would continue to wallow in the fantasy of socio-economic development.

Keywords: Corruption, Development, Transparency, Governance and Accountability

1.1 Introduction

The Nigerian political experience showcases an unfortunate antithesis between ostentatious wealth and crippling poverty, co-existing in the same political domain. It is most frustrating to know that in Nigeria, where there exists, an outrageously-high number of persons (67%), living below poverty lines, a stupendous display of wealth and riches is still vividly noticeable, within the public environment (Emmanuel & Ogoh, 2016; Uwais, 2018).

Consequently, the indices of corruption, demonstrated in acts of official graft, gross mismanagement of public funds and fraudulent kickbacks have been significantly responsible for the stagnancy, and in most regrettable circumstances, retrogressive developmental growth of an independent nation-state like Nigeria. Hence, a situation where the general welfare and social needs of the majority of the country's population are exchanged for the avaricious accumulation of financial wealth by a privileged few, development becomes sacrificed on the platform of deliberate administrative ineptitude and compromised governance system (Mohammed, Aluaigba & Kabir, 2012). From the foregoing therefore, corruption, understood within the context of its functional attribute specifically targets at serving secluded interests, at the expense of the majority.

Accordingly, Aluko (2008) observes that corruption serves as a means of distributing and re-distributing the resources of the state among the few privileged members of the ruling class. In whichever parlance it is described, any illegitimate system of acquiring benefits from official coffers demonstrates evident tendencies of corruption - a situation that is deemed variously hostile to development. Such an unpalatable social condition in a country like Nigeria, blessed with amazing natural resources, which exist in their bounties can be indisputably attributed to the ills of corruption and its related socio-economic vice(s). Ayua (2001) observes that Nigeria at Independence in 1960 was viewed by the International Community as a model for the rest of other countries within the realm of the African continent to emulate, with regards to the existence of strong and viable democratic structures and institutions which would eventually demonstrate effective governance. However, the opposite has continued to trail the Nigerian situation as the country continues to experience several dimensions of leadership wobbles and frailties. These administrative failures largely owe to deliberate incompetence, poor leadership insight, institutionally-enabling moral decadence, statutory incapacitations, ethnic

politics and bigotry, nepotistic inclination, wastefulness and calculated mismanagement of public funds and other resources.

Corruption has, overtime been viewed by analysts as a platform which sustains our nation's negative political narratives. A system that harbours a scenario which encourages a persistent leadership and development crisis, dysfunctional administrative architecture, economic and social imbalance and social disorder cannot be said to be a progressive one (Otite, 1996). Incidences of corruption have permeated virtually all aspects of Nigeria's social existence. These indicators gleam in the public and civil service (the bureaucracy), private sector (formal and informal), education sector, religious sector, etc. Invariably, the above flaws engender internal inequalities, imbalance and contradictions in the distribution of resources. Hence, the above variables are the components of corruption.

Emmanuel and Ogoh (2016) assert that the Nigerian social system is rapidly receding to a state of failure and should need a total overhauling and revamp, which supposedly should be anchored on a functional democratic practice, responsive and responsible governance, administrative accountability and public transparency. Over the years, successive administrations of government have experienced monumental failures in their efforts at getting rid of the malaise of corruption from the socio-political mainstream of the society. However exciting the jingles of such struggles against corruption may appear, it has become a usual experience that the past does not appear any better than the present. At most, degeneracy and conspicuous slide could suffice. Hence, Ayua (2001) captures the above submission when he posits that "corruption has been responsible for the instability of successive governments since the first republic. Every coup since then has been in the name of stamping out the disease called corruption. Unfortunately, the cure often turned out to be worse than the disease. And Nigeria has been worse for it (p. 1)".

As a result, Nigeria's image, both internal and external has been tainted and de-faced by the variables, accompanying corruption. The perception of the international community about the country's

