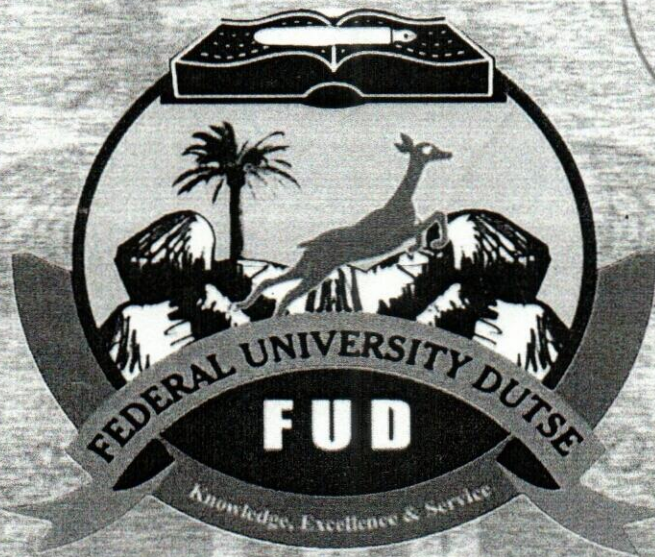


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Abstract

The menace of corruption requires urgent attention and constructive solution. Efforts at eradicating corruption most especially in new democracies of Africa have engendered studies on the nexus between corruption and democracy. While the menace of corruption is not unique to a particular country, Nigeria as a nation has no doubt had its dose of multifaceted challenges which is epitomised by incessant corruption. This paper examines corruption vis-a-vis democratic sustenance with particular reference to Nigeria from 1999 to 2015. Deriving data largely from secondary sources and analysing same through the qualitative method, it was discovered that while democracy has high potentials to prevent corruption its inherent tenets have been found to be corruption-inducing. The paper submits that since returning to democracy in 1999 the Nigerian state has been engulfed in monumental treasury looting and embezzlement of public funds by political office holders. The nation's electoral process has been turned into a medium of disbursing national revenue by public and political office holders to favourite political cohorts, an act which has far reaching consequences on the country's democratisation process and sustenance. It was however, concluded that reducing the paraphernalia of office and empowering anti-graft agencies are some of the ways by which the menace of corruption can be reduced.

Keywords: Corruption, Democracy, Electoral process, Good Governance, Nigeria

Introduction

The quest for good governance, particularly in developing democracies of Africa has engendered studies on the relationship between corruption and democracy (Heymann, 1996; Boswell and Rose-Ackerman, 1996; Michael, 2009; Kubbe and Engelbert, 2017). Corruption has indeed become one of the global menaces (Transparency International, 2010) which require urgent

attention. The reasons behind fighting corruption are not far-fetched; corruption is unarguably the greatest obstacle to socio, economic and political development (World Bank, 2013). At the economic level, corruption induces waste, promotes resource distribution asymmetries, distorts markets and competition, produces revenue losses, decelerates investment opportunities, generates non-productive rent-seeking activities and fuels distortions in economic policies (World Bank, 2013). In the social sphere, corruption engendered by inter-ethnic rivalry and aimed at the control of the state machinery for private or sectarian interests is said to be the root cause of pervasive social conflict. In the political arena, corruption distorts the capacity of the state and its institutions to function properly and to deliver good governance (Agbiboa and Maiangwa, 2012).

The menace of corruption is not unique to a particular country. Owing to its prevalence, corruption occupies a prime position on the global agenda. While no country is impervious to corruption, some countries are more vulnerable to the menace and suffer more negative consequences. Nigeria as a developing democracy has no doubt had its fair share of multi-faceted crisis (Omotola, 2006). Nigeria since independence has been bedevilled by multifarious challenges which include: leadership crisis, poverty, economic recession, political violence, intra and inter ethnic conflicts, religious fundamentalism and threats of democratic reversal. These challenges have impeded good governance and are crucial indices of a fragile or better still a failed state. These challenges are however, epitomised by corruption in its multi-dimensionality (Omotola, 2006). Corruption in Nigeria since 1960 has persisted and grown enormously in variety, magnitude and brazenness (Chukwuemeka, Ugwuanyi and Ewuim, 2012). Since the year 2000, Nigeria has always being ranked high in the corruption perception index of the Transparency International (Vanguard News, 2018).

