

## Article

# Corruption and Underdevelopment as Geared by Bureaucrats in Nigeria

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## I N F O

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## A B S T R A C T

Theories abound for the different possible causes of the flagrant graft that exists in Nigeria, some blame greed and ostentatious lifestyle as a potential root cause of corruption. Nigeria is faced with problems where funds meant for implementation of developmental project are siphoned, civil service ethics are declining and meritocracy is lost for personal regarding interest by public bureaucrats all in the name of corruption, this study however focus on the researchers attempt to study how corruption in public bureaucracy can be curtailed. It is no denying fact that the bureaucrats are an integral component of societal development in developed countries of the world but has been converted to an engineer or architect of corruption in our darling Nigeria. The study discovers that distality in neutrality; integrity and ethics in public bureaucracy required for the success in the discharging out of public duties are lost. This has happened, despite many governmental agencies and policies created to check corruption proves counterproductive, this paper recommends a reform of the system and process to enhance development because corruption is a fundamental component of injustice and no society will progress or develop if it bureaucrats are corrupt and mischievous, and no society progresses with corrupt leaders as custodian.

**Keywords:** Bureaucrats, Bureaucratic Corruption, Public Bureaucracy

## Introduction

There is no doubt that Corruption is one of those factors that has been considered as the impediment to development of Nigeria, contributed to its underdevelopment and has serve as cankerworm to its development policies during both the military and democratic dispensation as usually geared by public bureaucrats in their respective ministries, department and agencies MDAs. Nigeria has been losing billions of naira's yearly as the result of menace of corruption. Ango (1986:9) stated that "no doubt corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of Nigeria's society so much that, it is the greatest obstacles to national development". Corrupt practices are usually geared by civil servants in the process

of discharging their responsibility in the provision of public goods, awarding of contract, implementation of policies and recruitment process which are the preconditions for the development of Nigeria. Eric Ikhilae defined corruption as the undertaking of "corrupt practices" such as offering, Giving, receiving, or soliciting directly or indirectly anything of value to influence the action of a public official in his selection process or in contract execution. There has been grand corruption among public bureaucrats as the results of lack of following the formalized, standardized, impersonalize and legalized process in the public operations. Aluko (2009) asserted that this menace of corruption in bureaucrats has facilitated a problem which has leads to slow movement of files in offices, police extortion of toll fees, policy failure,

port congestion, queues at passport offices and public owned filling stations, ghost workers syndrome, election irregularities and over invoicing of contract. However, Faseke (2006:103) traced the festering corruption within the civil service and its consequent hindrance to performance of its bureaucratic function in the nation, to the British colonial legacy inherited by Nigeria. He posits that “the transformation of the civil service from an instrument of exploitation in the colonial era to one of corruption and fraud in post-independence period, especially under military rule that created job insecurity, marked the origin of office corruption in Nigeria”.

After over centenary of birth creation and her independence in 1960, many Nigerians and the international community's had very high hope and expectations for rapid socio-economic growth and development of Nigerian, Because of its natural endowments, population and human resources. Nigeria is a nation bestowed with vast human and natural resources with oil exports accounting for about 95% of foreign-exchange income and some 80% of government income, with a population above 158 million (Gbogbo, 2011). However, the Nigeria of today is facing some major fall back as the socio-economic performance over the years remained stagnant and un-impressive despite the wake up calls. Fayomi (2013) opines that since independence, Nigeria has been experiencing a high degree of mismanagement of resources particularly in the area of public procurement; there have been open abuses of rules and standards in the award and execution of public contracts in Nigeria. These were evident in over invoicing, inflation of contract costs, and proliferation of white elephant's project and diversion of public funds through all kinds of manipulations of contract system.

This bad scenario was largely attributed to high level of corruption and miss-management of public resources through the public sector which has manifested in severity and undermined development as the result of over invoicing of contract costs due to principal agent consideration, lack of meritocracy, decline in civil service ethics, poverty, Poor condition of service, poor remunerations, and lack of motivation. Corruptions in civil service are traceable to every administration, despite all the crusade of anti-graft agencies like EFCC, ICPC, Code of Conduct Bureau, and several reforms justice has not been done to the issue of corruption it seems only cosmetic solution were only provided. However, Lorhemen (2008.3) observed that the more Government devise complex ambition to combat corruption and plans for the socio-economic and political development of this country, the more their implementation is frustrated by evolution of even more effective and sophisticated method of corruption so that in the end the only growth we see is the development of corruption.