accountability/transparency status with regards to governance was replete with justifiable prejudices and contempt. This situation, arising from the corrupt tendency of the Nigerian leadership structure, apart from some scanty episodes in the first republic, became the more pronounced at the inception of the military era. Odusola (2001) cited in Orbunde and Ogoh (2016) identifies that Nigeria had witnessed painful moments of dictatorial and arbitrary rule by the military, which by virtue of their administrative incompetence only ended up plundering the country's resources and smeared her image before the international community. To mention some specifics, in 1973, the post-civil war era witnessed an unprecedented boom in the downstream sector of our economy (the oil boom). It was such that the country's treasury became sufficiently fattened by the proceeds from oil sales. That prompted a somewhat 'unguarded' statement by the then central bank governor. According to him, money was no longer the problem of Nigeria but how to spend it. Consequently, the military administrators, serving in different capacities found that as a golden opportunity to loot and mismanage the funds in their custody. Worthy of mention was the episode involving bribery allegation made against Joseph Gomwalk, the then military Governor of the old Benue-Plateau State, during Gowon's Administration (Ejovi, et al, 2013). Odusola (2001) notes that if properly utilised, Nigeria's oil boom in the post-civil wars era would have created a solid and sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria. Regrettably though, the corrupt tendencies of public administrators which manifested itself in the form of treasury loot, denied the country of such a fertile and mouth-watering economic legacy.

This paper, therefore, aims at conducting a critical and in-depth study of corruption in Nigeria's public space between 1999 and 2007. Nigeria, within that period was under the leadership of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. Therefore, this study seeks to unearth some cases of corruption during his administration and also assess the potency or otherwise of the fight against corruption as was initiated and enforced by his administration. In his speech during his swearing-in ceremony on May 29,

1999, the then President Olusegun Obasanjo was unequivocal and emphatic in his condemnation of the extent to which corruption was gradually annihilating the country's multi-sectoral facets. To him, his ultimate goal was to instil sound ethical values, high sense of official discipline, moral rectitude, accountability and responsibility in the public service (Ifamose, 2004). The administration of Olusegun Obasanjo was poised to bring sanity and consciousness in the performance of functions and shun all kinds of underhand dealings both in the public and private sector. The then Nigerian President further stressed that corruption forestalled rapid economic development and had the infamous capacity to impinge on bureaucratic mandate to deliver prompt and efficient service delivery. He also maintained that corruption was a dysfunctional variable which exists to deny the masses, access to social welfare needs - a fundamental core that confers on a state, a viability status.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Literature

2.1.1 Corruption: A Conceptual Explanation.

The definitions given to the term, 'corruption' are multi-dimensional and inferentially relative. The slight dissimilarities in its meaning are justified on the basis of the ideological and situational standpoint from where an author establishes their definition. Summarily speaking, the different definitions given to the term, 'corruption' might have divergent structural representations in terms of language and implication but will invariably convey the same message.

Otite (1996) considers corruption as the travesty of uprightness or the condition of obtaining reward or other forms of favour by indulging in moral wantonness. Whichever way it is looked at, corruption solely benefits the person or body of persons who are the direct beneficiaries of the act, at the expense of others. This assertion was corroborated by Nye (1967) when he described corruption as an attitude which derails from the official responsibilities of a public designation on account of a quest for individual

profit. To further buttress the fact that corruption is unarguably centred on selfish motives, Bharsava (2004) submits that corruption entails any kind of inordinate use of power and influence while performing any official assignment for selfish benefits.

Corruption also involves an act which breaches or betrays public confidence and trust, reposed in an individual who holds any public office. In doing this, the public office holder defies and undermines official rules, virtues and norms to achieve their unjust ends (Olusoga, 1981). In his separate opinion, Gboyega (1996) asserts that corruption denotes “The giving or taking of bribe, or illegal acquisition of wealth, using the resources of a public office including the exercise of discretion. In this regard, it is those who have business to do with government who are compelled somehow to provide inducement to public officials to make them favours (p. 7)”.

It can be deduced from the above definition that the author makes attempt at establishing a link between bureaucracy and corruption. According to him, public office holders consciously exploit the privileges attached to their official responsibilities to dubiously acquire unofficial advantages in terms of cash rewards or properties. It is, therefore, very instructive to appreciate the term, ‘corruption’ from the perspective of activities within the bureaucratic domain. Even to a large extent, the public sector displays a susceptibility to inducement from the private sector. In some cases as well, there seems to be collaboration by the two divides to facilitate corrupt acts.

To this end, the definition which exposes the culpability of the private sector, working in connivance with the public sector is the one tendered by the Asian Development Bank. It goes thus: “the behaviour on the part of officials in the public and private sectors, in which they improperly and unlawfully enrich themselves or those close to them, or induce others to do so by misusing the position in which they are placed (Asian Development Bank, 1999).