Corruption in the Nigerian state seems to have defied all mechanisms of control. Consequently, the incidences of corruption since 1999 have been on the increase and have served as potent hindrance to the nation's democratic project. It is on this basis that this paper examines corruption and democratic sustenance with reference to the Nigerian state from 1999-2015. This paper begins with the introduction and is followed by an overview of conceptual perspectives on corruption. The paper after this proceeds to a conceptual discussion of the concept of corruption. This is followed by a historical discussion of the Nigerian experience of corruption. Following this is an exposition of corruption and democratic sustenance in Nigeria from 1999-2015. After this there is a theoretical discussion of the nexus between corruption and democracy. The final part is the conclusion.

Corruption: Conceptual Perspectives

The menace of corruption by virtue of its commonness in terms of its spread and urgent attention has attracted multifaceted meanings from various scholars. Corruption has been defined from three perspectives namely: public office centred definitions, market centred definitions and public interest centred definitions (Agbibo, 2013). The three definitions are closely linked since they all assume the separation of the public and private spheres and view corruption as the inappropriate mix of the two. The definitions nevertheless emphasize three significant and interrelated aspects of corruption namely: public office, market and public interest (Agbibo, 2013).

Public office centred definitions place emphasis on the misuse of public office for private gains. Scholars who have offered public office centred definitions include: Okoosi-Simbine (2005) who defined corruption as the abuse of office for private gains and Akanbi (2004) who viewed corruption as any form of behaviour that generates private self-serving gains which are not sanctioned by law, or the prevailing norms of the society. Also, Lipset and Lenz (2000) view corruption as efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means or private gain at the public expense or the misuse of public power for private means. In a similar vein, Ogundiya (2009:9) view corruption as the betrayal of public trust for individual or sectional gain. One common feature of the above definitions of corruption under the public-office centred classification is that, it confines corruption to the public realm.

The market centred definitions revolves around societies in which the norms governing public office holders are underdeveloped or non-resistant (Mbaku, 2000). For instance corruption according to van Klaveren, (1990) is a means through which a civil servant abuses his authority in order to obtain and extract income from the public. In this regard, corruption is related to personally obtaining a source for high profits by officials through deviating from norms of guiding their condition of their duties to their superior as established by law. Mbaku (2000) identified the danger in this, in the sense that if bureaucrats are able to earn more income from external sources that is, from interest groups seeking government transfer than from their regular employment, they may allow the demands of interest group to override societal needs.

The public interest centred definitions tend to criticize public-centred definitions as been too narrow and the market-centred definition as been too broad. The crucial point of the public interest definition is that there is a public which has distinct interest and that those interests are promised by

private (corrupt) conduct. In other words, public interest proponents give pride of place to the concept of "public interest" in the analysis of corruption by explicitly and simply asserting the nexus between corruption and the subversion of public interest (Williams, 2010). This pattern of corruption exist whenever a power holder who is charged with certain responsibilities is induced by monetary or other rewards not legally provided for, to take actions which favour whoever provide the rewards and thereby does damage to the public and its interest (Friedrich, 1990).

In another perspective, corruption has been viewed to involve the use of power. It is the violation of legitimate rules, established procedures, code of conduct, or social norms in the service of unethical or unlawful ends (Asobie, 2012). For corruption to have taken place there must be some legitimate rules that have been either violated or perverted. Thus, the essence of corruption is deviation from public regulations or rules or code of conduct or social norms (Asobie, 2012). It is however, important to note that most definitions of corruption put forward by scholars revolves around the public realm, whereas corruption should be widened to include the private sector. Based on the three conceptual perspectives corruption can be political, economic, administrative or professional.

Political corruption is largely perpetrated by political office holders and their collaborators. The primary motive is to acquire and retain political power, through vote buying and other illegal acts, directed towards the election or defeat of a particular candidate, either by running him down through blackmail or outright assassination. Economic or commercial corruption covers act that are largely perpetrated by businessmen and contractors who are directly motivated by financial gain not only for themselves, but also to enrich their political allies, their military sponsors or the civil service facilitators who helped them to get the contract or even execute them in certain circumstances. Administrative or professional corruption refers to causal but deliberate and largely criminal act by top administrative and professional personnel for private, material and socio-political gain. Such acts include falsified accounts, embezzlement of corporate or government funds, false claims, fraudulent tax returns, and actions which cover up professional misdeeds. It also includes the indirect inducement to perform legally bound obligations (Dike, 2003).