Therefore, the paper examines the effect of bureaucratic corruption on development of Nigeria, The study implemented a qualitative research method in which secondary material was sourced from journals, articles, and government published materials, internets and newspapers.

## Conceptual Analysis

### Concept of Corruption

Corruption as a concept is multi-dimensional, used haphazardly and with also multifaceted effect on the nation's development. However, as rightly posited by mickel jhonstin corruption in civil service is a worldwide phenomenon and a serious limitation on the ability of government to accomplish their objectives. that the main reason for the worldwide presence of corruption in the civil service is that civil servants have something to allocate that the people want and the demands for government reward frequently exceeded the supply and routine decision making are lengthily, costly and uncertain in their outcome for these reasons legally sanction decision making process constitute a bottle neck between what people want and what they get from the government and the determination to get around the bottle neck one must use bottle neck influence which is corruption, and corruption which by definition cut across established and legitimate process is the most effective form of influence. To Harsch and Josepha(1993:33) corruption involves behavior which deviates from the normal duties of public roles because of private pecuniary or status game or violate rules against the exercise of some kinds of private regarding influence. According to Karl Fredrick (1990:15) separate are said to be engage in corruption when they are decided control by the society to perform certain public functions or duties but as the result of the anticipation of a personnel rewards or gain assume actions that reduce the welfare of society or damage the public interest. Jacob (1990) believes that a corrupt public official regard is office as a business from which he is able to extract extra-legal income as the result that civil servant's total compensation those do not depend on an ethical evaluation of his usefulness for the common good but precisely upon the market situation and is talent for finding the point of maximal gain on the on the public demand curve. The Transparency International [TI] [1999:1, 2002:6] the biosphere most reliable non-legislative anti- corruption regulator define 'bribery as the abuse of public office for private gain'. Corruption according to Nye(1967:419) is a behavior which differ from the normal duties of a municipal role because of private- regarding [family, close private clique], financial or status gains or infringes rules against the exercise or certain types of private regarding influences. This includes such conduct as bribery [use of reward to pervert the judgment of a person in position of trust]; nepotism [bestowal of patronage by reason of inscriptive

relationship rather than merit]; and misappropriation [illegal appropriation of public resources for private regarding uses]. It is a behavior that abuse societal legal or social standards as well as public role or resources for private benefit.

### Types of Corruption

To this study, we will focus on the two major types of corruption which are:

- Political Corruption
- Bureaucratic Corruption

#### Political Corruption

Political corruption usually showcases in areas related to activities like election, succession and power preservation. It a process in which transaction between the private and public sector actors takes place.

#### Bureaucratic Corruption

Bureaucratic corruption (administrative corruption) involves lobbying through buying of favors from bureaucrats who formulate, administer and implement government policies and programmed for developmental purposes and take place at the end of politics.

#### Causes of Corruption

It is germane to state here the possible causes of corruption particularly in Nigeria. In the analysis of the course of corruption in society (Umar, 2008) identified factors such as political instability, weak legislative and judicial system, and institutional inefficiency. Lord Brgce [1931] quote in Nye, has summarized these causes has the affect countries like Nigeria. He states that behavior that will be considered corrupt is to be more pervasive in less develop countries because of variety of conditions involved in their underdevelopment great inequality in the distribution of wealth: political offices as the primary means of gaining access to wealth; conflict between changing moral codes; weakness of social and governmental enforcement mechanisms, and absence of strong sense of national unity.

#### The Prevalence of Corruption in Nigeria can also be Attributed to The Following Factors

- Inefficient and non- self-enforcing rules.
- Lack of patriotism.
- The high rate of unemployment also triggers corruption.
- Relatively low public service compensation.
- Economic woes and chronic poverty.
- Indiscipline and in efficiency.
- The Nigeria society value money more than morality.
- The manner of the government to corruption. Many corrupt officials were, set free, some were not charged to court nor punished even after they are found confected of corruption.

### Consequences of Corruption

The continued accumulation process has resulted into diverse effect on the nation's development both under the civilian and military government. The diversion of public wealth to personal accounts; hence the looting of treasury reserve of government has made Nigeria to record unprecedented growth in all sectors of her economy and also gives Nigerian a bad image in the world. According to Caiden (1976) quoted in Amujiri (2002:78) corruption involves loss of moral authority, weakens efficiency of government operation, increases opportunities for organized crime, encourages police brutality, adds to taxpayers burden, undermines political decision, lead to insufficient use to resources and benefits the unscrupulous at the cost of the law abiding. Resources meant for public institutions have been taking by private individuals which as deprive average Nigerians from enjoying quality education, good health facility, portable drinking water, constant power supply, good roads and security of life and properties.

