

POLITICAL CORRUPTION, CULTURE AND MORALITY IN NIGERIA: AN EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS

By

EMINA, Kemi

Dept of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Delta State University, Abraka.

Abstract

This paper looks at the incidence of political corruption in Nigeria and argues that the incidences of political corruption is so well ingrained in the moral consciousness of the people, as some of our traditional/cultural practices seem supportive of it. While reechoing the fact that Africa is not just the least developed but actually the only continent backsliding among all other continents, opines that this state of affairs seem to have led to the enthronement of multiple negatives in the country and Africa. To curb corruption, it urges us to evolve a deep seated and very strong state institution, stressing that the lull in limiting political corruption is traceable not only to the failure of the state not been able to consider the moral fabric of the person seeking to climb the leadership ladder but to the absence of strong institutions to drive the anti corruption offensive. The paper further insists that from all the analysis, it appears that the only logical area of concern in the fight against corruption was to make the consequences of a corrupt decision to be as harsh, dire and discouraging as possible. Conclusively, it contends that if the incidence of corruption is drastically curtailed, it will no doubt lead the country in attaining great heights in all facets of human endeavor.

Keywords: Nigeria, Political Corruption, Existential Analysis

Introduction

It is stating the obvious to say that the African continent is not just the least developed but also the least developing of all other continents. This state of affairs has really lingered for a long time. Regrettably, this shameful and abominable situation has on the flip side ushered in poverty, disease, hunger, underdevelopment, illiteracy, unemployment, war, crisis of all sort (religious, social, political etc), violence and many more woes and general distractions.

Nonetheless, this circumstances is particularly troubling and heart rendering when one understands the fact that this same continent is one of the most endowed both with natural, human and other material resources that ignites, sustains and maintains all the basic modes of national development, progress and growth. Albeit, from various researches and statistics plus even human experience, it is becoming very blatant that one of the major challenges to national development in this

suffering continent that has by extension given rise to the aforementioned setbacks and woes stems from moral depravity and a very weak cultural and traditional setting and ethos and this has consequentially and automatically enthroned the dreaded and very destructive monster called corruption especially in the political setting. The type of corruption involved here is the very disparaging and reckless brand called- Political Corruption.

However, trying to situate and analyze the issue of corruption thoroughly, it would be necessary not to presume, but to even ask whether corruption is just starting now or is it a progression from the particular traditional society? Again, is corruption also a cultural affair? Is corruption a moral affair? Is corruption a given in any human society? Is corruption part of human nature? Is corruption a problem of the will or of knowledge? What is the role of culture in promoting and curbing corrupt practices over time? These among other vital questions should be of help in the

analysis that will follow. So to further understand and situate these questions, this paper took time out to expose historically how corruption has developed in Nigeria and this is coupled with the various theories of corruption which was followed by the hermeneutic involved in this discourse. These analyses were expedient because they formed the basis of the existential analysis of the concept of political corruption and culture in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The Socio-Cultural Approach theory very well interests this study. This is based on the fact that it argues that some cultures have ingredient that make corruption to thrive which includes the customary exchange of gifts. This theory puts forward the argument that there is a very thin line between a gift, a tip and a bribe. These cultural practices that demand the show of appreciation for favors done encourage the existence of contemporary corruption. But there is the objection that the idea of showing appreciation for favors done only portrays gratitude and is not intended to confer undue advantage, at least, not until the presence of foreigners in our society. This argument could be very good except for the counter-objection that there is also a very thin line between appreciation and anticipation in traditional society. The socio-cultural approach sees gifts exchanging hands in virtually every important transaction in traditional society, often before the transaction. It sees equal similarities in the pressure of the extended family and community on an average Nigerian public official towards embezzlement and nepotism (often rewarded with chieftaincy titles), the contribution of the traditional metaphysical foundations of political leadership towards the weakening of political leadership in Nigeria, and the fact that the extended family, clan and tribe, rather than the nation, demands the primary allegiance of the average Nigerian,

who sees the government and state as 'foreign', a legacy from the colonial days.