However, the definition which captures holistically, the meaning of corruption as a concept, drawing from diverse perspectives is the one given by the federal government of Nigeria, through the political bureau report on corruption, 1987. The body defined corruption as:

the inflation of government contracts in return for kickbacks; frauds and fabrication of accounts in the public service, examination malpractices in our educational institutions; the taking of bribes and perversion of justice among the public, the judiciary and other organs for administering justice; and the various heinous crimes against the State in the business and industrial sectors of our economy; collusion with multinational companies such as invoicing of goods and foreign exchange swindling, hoarding and smuggling. (Report of the Political Bureau, 1987, p. 213)

The above definition encompasses all aspects of corruption as well as the degree to which it has penetrated all the strata of human relations and existence. It touches on all behavioural tendencies of humans as they exhibit same in the course of their multi-dimensional social relations in work places, business transactions, etc. Corruption is generally viewed as a randomly affective social malaise which infiltrates the public domain; a vermin which preys on the vulnerability of its victims by manipulating advantages. It is an invented culture of moral expediency, characterised by all manner of gross exploitations, dispossessions and deprivations. Corruption fans the embers of prevailing social ills, bedevilling any society at any given time. The sinister indulgences of political or public office holders are given a shield in any political system where corruption seems to enjoy a somewhat 'institutionalised' protection. Corruption as an act has the capacity to engender class conflict in any society. This is because, while the beneficiaries of the pernicious social phenomenon (corruption) would prefer the maintenance of the status quo, the victims (the exploited population) would continue to push for a systemic change.

2.1.2 Development: A Conceptual Explanation

Brett (1973, in Damiari, 2013) defined development as a change process characterised by increased productivity and equalisation in distribution of the social product. In a corroboration, Todaro (1977) emphasises that development should involve a multiple course that consists in effecting positive changes in structures and institutions of governance, as well as attitudinal patterns on the part of government functionaries. According to him, the combination of the above administrative variables will spur economic growth and development, leading to a visible reduction in poverty level and also combat inequality.

Scholars like Adebayo (2000) and Aforika (2000) are of the opinion that development should be anchored around human beings. In this regard, the interest of human beings in the society who supposedly are the beneficiaries of any development initiative should be paramount. Aforika specifically drew inspiration from the utilitarian concept which by implication, presupposes that development is assumed to have been maximally actualised when the social needs of the majority in any given society has been met. Agreeably, the above definition tersely suggests that development should embody all details bordering on the overall welfare of the people, within the domain of an independent state or society.

Igwe (2016) in his definition of the term, 'development' asserts that development involves a set of activities that are comprehensively and dispassionately carried out by a body of government functionaries, which ultimate goal is geared towards improving the living condition of the generality of citizens. In his view, Ezenwa (2017) posits that development connotes a deliberate and conscious creation of policies and programmes by the government, supported by a strong and uncompromised financial commitment which should fundamentally aim at uplifting the living standard of the people.

Extracting from the views of scholars on the definition of 'development', it is convenient to submit that development involves a deliberate, far-reaching and holistic effort, initiated and executed by the

government to bring about a transformational change in the socio-economic life of the society. However, such transformational activity should have as its fundamental focus, the overall economic and social betterment of the people. The concept of 'development' is all encompassing and cuts across all strata of life – social, economic and political. Socio-economic development, on one hand, the centre-piece of this paper, centres around the economic well-being of the people which includes access to the basic necessities of life.

2.2 Review of Related Literature

2.2.1 An Assessment of Corrupt Practices of Public Office Holders in Nigeria Between 1999 and 2007 – Former President Olusegun Obasanjo's Eight-year Administration

This era witnessed the formal ushering in of the fourth republic. Accordingly, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) was sworn in as the democratically elected President of Nigeria, on May 29, 1999, after defeating his only rival, Chief Olu Falae of the defunct All People's Party (APP). The election was conducted on February 27, 1999. The (PDP) candidate, Olusegun Obasanjo polled a total of 18,738,154 (representing 62.78%) as against Falae's 11,110,287 (representing 37.22%). Consequently, the then Independent National Electoral Commission Chairman, Late Justice Ephraim Akpata declared the PDP candidate winner of the Presidential election (African Elections Database. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria>, February 2016). Despite the fact that the result of the election was adopted and upheld, critics expressed doubts on the credibility of the process. Hence, Ihonvbere (1999) observed that:

One can say with certainty that with all the contradictions that had bedevilled previous elections, it is convenient to hold unwavering claims that the 1999 presidential election was fraught with election malpractices. Democratic experiments in Nigeria were present and magnified in the February 27, 1999 election: divided loyalties, manipulation

of primordial identities and loyalties, corruption and other election malpractices, lack of political discipline, and limited attention to serious structural questions. (p. 59)

According to Ihonvbere, INEC officials deliberately retained the ballot boxes bearing the Alliance for Democracy (AD) logo at polling units when it was obvious that the political party in question was already in alliance with the All People's Party (APP), on which platform, Chief Olu Falae contested the election. The implication was that it brought about confusion and divided loyalty among prospective voters. In his opinion, Ihonvbere maintained that such development was a calculated attempt, corruptly intended to frustrate the chances of the APP presidential candidate at the polls.

Similarly, a member of the 2014 National Conference Committee on Political Restructuring, Femi Okurounmi in his revelation cast doubts on the veracity and genuineness of the 1999 presidential election. In his words in Odunsi (2014), "Obasanjo did not win election; he was anointed by the powers that be to pacify the south west over the annulment of June 12, 1993 election. We did not vote for him (p. 5)".

However, following his emergence as the democratically elected President, Obasanjo's administration did not hesitate to enact the anti-corruption Act. The Act contained 71 sections and spelt out stringent and uncompromising sanctions against corrupt public office holders. The content of the Act can be said to be a reflection of the then President's strident emphasis about his condemnation of corrupt practices and indulgences. An excerpt from his swearing-in ceremony speech was captured thus: "Corruption, the greatest single bane of our society today will be tackled head-on at all levels, the impact of official corruption is so rampant and has earned Nigeria a very bad image at home and abroad. Besides, it has distorted and retrogressed development" (Daily Independent, 2005, p. 5).

3.0 Theoretical Framework

In the interest of academic appropriateness, this paper is anchored on Social Learning and Social Disorganisation Theories. These theories fit in appropriately to the Nigerian situation because they provide the ideological description of the entrenchment of corruption in the Nigerian system. The theories are premised on the interplay between attitudinal and environmental forces that exacerbate the progress of corruption. It also lays emphasis on the social domain in which corruption is grown and processed (Karimu, 2016).

Social learning theory establishes that behaviours can be influenced by values generated among peer groups and associations in the course of social interactions. Such interactions could produce conformity or deviance. Conformity and deviance as two opposite variables always breed either positive or negative responses from individuals (Akers & Sellers, 2009). Therefore, individuals and public office holders engage in corrupt acts on account of the super-influence of social interactions and also by virtue of their responses to the forces of deviance and conformity.

Social disorganisation theory presupposes a situation where the social order is characterised by weak socio-political institutions. In this condition, individuals, political and public office holders would lack the moral grounds to fight criminal indulgences. According to Akers and Sellers, depravities in humans have strong link to the society's economic base. They are of the opinion that corruption and other criminal activities thrive more in societies where the socio-economic structure can no longer guarantee access to employment opportunities, housing, etc.

3.1 The Relevance of Social Learning and Social Disorganisation Theory to this Study.

Since the central theme of these two theories is pitched around the transferability of the learning process, the theories aptly describe the Nigerian social system. Corruption in Nigeria is passed from one generation of leadership to the other. This is the reason why a once morally

upright individual would suddenly become corrupt when he or she acquires political or other forms of public offices. This is so because corruption in Nigeria is contagious and therefore has the ability to infect whoever comes in contact with it.

The inability of the leadership of the Nigerian state to assume the constitutional responsibility of regulating social relations, hence it is part of the faulty social order, emphasises the weakness of the system. Again, the failure of public office holders to see themselves as models, fit for emulation, with regards to moral virtues frustrates the need to sustain discipline in the polity.

Consequently, in a system where there exists, a plethora of situations indicating the failure of social order and regularities, the imperatives of development will be unfavourably constricted. Such a trend consistently smacks of systemic retardations and overall redundancy in the polity. The negative fallouts, emanating from the above situations create a nexus of unwholesome resorts to 'self help' by members of the public, in sheer negation of national interest and collective/widespread developmental impartations.