Corruption: A Chronological Explication of the Nigerian Experience

The genesis of corruption in Nigeria cannot be determined without making reference to the country's colonial experience. It was observed that the beginning of corruption in Nigeria can be traced to the period of colonialism (Omotola, 2006). It was posited that colonialism in all respect

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Nigerian Experience
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was built on the British colonialists' interest to exploit the country's resources for their selfish interest. To be able to achieve their parochial aim, the colonial masters destroyed social structures that were peculiar to pre-colonial African societies and replaced them with their own. This led to the emergence of what Ekeh (1975) referred to as the 'two publics in Africa' that is the primordial public and the civic public. While in the primordial public there is a system of accountability and control based on moral principles while civic public was a competitive terrain for private accumulation of wealth (Ekeh, 1975). This scenario marked the commencement of official corruption in Nigeria (Omotola, 2006).

During the colonial era, nationalists that are now considered father of the nation were accused of corruption (Izuchukwu, 2010). In 1943 Sir Ahanadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto was accused by his own cousin Alhaji Abubakar Siddique of misappropriating tax revenue as district head of Gusau. In a similar incidence, Mr. E.O. Eyo the then NCNC Chief Whip in the then Eastern Nigerian House of Assembly moved a motion in the Eastern House of Assembly asking for an enquiry into the 2 million pounds invested by Eastern Development Cooperation into African Continental Bank while Azikiwe was the Premier of the Eastern Region. Also, in 1962, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the then leader of the opposition at the federal level was accused by his political opponent of diverting Western Region government funds to his party (Izuchukwu, 2010). This accusation was found to be true by the justice George Coker lead inquiry.

In the Nigerian First Republic corruption thrived. The corrupt nature of the politicians of the first republic manifested in the flamboyant lifestyle they lived. Adamolekun (1985) observed that prominent politicians of the First Republic lived an ostentatious life. They rode in expensive cars and lived in big houses. The showy lifestyle which the politicians lived forced Major Chukwuma Kaduna Nzeogwu, to tag the politicians as "ten per centers." After the collapse of the First Republic the emergent military regime indicted many politicians. However, the occurrence of the civil war and the increasing revenue from crude oil brought a new dimension to corruption in Nigeria. The period of the civil war was a period of prosperity for both the military and the political elites. Ten out of the twelve state governors were indicted for corruption and self enrichment by the Obasanjo military administration (Adamolekun, 1985).

The Muritala-Obasanjo regime could not be described as free from corruption. Certain politicians and individuals were believed to have been enriched through money illegally appropriated from contracts that were either partly performed or not performed at all. Some government officials

after retiring established business ventures that were enough to buttress the suggestion that they had used their positions to illegitimately enrich themselves while in office. For instance, according to Adamolekun (1985), the late major General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua became a bank promoter and one of the richest Nigerians in the 1970s. After returning to democracy in 1979, the Shehu Shagari led administration witnessed high level of corruption. Corruption was witnessed in every level of government and occurred in all political parties. The National Party of Nigeria (NPN) which controlled the executive branch was however, at the centre of corrupt practices. This manifested in the unprecedented competition by the NPN big wigs to own private jets and outsmart one another in the amount of money stashed in foreign banks (Adamolekun, 1985). Owing to unprecedented corruption at all levels of government, the Shagari led government was booted out of office through a bloodless coup spearheaded by Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon.

The Buhari-Idiagbon regime can be better remembered for its discipline than for corruption. After taking over power, the Buhari-Idiagbon military regime went after notable politicians who were considered to be corrupt. Such politicians were arrested, tried and found guilty of varying levels of corruption and were consequently jailed. The subsequent regime headed by General Babangida was characterized by manifest, unprecedented and pronounced corruption (Ogundiya, 2009). The Babangida administration elevated corruption to an instrument of state policy. The Babangida government enriched its actors and many friends who were ready to do his bidding and who found no fault in all actions and policies of the regime (Ogundiya, 2009:289). Corruption in Nigeria reached its prime during the the gulf war when a windfall from the sale of crude oil estimated at about 12 billion dollars was missing and till date is yet to be accounted for (Odeku, 2006).