Pursuing this further, in an ethnographic study of the Igbos, Smith observes that some of what is termed corrupt in the west is morally justified and even praiseworthy by Igbo cultural standard (de Maria 2001: 350). This is because in Igbo culture the individual has access to resource through reciprocity and obligation practices long embedded in family, lineage and community. Western forms of access through highly organized welfare state programmes, adequate salaries and expansive markets, among a list of many pre-conditions, are not part of the Nigerian political economy. Smith observes that these give-and take transactions are governed by subtle conventions that will escape the eye of a Westerner with his stereotypical definition of corruption. Smith gives an example with Nneka who scored well in her secondary schools admissions test but not well enough to secure admission into the school desired by her parents. Nneka's mother found out that her sister had a friend in the Federal Ministry of Education in Lagos. The friend said she would give Nneka the admission by putting her name on the Minister's discretionary list. For this favour the parents had to pay her a considerable sum. By now the Western eye will have identified a corrupt act. But is it so? Not according to Smith, who says that even though payment was part of the process, it is not bribe according to ethnographic evidence. The feature that made inclusion in the discretionary list possible was not the payment but the connection (Smith 68-9; de Maria 369). The money actually represented a social distance. The woman at the ministry would almost surely have rejected money if it came from her own sister's daughter. To help a total stranger by taking money is not allowed, the rules of the state apply. But to help your own relation get

admission when her marks are below the cut-off is expected and morally justified, going by the rules of kinship, community and reciprocity, which apply when the stakes are personal and communal (Smith 353; de Maria 369).

Ekeh distinguished two African publics (or societies for better understanding): the primordial and the civic. These publics have their respective moral value. What is termed 'corrupt' in civic African public may not be so in primordial public (17[1]: 105). Ekeh observes that while many Africans bend over backwards to benefit and sustain their primordial origins, they lean back to civic Africa for whatever they will gain. According to him;

The individual's relationship with the civic public is measured in material terms...while the individual seeks to gain the civic public, there is no moral urge on him to give back to the civic public in return for his benefits...Duties...are de-emphasized while rights are squeezed out of the civic public with amorality of an art dodger (Eke, 107).

Ekeh posits that the unwritten law is that it is legitimate to rob the civic public as long as it is meant to strengthen the primordial public. Unfortunately, he traces these anti-state attitudes to the era of colonialism and the fight for liberation across the continent which involved sabotage of government through absenteeism, pilfering, strikes and tax evasion. For Ekeh, independence did not curtail these activities as they found their way into the post-colonial period. That explains what we have today. So, it now appears that political corruption will thrive more in this environment where the allegiance demanded by the state is subverted by a lesser tribal or clannish loyalty.

Flowing from this, Kwame Gyekye (1997; 194) notes that in post-colonial countries,

governments are perceived as distant entities whose activities have little or no bearing on the welfare of the citizens. He reasons further that the average African sees the government as 'they' - it has nothing to do with you and me, For the people, the government was just a strange setting and the business of the people was just to get in to get as much as is possible from it provided they are not caught. For Gyekye, traditional African communalism even influenced the African mentality of corruption. Even though the prevalence of corruption varies according to societies, it is common to all societies stating that political corruption infects human societies though some influence corruption more than others. He says;

In this connection, it might be supposed that a society characterized by the individual ethos with its emphasis on...individual interests, be more greatly infected by political corruption than a society characterized by the communitarian ethos with its emphasis on community or public interests. But this supposition is clearly false. For empirical evidence shows that African societies whose social structures are more communitarian than individualist are nevertheless riddled with more frequent and scandalous levels of political corruption than most non-African societies (195-6).

The reason Gyekye gave is simple; some elements of communitarianism especially in Africa have tended to pressurize individuals who hold public office to get involved themselves in political corruption. He attempts an example;

In the extended family system of African societies, an individual... bears a responsibility for himself and for the members of the group. These responsibilities are naturally onerous. To be able to shoulder them successfully requires an adequate

personal economic position. An individual public official who has access to public resources may, in the process of striving to achieve that adequate economic position, take advantage of his official status and commit acts of official corruption. Secondly, the extended family system with its web of relatives - far and near gives rise to patronage, the public official is expected to find jobs for some members of the extended family either in his organization or elsewhere. This often leads to nepotism, which is an act of political corruption (Gyekye 1997; 196).

Gyekye instructively stated that in a communitarian social system, social relations are usually reinforced with the exchange of gifts to elders who may hold official positions in the community. This made him to submit that

It would be correct to say that among the ordinary members of the society gifts are an expression of love, friendship, sympathy, and compassion or similarly, to reciprocate an act of kindness or goodwill. No intentions of corruption the recipient are implied here. But, it would also be correct that gifts to elders holding officials positions are offered most probably for different reasons; as signs of respect for or courtesy to the office, or in anticipation for an act of kindness by the recipient to the giver or anticipation of some reciprocities from the recipient (i.e., the public official) in the form of favors. Gifts offered to public officials can be described as bribes intended immediately to ingratiate the giver to a public official and subsequently to ask him or her for some favors. Gifts can thus insidiously corrupt a public official. It may therefore be said that the traditional practice of giving gifts to elders, or to public officials and "big men" and "big women" in government in the modern political

setup is a causal factor in political corruption (Gyekye 1997; 196),

Consequently the way out of corruption in the socio-cultural setting should be to review its traditional and cultural origins.