4.1 A Brief Appraisal of the Responses to Corruption Allegations in the Legislative and Executive Organs by the Olusegun Obasanjo Administration, 1999-2007

The new birth of the fourth republic in 1999 witnessed a dramatic unfolding in the lower chamber of Nigeria's National Assembly. Teslim (2017) observes that the then newly elected Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Salisu Buhari was caught in the web of allegation of perjury and forgery. It was alleged that Buhari tendered a false certificate which earned him a status as a graduate of University of Toronto in Canada. Following an inquiry conducted to ascertain the veracity or otherwise of his certificate claims, an official of the institution, Carlo Villanueva categorically stated thus: "Regarding your request for confirmation of degree for Mr. Ibrahim Salisu Buhari. We have searched our records and

could not find anybody with the name you are inquiring with". Also, he gave false information about his age. He claimed he was born in 1963 while he was actually born in 1970. Consequently, Salisu Buhari was found guilty of the allegations against him. Following that development, he tendered his resignation at the floor of the House in an emotional but pathetic mood. Sequel to the development mentioned above, Ojo (2004) informs that Alhaji Salisu Buhari was arrested and subsequently sentenced by a competent court of law to serve a specified jail term. However, the then President Obasanjo was too quick in granting state pardon to Mr. Buhari - a situation which vehemently questioned the President's unflinching resolve to deal decisively with corruption.

In the year 2002, the House of Representatives, under the leadership of Ghali Umar Na'abba issued the then President Obasanjo an ultimatum, advising him to either resign or face impeachment. In retaliation however, it was alleged that the executive arm of the government lured the House of Representatives members with (N2M) each to commence impeachment proceedings against Na'abba. The Speaker, at this time got enmeshed in an array of charges of questionable personal aggrandisement, unauthorised withdrawal of public funds, inflation of figures in the budget, extra-budgetary spending, and etc. The said charges were contained in a 50-page written petition, filed by a House of Representatives member, Sam Obande. The issue was then handed over to the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission, (ICPC) for onward investigation and Prosecution (Adesola, 2006; <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghali>).

In December 1999, the then Minister of Defence, Lt. Gen. T.Y. Danjuma confirmed a N421m fraud in the Ministry, following an indictment by the Police. The then Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Dr. Julius Makanjuola - a cousin to former President Obasanjo was later linked with the missing fund. Consequently, Makanjuola and four others were arrested, almost a fortnight later. Surprisingly though, Dr. Makanjuola was later released on bail and returned to the ministry without receiving any legal punishment for the crime, even when the then Minister of State for

Justice, Alhaji Musa Abdullahi Elaho insisted that the case had enough evidence to send the accused to jail. In a contrasting situation however, Alhaji Hussaini Akwanga was arrested in connection with \$214 million dollar bribe relating to the National Identity Card Project. He was immediately sacked, even while investigations were still ongoing (Isaiah, 2003; Orngu, 2006;).

Furthermore, Isaiah, in his criticism of Obasanjo's preferential tendencies and selectiveness in the fight against corruption cited a particular instance where the then President visited Ogun State and publicly declared that he was ashamed of federal roads. Isaiah revealed that the many potholes had remained because, out of the N352 billion naira the Ministry got for road construction and maintenance, only N118 billion was paid to road contractors. According to him, Anenih and his likes could not be fingered for any corrupt act since they belonged to the 'sacred cows society' of the Obasanjo administration.

Similarly, Tsa (1999) reveals that in the year 1999, the police in the course of their investigation uncovered a situation involving Okoro community, Isiokpo in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State where the community applied for N40.7 million compensation to the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing but N107.1 million was withdrawn from the treasury for the same purpose.

In his own input, Kolawole (2014) claims that in the year 2006 federal law makers, comprising the senate and the House of Representatives were given N50 million naira each to help facilitate and actualise Obasanjo's third term agenda. Kolawole observes that the then President used that premise to distinguish between his friends and foes in the National Assembly and the entire political landscape at large. This is true because, those who were opposed to the then President's third term agenda were automatically listed in his black book. In concurrence with Kolawole's position, Emeruwa (2018) reveals the confession made by a former Senate President, Adolphus Wabara of how he resisted the financial inducement to endorse former President Olusegun Obasanjo's third term bid.

According to the former Senate President, he was offered N250 million bribe to use his position as the Head of the legislative arm to facilitate the actualisation of Obasanjo's third term bid. Wabara maintained that he declined the offer on the basis that such agenda was constitutionally unattainable and also in the spirit of national interest. However, in what could be described as a 'drama of vendetta', the former Senate President was enmeshed in a bribery scandal - a situation that culminated in his exit from the position as the number three citizen in the country.