The regime of General Sanni Abacha merely consolidated on the corruptive legacies of the Babangida regime. The Sanni Abacha regime simply transformed Nigeria into a more corrupt environment especially with the involvement of his siblings in several government businesses and contracts thus, like the Babangida regime, Abacha also enriched his close associates. The then governor of Central Bank was accountable to the family and had to make available whatever sum is demanded by any of its members (Odeku, 2006). Until his death, Abacha ruled the country based on his whims and caprices. The sudden death of Abacha brought in the regime of General Abdusalam Abubakar. Like his predecessors, Abdulsalam satisfied his urge and those of his close associates (Adesote and Abimbloa, 2012). To confirm this, the Christopher Kolade inquiry set up by president Obasanjo's

government indicted the Abubakar administration in its findings over contract awards and financial transactions that were hastily made between June 1998 and May 1999 (Adesote and Abimbloa, 2012). The General Abdusalam Abubakar led regime will however be remembered for bringing Nigeria back to democracy.

Corruption and Democracy: The Nexus

Democracy as a principle of governance is characterised by some certain distinctive indicators. Some of these include: respect for fundamental human rights, free press, periodic, free, fair and credible elections as well as independence of judiciary and public accountability of political and public office holders. Accountability of public office holders as a principle of democracy entails the prudent management of state resources for the betterment of the people. However, the ability of the public officers and political office holders to manage state resources and use such for the general welfare of the people strengthens democracy. In a situation whereby public officials use public funds for their selfish interest, public accountability as a principle of democracy is undermined. Thus, the people lack confidence in the governance process. This comes as a result of the notion on the part of the people that public and political office holders do not hold public positions on their behalf and are not responsible to the people but are more interested in enriching their pockets with that of their cohorts, a situation which is inimical to democratic advancement and sustenance. This partly demonstrates the relationship between corruption and democracy.

There is a growing body of literature on the critical nexus between corruption and democracy (Boehm, 2015; Nicolescu-Waggoner, 2011; Kolstad and Wiig, 2011; Treisman, 2000; Heymann, 1996). While some of the literature sees democracy as a powerful tool for controlling corruption others are sceptical about the prospects of democracy in reducing corruption. Heymann (1996) argued that in fragile and new democracies, corruption can weaken structures of democracy; thus, leading to high potentiality of the opposition party being voted into power. In this regard, corruption can engender the dumping of democracy as a system of government for other forms of government even if they are not democratic but which may be viable and capable of preventing the occurrence of corruption. The notion is that democracy within this context can be in the interest of a selected few. This brings to the fore, the corruption inducing nature of democracy.

It was noted that democracy can induce corruption in two ways. First, the indicia of democracy such as freedom of speech, press and the

independence of the judiciary as well as the attendant political challenges of democracy can serve as a hiding place for corrupt democratic administration. Second, the nature of democracy as an expensive project may serve as a medium through which public funds are diverted for private use. Funding political campaigns and organising elections are two conspicuous democratic activities which may be extremely expensive. When political campaigns are funded on behalf of particular candidates by party bigwigs, such candidates are indebted to the funders and as such *mobilise state funds to compensate and repay such political campaign funders*. Thus, the discharge of the duties expected by the electorate is obstructed by the selfish interest of the candidate raising the funds required for them to be elected. *This is considered as a form of bribery (Heymann, 1996).*

In another perspective, Kolstad and Wiig (2011) claimed on the one hand that electoral democracies have the potentials of reducing corruption in the sense that perceived corrupt officials could be voted out office. On the other hand however, is the sceptic view of the nexus between democracy and corruption. It was observed that the need for campaign finance can serve as a driver of exchanging political decisions for funds. Thus, political decisions are made in favour of the highest bidder. It was further posited that the empirical link between democracy and reduced corruption may not necessarily be valid. It was argued that there are countries that do not fall within the classification of "more democracy-less corruption" but which has far lesser cases of incidences of corruption than those which claim to be democratic but are corruption ridden. For instance, Singapore which is mostly described as a relatively undemocratic country has low incidence of corruption. However, countries such as Paraguay and Nicaragua are described as democratic but have high incidence of corruption. This however, implies that there exists some lurking variable which determines corruption in these countries (Kolstad and Wiig, 2011).