#### The Concept Civil Service

The civil service is "a complex organization with a body of permanent officials appointed in a civil capacity to assist the political executive in the formulation, execution and implementation of government policies, in ministries, department and agencies within which specific government works are carried out. This excludes the judiciary, polices, arm force, local government services, research institutions and universities, the officials who remuneration are paid wholly out of monies voted by and approved by the national assemble are called civil servant. The civil services which possess status of neutrality among other public services organization within the broad canopy of the public services. As Adamolekun (2002) state that civil services is frequently used as the synonym of the apparatus of the government, this is so in Britain and most common wealth countries of sub-saharan African. In Britain's civil services is used to refer to the body of permanent officials appointed to assist the decision makers. According Bezzina (1994) opined that civil services refer to employees selected and promoted on the basis of merit and seniority, system which may include examinations. According to the 1999 constitution session 318 sub session 1 civil services refers to the services of the federation of (state) in a civil capacity, staff of the offices of the president, (governor), the vice president, (Deputy governor), ministry or department of the federation (state), (FRN, 1999).

#### Under Pining Theory

There are two major theories that can be used in explaining corruption in relation to bureaucrats which are the Agency theory and Public choice theory.

The agency theory posit that relationship due exist between the principal and the agent in other word government and it workers who are the public and civil servants or the relationship between the civil servant and the private sector in which the agent work in other to minimize efficiency so that he can be rewarded by the principal. In the sense that the civil servants due award contract to their agents so as minimize cost and been rewarded by the contractor based on the principal to agent relationship.

On the other hand, the public choice theory posit that the civil servant and politicians will go for decisions that favors their own interest and confer benefit on them without taking other factors into consideration. So, for these reasons, I will use the public choice theory.

### Public Choice Theory

The public choice theory is also called the social choice theory and rational choice theory, is directed toward the study of politics based on financial principles. The most important contribution of public choice theory is that it recognizes that politicians and civil servants are motivated by egocentric interest to serve the masses. The public choice theory has made economics of politics had a tremendous impact on public policy and public administration during the past three decades. Ducas Black [1958] is often regarded as the father of public choice theory. However, it was George Stigler [1971] and Sam Peltzman [1996] that create the submission of public option theory to government control while William Niskan [1987] is generally considered as the founder of public choice literature on Bureaucracy [Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2008]. The central tenet of public choice is that individual is indeed utility expands such that they will support policies that convey the greatest individual benefit. The basic unit of discussion is the individual, and that purposive action by an individual is the essence of social behavior. As utility maximizes civil servants will use their power to manipulate agency budgets giving them large perquisites as a compliment to the static civil servants income before awarding the contracts [Hackler 2003: 1019]. Stated that these civil servants actions lead to recourse waste and rent seeking, Johnson [1991] opined that the source of civil service problems lies not in the bureaucrat but in the nature of public goods and incentives that the get in the public procurement of contracts from bidders and institution existing in the bureaucracy and while some civil servants may selflessly pursue the public goods, other do so while simultaneously pursuing their careers and economic gains. [Krueger 1974, 1993].

### Conclusion

It is observed that corrupt practices by bureaucrats have become impediment to the nation's growth and development. It is found in almost all spheres of life in

Nigeria. Almost all the anti-graft agencies are not performing up to expectation corruption had been regarded as a culture in Nigeria because it seen in our daily affairs' in public life it is found everywhere even in religious place of worship. It has been asserted that it is even the bureaucrats that instigate political corruption because they understand the system, the run day to day activities of government and they carry out the implementation.

### The Way Forward

The rationale behind any research is to provide solutions to a giving problem and also to provide an illuminating insight on the topic to the audience or other researchers, the solutions include:

- Government should emphasis on more declaration of assets by public officials, because many public office holders manipulate and inflate their assets and liabilities so the code of conduct bureau should increase their administrative capacities to tackle the problem.
- There should be strict adherence to the rule of law and separation of powers by the tiers of government because many cases of pardon and lack of probing of each tier in process of making judgment for responsiveness and accountability.
- The conditions of work of civil and public servants should be improved because they are not comparable to those in private sectors in terms of remunerations, standards of living, welfare services.
- Awarding of contract should be made public in other to allow for bidding and public awareness about the contract because most contracts are not publicizing.
- Lastly there should be strict punishment on does that go contrary to laws in the obtaining of public goods in the process of policy formulation, execution, and policy evaluation.

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