Understanding Political Corruption

Political corruption can be seen as the abuse of powers by elected or appointed person and is geared towards illegitimate and/or private advantage and achievement. This misuse can be in the form of bribery, extortion, cronyism, nepotism, patronage, graft, and embezzlement. Political corruption also involves or attracts activities like drug trafficking, money laundering, and human trafficking. However, over time the basic practices of corruption, like bribery and embezzlement are the traditional paradigms of measuring corruption most especially in Nigeria .Kleptocracy -“rule by thieves”. is seen as a situation of unrestrained political corruption. While corruption is a worldwide phenomenon, that of Africa nay Nigeria remain the primary concern of this research. This is because the latter has been notorious for mind-blowing acts of corruption that has rendered other nations speechless. Even Clark (1995: 125) contended that “Nigeria is beyond doubt the most corrupt nation I have ever reported on or from. International fraud in this African nation has reached epidemic proportions and there is no sign of it abating”. Ukwaba (2002: 31-2) has traced corruption in Nigeria to the preparation to take over the mantle of leadership from the colonial masters by the Nigerian petty bourgeoisie. It is observed that the colonial masters may have exploited natural resources, but are accustomed to responsible government, leaving behind a national total asset of 243.7 million pounds when the Nigerian petty bourgeoisie assumed position of authority in the regions in 1954. And unfortunately, by 1960, the treasury had fallen to 174.2 million

pounds and by 1964 it had fallen to 76.8 million pounds. The Nigerian petty bourgeoisie soon proceeded to prove that it is unrivalled in political corruption. A case in point is the then African Continental Bank (ACB), Nnamdi Azikiwe was investigated by the Forster-Fulton tribunal in which Azikiwe was accused of abusing his office by siphoning public funds into the African Continental Bank (ACB), a bank Azikiwe had interest. The tribunal indicted Azikiwe revealing how his family sustained a financial empire through the use of public funds (Nnoli 1980; 146).

Similarly, Dudley (1978; 47-8) argues that to secure resources, the Action Group needed to contest the 1959 general elections under the leadership of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the party channeled funds from the National Investment and Property Company (NIPC), a company controlled wholly by the top AG functionaries, the Western Regional Development Corporation, and the Western Regional Marketing Board, to the coffers of the group. And between 1958 and 1960, some six and a half million pounds of public funds found its way through the NIPC to the Action Group Treasury. After this, the nearly 12 million dollars diverted from Nigeria's Western Regional Marketing Board into the AG coffers from 1957-1962 and probably equivalent amounts in other regions seem to have been wasted in terms of institution building (Nye 421).

When Alhaji Shehu Shagari took over power from then General Olusegun Obasanjo on October 1, 1979, Nigeria's total reserve stood at N2.3 billion. Within the next four years of 1979-1983, Nigeria also earned N40.5 billion in foreign exchange, but by the end of these four years on December 31, 1983, the inherited and earned treasuries had all vanished and Nigeria had incurred a public external (not overall) debt of 10.21 billion (Ukwaba 34). A

budget surplus of N1461.6 million was inherited from Obasanjo which went down to a balance of N696.79 million in December 1980. This was followed by an annual debit balance of N2675.483 million, N4727.064 million, and N3989.609 million for December 28, 1982 and 1983 respectively. The overall debt by December 28, 1982, stood at N22.2 billion (Olagunju, Jinadu and Oyovbaire 1993: 60) it is contended that these were squandered on importation of luxurious items, kickbacks to the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) (Clark 135), ghost workers (Riley 142) and enrichment of individuals (Ukwuaba 34). This resulted in chronic balance of payment deficit, inability of certain arms and of the public sector to pay salaries and wages, collapse of social services, increasing food import, bills and abandonment of various uncompleted projects (Olagunju, Jinadu and Oyovbaire 61).