To buttress this assertion, Sung (2004), noted that, transition to democracy particularly in the new democracies of Africa has compounded the challenge of corruption in such countries. Electoral competition in such countries have simply increased incidence of corrupt electoral practices such as vote-buying to secure electoral victory. After securing electoral victory, political office holders indulge in siphoning public funds through corrupt practices in public procurement and outright embezzlement in their bid to ensure political support for their re-election bid through the involvement in patron-client relationship (Sung, 2004).

Corruption encourages devious politicians to win electoral contest by taking advantage of anti-democratic practices such as vote buying and illegitimate

political challenges of corrupt democratic an expensive project re diverted for private g elections are two extremely expensive. particular candidates by funders and as such ch political campaign d by the electorate is sing the funds required of bribery (Heymann,

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transition to democracy a has compounded the oral competition in such corrupt electoral practices After securing electoral ing public funds through ht embezzlement in their election bid through the (2004).

electoral contest by taking te buying and illegitimate

party activities (della Porta and Vannucci 1997). Such practices affect the process of democratisation and consolidation. Thus, corruption has negative causal effect on democracy most especially during the consolidation process (Nicolescu-Waggonner, 2011). It was noted that corruption is detrimental to democratic consolidation in two distinct ways. First, it destroys the process of consolidation by hindering the incorporation of eligible groups into the political space thereby preventing them from participating in the political process. Corruption in this regard, may manifest through electoral malpractices and fraud. Consequently, effective checks on the powers of elected political office holders are greatly undermined. Second, due to lack of the respect of the rule of law and frail civil society, the ability to check elected political office holders and foster public accountability is weak, thus, obstructing the process of democratisation and democratic consolidation (Nicolescu-Waggonner, 2011).

The lack of transparency and public accountability of elected public officials most essentially as it relates to government's fiscal and monetary policies have been found to be a thriving ground for corruption and a crucial way of damaging democracy through siphoning the economic resources of a country into private purse (Hassan, Megistu and Teklu, 2013). The optimistic assumption that democratisation should lead to lower incidence of corruption or at least should have a linear negative effects on it is borne out of the philosophical and normative ideals of democracy premised on the values that are antithetical to corruption such as equality before the law, justice, respect for the rule of law and public accountability (Morris, 2009). Such assumption has also found root in the theory of representative democracy which view democracy as a system in which elected officials are geared towards representing the interest of the entire citizenry. In this view, it is believed that democracy should lead to adequate representation of the interest of the people because the electorate through their votes can threaten to remove them from office when they feel their interest is no longer of paramount importance in the minds of elected representatives (Przeworski et al., 1999 cited in Mondo, 2014).

While it is evidently clear that there is no paucity of literature on the nexus between democracy and corruption it is important to note that the relationship between corruption and democracy is a complex one in which lots of hypothesis has been formulated to test the relationship between the two variables. While some studies have revealed that democracy reduces corruption, others have demonstrated that there is a negative relationship between democracy and corruption. Such studies revealed a strong negative relationship between level of corruption and level of democracy. The

To further emphasise the complexities in studying the relationship between democracy and corruption Kolstad and Wiig (2011) posited that the causal effect of democracy on corruption is complicated by the fact that democracy is endogenous and that both democracy and corruption are likely to be affected by lurking variables that may not be easily quantifiable. It is further argued that there may be occurrences of reverse causality. In this regard, corruption can erode the confidence of the electorate in a democratic system, a situation which is dangerous to democratic sustenance and consolidation. However, democracy has inherent incentives to reduce corruption. In the sense that it's tenets when strictly adhered to have great potentials to limit corruption.