The N6 billion (six billion naira) Presidential library project initiated by the then President Obasanjo at a time when the country was still struggling to grapple with fundamental developmental challenges like reduction of poverty and creation of unemployment for the teeming unemployed youths was not only unnecessary but also raised doubts about the sincerity of his administration's fight against corruption. Again, the sources from where such money was raised and the manner of donations during the launch were questionable. Critics imagined how Obasanjo could explain why the Nigeria Ports Authority - a company which was under probe for alleged billions of naira fraud participated and donated the sum of 1million Pound sterling during the launch of his presidential library project (David-West, 2005).

The Obasanjo-led administration in the year 2000 embarked on a National Identity card project which ultimately turned out to be a wasted effort and resources. In that year, the presidency sought the approval of the senate to withdraw N18 billion. However, prior to that, the President had already withdrawn N6 billion and released same to the Ministry of Internal affairs. It was baffling to Nigerians that by 2003, a whooping sum of N24 billion had been expended for the 'faceless' project (The News, 2004).

A former Governor of Bayelsa State, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha alleged that the former President, Obasanjo conspired with oil thieves to carryout illicit oil trade in the downstream sector of the Nigerian economy. He revealed that during Obasanjo's administration, 50 percent of Nigerian crude oil was being stolen on daily basis. The erstwhile Governor of Bayelsa

claimed that the former President's administration provided protection for the criminals and their foreign expatriate counterparts. Alamiyeseigha also gave an empirical account of how, during his tenure as the Governor of Bayelsa State, individuals who were conveying 14 big tankers, loaded with crude oil out of Bayelsa were arrested and handed over to the Police. Mr. Alamiyeseigha stressed that himself and Bayelsans were shocked when in a week's time, the NNPC in conspiracy with the Police concocted a report which claimed that the seized tankers were actually loaded with agro-chemical product (Daniel, 2014).

The hosting of the 8th All African Games in 2003 was viewed by critics as a channel through which some persons were dubiously enriched while the nation's treasury suffered a plunder. Expectedly, such a development would always lead to a cut in the provision of social services to the people. Critics observed that amidst national hardship, N30 billion was lavished on the games jamboree and N50 billion spent on building sporting facilities for the games. Aside all that, few persons got contracts with highly-inflated quotations for the hosting of the games. It was revealed that the then Director of Sports Development, Amos Adamu awarded a contract for the procurement of mobile toilets to the tune of N200 million. Similarly, Teju foam got N264.8 million to provide mattresses. Critics observed that the contracts were given without paying attention to due process and accountability (David-West, 2005; Orngu, 2006).

4.2 A Brief Review of Corruption Escapades/Charges Against Some State Governors in Nigeria, 1999-2007

The case of an erstwhile Governor of Bayelsa State, the late Diepreye Alamiyeseigha was one that registered a monumental awe and historic dismay in the Nigerian polity during his tenure as the state Governor. According to Roberts (2015), Alamiyeseigha embezzled an outrageous amount, to the tune of \$55 million in the oil ministry and diverted same to the purchase of luxurious and extravagant homes and properties around the world. He was detained in London on charges of money laundering in

September 2005. According to the source, at the time of his arrest, police detectives discovered 1million pounds cash in his London residence. Added to that, about 1.8 million pounds was seen in his London bank account. Interestingly, it is on record that Alamieyeseigha pleaded guilty to all the criminal charges of embezzlement of public funds and money laundering at the court of law (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diepr>).

The Chinwoke Mbadinuju of Anambra State saga shows explicitly, the profundity of the influence of godfatherism in the politics of Nigeria. From whatever undeserving and inglorious perspective it is viewed, the hard fact remains that godfatherism shaped and consciously directed political affairs of Anambra State during the administration of Mbadinuju and leaped to the era of his immediate successor, Chris Ngige. In an interview with a correspondent from naija news, Sarah Adoyo in 2014, the one-term Governor of Anambra state (1999-2003) confessed to how he was intimidated and compelled by the 'powers that be' to make a N10 million compulsory but statutorily baseless payment to his then godfather, Chris Uba. According to Mbadinuju, the former President Obasanjo gave his fully expressed backing to the illegal payment. The siphoning of that amount, including other sundry dubious withdrawals from the State government's treasury led to the almost total abdication of the responsibilities of governance. During his tenure as the governor of Anambra State 'between' 1999-2003, salaries of civil servants were not paid. Aside all that, social services, welfare packages and funding of capital projects were halted due to the lack of attention paid to those sectors (Adoyo, 2014).