Again, the Idris Kuta Panel set by the Senate to probe contract awards in the Senate indicted the then leadership headed by Dr Chuba Okadigbo for approving the sum of N37.2 million "... to himself as furniture grant without recourse to the tenders board" (Alozieuwa 2000: 8); engaging four contractors who tendered N11 billion estimate for the construction of office complexes without any design, a project not contained in the 2000 annual budget, which later got N70 million approved as consultancy fee; diverting N200 million meant for press centre to senators; allocating N22.9 million and N16.9 million to himself and his deputy respectively for Christmas, and another N3.2 million to his deputy for Sallah celebration (Chukwumba and Okolo 2000; 26). Tell reports that a contract for street-lightening from Eagles Square to National Assembly (one kilometer) initially estimated at N57 million and to be executed by the FCDA was re-awarded for N175 million to unregistered companies owned by some senators and officers of the National Assembly

(Tell 7-8-2000: 26-8). During the same period, four members of the House of Representatives accused the speaker of awarding a N50 million contract to former speaker, Salisu Buhari, incurring a debt of N460 million while claiming that the account of the House was in red to the tune of N101 million; and of collecting N90 million from the Abuja First bank from where legislators received N250,000.00 each as part of their constituency Allowance (The source 7-8-2000: 14), in addition to the accusation that he nominated one of the contractors of the street-lighting scam. “There have been indications that bribes have been offered by the Executive branches to Legislative houses to 'oil' the passage of bills sent by the Executive” (Ibrahim2001:81)

Ojeito (2002: 5). even points out that some senators were said to have been involved in the distribution of N1 million each to Senators who were willing to tag along in the plot to forestall the Electoral Bill 2000 by two-thirds majority (Ojeito 2002: 5). Civilian acts of corruption pale significantly in comparison to the military. Ibrahim Babangida is said to have deposited about N2462.35 billion in banks in USA, London, Germany and Switzerland (Ukwuaba 105). This is among other deposits by Nigerian Public looters in these countries submitted by the World Bank Report on Cash Holdings which totals the loots at about N11.13 Trillion. According to the L' Evenement du Jeudi (French Weekly), Felix Houghtet Boigny of Cote d' Ivoire looted an equivalent of N520 billion; Moussa Traore of Mali, N162 billion; Henrie Kanan Bedie of Cote d' Omar Bongo of Gabon, N8 billion, Paul Biya of Cameroon, N6.75 billion; Hissene Nabre of Chad, N300 million; Sani Abacha of Nigeria, N1218.137 billion (French weekly May 1997). These mind-boggling acts of corruption seem to suggest that this issue of corruption is innate in Nigeria. However, a further elucidation of this phenomenon will put

things in proper perspective. This informs why it is expedient for some theories of corruption to be analyzed.

The Economic Theory: The first theory of corruption is the economic theory which sees corruption as arising from interactions between clients and politicians and public officials who are said to be self-seeking in their behavior (Robinson 10 [1]4). This is referred to as public choice theory (Harris-White and Harris-White 27: 1-5). The point been made here is that public officials and state organizations are only motivated by their own self-interest without taking into account the role of Government in shaping society (Okeke 2002; 130). This theory is universally applicable to man as an economic being and does not explain the special prevalence of corruption based on the fact that there are really good-spirited government officials who want to act accordingly but are compelled to be corrupt because they are scared their responsible conduct would expose corrupt culprits and attracts backlashes from members of the society. This theory therefore seems not to have explained adequately the depth of corruption in Nigeria.

The Political Theory: The political theory sees corruption as lack of durable political institutions and political competition plus a weak and/or undeveloped civil society, but the weakness in this theory is excessive faith in political institutions in preventing corruption and regulating the behavior of public officials (Okeke 130). This is sequel to the fact that what needs to be addressed in Nigeria is the matter of which came first in causing corruption, the weak political institutions or some cultural and colonial values which gave rise to weak political institutions. Agreed that political institutions in Nigeria appears to be too weak to arrest corruption, nonetheless attempting to exterminate corruption merely by reexamining

the political institutions may be taking for granted the primal issue of what political theory of corruption, though relevant in the corruption discourse, is inadequate in the more foundational discourse of its roots.