Corruption and Democratic Sustenance in Nigeria, 1999-2015

The year 1999 is an important year in the political history of the country. It was in that year that Nigeria returned to democratic governance after several years of military interregnum. As such, the period from 1999 to 2015 is equally of great importance in the nation's political history in the sense that one political party (People's Democratic Party) dominated the nation's political scene for an uninterrupted period of sixteen years. The swearing-in of a democratically elected President on the 29th of May, 1999 however, brought relief to the electorate who have witnessed the worst excesses of corruption under various military regimes. Taking into consideration the historical antecedents of corruption as one of the main reasons for the overthrow of civilian governments since independence the re-emergence of democracy was seen as a golden opportunity to combat the menace of corruption in the country.

Barely has the country settled down for another democratisation process that it was discovered that one of the main challenges to confront the new democratic government is corruption. It was reported that most of the governors who ruled between 1999 and 2012 were found guilty of mismanagement of public funds and embezzlement (Agbo, 2012). Between 1999 and 2002 a handful of corruption cases by some former state governors were recorded. Former Delta state governor James Ibori was arraigned on a 170-count charge of money laundering to the tune of 9.1 Billion naira (Agbo, 2012). Similarly, Uzo Kalu former governor of Abia State was arraigned on a 191-count charge of money laundering, criminal diversion of public fund and official corruption totalling 5.2 billion naira and was also accused of using his loot of 3.1 billion to fund Sky Airline

the potential of democracy to debar
a series of conditions going beyond formal
(2016).

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relationship is complicated by the fact that
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Sustenance in Nigeria, 1999-2015

in the political history of the country. It
returned to democratic governance after
military rule. As such, the period from 1999 to
the present in the nation's political history in the
Fourth Republic (People's Democratic Party) dominated the
uninterrupted period of sixteen years. The
elected President on the 29th of May, 1999
electorate who have witnessed the worst
various military regimes. Taking into
account the incidents of corruption as one of the main
problems of governments since independence the
Fourth Republic is seen as a golden opportunity to combat the

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governors. Delta state governor James Ibori was
found guilty of money laundering to the tune of 9.1
billion naira. Uzo Kalu former governor of Abia
state was found guilty of money laundering, criminal
fraud and corruption totalling 5.2 billion naira
and was sentenced to 3.1 billion to fund Sok Airline

and two banks in the Gambia and Sierra-Leone, in ad
dition to houses in London and the United States (Kofarmata,
2005). Governor of Jigawa state Saminu Turaki was accused
of misappropriation of public funds to acquire oil blocks from the Fed
Rev Jolly Nyame of Taraba state was charged with stea
belonging to the state. Dipreye Alamieyesegha was arrested
for corruption and money laundering in July 2006. British au
thorities recovered about 1 million pounds (USA 1.9 million) of the allegedl
he stashed in British Banks (Korfamata, 2005: 87).

With these reports of corrupt practices by some of
the governors, it was believed that the initiatives taken by the
government headed by Chief Olusegun Obasanjo to cr
create an environment for democratic sustenance and development
crumble at the very beginning. Corruption was not limited
to the executive arm, other organs of government were also involved in
corruption. Also, democratic institutions which were supposed to
strengthen the forces of democracy were involved in massive corruption
in the legislative arm, corruption took the form of bribery ar
procurement documents as well as certificate forgery (A
first victim of corruption in the Fourth Republic was Sali
leadership as the Speaker of the House of Representative v
confirmed allegation of certificate forgery. Salisu Buhari c
election in the National Assembly using a forged U
certificate purportedly obtained from the University of Tor
also falsified his age, claiming to be 36 years when he
was 30 years.

In a similar occurrence, Patricia Olubunmi Etteh who wa
the Speaker of the House of Representative from June to October 2007
authorizing the spending of 628 million naira (about 5 m
for the renovation of her official residence and that of her deputy
of 12 official cars meant for the House of Representatives.
fraud was chanted at her as she tried to speak in the Hou
result escorted out by the security as the situation deg
commotion. Her party officially continued to support her, e
members criticized the stance. However on 30th October,
of intense pressure, Etteh resigned her position as speaker (

In another scandal, the former Senate president Aldoph
found guilty of receiving a bribe of 55 million naira from
who was a former Minister of education to inflate the bud
to the education ministry. The Supreme Court how

Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) the go ahead to prosecute the former Senate President along with his cohort (Nochiri, 2008). In a similar vein, the former speaker of the House of Representatives, Dimeji Bankole was accused of corruption by The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Allegations were brought up against the former Speaker about the misallocation of a 10 billion naira loan. The unauthorized allotments of this loan were disbursed between certain fellow legislators without proper authorization. The former House Speaker and his deputy were charged with 17 criminal counts of theft and padding of House members allowances without approval of the relevant authorities (Nochiri, 2012).