The degree to which Anambra indigenes and residents were negatively affected during Mbadinuju's administration was vividly expressed during his attendance at the burial ceremony of the late Alex Ekwueme. The sight of him, to observers, 'opened old wounds' as he continued to receive side vituperations and unpalatable comments from people with regards to his past (<https://www.nationalhelm.co/2018>).

A former Governor of Abia state, Orji Uzor Kalu and his former Commissioner for Finance, Ude Udeogo were linked with a-34 count

charge, bordering on corruption and a N3.2 billion fraud. The said frauds were alleged to have been committed between August 2001 and September, 2006. According to the report, Kalu was alleged to have used his company's name (Slok Nigeria Ltd.) to divert N200 million from the State's treasury and deposited and retained same amount at Inland bank, now First City Monument Bank. Also, Kalu, conniving with one Emeka Abone and Michael Akpan within the above mentioned period, concealed the genuine origin of about N7.2 billion, belonging to the Abia State Government. The report has it that the large fund was converted into several bank drafts and paid into an account belonging to Slok Nigeria Ltd (Nwachukwu, 2018).

A one-time Governor of Taraba State, 1999-2007, Jolly Nyame was arraigned by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over allegation of criminal diversion of N1.64 billion while he served as the Governor of the above mentioned State, within the period stated above. Consequently, by May 2018, a Federal Capital Territory High Court, presided over by Justice Adebukola Banjoko found the former Governor guilty as charged and sentenced him to 14 years in prison without the option of fine. According to the presiding judge, Mr. Nyame unashamedly betrayed public confidence reposed in him by the people (Ugwuanyi, 2018). In a similar situation, a former governor of Plateau State, 1999-2007, Joshua Dariye was also convicted and sentenced to 14 years imprisonment for diverting public funds to the tune of 1.126 billion naira by a Federal Capital Territory High Court, presided over by Justice Adebukola Banjoko. The judgement held that: "the ex-governor criminally misappropriated funds and acted in violent breach of public trust and his oath of office (<https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018>; Okawu, 2018, p. 3)".

4.3 An Overview of the Impact of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria, 2003-2007

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was established in the year, 2003, during the administration of former President

Olusegun Obasanjo. Corruption was seen as the worst problem Nigeria had had when former President Olusegun Obasanjo assumed power in 1999, hence his government instituted some anti-corruption measures to tackle the menace which include the establishments of the EFCC and ICPC (Rengshik, 2018). For instance, the formation of EFCC was in swift response to the inclusion of Nigeria among the 23 non-compliant and uncooperative countries in the international community's commitment to combat money laundering in 2002 by the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF). It is a Commission, primarily instituted to investigate and tackle all forms of financial irregularities, money laundering, corrupt practices of public office holders and overall activities, bordering on financial crimes and fraudulent practices. The pioneer Chairman of the Commission was Mallam Nuhu Ribadu (Adisa, 2017).

Some salient objectives of the EFCC include:

1. To investigate all financial Crimes such as advance fee fraud, money laundering, counterfeit, illegal charge transfer, issuance of dud cheques, etc.
2. Creation of strategies and methods to confiscate and freeze proceeds, derived from illicit activities such as oil bunkering activities, looted funds, cyber fraud, etc.
3. Introduction of the use of modern technology in crime detection and tracking.
4. Gathering of all vital information relating to suspicious financial transactions as well as embarking on a comprehensive analysis of the collated information and make them available to all relevant agencies of government.
5. To function in partnership with international anti-graft agencies to assist in fund repatriation.

In spite of several opinions and assertions to the contrary, following its establishment in 2003, the EFCC no doubt, has recorded tangible achievements in its fight against corruption, within the public domain,

within the period, 2003 and 2007. In September 27, 2016, while presenting a paper at the floor of the senate, the Commission's first chairman, Nuhu Ribadu gave an account of the numerous strides, recorded by the EFCC during his tenure as the Chairman of the anti-graft Commission.