The Functionalist Theory: This perspective sees corruption as a means of maintaining existing power structures, systems of political control in society towards equilibrium. Its argument is that corruption can improve social welfare and economic efficiency by overcoming bureaucratic hurdles (Aeckerman 1978) meaning that corruption lubricates excessive bureaucratic inflexibility. According to Szeftel, corruption is a means of cutting cumbersome, genuinely hampering, governmental economic regulations (Szeftel 1998; 28). It is an “accommodating device”, a must for successful development. Asogwa stated that corruption does, to some extent, promote flexibility in intra-administrative procedure (Amujiri 1997; 77). Interestingly, with corruption, the burdensome checking at the boarders, seaports, road blocks and airports are relaxed. Corruption also allows citizens easy access to public officials and thereby fosters the integration of immigrant and parochial groups. According to Ozioko (2002; 7), corruption helps bridge the gap between groups based on power and those based on wealth; it even bridges the gap between literate officials and illiterate peasants. Corruption might also assist economic growth by facilitating inward investment and by increasing areas 'rents' can be collected. Amujiri even considers that one can use capital accumulated through corruption to invest in business venture and offer employment to people (Amujiri 28). Nonetheless, the problem with this theory in Nigeria is that it has been working against the tide, the opposite. This is because; it has pulverized the political structures, systematically destroying the economy and weakening social structures to

the point of State of Nature. Obviously, this theory does not apply to Nigeria in resolving corruption. But why is the result of corruption in Nigeria so different from the benefits that the functionalists envisaged? This is because such benefits (easing up bureaucratic procedures, relaxing security checks, gathering money for investment, etc) are precisely what grounded the economy, implying that the 'benefit' of corruption is just immediate gratifications. This theory of corruption fails to distinguish between harmful immediate gratification and long-term, real impact of actions. Speaking of positive impact of corruption per se, the functionalists precisely though that for the first time in history, we can toy with the age-old moral question of whether the good can possibly emerge from the bad. Whether one looks as it from the conceptual or factual level, it is contradictory. Obviously, this theory does not apply anywhere in resolving corruption.

The Poverty Theory: There is also the sociological approach which links poverty and economic deprivation to deviant behavior of which corruption is part (Dambazau 1994; 60). This approach describes poverty as an indomitable root of corruption. Pervasive poverty is an important contributing factor to corrupt behavior particularly where there are poor salaries and wages, high unemployment and difficulty of physical survival. Thus, people embezzle or misappropriate public funds and receive gratification in order to survive. Even the unemployed are more prone to offer gratification to secure the very limited jobs while the starving poor may not be able to resist corrupt temptation in order to survive (Onimode 2001; 32). Obi-Okogbuo believes that where there is lack of basic needs of food, shelter and clothing, corruption is bound to be widespread. Indeed, he sees a correlation between poverty and corruption especially in Nigeria: “...as the impoverishment of people increases, corruption increases

proportionally”. (Obi-Okagbuo (2000; 25) But this theory cannot explain the initial incident of corruption especially when the economy of Nigeria was tolerable at the onset of independence. This is based on the consideration that poverty is not the primordial cause of corruption, but its effect. Nigeria at its oil boom had all it took to move and become one of the world's major powers, save for corrupt tendencies. Therefore, this theory falls short of addressing the challenge here.

Corruption as Human Nature: This interesting theory of corruption states that corruption is just rooted in man's nature. Thomas Hobbes had stressed this bad nature of man which manifests itself in corruption, difference and self-glorification (Hobbes 489). This theory accounts for universal corruption and the implication is that corruption should be equally prevalent everywhere. It fails to take into consideration the special prevalence of corruption in Nigeria. Furthermore, it does not give room for remedy, having painted corruption as human nature. It is also just like saying that stealing is part of human nature and it is contradictory as lots of people do not steal, but human nature as a stealing or corrupt nature would precisely have rendered any decision to stop stealing or to stop corruption as useless or ineffective.

The Marxist Perspective: There is also the Marxist dimension of corruption as the consequence of the legalization of the limitless acquisition of private wealth whose eradication is linked to a reduction of the excesses of capitalism. This is the submission of Ukwuaba, who reasons that capitalism in a post-colonial/neo-colonial society such as Nigeria breeds corruption (Ukwuaba 29). And the get-rich-quick syndrome among Nigerians is a spiraling effect of the fact that the Nigerian ruling class did not arise through the sphere of production, but through circulation and service sectors and using the state as the main

instrument of social mobility. For Ukwuaba, those who inherited the post-colonial state, the petty bourgeoisie, had very weak economic base due to the policy of the colonial masters (Ukwuaba 32). It then follows that the wealth of the Nigerian dominant class came not through production and society building but through corrupt enrichment with public funds. This primordial act of political corruption initiates a journey of corruption whereby anyone who wants to rise to dominance must follow this channel. We see the negative input of colonialism in ensuring the acquisition of power through this negative channel. This channel, namely, corruption, thus becomes a means of maintaining existing power structures (Robinson 10[1]:4).

