

Corrupt Followership versus Corrupt Leadership: A Stereotypical Analysis of Political Corruption in Nigeria

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Abstract

Several studies on corruption in Nigeria identify the leadership as the bane of society. The media in its various manifestations often focus on the degree of corruption among the elite, paying little or no attention to the followership. It is the position in this paper, however, that corrupt leadership is the consequence of corrupt followership and vice versa. The paper is an examination of the evolution of corrupt leadership from corrupt followership. The prevalence of corruption in all its ramifications stems largely from the followership because leaders do not just appear. They emerge by elevation from the followership. This work therefore examines the culture of corruption as the foundation for corrupt leader using the Nigerian situation as case study. Using two corruption theories: public choice and bad apple as investigatory tools, this research reveals that faulty morals and the quest for acquisition of material wealth by the generality of the citizenry (from among whom tomorrow's leaders will emerge), produce corrupt leadership.

Keywords: corruption, corrupt followership, corrupt leadership, sustainable development, Nigeria

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Introduction

The financial and economic conundrum being experienced by Nigeria is largely a function of the prevalence of corrupt practices within the country. Corrupt practices have placed Nigeria among the top most corrupt nations of the world (Transparency International, 2017:5). This ranking indicates that the abnormal has become the norm, the illegal has become legal, and the aberrant has become the standard. In fact, given the unbridled looting of the treasury with impunity, it is assumed that corruption is official in the country (Joda, 2011:24 and *Daily Sun*, August. 9, 2016:8). Cases of looters of government treasury who live and enjoy their loots freely in the society without being jailed abound. The stench of political corruption has continued to pollute the national atmosphere and attract the derision of international community. Political corruption has become topical issue of discourse on both the electronic and print media. Most debates and discussions tend to bemoan the corrupt leadership style as a factor for massive corrupt practices by politicians. Corrupt leadership has been crucified for corrupt practices. Corrupt followership has received little or no criticism for the upsurge of political corruption in Nigeria. All triggers are pulled at corrupt leaders, forgetting the fact that the leaders had once been followers. Becoming a leader does not entail cleansing from negative values. A corrupt follower is a potential corrupt leader while a corrupt leader can negatively influence a follower. This paper seeks to examine the making of bad leadership from bad followership and vice versa. The work reveals that political corruption is promoted by both leadership and followership and not the preserve of the former. It demonstrates that the fight against corruption should be targeted at both the leadership and followership.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

For a better understanding, the following concepts shall be explained: corruption, political corruption, corrupt leadership and corrupt followership.

Corruption: This is an illegal, vicious and fraudulent intention to evade

the prohibition of the law. The act of an official or fiduciary individual who unlawfully and wrongfully uses his or her position, power or character to acquire some gains for himself or for another person, contrary to duty, the right of others, and to the law of the society (Black's Law Dictionary, 1968:311). The black's law dictionary described corruption as a form of dishonest or unethical conduct by an official entrusted with a position of authority often to procure personal benefit. It includes any form of behaviour that deviate from ethics, morality, tradition, law and civic virtues by any person or group of persons, no matter their status in the society (Joda, 2011:14). The World Bank defines corruption as the misuse or abuse of public office for private gains (Balboa and Medalla, 2006:4). Corruption comes in various forms and a wide array of unlawful conduct, such as bribery, extortion, fraud, speed money, graft, nepotism, pilferage, theft, embezzlement, kickbacks, campaign contributions, falsification of records and influence peddling (Klitgaard & Fedderke, 1995:359).

Corruption is classified into two categories: spontaneous and institutionalized (or systemic). Spontaneous corruption is prevalence in societies observing strong ethics and morals in public service, while institutionalized corruption is common in societies where corrupt behaviours are perennially extensive or pervasive (Balboa *et al*, 2006:4). Corruption takes place when an individual, irrespective of position or status, act against basic norms and regulations. For example, a man or woman who drinks bottle water and throws the container on the street or conceals the truth for his personal benefit is guilty of corruption. An officer who uses public funds, meant for community development for his or her personal interest or a head of department of an institution who deducts a part of his or her subordinate's training grant for personal gain is involved in corruption.