Furthermore, in the wake of the controversy generated over the Federal government's planned total withdrawal of subsidy from petroleum products in January 2012, the House of Representatives set up an ad-hoc committee to probe how the subsidy fund that was appropriated by the National Assembly in the past had been disbursed. The Chairman of the ad-hoc committee Hon. Farouk Lawan was accused of involvement in a bribery scandal worth 600,000 dollars. The lawmaker was reported to have demanded the money from Femi Otedola, the Chairman of Zenon Oil and Gas to remove his company's name from the list of firms in the probe report that bought foreign exchange from the central bank of Nigeria but failed to import petroleum products (The Nigerian Voice, 2016). Otedola, it was observed had visited the police headquarters where he told detectives how Lawan pestered him with a demand of 3 million dollars to clear his company. On the advice of the security agents, he had played along and gave marked bills, provided by the security agents unknown to him that the whole transaction was being recorded. Farouk Lawan however, defended himself by saying "I took Femi Otedola's N96 million bribe to expose him (The Nigerian Voice, 2016).

Again, the former Aviation Minister Stella Oduah was engulfed in a certificate forgery scandal. She claimed to be a holder of a Masters degree in Business Administration from the St. Paul's College in Lawrence's Ville, Virginia, United States. The school authorities however confirmed that the former minister only bagged a first degree in Business Administration at the institution in 1982 with a major in Accountancy (Agada, 2014). Confirming the development, St. Paul's Registrar Mrs. Helen Jackson said Mrs. Oduah was an alumnus of the school. She however, reiterated that the school has never had a postgraduate program as earlier claimed by the minister. In a similar development, the former minister also claimed to have obtained a honorary Ph.D. degree from Christian Pacific University in Glendale, California. The claim was also found to be false. The former Minister's

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claim to an MBA in 1983 was found to conflict with the year in which she supposedly served in the National Youths Service Corps (Agada, 2014).

In another scandal, Mrs Oduah was reported to have dubiously purchase two armoured BMW 760 bullet proof cars at highly inflated prices. It was reported that Mrs. Oduah had compelled the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) to pay Coscharis Motors approximately 1.6 million dollars for two BMW bullet-proof cars (*Osun Defender, 2012*). Investigations however, showed that the highest cost for each of such car in both the U.S. and U.K. was 267,000 dollars per car. The NCAA and other sources further disclosed that the two cars were never delivered. It was admitted that Mrs Oduah reportedly split the 1.6 million dollars with Cosmas Maduka the chief executive of Coscharis motors (*Osun Defender, 2012*).

The rising spate of corruption specifically among government officials and democratic institutions such the National Assembly between 1999 and 2015 has the potential of sabotaging the nation's democratisation process. Presidents who were supposed to be the leading voice in the entrenchment of democratic ethos, norms and values were also accused of corruption (Ebegbulem, 2012; Amuwo, 2012). The former President Olusegun Obasanjo who assumed office in 1999 with no so sign of affluence, within eight years rose from obscurity to affluence owning chains of business enterprises worth millions of naira (Ebegbulem, 2012). Former President Goodluck Jonathan was also accused of using public funds for personal purposes (Amuwo, 2012). The former President was accused of sharing funds in the Federation Accounts to state governors, party bigwigs, traditional and religious rulers to buy their support for his Presidential ambition (Amuwo, 2012:206).