The Hermeneutics of Political Corruption and Culture in Nigeria

To appreciate the present situation as it concerns corruption in Nigeria would entail a proper situation of the analysis of Ekeh in his two societies or 'publics' in Africa'. The tacit endorsement of wealth by the public is just a tacit way to celebrate corruption. People have done this advertently and inadvertently by moving the locus of authority in the society formerly from the elders to now the wealthiest irrespective of age or social circumstances just because of personal or collective but selfish gains. The aftermath of this is in the award of chieftaincy titles plus other forms of recognition. Wealthy individual have always been given/awarded titles not minding if they got their wealth responsibly or dubiously. In order to satisfy this primordial public, the contemporary African individual does not mind plundering the civic public to come back home a wealthy man. For Kwame Gyekye (1997; 195) “A social system may be an explanatory factor in the frequent incidence of political corruption...and... some social systems influence the incident or

perpetration of political corruption more than others”.

So, from this, it is barefaced that this present social system in Nigeria has become the cultural foundation of one of the most corrupt countries of the world. But the question of corruption been a culture phenomenon sees Gyekye taking a different view instead. He took exception that “... Ghana had developed what we term a culture of political corruption” (Le Vine 1975; 12). Gyekye argues that the issue of a culture of corruption in Ghana is inappropriately based on the fact that; culture is a product consciously and purposely created by a people or society, which has positive meaning in the lives of the people and is conducted in the glare of public. Therefore, for Gyekye (198) the fact that successive administrations have made frenetic effort to extirpate corruption goes to show that corruption is not a valuable cultural product created by the people. This is dependent on the fact that culture stands for something that is sanctioned. Arguing further, Gyekye portend that as an unproductive endeavor, corruption does patently qualify as a culture. And strictly speaking, he sees corruption instead as a moral evil sharing the same features with; Theft, fraud, greed, among others. And with the above submission, he reasons that corruption is not about culture but just a problem that can destroy any society. He avers:

...features as patronage, communal relationships, and kinship and extended family obligations and loyalties, which characterize societies in Africa and elsewhere, could give rise to corruption. There is no guarantee that if these features of a social order are removed, the incidence of political corruption will be reduced. The reason is that some social systems that have not evolved these politically corrupt features also have serious experiences of political corruption. This clearly

shows that even though the roles of legal, social and political structures are relevant to the causal explanation of the rampant incident of political corruption. There is nevertheless a more fundamental cause of political corruption. This more fundamental cause is the moral character of the public official as well as the member of the public who seeks a favor from him or her (Gyekye 1997; 204).

For him therefore, corruption is as a result of the weakness of the moral fabric of the individual concerned. He then went ahead to propose a sort of substantive moral revolution that will include essential changes in the moral beliefs, values and ideals of a people. For him, this revolution must navigate from the religious to the socio-political structure as revolutionaries have always not only protested against widespread corruption but also the self-aggrandizement of rulers and concentration of wealth in hands of a few. The crucial aspect of this genre of moral revolution is that it can inadvertently take place as a result of far-reaching changes in the socio-political structure which includes the gradual shift from communal to individualistic ethic, due to the movement from agrarian and communal to individualized and capitalist settings. With this, Gyekye sees the need to realign certain elements of the traditional system of values in the interest of the success and progress of the politics of the new African nation-state. He reasons that:

People will have to be morally weaned from the influences of the commune-cultural loyalties that obscure and subvert devotion and commitment to the national political community. A new national political morality that considers it totally morally unacceptable to use one's official position to obtain jobs for members of the extended family will need to be put in place. In other words, a new conception of loyalty to the state fashioned and underpinned by new moral values, will need to be created (Gyekye 208-9).

In addition, Amujiri is also of the view that it is imperative that traditional African needs to be overhauled as it has become a potent force that propels the pervasiveness of corruption especially in Nigeria. He asserts that:

Another method to be employed in eliminating corruption is community-based strategy. Community-based strategy of eradicating corruption is rationalized on the basis that it is not the police and the law, which prevent crime. As Werner (1993: 66) noted, it is the community. Community justice can liberate Nigeria from corruption. Since much of the money looted finds their way to the rural communities where such corrupt official is honoured with chieftaincy title, we suggest the setting up of community tribunals to try the community. This community-based strategy will greatly deter corruption in Nigeria because the offender cannot escape punishment from his own people (Amujiri 81)