According to Ribadu, during his administration as the EFCC boss, the Commission received a total of 4324 cases. He revealed that 2103 out of the 4324 were placed under investigation. He further noted that the Commission made more than 2000 arrests and prosecuted 306 cases. Mallam Ribadu maintained that the Commission, within the space of three years had made huge recoveries of stolen assets of government, both within and outside the shores of Nigeria. The said assets which all together have a financial equivalent of about \$5 billion dollars included properties like magnificent buildings and lands obtained with stolen public funds, laundered cheques and physical cash, intercepted illicit transactions and sundry recovered funds, through the aid of international anti-graft bodies.

The pioneer chairman of the EFCC also accounted for how the Commission subjected the activities of the administration of past state Governors to financial investigations and subsequently, traces of looted, misappropriated, mismanaged and diverted public funds uncovered. He mentioned some past State governors who have been previously referenced in the preceding pages of this study (Anene, 2011).

On the whole, the activities of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission between 2003 and 2007 were said to be paternalistically superintended, selective and discriminatory. The Commission was alleged to be an instrument of vendetta on political foes. It is glaringly true that during the formative years of the EFCC, if a public office holder derailed from the pathway, designed by the ruling class, the anti-graft body swooped on them. This is evident in the way the EFCC was used to persecute the political office holders who were opposed to the third term bid of former President Obasanjo. Also, the 'veiled' reason behind the removal of Mallam Nuhu Ribadu as the EFCC chairman in 2007 was as a

result of his arresting a former wealthy Governor who was a close pal of the then President, Musa Yar'Adua. (Umar, Samsudin & Mohamed, 2016).

5.1 Research Findings

In the course of the study, the following findings were made:

1. Corruption in Nigeria had assumed a firmly-rooted stance, prior to the birth of the fourth republic.
2. The leadership of the country, under the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo failed to conduct a proper and detailed investigation into the institutional and social factors responsible for corruption before embarking on the fight; it lost sight of the normative culture of corruption in the country.
3. There was in existence, a high degree of moral bankruptcy in the system.
4. Political office holders themselves were seriously involved in corrupt acts, hence their inability to successfully curb corruption in the bureaucracy and the entire public environment.
5. Corruption adversely undermined development during the periods under study.
6. The fight against corruption in Nigeria within the period, 1999-2007 was purely partial, discriminatory, selective and prejudiced.
7. There was a 'deliberate lethargy' in concluding investigation processes and prosecution of offenders. This is true because, most of the cases which trials commenced within the period, 1999-2007 remained inconclusive.
8. Law enforcement agencies and anti-graft bodies like the ICPC and the EFCC were mere appendages to the Presidency; their operations were devoid of any iota of independence and were used as instruments of political victimisation and oppression.

5.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

Deducible facts from the study have revealed that corruption, expressed in the form of dearth of proper accountability; poor culture of transparency, financial misappropriations and the thriving trends of impunity characterised the public space within the period, 1999-2007. Understandably, the above mentioned indicators of administrative improprieties hampered development during that era. Good, sound and quality governance should connote the ingredients of transparency, rule of law, probity, moral decency and chastity. Also, good governance stresses emphatically on the need to abolish political personalisation and patronage.

Since the experiences of corruption within the Nigeria public space between the periods, 1999-2007 still manifest in our contemporary time, recommendations on the need to tackle corruption forthwith have to reflect the realities of our time. These include:

1. There should be institutional capacity building and re-branding. The statutory powers and obligations of governmental institutions in Nigeria should be strengthened and revitalised to make them impartially responsible and responsive.
2. Law enforcement agencies and other anti-graft bodies should be made to be independent of executive preponderant control. These agencies should enjoy independence.
3. There should be an entrenched system that will mandate political office holders to have the political will to judiciously implement policies and programmes, aimed at providing social welfare services to the people.
4. There should be an institutional enactment of value re-orientation in our socio-political system that should cut across all aspects of our existence as a nation.
5. There should be stringent anti-corruption laws that should be meted out to offenders dispassionately and without prejudice or compromise.

6. Public office holders should be well remunerated so as to limit the chances of allurements to corrupt acts.
7. The Nigeria political system should do away with the way where anti-corruption crusade and fight mainly target political opponents and foes.

In summary, we recommend, therefore, a holistically systemic and institutional overhauls that would be fundamentally essential in tackling institutionalised corruption in Nigeria's public space with a view to achieving maximum socio-economic development. We conclude that except stern measures are taken to address the pervasively institutionalised corruption perpetuated under the Obasanjo's eight-year administration, the country would continue to wallow in the fantasy of socio-economic development.

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