The then opposition party Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) claimed that the federal government shared N108 billion among the states for the Presidential poll, with unnamed Multinational Companies contributing 12 million dollars each. It was observed that: From 500 million allocated to each state during the National Assembly election, the Jonathan government increased the allocation to the states for the 2011 Presidential election to N3 billion each to be used to compromise voters, security agencies and electoral officers during the polls (Daily Sun, 2011 cited in Amuwo, 2012:200). It was observed that the 2011 general elections particularly the Presidential were heavily monetized in favour of the PDP and particularly the then incumbent Goodluck Jonathan to the disadvantage of the opposition parties (Amuwo, 2012). The former speaker of the House of Representative, Aminu Tambuwal buttressed this when he reiterated that

corruption flourished under Jonathan and that his body language encouraged corrupt practices in the country (*The Paradigm*, 2013). He further claimed that the then President failed to act on corruption cases revealed by the then National Assembly. The apparent lacklustre approach in dealing with corruption cases and the culprits encouraged corruption in the country. It was observed that when corruption cases are exposed and probed bringing the culprits to book is another story entirely (*The Paradigm*, 2013).

The key indicators of democracy such as fundamental human right which encompasses the right to fair hearing and adherence to the rule of law, free press and impartial judiciary are meant to determine who is guilty of an offence or who is innocent and ensure that the guilty are brought to book. The Nigerian case is such that, due process has been such that the accused are never brought to justice except in those instances where current office holders may, for political reasons take an interest in the conviction of former state officials accused of corruption (Olukotun, 2013). It was further asserted that the National Assembly frequently embarked on probes of which proceedings last several months. Since there are no follow-ups to these probes, nobody is punished and business goes on as usual. This scenario has made some to see probes of corrupt officials as dramatic performances designed to amuse the electorate and perhaps convey the impression that something is being done about corruption (Olukotun, 2013). This however, has been seen as detrimental diversions taking cognisance of the havoc that corruption has wrecked and continues to wreck on Nigeria's democracy.

The cash-and-carry politics played by Goodluck Jonathan in order to secure electoral victory in the 2011 Presidential election was nothing compared to that of the 2015 general election. With his inability to tackle corruption and punish offenders and the defection of five governors to the APC, Goodluck Jonathan was able to see the hand writing on the wall that come 2015, he may not be able to secure victory in the Presidential election. In about six weeks to the Presidential election however, the Jonathan administration gave out 100 billion naira in cash and within two weeks to the election another 295 million dollars was purportedly given out to beef-up 'security' for the election (Jannah, 2017). Corruption was so endemic in the past administration to the extent that the then opposition party made the fight against corruption one of its cardinal campaign promises. After the Jonathan administration was voted out of power it was discovered that about \$32 billion was lost to corruption under the Jonathan's administration. This amount made up 15% of state resources during the

period of his administration. This implies that nearly 16 per cent of the previous government's money was lost to corruption (DFID, 2017).

Conclusion

The Nigerian experience as regards corruption has been that of monumental treasury looting, bribery, electoral malpractices, fraud and brigandage. The country's political template seems to provide a thriving base for the promotion of corruption. Since attaining independence in 1960, the Nigerian state has been engulfed in all sorts of corrupt practices such that the nation's first attempt at democracy was partly terminated by the kleptomaniac tendencies of the politicians of the First Republic. The menace of corruption has been so entrenched in the nation's political system such that it has remained a potent hindrance to the nation's democratic system. Since the commencement of the Fourth Republic, corruption has taken the centre stage in discourse pertaining to the country's political system. Several state governors who served from 1999 to 2015 were accused of embezzlement of public funds and treasury looting. The manifestations of corruption in the country have undermined the corruption-reducing power of democracy. The Nigerian political process since 1999 seems to have been characterised by all forms of political corruption including electoral malpractices, fraud and violence.

There is an urgent necessity to tackle corruption in Nigeria. Corruption has hindered the growth and sustenance of democracy and has been a potent hindrance to socio-economic growth and development. One of the factors which induce corruption in a democratic system such as that of Nigeria is the overwhelming paraphernalia of political offices. This makes the competition for political offices tense and violent, as incumbents are scared of being voted out of power. To prevent this, there is the need for the government to reduce the spoils of political offices so as to make political offices less attractive and make electoral competition peaceful. There is also the need to ensure that public and political office holders are duly tried in the court of law and are consequently convicted if found guilty of corruption offences. In Nigeria, corrupt public and political office holders are able to get away with corrupt acts because the trial processes are never completed and are mostly distorted by a corrupt judiciary. Thus, there is the need to empower anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria most especially the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) through legislation to convict public and elected officials found guilty of corrupt practices.

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