This subscription to this shade of moral revolution appears perplexing as it appears that there is recourse to the same traditional communal structure which breeds corruption to fix it. But it was in response to this that Gyekye rather opted for committed moral revolution because it is more personal in dimension. This one now involves both a change of moral rules, and an attitudinal change in our orientation to that of more commitment to existing moral rules. He seems not to subscribe to the Greek notion that knowledge of moral principles automatically translates to their observance. This is predicated on the fact that more often than not, corruption exist not because people are ignorant of the ideal. There is indeed a gap between knowledge and action. This is the grey area of the thought pattern of the ancient Greeks who placed too much attention on the intellect at the expense of the will. Contrary to the submission of the Greeks, Gyekye perceives the will as central to the issue of commitment revolution, which he sees as in turn relevant to situations of knowing the right thing to do and being at the same time faced with temptations to do otherwise. The failure of commitment revolution is a failure of the will. The importance of the will can be seen in the legal system: we can make a law but we cannot make the will to obey the law, and using the law to enforce morality often does not

produce lasting results. So, the tendency to see corruption as a result of the weakness of the political, social legal and economic system, overlooks the core problem of corruption which is moral and personal. Therefore they think that the overhauling of social systems will place more restriction on the corrupt tendencies of people, but this is hardly adequate. For people cannot be forced to be honest; and it is unlikely that all the weakness and imperfections of human institutions can be removed. In this connection, Gyekye insists that:

Thus if we are really serious about reducing political corruption considerably, to minimal and negligible levels, we would need more than the devices of the law, improvements in people's economic situations, and reforms in political structures. We would need to come to grips with matters of personal integrity, character, and honesty with respect to public officials who happen to be in the position where they can involve themselves in political corrupt acts as well as to members of the general public officials, tempt them and make (some of them) succumb to temptation. Both public and non-public persons would need to steel their moral wills to avoid involving themselves in acts of political corruption (Gyekye 211).

So, basically, the obliteration of corruption should be left to the will of the individual. Nevertheless, this submission would not really solve the problem of corruption, based on the fact that there is no social laid down scheme to do this. Even in religion and moral instruction, there is no mechanism for overhauling the character of people, as that would amount to infringing on the rights of those concerned. From all these analysis, it appears that the only logical area of concern in the fight against corruption is to make the consequences of a corrupt decision to be as harsh, dire and discouragement as possible. This is so that whether our society consists mainly of individuals with good moral character or not, we could still attain the objective of eradicating entirely or reducing considerably the spate of corruption. For the above submission to be realization, the political leader that will overhaul the system to discourage corruption should have to possess both good character and strong will to resist the

temptation for corruption. This seems to have some strong connection with the principal of identity. This leads this argument back to the insistence of Gyekye's on moral character and individual strength of will, but now from the top. So, both the institutional approach of the social scientists and the individualist moral dimension of Gyekye are critical elements in the quest to annihilate political corruption. The moral journey against corruption therefore begins in the interiority of the individual who is to lead and flows down to the entire system. This implication of this is that in this novel system that can fight corruption, moral individualism supersedes moral institutionalism. By the way, it might be argued that it is not noteworthy to assume that moral individualism must precede moral institutionalism, since the political system which will bring about the emergence of a morally good leader is an institution. For instance, an electoral environment surrounded by god-fathers where the accession to a political office depends on the help of powerful financial barons who expect 'payment' in public office may make the fight against corruption and the emergence of a 'good' leader, impossible. So how can the moral individualism of the leader be possible without a moral institution that will make his very emergence possible? As a response to this concern, it is useful to point out here that the journey which we trace to begin with moral individualism to moral institutionalism is supposed to occur while the leader is already in office and that the pre-elective anti-corruption journey will still have to begin with the moral individualism of the citizen in overriding god-fatherism to elect a good leader or on the part of the good leader who has emerged to fight corruption while in office.

Concluding Remarks

It is quite empirical that the countries with very low rate of corruption take note of the moral fabric of their leaders. As a moral scandal is good enough to terminate the political career of a public officer. So, once a responsible good man ascends a political office, the effect will simmer down to the people. But painful enough, in Nigeria it is the direct opposite. The

average Nigerian politicians and/or public office holder is highly irresponsible and lousy. So, since vices are mostly intertwined, it is surprising that a very good number of the political corruption in Nigeria are not just profligate but embarrassingly and shamelessly corrupt. This appalling state of affairs has no other cause but the failure to consider the moral fabric of a person who wants to be a leader. This makes it entirely impossible to expect an improvement in the country's rating on corruption and not call to question the moral decadence of the country's leadership. In this connection, there is little insistence for the morally perfection of the entire policy. This is not feasible, even on the theoretical level. As we observed earlier, the moral wills of less morally capable subjects can always be 'helped along' with the sanction of the law. The crux of the argument is for the moral probity of their leadership, the very makers and executioners of their law. This being the case, it is only natural that the given moral standard of this leadership will (more or less) be brought to bear on the subjects in one way or another. Conclusively, it is pertinent to state here that the quest and the voyage towards a new Nigeria that is not suffering from corrupt leaders is to evolve a deep-seated refurbishment of state institutions as this is the only way out of this quagmire.