Political or government corruption: This is the use of powers by government officials for illegitimate private gain (Yuki, 2006:32 and British Broadcasting News, 2007). An unlawful action by an officeholder constitutes political corruption only if the action is directly related to their official duties, is carried out under colour of law or involves trading in

influence. The misuse of political power for purposes such as, repression of political opponents, rigging of election and general brutality is considered political corruption. A state of unrestrained political corruption is known as Kleptocracy, literally meaning “rule by thieves” (BBC News, 2007).

Corrupt leadership: Researchers define leadership in many ways. Leadership is defined broadly in terms of (a) influencing individuals to contribute to group goals and (b) coordinating the pursuit of those goals (Bass, 1990:20 and Yuki, 2006:18). Leadership is building a team and guiding it to victory. Leadership is the process of guiding and directing the behaviour of people in the work environment. Leadership can be described as an influenced relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect the mutual purposes.

Corrupt leadership is someone with responsibility over a group of people, organization, community or state, and thus abuses the leaders-followers relationship by leaving the group or state in a worse-off condition than when he or she first found them, (Blake, 1994:34). Corrupt leader or leadership could also be referred to as toxic boss, little Hitler, manager from hell and boss from hell. The leadership style is both self-disruptive and ultimately corporately harmful as they subvert and destroy organizational structures (Blake, 1994:34). Corrupt leader or leadership puts own needs first above organizational or state interest, micro – manage subordinates, behave in a mean – spirited manner, display poor decision –making, divert organisational or state financial resources to private or family account and deliberately refuse to listen to his people or subordinates (*The Washington Post National*, 2011:9). Corrupt leadership is generally considered to be insular, intemperate, glib, operationally rigid, callous, inept, discriminatory and aggressive (Kellerman, 2012). Corrupt leaders fail in the provision of basic needs of the people. Their style entails mismanagement and embezzlement of fund.

Corrupt followership: Followership, to start with, can be described as adherence to a leader. It is the virtue of supporting and helping leaders to direct or lead well. (Jehn and Bezrukova, 2004:44) asserts that followership is a people-oriented behaviour and this behaviour builds relationship

between leaders and followers, provide an environment that makes all organizational members to focus on a common goal. In the authors' submission, followership disposition determines successful leadership. Good followers can help bring about good or trustworthy leaders or leadership.

Corrupt followership or followers are individuals whose illegal or unlawful activities are synonymous with those of corrupt leadership or leaders. According to Robert Kelley (1988:52), corrupt followers are individuals who are passive, not committed to the organization or team, selfish in relating with other citizens, and praise corrupt leadership. Corrupt followership can be referred to as an individual or group of people who indulge in criminal activities or any act contrary to the rule of law.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts two theories: the “public choice theory” and the “bad apple theory” in its analysis. Both theories focus on the respect for material wealth and defective human character respectively. Public choice theory is often used to explain how political decision making results in outcomes that conflict with the preferences of the general public (Caplan, 2007:46). Public choice emphasises the special interest of politicians and government officials in embarking on projects that are not the desire of the overall democracy or the interest of the general public. Politician's special interests accrue financial benefits that open the door to future wealth. Proponents of public choice theory such as Bryan Caplan, Geoffrey Brennan and Loren Lomasky claim that democratic policy is biased to favour “expressive interests” and neglect practical and utilitarian consideration and that politics is plagued by irrationality (Caplan, 2007:46). Bad apple theory on the other hand, focuses on the level of the individual corrupt agent for the causes of corruption (Cusson 1983:67). This theory places the cause of corruption on faulty (moral) character. It emphasises the causal chain from bad character to corrupt acts, defective human character and predisposition toward criminal activity (Cusson 1983:67). Causes of corruption are rooted in human weakness such as greed

and selfishness. To proponents, people are assumed to act on the basis of moral values, and “wrong” values cause corruption. (de Graaf,2003).

The Emergence of Political Corruption in Nigeria

Political corruption can be traced to the pre-colonial traditional society. It persisted in the colonial period, precisely from the second quarter of the 20th century. Before the alarming rate of the “monster” called corruption, colonial masters while administering Nigeria, had claimed to be laying the foundation for a modern and viable state that would one day emerge as a great nation. In fact, Margery Perham, who had travelled widely in Nigeria in the 1930s, recalled the possibilities of building a new Nigeria from the bottom up (Perham 1969: 238). In 1939, Governor-General Bernard Bourdillon reiterated Perham’s view that Nigeria had the potential to build “a sound United State” (Bourdillon cited in Ellis, 2016:56). The dream of a sound united and developed state became a farce right from the onset, especially with the arrival of educated elites from the West and their subsequent involvement in politics. Though the British officers were not free from corruption, but the appointments and elections of Nigerians into public offices increased corruption drastically (Ellis, 2016:56). Political corruption before the arrival of Nigerian elites had been at its lowest ebb, as there were occasional cases of dishonesty (NARA 11, 1944; cited in Ellis, 2016:56). To Ellis, the civil service, in its early days, was almost immune from awuf (bribery).” British officials who manned the key posts saw to it that “awuf” was reduced to the barest minimum. The British government had effective legal instrument to punish corrupt officers. Hardly anybody caught on corruption charges escaped going to jail (Liman, 2017:2). According to Liman, many top ranking officials had their careers unceremoniously terminated for their involvement in corrupt practices. The system eschewed corruption, and had zero tolerance for corrupt individuals. However, following the gradual replacement of the British officials by the Nigerian educated elites, the incidences of “awuf” increased (Amadi, 1982:88). The increasing nature of corruption became worrisome under the Nigerian officers who occupied senior positions in

the federal civil service. In 1946, a senior British official wrote in a circular letter that the government was “appalled” at the extent of corruption and bribery “throughout the African civil service. It appears to permeate practically every branch and seems to be rapidly undermining the activities of government” (Ellis, 2016:56) To prove that western accusation were void of superiority on the part of British officials or from crude racism, similar statements were made by Nigerians themselves. According to Ellis, in 1950 the Northern politician, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa caused a sensation by referring to “the twin curses of bribery and corruption which pervade every rank and department” of government. Another Nigerian corroborated Balewa’s statement as he noted: “when the British colonialists brought the public service apparatus, it did not take much time before Nigerians successfully prostituted these agencies and negated the ideal of service for its own sake into service for what I can get for myself” (Labanji, 1975:6).

It is worthy to note that some Nigerian politicians before independence made their personal financial ambitions known, even before starting their political career. Some of these politicians saw political participation as a means of self-enrichment. For example, on the new year’s eve of 1937, Nnamdi Azikiwe swore an oath to become rich. He repeated the oath in a letter he wrote on 21 November 1943 (Booth, 1981:49). In addition, an astute critic discerned in the autobiographies of both Zik and his great rival Awolowo, a complete identification of their own personal prosperity with that of the nation (Booth, 1981:53). The ambition to acquire wealth was not just a personal trait of prominent politicians such as Awolowo and Azikiwe, or even of the political class as a whole but a general tendency throughout the society. Material wealth, with the power associated with it, rather than the science, philosophy nor even religion of the west, most impressed the politicians.

In the ensuing political activities of the second half of the 20th century, higher levels of government were reported to be “marked by great corruption” (Report on corruption, 1953, cited in Ellis, 2016:57). Elected politicians were consumed with the control over men and resources rather than ideological projects. Through public office, politicians could

use government resources for their own private or party purposes, a trend that continued unabated to date (Ellis, 2016:56). In 1955, there was a gruesome case of abuse of government funds in the Eastern Region. The government in Lagos took action by setting up an official tribunal headed by Stafford Foster-Sutton, Chief Justice of Nigeria. The main target of its enquiries was Nnamdi Azikiwe, the then premier of Eastern Region, on account of his involvement in the affair of African Continental Bank, an institution that he created and continued to dominate (Ellis, 2016:56). Azikiwe was accused of using his control of the Regional government to prop up his own bank and his business. According to the Foster- Sutton Tribunal, Azikiwe did not sever his connections to ACB when he became a minister but continued to use his influence to further the interest of ACB while he was in government. Similar incidence occurred earlier in 1953 in the Western Region, where senior members of staff of the National Bank of Nigeria were leading members of Action Group. In collusion with its leader chief Obafemi Awolowo, the party members used its control of the Region and the National Bank of Nigeria to utilize government funds for the benefit of itself and its own directors (Sklar,2004:254).

Following the attainment of political independence in 1960, politics in general and tenure of public office most especially, became the key site for self-advancement, as the fortunes of businesses, communities and households in Nigeria hinged on governmental favour, and political influence. “Nearly all businessmen were politicians because the state had become the main source of both finance and contracts; and nearly all politicians were businessmen” (Ellis, 2016:58). The culture of grandiose self-advancement brewed by Nigeria’s foremost nationalists, politicians and public officers were bequeathed to the post-independence practitioners. Political corruption is not just the practice of old politicians but also the mastery of post-colonial politicians. Post-independence politicians who were once followers of pre-independence politicians over the years imbibed the corrupt value system and thus perfected the art to an unprecedented level. In fact, the discovery and exploration of oil in the 1950s and 1960s necessitated a more worrisome corrupt practice

among politicians and government officials. Nigerian politicians are more concerned with ego-centric interests, the building of personal wealth instead of nation building. The building of financial pyramids from state resources has become a common practice among corrupt citizens including followers (Joda, 2011:19).

In early 1970s, under General Yakubu Gowon, a certain commissioner of agriculture in the defunct Northwestern State was reported to have informed a panel of investigation how huge tractors and farming implements disappeared (Liman, 2017:2). Abubakar Liman further asserts that at the federal level some super permanent secretaries and commissioners were involved in corruption related cases. Corruption continued under General Olusegun Obasanjo's first tenure, 1976-1979, but with a low index.

Under Alhaji Shehu Shagari, the first Executive President of Nigeria, corruption took a leap forward. Despite the participation of competent hands and experts in key positions of the technical sectors, there were reckless and thoughtless white elephant projects, misplacement of priorities, nepotism, capital flight and mismanagement of public resources. Bangura (1986:31) described Shagari's administration as "the government of the contractors by the contractors and for the contractors." The disturbing level of corruption in the second republic necessitated the return of the military junta to power by toppling the civilian government. General Mohammadou Buhari who succeeded Shagari through a coup d'état initiated War Against Indiscipline (WAI), to clean the Augean stable of corruption in both the formal and informal sectors of the Nigerian economy. To Liman, Buhari's greatest undoing was his obsession and doggedness as he indiscriminately treated both culprits and innocent individuals as suspects, and his promotion of human rights abuses.

In 1985, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida toppled Buhari's regime. During Babangida's administration, there was mindless institutionalization or rather palpable personalization of public funds (Liman, 2017:3). Corruption became part and parcel of Nigerian culture. Honesty, sincerity and hard work became less appreciated, as these

qualities no longer paid anybody. Corruption was raised to the level of state policy and was used as an instrument of regime legitimation and stability (Gboyega, 1996:5). According to Gboyega, some jailed corrupt politicians were released, and their ill-gotten wealth and properties earlier confiscated by Buhari's government, were returned to the offenders. This was done under the Forfeiture of Assets (Release of certain Forfeited Properties, etc) Decrees No 24 and 50 of 1993 (Ogundiya, 2009:287). Worse still, in a bid to sustain the regime's legitimacy, Babangida embarked on massive pay-offs to various groups of people and organizations in the civil society. These included: Ecumenical Cathedral Abuja, 50 million naira; Obafemi Awolowo Foundation, 30 million naira; Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria, 20 million naira; Zik Hall Zungeru, 40 million naira; Arewa House Kaduna, 35 million naira; Yakubu Gowon Centre, 30 million naira; Nigerian Union of Journalists National Secretariat Abuja, 30 million naira; Nigeria Labour Congress Secretariat Building Fund, 50 million naira among several others (Committee for Defence of Human Rights, 1999:35). In 1993, it was reported that 400 million naira was wasted on the Better Life Project, and \$200 million siphoned from the Aluminum Project (*The News Magazine*, 1993:20) Babangida's cronies headed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) inspired Structural Adjustment Policy (SAP), and other special outfits in the public sectors such as Better Life Programme, National Directorate for Employment, Community Bank, Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery (MAMSER) and Directorate for Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI). These institutions were conduit pipes which drained the nation's resources. The billions of naira sunk into these programmes which were geared towards empowerment and poverty alleviation did not yield the desired results. One gruesome case of corruption which will never be forgotten in the history of corruption in Nigeria is the disappearance of \$12 billion Gulf war oil windfall. According to Sahara Reporters online (2012:1), Pius Okigbo, a former Nigerian economist detailed how Babangida and his cronies fraudulently depleted the windfall. Further deduced from Liman submission, under Babangida's administration, the clergy from the

main religious bodies, that is, Christianity and Islam were politicized and financially corrupted.

General Sani Abacha and Abdulsalami Abubakar did not significantly depart from Babangida's profligacy. They maintained the corrupt status quo. For example, Abacha's loot was estimated to the tune of N218.3 billion (*Vanguard*, Wednesday, August 31, 2016:5). After his death, he forfeited six ultra-modern buildings worth billions of naira. His family was asked to return about 75 million British Pounds, 100 million naira, while 250 million naira and 96.9 million naira were forfeited to the Nigerian government by his sons – Mohammed Sani Abacha and Abdulkadir Abacha respectively (Ogundiya, 2009:287). According to Erhagbe (2017:2), the Swiss government revealed another Abacha's loot of about \$321 million. The money was part of the estimated \$5 billion allegedly looted by late General Sani Abacha between 1993 and 1998. Like Babangida, General Abacha nursed and promoted corruption in order to hold on to power. He made several pay-offs and gave undue rewards to some politicians, which included Chief Anthony Ani, DM30 million and \$3 million; Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu, \$5 million; and Alhaji Abdulazeez Arisekola Alao, 100 million naira (Ogundiya, 2009:288). Abdulsalami's short tenure was not void of allegations of corruption, especially his administration's transition programme which was alleged to be an avenue for self-advancement for the leader and his cronies (Liman, 2017:4). Irregularities marred the vote, and Chief Olu Falae, the defeated candidate, challenged electoral results and Obasanjo's victory, but to no avail.

President Olusegun Obasanjo, the winner of the 1999 presidential election, established anti-corruption institutions such as Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). It did not take long, for these institutions to become hounds for witch-hunting political opponents. Associates and friends of the government were immune from scrutiny while opponents are targets of ICPC and EFCC. During Obasanjo's administration, cases of corruption abound in the Senate and House of representatives. For example, Chief Evans Enwerem, Chuba Okadigbo and

Adolphus Nwabara were impeached on account of mismanagement and corrupt enrichment. According to Senator Idris Kuta led panel, Okadigbo was involved in the inflation of the street light project to the tune of 173 million naira; authorized the payment of 37. 2 million naira to furnish the Senate president's residence, an amount above the approved 25 million; installed and commissioned a 100KVA generating set at the Senate president's residence at an inflated price of 15 million naira. Adolphus Wabara was guilty of receiving bribe of 55 million naira from Professor Osuji (former education Minister) to inflate the budgetary allocation to education ministry, while Senator Chimaroke Nnamani faced about 124 count charges of fraud, conspiracy concealment and money laundering totaling about 5.4 billion naira (Saturday Vanguard, 2008:16). Madam Patricia Etteh, the first female Speaker of House of Representatives resigned from the position for her involvement in the misappropriation of public funds in multiple contracts of 628 million naira (US\$5million), for the renovation of her official residence and the purchase of 12 official cars (Ogundiya, 2009:289). More shocking and disheartening was the Atiku's saga over the Petroleum Technology Development Fund. The Senate Committee pronounced Vice President Atiku Abubakar guilty on the allegation that he diverted \$145 million PTFD to unauthorized accounts. According to Ogundiya, the report reads: "the Vice President abused his office by aiding or abetting the diversion of public funds in the sums of \$125 million and \$20 million respectively approved for the specific projects of deposits in banks, some of which were fraudulently converted as loans to NDTV, Mofas Shipping Company Limited and Transvari Services Limited." Another gory scenario of corruption was the report of the Auditor General of the federation in 2003 which revealed pervasive financial irregularities, over invoicing, scam and colossal waste of public resources in the 2001 Federation Account (Ogundiya. 2009:289).

President Umaru Yar'adua who succeeded Obasanjo could not fight corruption for health reasons. His failing health condition provided opportunity especially for members of his kitchen cabinet to siphon government funds. After his death, President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan's

government was characterized with corruption. Jonathan's administration can be compared to the regime of Ibrahim Gbadamosi Babangida. Like Babangida, Jonathan was indifference to corruption. According to Liman, under Jonathan, stealing by government officials was not corruption. Government officials helped themselves with so much recklessness. Institutions responsible for tackling corruption cases such as the ICPC and EFCC were rendered ineffective. The trend of living above one's means by government officials and employees augmented. The egunje (kickbacks) syndrome reincarnated in the formal and informal sectors. Within the various sectors, exchange of money became pre-requisite for files and humans to move from one office to another. The oil industry experienced an unprecedented level of corruption. The industry was wrecked by sacred cows like Diezani Alison Madueke who used government funds to acquire mansions in western countries (Liman, 2017:4) A more worrisome corruption under Jonathan was the case of Sambo Dasuki, the National Security Adviser, who was supposed to have helped the nation procure sophisticated military equipment to prosecute the war against Boko Haram but decided to embark on "expressive interests" of thieving politicians. Dasuki brushed aside the idea of purchasing military equipment and shared the earmarked sum of \$2.1 billion (like birthday cake) among some governors, ministers, political stakeholders and other politicians (*Saturday Sun*, April 16, 2016:20). More than ever before, political appointments became the surest passports for self-enrichment in Nigeria. Low income earners like clerks in government offices were alleged to own estates in Abuja and other posh urban centers across the country. Jonathan's government created a new class of spiritual merchants that became rich through "political prophecies" (Liman, 2017:4). Some spiritual leaders or merchants bought private jets from government funds. To Liman, Jonathan and members of his family got entangled in the web of inconceivable financial waste.

In 2015 presidential election, Jonathan was defeated by General Mohammadu Buhari, thus bringing to an end the 16 year-old Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) government. Nigerians were tired of the

unspeakable and alarming rate of corruption and therefore voted for a change. Upon his election, Buhari promised zero tolerance on corruption and immediately started the fight against the monster. However, his approach has been trailed by controversy. From different quarters, Buhari's corruption crusade has been criticized for not being holistic enough, in that the war targets mainly the recalcitrant PDP members. The anti-corruption war is slanted because most politicians around Buhari that carpet-cross from PDP to All Progressive Congress (APC) were not affected by the EFCC arrest (Liman, 2017:5).

At present the power of money is placed above all other powers. The race for illegal acquisition of money is on the increase. Financial (money) power has informed different levels of corrupt practices among the citizens (followers) who are prospective leaders, such as, ritual killing, kidnapping and armed robbery, advanced fee fraud, sale of human kidneys abroad, and so on. Going by the level of corruption among followers and leaders, one can say that corruption trails corruption, that is, the next man (follower) to take the baton from the about-to-leave leader, is corrupt and a product of corrupt practices and system.

The Making of Corrupt Followership in Nigeria

The emergence of corrupt followers in the country could be traced to the unconscious institutionalization of a corrupt culture by the pre-independence politicians. There exist several theories responsible for the evolution of corrupt followership such as, bad apple, frustration-aggression, and relative deprivation (Okeke, 2014:25). These theories explain the institutionalization of corrupt culture in Nigeria. Corrupt political culture was promoted by first generation politicians including but not limited to the following: Chief Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier of Eastern Region, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Premier of Western Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Premier of the Northern Region, Mbanu Ojike, the Finance Minister for Eastern Region, Chief S.L. Akintola whose daughter Omodele, a staff of Leventis, made the company to be deeply involved in the finances of Western Region; Festus Okotie-Eboh, Minister of Finance,

Mohammadu – Defence Minister and Inua Wada – the Minister of Works (Ellis, 2016:58). This group of politicians and other public officers, who were once followers under the leadership of the British, bequeathed a corrupt system to succeeding politicians and public office holders, who have been under their unstructured and informal tutelage as followers.

It is glaring to discerning observers that corruption has easily spread to daily life. It has become experiential in virtually all facets or spheres of human endeavours. From the 1960s, knowledge of corruption that regularly occurred in relation to government contracts was “no longer confined to a few top civil servants, but seeping downwards to the small towns, cities and villages in Nigeria” (NARA 11, 1964; cited in Ellis, 2016:57). For example, in the educational sector in the Western Region, some principals were involved in illegal collection of fees for variety of services to students such as, requiring parents to pay for their children school books (NARA 11, 1966; cited in Ellis, 2016:57). In Port Harcourt, some students were reportedly dropped out of rural schools for their inability to pay a “dash” of sixty pounds to the relevant local government councilor (UK National Archives cited in Ellis, 2016:58). In addition, the present excessive numbers of local councils in some states today is not a new phenomenon. Regional governments were involved in the creation of excessive number of local councils in order to satisfy local interests and opportunities for graft, and to build a constituency for parliamentary candidates, who at election time could secure the votes of the councilors whom they helped (NARA 11, 1966).

The perception of politics as a source of self-advancement or miraculous benefits is the creation of early politicians in the 1960s, as some supporters or followers of politicians were not perturbed by the self-enrichment games of their leaders. Ministers’ houses were often flooded by supporters who regarded them as public places (NARA 11, 1964). In 1962, the Coker tribunal that inquired into corruption in the Western Region arrested Obafemi Awolowo in the presence of a huge crowd of his supporters. These followers (supporters) as they were referred to as “wanted Awo to take a lot more of public funds for himself as he was their son and his money was

their money” (Onyeachonam, 1983:13). It is not surprising that in present day Nigeria thieving politicians live freely within the society and are highly celebrated by their supporters. The corrupt practices of politicians rob-off or have great impact in the lives of the followers. Corruption becomes contagious as followers are easily affected or influenced. There is an unending list of criminal politicians or government officials, living in affluent of their ill-gotten wealth without being arrested or molested by the general populace. A more painful scenario is the art of using the stolen funds, in the event of being prosecuted, to employ the services of a large number of smart lawyers (who claim to be doing their job) to take advantage of the legal technicalities to get freedom.

In Nigeria, the provision of social amenities in some areas depends on patronage of politicians or political allegiance. For example, a water distribution system was completed in Ondo in 1965 but was not put into operation in order to remind the people of Ondo of the consequences of supporting opposition party (NARA 11, 1966). What is more, early politicians bequeathed violent politics to the new generation of politicians. According to Ellis, (2016:58), in 1964, Samuel Akintola, leader of Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) a splinter party from the Action Group, in preparation for Western Region elections hired thugs in the market-place for 10 shillings per day, plus bonuses. The implication of the above event was that, first generation politicians “took” corruption and violent politics to the door steps of their supporters/followers; they became mentors to their supporters; they were major actors of the proliferation and enthronement of corruption in Nigeria; corruption has become a hydra-headed monster; and today the old corrupt followers are now corrupt leaders, producing a vicious circle of corrupt followers – corrupt leaders, and so on.

Presently, a large number of the population ranging from children to adult, men to women, unskilled and skilled workers, uniform men, conductors, clerks, office workers, professionals, and other groups that constitute followership, are deeply involved in corruption in one way or another. It is a common practice for contracts to be awarded to those who

give more money during bidding; to offer bribe to police officers to ensure that one's relative or friend is favoured against another person in a case; for a teacher or lecturer to receive bribe before a student could have high score; to use government or company's equipment to build one's house or run one's personal business; for aspiring politicians to offer money and food items to supporters and the electorates for their votes during election; for office clerk to ask for bribe before he or she can attend to your file; for police constable to collect bribe and even kill for failure to give; for "agbero" (garage tout) to collect illegal money from commercial bus conductors for themselves, their chairmen, and for some police officers (interview with Adeyemi Segun 2016). Also, for market women or men to adjust or tamper with her or his measure and scale devices to dispense less produce at the same price; and for a student to become a cultist, armed robber, kidnapper and advanced internet fraudster (interview with Agwu Johnson, 2016). This group of followers, it should be noted are the prospective future leaders. The next session of this work will briefly discuss the making of corrupt leadership.

The Making of Corrupt Leadership

Nigerian leaders are citizens of Nigeria. They were at one point or the other followers of other leaders. Like the popular adage, "children are the leaders of tomorrow," followers are the leaders of tomorrow. Corrupt followers turn out to become corrupt (successor) leaders (Olson, 1965:78). The prevalence of corruption in Nigeria stems from the followership with a gradation to the leadership.

The state of corrupt leadership is a buildup of corrupt practices indulged in by followers. For example, an "okada" (motorcycle) rider who specializes in using his motorcycle for robbery joins a political party as one of the thugs and after several years of loyal thuggery, he is sponsored to become a local government councilor. A man who could barely afford 3 square meals a day, a few years back, suddenly becomes the owner of duplexes, expensive flashy cars, and fat bank accounts. This former robber, turned councilor could have colluded with like minds (including

the local government chairman) to embezzle council money. Similarly, a cultist who goes abroad to further his studies and end up being wanted for criminal activities, returns home with a “Toronto”- (forged) certificate and later vies for a political position with his illicit wealth, rigs his way through and then becomes a leader.

Corrupt student union executives, lecturers, students, principal officers in universities, business men and women, bus conductors and drivers, fathers, mothers, children, cronies and supporters of corrupt politicians, and other categories of skilled and unskilled workers are potential corrupt leaders, especially when they persist in corrupt practices before elevation to leadership positions. Based on faulty morals/defective human character and greed for material wealth, this group of people and many others which constitute the followership, indulge in corrupt practices while in leadership positions (Caplan, 2007:35).

Effect of Political Corruption in Nigeria

Political corruption, especially massive looting of government funds is a major precipitating factor for the unprecedented stage of underdevelopment in Nigeria. It affects the provision of social amenities/infrastructures, and the creation of jobs for the unemployed graduates and other youths. It impedes economic growth and development.

Political corruption promotes criminality and militancy/insurgency. For example, the restiveness in the Niger Delta is due partly to the inability of the government and leaders of the region to account for the estimated 40 billion dollars accrued to the Niger Delta region between 2004 and 2016 (*Daily Sun*, August 31, 2016:14).

A more worrisome effect of political corruption is the destruction of Nigeria's image internationally. Nigeria was in the early part of 2016 described as a fantastically corrupt nation, by the British Prime Minister David Cameron (*Saturday Sun* May 14, 2016:16). Corruption-related cases, such as, James Ibori's jail term in the United Kingdom; Late Diepreye Alaymeseigha's disgraceful ordeal in London; and reports of foreign accounts with huge deposits, and several mansions in Europe and America

owned by Nigerian politicians, are tantamount to image destruction. The discoveries of money in sundry places, such as septic tanks, burial grounds, shops in market places, uncompleted buildings, airports, and special safes, among others demean the nation's image.

Corruption destroys the social values of the society. It entrenches negative values among the different ethnic groups. Citizens, especially youths, now see the abnormal as normal; the involvement in crime as a means to successful life; and the value and love for materialism as paramount, above all other virtues.

Measures to Curb Political Corruption in Nigeria

All segments of the society, including agents of socialization (the family, school, religious institutions and mass media), civil societies and the government should sincerely cleanse themselves and work together to redress the situation. They should extol virtues such as hard work, chastity, honesty, integrity, positive thinking, creativity, innovation, discipline, trustworthiness, dependability and reliability, humaneness, devotion/dedication to communal work and interests. True heroes of the country rather than corrupt politicians should be venerated or celebrated. Success through perseverance and hard work should be eulogized.

In the traditional society, there were no police, but the reality of punishment forced many to conduct themselves appropriately. The government should be prepared to bring violators to book through the courts, and appropriate punishment meted out against such. The fight against corruption should be void of favouritism and nepotism.

Citizens should see themselves as enforcers and protectors of societal values and be ready to expose and condemn violators. Importantly, the youths should rethink and shun crime in any of its forms and follow the path of honour, integrity, hard work and moral rectitude in pursuit of their goals.

Parents, teachers and "men of God" should exhibit impeachable conduct in order to positively influence their children, students and members of congregation respectively.

Conclusion

Since followers are potential leaders and corrupt followers are future corrupt leaders, discourses on political corruption should address both the former and latter. The crusade against corruption or corrupt practices should be all-encompassing, in that, it targets all sectors of the economy, the (governed) citizens and political office holders. Against the perturbing background of corruption in the Nigerian society, there is the need for urgent re-orientation of the citizenry towards positive social values/virtues. Alongside the existing anti-corruption agencies such as EFCC and ICPC, there is need for the provision of genuine mechanism and / or platform to address corrupt practices among citizens (followers). More than ever before, the fight against corruption should be directed at schools and religious bodies, and other relevant institutions.

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