Recommendations

It is necessary that for the corruption scourge to be drastically reduced if not eliminated, the state must to make efforts to create strong anti corruption institutions rather than creating 'strong men'. There is no gain saying the fact that the fight would be won if there are institutions well funded to fight the war. Also of great importance is our reward and value system. The nation must critically look at her reward and ascertain if it is in the right direction. Presently, many believe that our

reward system do not seem to favor hard work and honest living in any way. This position also seem to find relationship in the gradual but systemic erosion of our traditional value system and ethos that encourages hard work and pride in labor. Finally, for the war against corruption to be won, there is need to have a real look into the welfare scheme of the citizens. A situation in which the average worker who knows that the system will be hostile to him after spending his productive life, working in the public service, as he will, on retirement, most certainly find it almost impossible to get his pension and gratuity will not have room for honest living while in the public service. He begins from day one to plan on how to secure his future through dubious and corrupt means. That seems to be the lot of the average public servant in Nigeria today.

References

- African Corruption 'on the wane', 10 July 2007, BBC News.
- Alozieuwa S.(2000). National Assembly's Show of Shame". The Source, August 7.
- Amujiri B.A.(1997). "Bureaucratic Corruption in Enugu State Civil Service and the Development of the State: An Assessment", A PhD Seminar paper presented to PALG, UNN, 1997.
- Chinhamo, Obert; Shumba, Gabriel (2010), Institutional Working Definition of Corruption, Anti-corruption Trust of Southern Africa, <http://www.actssouthernafrica.org/workingpaper> May 15.
- Chukwumba O. and Okolo, A. (2000.) "End of Game for Okadigbo, Abubakar" Tell August 7.
- Dambazau, A. B. (1994). Law and Criminality in Nigeria, Ibadan: University Press Plc.
- De Maria, William. (2005). Does African 'Corruption' Exist? Pretoria: Preton.
- Dudley, B.J.(1978.)Instability and Political order: Politics and Crisis in Nigeria, Ibadan: University Press.
- Ekeh, P. (1975) Colonialism and the Two publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement". Comparative Studies in Society and History, 17: 1.
- Eze Nwokekere. (2002). "The causes of corruption in Nigeria and the way forward" in C O.T. Ugwu (ed), Corruption in Nigeria: Critical perspective: A Book of readings, Nsukka: Chukka Educational publisher.
- Gyekye, Kwame. (1997.) Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harriss –White B., & Harriss-White, G.(1996.) Corruption, Liberalization and Democracy', IDS Bulletin, 27 1-5.
- Hobbes, Thomas. 1994. Leviathan, or the Matter, form and power of a commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil, Edited by Edwin Curley, London; Hackett,
- Ibrahim, J. (2001) "Manifestations and Impact of corruption on Nigerian society and Sustainable Democracy", in I. Lame and F. Odekunle (eds), Fighting Corruption and Organized Crime in Nigeria: Challenges for the New Millennium, Abuja: Spectrum Books Ltd.
- Ikejiani-Clark, M. (1995.)"Pathologies of Local Government Administration Corruption and Fraud", in Ikejiani-Clerk, M and Okoli, F (eds) Local Government Administration in Nigeria: Current problems and future Challenges, Lagos: Man-groove publication.
- Le Vine, Victor T.(1975). Political Corruption: The Ghana Case, Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press.
- Nnoli, O., "Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis", American Political Science Review, 61 (2).
- Obi-Okagbue, J. (2000). "The History and Aetiology of corruption in Nigeria: A critical Appraisal", in Tile, W.S., (ed), Towards a Corrupt-free Democratic Society, Enugu: Vougasen Ltd., 15-34
- Ojeito, S.(2002). "Electoral Bill, Senate Probes N100 Million Alleged Bribe", Sunday Vanguard.
- Okeke, Veronica. (2002). "Corruption in Nigeria: A Theoretical Appraisal, in C.O.O Ugwu (ed), Corruption in Nigeria: Critical Perspectives: A Book of Readings, Nsukka: Chuka Educational Publishers,.
- Olagunju, I., Jinadu A. and Oyovbaire, S.(1993.) Transition to Democracy in Nigeria, 1985 – 1993, Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd.